

VISION FOR FAIR FOOD & FARMING



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This Vision for Fair Food and Farming seeks to achieve global adoption of food and farming policies which respect and protect the interests of people, animals and the planet.

In particular, it calls for:

Good health by ensuring universal access to sufficient and nutritious food

Sustainable farming methods which support rural livelihoods and relieve poverty

Protection for the planet and its precious resources: soil, water, forest and biodiversity

Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from agriculture

Humane farming methods which promote the health and natural behaviour of sentient animals and avoid causing them pain and suffering

Reduced consumption of animal products in high-consuming populations to meet environmental, health and sustainability goals

This document outlines briefly the basis for the key statements of the Vision for Fair Food and Farming and suggests further resources and reading for those who wish to know more.

www.visionforfairfood.org



We are facing a dilemma:

the world's population is growing, but the planet itself has little viable land left to farm, and water resources are under severe pressure. Many people are suffering from hunger, and the environment has been damaged by inappropriate farming methods. New technologies may increase productivity, but small-scale farmers may not have access to them. These technologies do not offer a complete solution to the key issue of providing enough food for all, while protecting the environment and ensuring fair treatment for animals too.

Good health

by ensuring universal access to sufficient and nutritious food



Nearly 1 billion people are suffering from under-nutrition (FAO, 2010). This is a situation which signifies global failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000). Currently it is the poor who bear the brunt of this situation, and millions of children go to sleep hungry, night after night.

The marketing of food and global trading in food commodities must be reformed so that prices of food staples are maintained at an affordable level for those on low incomes.

Trading companies should adopt the principles of Fair Trade: better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, fair terms of trade for farmers in the developing world and fair pay for workers. Companies should pay sustainable prices, which should never fall lower than the market price. The principles of the Green Economy should facilitate such developments.

The FAO estimates that one-third of the world's cropland is used to grow crops, not to feed people, but to feed animals (Steinfeld et al, 2006 (a)). Over 90% soy and around 40% global cereals are grown primarily for animal feed, not human consumption (Lundquist et al, 2008; Steinfeld et al, 2006(b)). Using so much of the earth's productivity to feed farm animals could only be justified if the animals produced more in output than was fed to them. Sadly this is not so.

With industrial intensive farming, research shows that to get 1kg edible beef you need to give the animal 20kg feed. For pigs the figure is around 7.3kg feed, and for chickens, around 4.5kg (Smil, 2000). This means that much of what we feed to animals is in fact wasted from the point of view of feeding the world.

A report by Oxfam on sustainable UK consumption concluded in 2009 that, "Increased demand for grains to feed livestock, coupled with the burgeoning ►

demand from biofuels for feedstocks, is likely to push future food prices further beyond the limits of affordability for the world's poorest people. The recent rises in food prices have already caused misery for millions, but future price rises and pressures on food supplies are likely to be increasingly compounded by, perhaps even driven by, rising global demand for meat and dairy products" (Oxfam, 2009).

According to the 2011 Foresight Report: "Major increases in the consumption of meat, particularly grain-fed meat, would have serious implications for competition for land, water and other inputs"; and "a global increase in the proportion of calories obtained from grain-fed meat as opposed to grain will stimulate

the overall demand for grain and lead to an upward pressure on grain prices" (Foresight, 2011) .

It has been estimated that if the whole world ate the average US diet, heavy in animal products, the total world grain harvest could feed only 2.5 billion people (Brown, 2009).

To ensure global equity, those who cannot afford to consume balanced diets (which might include fresh vegetables, fruits and a range of cereals and some livestock products) – that is, mainly the poor in developing countries – should be supported by policy measures to achieve income levels where purchase of such products is possible.

Sustainable farming methods which support rural livelihoods and relieve poverty

Small-scale farmers in developing countries must be supported in gaining access to adequate and appropriate animal feed and veterinary care for their farm animals. There should also be support for measures to assist with marketing of agricultural products, such as co-operatives, training and investment in rural infrastructure. It is vital that small-holders are protected from the effects of the competitive advantages enjoyed by large-scale producers such as economy of scale and access to global markets.

The United Nations reports that "small farm holders are at the heart of the food security challenge" but also that "small-scale and diversified farming continues to have significant advantages over largescale monoculture systems in terms of productivity (20-60% higher yields), food production and environmental protection (including climate change mitigation)" (UN, 2011).



Photo: CIMF / Karen Playford

Wages and working conditions in the livestock sector, from farms to slaughterhouses and processing plants, must be raised to a level which ensures livelihoods, protects health and increases personal motivation.



Photo: Karunakar Rayker

Protection for the planet and its precious resources: soil, water, forest and biodiversity



The planet's systems are in peril. Our precious global resources of soil, forests, grasslands and water are finite. But they are being over-exploited – as if there were no tomorrow.

Industrial animal agriculture uses more land and more water than cereal, legume or most horticulture production. Nearly 80% of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon results from cattle ranching (Greenpeace, 2009). Already 20% of pasture land has been degraded (Steinfeld et al, 2006(a)). Over-grazing is turning grassland into desert from north-west China to West Africa and Brazil. Conservation International reports that 23 of 35 global biodiversity hotspots are affected by livestock production (Steinfeld et al, 2006 (c)).

Intensification deprives birds of suitable habitat for feeding and breeding as a result of use of monocultures, pesticides, fertilizers, 'improvement' of semi-natural grassland, hedgerow removal and others. FAO says that the vast majority of vital food crops are pollinated by bees (FAO, 2005). Both wild bumblebees and domestic honeybees are endangered by the practices of modern agriculture (UNEP, 2010 (a)).

