

Feeding the Future? Harnessing Desalination for Agricultural Growth

Abstract

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With rapid population growth seen in the past several decades, and freshwater repercussions, as well as the increasing effects of climate change, the competition for water is exacerbating, notably affecting agriculture. In regard to this situation, desalination has emerged as a promising solution in alleviating water scarcity challenges in agriculture.

However, this essay argues that whilst desalination has expanded rapidly over the last 50 years, the pace has been checked by awareness of the environmental costs of the technology, both in terms of waste products and energy consumption. What follows is a discussion of the multifaceted approach Spain has taken towards this issue, and an analysis of some regional developments in the drive to make desalination a more efficient source of freshwater, as well as its limitations. The report concludes by putting these efforts into perspective, by highlighting alternative means to address water shortages.