Visual Argument Introduction

For this project I chose to focus on the issue of Saudi pumping of groundwater in the Southwest United States. The Arizona government sold some land to a Saudi Arabian firm, with restrictions on amount of water that could be pumped from the land, as the area has been experiencing severe drought and groundwater depletion. Many citizens in the Southwest also have limitations on how they can use water and how much they can use. However, the government has allowed pumping far above the restriction. The water is being used to water alfalfa for cows in Saudi Arabia. So, in the end, a precious resource that many citizens are already being forced to use sparingly is being used to feed cows in countries across the world. I tried to make this argument in a meme format that could be spread on Twitter or Facebook to spread awareness.

Visual Argument Reflections

For this project I chose to give an exaggerated view of this point. I want to show the government stopping Americans from using water how they please, while in the background cows are allowed to drink as much as they want. The format of the image also helps to show this hyperbole. The meme format allows the image to be goofy, while still having a point. Obviously, this isn’t really happening in this way, but it effectively represents my argument. While it is in a meme format, it still has some aspects of visual rhetoric that we went over in class. One of these is symmetry. The shot of the water source perfectly splits the image in two. On one side you can see approaching a trough freely, while a man is stopped by a guard from getting more drinking water. This creates a dichotomy between the sides, that I hope will show the absurdity of the situation.