

A person can live four to six weeks without food, however, only three to five days without water. According to WATERisLIFE, an organization dedicated to providing safe water around the world, over one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water. The vast majority of people in the United States take clean water for granted. Water is an important factor to all life that humans rely on for almost everything. The most important use of water in the household is, of course, drinking and cooking, and for human consumption it must be clean and safe. Water is also used for bathing, other personal hygiene, raising livestock and pets, and cleaning. Considering recent events related to the coronavirus issue, cleaning and sanitizing have become more important. All of these uses are very important for our way of life; however, they consume a lot of fresh water. The US Geological Survey estimates that each person in the US uses 80 to 100 gallons of water per day for typical household use. That means my family of five could use up to 500 gallons per day. What do we do with all that water? Where does it go? How can it be recycled and used more efficiently? These are questions that I will delve into in this essay.

My household utilizes water to grow fruit and shade trees, grass, and a small garden. Many in our community also raise livestock, including us. I am in 4-H and raise a variety of animals, which all require clean water every day. Without scrubbing and changing out water pans daily, the water grows a thick layer of algae and develops a foul odor. This discourages the animals from drinking and causes sickness. Cleaning out water pans uses a lot of water. In an effort to conserve water, we reuse the dirty water to irrigate productive trees and plants.

Water is also used to shower, and honestly who doesn't shower every day, maybe every two days for kids for bathing and personal hygiene. It is extremely important to stay clean even when a pandemic isn't happening. This is still a ton of water down the drain that could be potentially repurposed when considering all the people who shower every day. Plus, the water I use to wash dishes or even flush the toilet and wash clothes needs to be considered. When thinking "I'm just going to take one quick shower, that's not too much water," I didn't realize how much water was also being used on so many other things. So, one shower isn't bad but combined with clothes and dishes and watering animals it adds up fast.

I am in 4-H and I show a variety of animals such as chickens, sheep, rabbits, and geese. These animals need clean water every day even if they didn't finish it the day before and it is my responsibility to make sure that they receive it. The geese also need it to swim in, and although it doesn't have to be cleaned everyday, that is still water that is needed and used. Farmers also use river water to irrigate their crops, which takes an enormous amount of water. Even though it is river water and not considered clean enough to drink, river water would be easier to clean compared to ocean water.

The role of water in life is very important and somehow constantly overlooked. I didn't realize how much water was being used when performing everyday tasks and had to think about ways to make water usage more efficient. Shower or dish water for example, most don't want to just purify that and re-drink that water, but it could be used for farming purposes. Even those who have a garden could redirect a hose or a tank to water their gardens using that water rather than just sending it to the sewer system or septic tank. Also, when putting together a garden or

crops, farmers use fertilizer and thinking about what it is we have a solution to that as well. Toilets are one of the top water wasters because we just put that into the ground to. Rather than spending money on fertilizer why don't we use the same idea as the shower. There would have to be some obvious changes, such as the toilet paper or any other consumables but, it could work eventually.

Eventually there will be no more readily available water in the dry regions of the United States and world, so the more aware and appreciative we are about water usage, the better the future could be. Water's role in my life is so significant I couldn't live without it. The amount I use in one day astounds me. After showering, washing my dishes, doing my laundry, staying hydrated, and watering my animals I have used over a hundred gallons. Thinking about all five people in my family doing the same, the amount just gets crazier. After the research I have done, to realize how much water I use, to write this essay I will definitely be more conservative. Hopefully over time it will help, especially if others come to the same conclusion. Water is so important to everyone and it takes a lot to realize the importance even when it's right in front of your face.