

## Water use will increase in AV area . . C. D. Smith

Water use throughout the nation is expected to increase a great deal in the future, even if population stabilizes, according to a local water official.

C. D. Smith, member of the board of directors of Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, says per capita consumption of water is on the rise. In 1953, he points out, per capita consumption on the average was 118 gallons of water per day. Today, it's well over 200 gallons. Smith said most of the current increase in water consumption is in residential use.

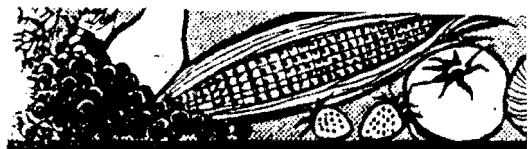
"When we apply this trend locally," said Smith, "it indicates that the gradual population increase foreseen here will vastly accelerate the present groundwater overdraft problem, unless we begin using supplemental water from the State Water Project as soon as possible."

Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency has a contract to take water from the State Water Project—which is now flowing through the area — and distribute it to local community water systems. However, this new water supply cannot be tapped until the electorate authorizes financing and construction of a distribution system.

Smith said one large water agency elsewhere in California is hoping to blunt the per capita rise in water consumption through a new conservation education program.

"Past experience in gaining voluntary reductions in water use is not encouraging because people are reluctant to adopt an austere lifestyle they consider unacceptable," Smith says. "Using police power to enforce mandatory water conservation practices among residential users would have adverse social economic and environmental impact. That is why growing water demands are traditionally met through expansion of water supplies, as will be done in this area."

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