

Compiled by Kate Cline

Water From Air

As the California drought continues, people are looking for new ways to save water. One such method is atmospheric water generation—technology that collects moisture from air and turns it into usable water for agriculture and other applications. Keith White, CEO of Ambient Water, a company that specializes in atmospheric water generation, recently spoke with WQP Managing Editor Kate Cline about the technology and people’s perceptions of water during drought.

KATE CLINE: *How is the drought affecting agriculture in California?*

KEITH WHITE: The drought has had a tremendous impact on California’s agricultural industry in terms of both production and employment. The water restrictions placed on farmers and irrigation districts, along with the lack of natural rainfall, have severely decreased the overall yield of crops, while leaving some farmers with dried-out and dead produce. I’ve seen recent reports that say the drought has created a net revenue loss of \$1.5 billion. With a decrease in supply and the same level of demand, prices of agricultural goods have skyrocketed in California and across the U.S. The drought has removed an integral part of the agricultural process, and the impact across the state and nation has been palpable.

CLINE: *Briefly, how does the atmospheric water generation technology work?*

WHITE: Atmospheric water generation is a technology-based process used to condense water from the air, then capture and filter that moisture into drinkable water. Ambient Water products collect water from humidity in the atmosphere. This air is chilled to the “dew point,” and the moisture is condensed onto patented stainless steel or specially coated coils, and then channeled through advanced filtering chambers to provide a reliable source of clean drinking water. This technology enables significant amounts of water to be extracted from the air and purified efficiently at a relatively low cost per liter or gallon.

CLINE: *Why is this technology ideal for drought situations?*

WHITE: Atmospheric water generation technology is ideal for drought situations because it produces a sustainable water source wherever one is needed. The machines run on an energy-efficient electricity model, and can be moved from one site to another to accommodate need. The technology is also beneficial because of its dual-purpose use—both commercial and residential. Yes, the water produced through atmospheric water generation can be used for agricultural purposes or in emergency situations, but it can also be used by families for consumption, cooking and bathing. Atmospheric water generation technology can help ease the stress of a water-scarce situation, and enable people to live somewhat normally.

CLINE: *As the drought progresses, have you found people to be more interested in new water technologies?*

WHITE: Most definitely—as the drought has gotten worse and the need for relief becomes paramount, people are more open to learning about alternative methods that can combat water scarcity. The unfortunate circumstances in California and other parts of the U.S. have shone a spotlight on the benefits of water technologies and the need for a solution as issues around natural resources and climate control

continue to grow. I think people have seen enough of the impact to realize that we need an alternative solution to water as a natural resource, because this is an issue that is not going away.

CLINE: *In your experience, how has the drought changed people’s perceptions of water?*

WHITE: I think sometimes people often forget just how much water is necessary for our agricultural industry to operate. For the longest time, people didn’t really question where their food came from or the process by which it was grown, so no one really

thought about water. But I think the drought has brought some attention to that because people are seeing the prices of their produce rise as a result.

In general terms, though, I think many still don’t understand that water really is a growing concern—and not just in agriculture, but beyond. We all think of water as the world’s most abundant resource because of the oceans, but much of that we can’t use in our everyday lives. Hopefully all of the media coverage from California and other water-scarce areas like South America has created some awareness that this isn’t just a small problem, or a California problem—it’s a global problem and we need to start looking for solutions. **WQP**



Keith White

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