

Geographical Association Annual Conference 2011

How much water do we eat?

Dr Tim Hess, Cranfield University

This was both an entertaining and thought provoking lecture which gave rise to many questions and much interesting discussion. The basic premise proposed and supported by a range of informative statistics was that everything human beings consume has a price in terms of the water used to produce it. The water may be from original sources or may be recycled and the dependency on each varies greatly from country to country and/or area to area. Some products are far more demanding than others; for example the grazing of animals, such as cattle for meat production, is one of the most wasteful users of water in agricultural production.

A clear message emerges with regard to our interest in water and its potential usage as sustainer of agricultural systems and, ultimately, human life. Wherever people live and whatever they do, we all need to reconsider our outlook, thinking and use of this, the most precious of all our commodities.

This was a most fascinating presentation which raised many questions and provided much food for thought.

Neil Simmonds