

# CHAPTER 5

## Natural Resource Constraints on the Food System

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### ABSTRACT

Increasing global demands for food is occurring at the same time that water shortages, land and energy restrictions, climate change and environmental pollution are escalating in many parts of the world. This chapter explores (i) various facets of natural resource constraints on the food system, (ii) methods to assess these constraints, and (iii) steps that might be taken to reduce the pressure on scarce natural resources. Particular focus is placed on the use of resource footprints to evaluate the demands of the food system and to quantify the resources embedded in food products. Resource constraints are also analyzed in terms of a nexus, representing the complex and dynamic interactions among resource sectors (e.g., water, energy, food, land, ecosystems) that are difficult to address independently.

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