

Drought will be profitable for some businesses

By Erik Sherman, Fortune

There will be businesses, new and old, that find water shortages can produce profits. As droughts become more common throughout the world, these 9 industries may thrive.

It's crunch time for water, with shortages presenting one of the top global risks over the next decade, according to the World Economic Forum.

This is a problem that is current, not only future. Look beyond California's multi-year punishing drought. The U.S. and Brazil face historic water crises, even though between them the two have a fifth of the planet's freshwater reserves. And China faces a huge potential crisis within 15 years, according to a report by The National Intelligence Council (NIC), the federal agency that provides analysis to America's intelligence community.

You can't live without water, and doing business is pretty tough as well. "Water is fundamentally mispriced around the world," Clinton Moloney, a managing director of PwC's sustainable business solutions practice told Fortune. "The social cost is not built into the price that companies pay." There's always something else that can be done with water, and when there's concern about having enough to drink and grow necessary food, what has been a cheap resource could quickly get far more expensive.

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