

NEWS RELEASE



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WE CAN EAT MEAT AND SAVE THE PLANET- NEW RESEARCH

We don't need to go veggie to feed a booming world population and save the planet from climate change and forest destruction – and can produce enough food for everyone without factory farming, new research from Friends of the Earth and Compassion in World farming shows.

'Eating the planet?', published today (Wednesday 11 November 2009), as world leaders prepare to meet in Rome at the FAO World Summit on Food Security , reveals that we can still enjoy meat several times a week whilst feeding the world using planet-friendly and humane farming methods.

Cruel and intensive factory farming practices currently used to mass produce meat for people in rich countries – who eat around six times as much meat as those in the poorest countries – are destroying forests and wildlife as land is cleared to grow animal feed and graze cattle.

The research models future food production against different diets, farming methods and land use, and concludes that enough food can be produced to feed the growing world population with fairer and healthier diets whilst avoiding deforestation and animal cruelty.

Continuing to eat more meat and dairy globally – the production of which already generates more climate-changing emissions than all of the world's transport – will push the world's climate and resources over the edge.

Despite pushes from agribusiness to intensify farming to feed a growing global population that is expected to reach over nine billion by 2050, the researchers found that a diet equivalent to eating meat three times a week would allow forests to remain untouched, animals to be farmed in free-range conditions and greener farming methods to be used.

With as many people obese in the West as malnourished in poor countries – roughly a billion of each – distributing protein more fairly is also an opportunity to tackle global health problems, the report points out.

But feeding the world in a planet-friendly way means there will be little room to grow bio-fuel crops for cars. Feeding people must come first. Compassion in World Farming and Friends of the Earth are calling on Ministers to switch support from factory farming to planet-friendly and humane methods.

The groups also want the Government to take action to measure and reduce the impact of the UK's meat and dairy production and consumption – and to switch subsidies from intensive to planet-friendly and humane farming.

Clare Oxborrow, senior food campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: “It’s amazing news that we can feed a rapidly expanding population without trashing the planet – and still eat meat several times a week.

“With as many obese as malnourished people in the world, fairer and healthier lower-meat diets are a win-win for people and the planet.

“The Government has already backed a major scientific study that calls for a move away from intensive production – it’s time it stopped spending public money on it and got behind planet-friendly farming instead.”

Lasse Bruun, Head of Campaigns at Compassion in World Farming, said: “It’s great to see that we can actually do without factory farming and still eat meat, just by cutting down the amount we consume.”

“With 60 billion animals being reared for livestock production every year and the figure set to double by 2050, we really need to re-consider our approach to farming.

“Animals are being reared like factory units to provide us with cheap meat. The true cost of eating too much meat is animal suffering, deforestation and obesity. We have the power to save our planet and be kind to animals. All we need to do is change our diets to a healthier and fairer option.

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For further information or to arrange interviews contact Valentina Moressa on 01483 521952 or 07771 926005 (out of office hours) or email valentina@ciwf.org

Notes to the editor

- 'Eating the planet? How we can feed the world without trashing it' is produced by Compassion in World Farming and Friends of the Earth. www.ciwf.org/eatingtheplanet It summarises an original study undertaken by researchers at The Institute of Social Ecology, Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt, Vienna, Austria, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany and draws out implications and recommendations arising from the research findings.
- Friends of the Earth believes the environment is for everyone. We want a healthy planet and a good quality of life for all those who live on it. We inspire people to act together for a thriving environment. For further information visit www.foe.co.uk.
- Compassion in World Farming campaigns peacefully to end all cruel factory farming practices. Factory farming is the biggest cause of animal cruelty on the planet with 60 billion animals being reared for livestock production every year. For further information see www.ciwf.org
- The full research report can be found at:
www.foe.co.uk/eatingtheplanet/fullreport
www.ciwf.org/eatingtheplanet
- Maps and tables showing the results of the research are available upon request. Please contact Compassion in World Farming on 07771 926 005
- High resolution pictures and footage of deforestation, factory farmed and free-range animals are available upon request. Please contact Compassion in World Farming on 07771 926 005

Meat and the planet

- Reducing global meat consumption could free up one million square kilometres of cropland and 27 million square kilometres of pasture that could be used to store large amounts of carbon as the vegetation regrows (Stehfest *et al.*, 2009).
- Eating a steak is the equivalent of taking 51 showers. 15500 litres of water are needed to produce 1kg of beef, so a 300g steak would use 4650 L of water. A low flow output shower head (DEFRA recommendation) uses 9 l/min, a ten minute shower would use 90 litres of water. $4650/90 = 51.67$
So for an economical shower head, you could have 51 showers in place of a 300g portion of beef.
- One kilogramme of beef requires 12 times the quantity of water needed to produce 1 kg of wheat and five times the quantity of water needed to produce 1 kg of rice.
- One third of the world's current cropland is used for animal feedcrops. Around 40% of the world's cereal harvest is used as livestock feed, and that proportion is 70% in most rich countries.⁷ Much of the land, energy and water used to grow feed crops for intensively produced animals could have been more efficiently used to grow food that is directly consumed by people.
- Industrial production now accounts for at least 74% of poultrymeat, 55% of pigmeat production 68% of eggs and 43% of beef globally. The result of this is that the large majority (72%) of the animal feed grown on cropland is fed to pigs and poultry, typically kept in intensive farming systems. The FAO reports that industrial animal production systems have been increasing at six times the rate of traditional mixed farming systems.

Diets

- The report's 'fair, less meat' diet scenario would feed 9 billion people a sufficient and healthy diet including a meat meal 2 to 3 times a week.
- Our Western diet: an average person in Europe eats approximately one large beef steak (300 g), two portions of chicken breast (two 150 g chicken breasts), two pork chops as well as milk and cheese every day (e.g. 100 ml of milk and two and a half slices of cheese* every day). * One slice of cheese is 30g
- For a more balanced diet with meat and dairy 2-3 times a week: In Europe, on a weekly basis, an average person could be eating one small beef steak (150g), one portion of fish, one portion of chicken (e.g. 150 g chicken breast), two pork sausages and two eggs over the course of the week, as well as a small amount of dairy products every day (e.g. small slice of cheese, 50 ml of milk and small amount of butter every day). Compared to a current typical European diet, this would mean cutting out meat on two days (i.e eating meat three times a week, as opposed to five) and eating slightly smaller portions of both meat and dairy.
- Diet for an organic world: On a weekly basis, an average person would eat meat and fish two to three times a week, as well small amounts of dairy products every day. For example: one portion of fish, one pork chop, and a small amount of beef (120 g) over the course of a week as well as a small amount of dairy products every day (100 ml of milk every day and a small amount of butter every day, or cheese four days a week)

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