

Saving water for Okanagan farmers

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Without water, vegetation, including our food crops, stands little chance of survival in the heat of an Okanagan summer.

Did you know, B.C. farmers meet about 50 per cent of our province's food needs? They are vital to producing local, healthy food for our population that continues to grow.

In the Okanagan, our numbers are projected to increase 45 per cent by 2036 to more than 260,000 people.

For each one of those additions to our population, we need more food – which, in turn, needs more water to grow.

Our farmers markets and fruit stands are ripe with wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables.

To ensure this continues, it's important that we make sure there's enough water for the farmers to irrigate their crops.

As the sun gets hotter and the ground gets drier, some might think it's time to turn on the taps more often.

Instead, we need to help farmers by doing our part to conserve water.

In fact, with government assistance and rebates, a growing number of Okanagan farmers are installing water meters, using drip irrigation and micro-jet sprinklers, and installing soil-moisture sensors to ensure they're using only the water they need. But in the summer, we start to compete for water.

If you have a vegetable garden, make sure to be WaterWise, using effective and efficient watering practices, paying attention to when and how much you water.

Find tips at the website www.MakeWaterWork.ca.

If we use less water, there's more for the farmers to keep their crops growing.

That means healthy fruits and vegetables for our growing population.

Learn more at www.makewaterwork.ca, then "Take the Pledge" and enter to win \$5,000 in WaterWise yard upgrades thanks to KelownaGardens.com.

Make Water Work is an initiative of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its Okanagan WaterWise program.

Find this article at:

<http://www.kelownacapnews.com/community/219954231.html>