

# Staying Alive

## Food + Energy + Water = FEW

**MATTHEW EDLUND M.D.**  
Contributing Columnist  
health@lbknews.com

Food, energy and water were once abundant in America and throughout the world. No longer. Food shortages threaten the livelihood of a billion people, food and energy costs have reached their highest point in history, and water is seen as "the next oil" as climate change and droughts spread. Appreciation of the rising scarcity of food, energy and water has still not brought sufficient scrutiny to their interconnectedness. Food, energy and water represent dwindling and interdependent resources, requiring new political and economic structures to fully utilize them.



### Food

The Green Revolution of the 1950s and '60s shifted a globe facing persistent starvation into a planet easily accepting rising population. Malthus never imagined a world with 6.7 billion people, which the United Nations expects to reach at least 9 billion by 2050.

Today the growing economies of Asia and Latin America require that their populations not only get fed, but are fed "well," eating the chicken, pork and beef that developed countries generously consume. It takes eight pounds of grain to create one pound of beef.

Food has now morphed from body fuel to motor fuel, with up to 30 percent of American corn used in gasohol. Despite numerous studies that biofuels are disastrous for global warming, particularly through deforesting the Amazon, the headlong rush into biofuels now provokes food cost increases, which pinch pocketbooks everywhere while setting up millions to starve. Increased

energy costs also increase food prices and lead politicians to further decrease the global trade of foodstuffs, a new, harmful protectionism.

### Energy

Would America be fighting in Iraq if we and the rest of the global economy were not addicted to oil? What happens if someday the United States bombs Iran, the Straits of Hormuz are closed and 40 percent of world oil exports cease?

Our fossil fuels literally cook the planet, leading to climate change whose dramatic droughts in Africa and Australia radically shift what kinds and how much food can be grown — the Australian rice industry now hardly exists. We fertilize our fields with natural gas fertilizers, using the dead plants from the Jurassic to create the new plants of the 21st century. As American oil production declines, new drilling techniques bring hope that gas shale will become a major new source of domestic energy. Yet shale "fracture" techniques require giant quantities of water pulled from the same midwestern aquifers necessary for agriculture and homes. The same requirements exist for horizontal drilling. Acquiring fossil fuels now requires colossal water resources.

### Water

What we used to take for granted is our "new oil," with billions of water bottles consumed yearly by people who no longer trust what comes out their taps. Water wars will embroil the Southwest, as Phoenix and Los Angeles fight with farmers for riverine sources that decline year by year — yet our problems are tiny compared with much of the world. Whether it's Israel-Palestine or Darfur, people are today fighting and dying over water. China flirts with ecological disaster, stealing the water of the Yangtze to feed thirsty Beijing.

Water hydropower used to be a major source of

energy, but global warming diminishes glaciers and reservoirs. In our country new fights about water rights are just beginning, as multinationals buy up sources of bottled water, while across the earth billions do not have clean water to drink.

### FEW

Food, energy and water have always been critical to our survival, but never before has each been so dependent on the other. Nationally, we do not have a food policy, though our obesity-friendly "farm bill" powerfully affects the health of every American. Our energy policy remains wedded to fossil fuels, while a national water policy does not even exist, though most recognize that without water we do not exist.

We need national leadership on FEW, with food, energy and water seen as parts of a whole. Different government agencies, like Energy, Interior and Agriculture should come together to create a new Resources Advisory Board. We need national, systemic decision-making of a high order, and we need it now.

As America embarks on choosing a president, we can recognize that our political system is witnessing a fight between new and old economies. The old industries of agribusiness, oil, tobacco, drugs and insurance have pushed their lobbying power to create political bottlenecks preventing the new economy of knowledge industries, information technology and alternative energy from getting their chance to remake the American economy. How this battle turns out may determine whether we become a has-been of history or the world's industrial and technological exemplar. Coordinate food, energy and water, and we may have that shot.

*Dr. Matthew Edlund practices sleep medicine and psychiatry in Sarasota. His new book, "Designed To Last," is available online. He can be reached at 365-4308 and via his Web site at doctoredlund.com.*

## KEY Classifieds

### CLASSIFIEDS

Order classified ads at  
[www.lbknews.com](http://www.lbknews.com)

Deadline 5 p.m. Tuesdays

We accept all  
major credit cards!

Questions? E-mail:  
[classifieds@lbknews.com](mailto:classifieds@lbknews.com)

### FINANCIAL

**FREE PORTFOLIO REVIEWS** based on technical and fundamental analysis. Send stock and fund list to Saperston Asset Management, Inc., 172 Lake St., Hamburg, NY 14075 or call 1-800-879-7541 ext. 208. Member: FINRA.

### ITEMS FOR SALE

**COMMERCIAL STEINER MEAT SAW-SLICER** 10" Blade. \$75 941-809-5909.

**TALL LOUNGE CHAIR.** Cane sides, beautiful, elegant. \$79. 941-379-4884.

**CARRYING CASE** for Singer Sewing Machine,

new in box. \$15. Call 941-383-3158.

**DVD/VIDEO-CD PLAYER.** Samsung w/remote control. Like new. \$35. 941-795-8359.

**FISHING REEL.** Daiwa bg-15 gold/black. \$20. 941-761-1415.

**FISHING REEL.** Shimano Aero-4000. \$25. 941-761-1415.

**FISHING COMBO** Daiwa 7' rod + bg-20 reel. Very good cond. \$50. 941-761-1415.

**IMPORTED ITALIAN** music CDs \$20, and Italian movie DVDs \$25. Contact Pino 248-670-0093.

**LIFE MAGAZINES.** 16 issues 1940-1947. 11/17/1952 Eisenhower Election issue. \$60 for all. 941-745-9696.

**AQUARIUM FILTER.** 10-20 gal Aqua Tech. 1-year-old. \$10. 941-761-1415.

**FISH SCALE.** Rapala 25lb mechanical w/tape, unused. \$8. 941-761-1415.

**BIKE RACK.** Outback for SUV, holds two bikes. \$15. 941-761-1415.

**VHS TAPES (10).** Bible story adventures. \$25. Call 941-383-3158.

**SUITCASE.** American Tourister, black large roller, never used. \$25. 941-739-3692.

**GOLF BALLS.** \$2 per dozen. Most like new. 941-721-3162.

**CHLORINE TABLETS.** 25 lb. bucket, nearly full.

\$25. 941-739-5539.

**POOL FILTERS.** 3 Hayward cartridge C-800. \$30/all. 941-739-5539.

**MIRROR.** Designer, fancy, filigreed, with gold border and trim. Cost \$199, asking \$45. 941-365-8055.

**TABLE LAMPS (2).** Ceramic base. \$30. Call 941-383-3158.

**PAVERS** 16"X16" \$2 each, 9"X18" \$1.50 each. 941-383-7800 or 616-824-5404.

**SETTEE.** Beige with floral design, tufted. Cost \$350, asking \$75. 941-365-8055.

**DRAPERIES & VALANCES.** Various sizes, drapes white, \$10/ pair; blue valance, 12-feet long, can be divided. \$40. 941-365-8055.

**1,200 FULL LENGTH BOOKS** read on CD. Classic choices. Adventure, science, fiction, drama, western, romance, history. Just \$15. 941-383-5372.

### LIMITED FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Longboat Key News is offering free advertising space in our classified section for your items \$99 or less. (Limit of 15 words per ad, three ads per phone number.)

Free ads must be e-mailed to  
[classifieds@lbknews.com](mailto:classifieds@lbknews.com).