One third of our fellow humans live in areas suffering from a high level of water stress (Oki and Kanae, 2006). Water tables are falling in China, India, the Middle East, the United States and many other areas (Brown, 2006). Major rivers are drying up, whilst others are dangerously low at certain times of the year. Rising global temperatures will only exacerbate this dire situation.

To produce just 1kg of industrially-produced beef requires almost as much water as the annual water needs of one person, which is around 18,000 litres (Liu and Slavenije, 2008). To produce that 1kg of beef we use nearly 12 times as much water (15,500 litres) as we do to produce 1kg of wheat (1,300 litres) (Hoekstra, 2010).

Water conservation measures must be adopted and farmers trained in the best irrigation methods, such as drip irrigation. The water footprint of animal (and other) products should be incorporated into commercial and international agreements and be communicated to citizens/consumers.

Livestock production is a major cause of environmental pollution, habitat damage and biodiversity loss. Pig slurry is 75 times more polluting than raw domestic sewage (Archer, 1992). Factory farms produce ammonia, sulphur dioxide and dust, all of which can harm the health of farm workers and nearby residents. Surveys have shown higher levels of lung problems in these populations (NALBOH, 2010: Pew, 2009). Ammonia emissions from large livestock units contribute to the formation of acid rain.

Over-use of nitrogen fertilizers can saturate soils, encouraging leaching of nitrates into water supplies, causing eutrophication, with potential damage not just to fish and other species, but to human health. (FAO, 1996). Use of nitrogen fertilizers must be better controlled. Alternative methods of enhancing soil fertility should be used where possible.

Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from agriculture

Climate change is already affecting food production, livestock and farmers; these impacts are projected to increase over time, with potentially devastating effects. Agricultural systems need to adapt to these impacts.

Livestock production, on the other hand, is responsible for 18% of the global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) generated by human activity, making it a major contributor to global warming (Steinfeld et al, 2006(a)). Livestock is responsible for as much as 37% of our emissions of methane and 35% of nitrous oxide – both far more potent as greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide (Steinfeld et al, 2006 (a)).

Globally, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Agriculture has a role to play in mitigating its impact on climate change by, for example, more prudent use of nitrogen fertilizers, better manure management and protecting and enhancing carbon sinks such as forests and grasslands.

An increasing number of leading scientists believe that as well as technical measures to reduce emissions, we urgently need to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of our food by reducing consumption of animal products (FCRN, 2008).

The World Bank says: “As a global public good, urgent action by the global community is required. This should start with creating awareness at the highest political levels because livestock emissions have not yet been addressed by global decision-making institutions” (World Bank, 2005).



Agricultural policies must not only be based on sound environmental principles, but must encompass long term impact on the climate. Forests and grasslands sequester carbon and must be protected and enhanced. Pastureland used for grazing farm animals can act as an environmentally beneficial carbon “sink” (Rotz et al, 2009).

Practical measures to reduce the amount of methane and nitrous oxide associated with livestock production need developing and adoption. Agricultural intensification can have negative impacts on animal welfare and any climate change mitigation measure which affects animals should undergo an assessment of its impact on animal health and welfare before adoption. Developed countries may need to introduce greenhouse gas emission taxes on livestock products. This could be partially offset by payment for carbon sequestration in grassland.



Photo: CWF / Martin Osborne

Humane farming methods which promote the health and natural behaviour of sentient animals and avoid causing them pain and suffering



Photo: CWF / Xiao Shihai

A major problem in animal farming is the impact of intensive, industrial ‘factory farming’ on the welfare of the animals themselves.

Animals are sentient beings. They can feel pain, fear, anticipation and pleasure. They can suffer. The Treaty of Lisbon, 2009, binding within the European Union, recognizes that animals are sentient beings and that their welfare must be protected (EU, 2008). Major veterinary bodies across the world have supported the call for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare to be adopted by the United Nations (WSPA, u.d.).

Factory farming abuses animals by denying their sentience, breeding them for such high rates of productivity that their own bodies are no longer capable of a normal life span, and keeping them in conditions of confinement, isolation or overcrowding so that their psychological, social and behavioural needs are thwarted.

Millions of animals are reared in totally abhorrent conditions: dairy cows permanently on concrete, pregnant pigs and veal calves confined in crates so narrow they cannot turn round, and laying hens in cages in which they cannot even stretch their wings.

Large scale factory farming has so many adverse effects on people, animals and the planet, that it is ethically and practically unsustainable.

All countries should adopt legal protection for animals and place a duty of care on the keepers of animals.

Regulations to protect the welfare of farm animals should be adopted. These could be based on the internationally recognised Five Freedoms (Farm Animal Welfare Council, u.d.):

The Five Freedoms

- 1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- 2. Freedom from Discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- 4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- 5. Freedom from Fear and Distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Reduced consumption of animal products in high-consuming populations to meet environmental, health and sustainability goals

“Reducing consumption of meat and dairy products is likely to have the most significant and immediate impact on making our diets more sustainable, in which health, environmental, economic and social impacts are more likely to complement each other” (SDC, 2009).

Around half the adults in Europe are overweight or obese (OECD, 2010). In the United States, 65% of adults are overweight and 30% are classified as obese (USDHHS and USDA, 2005). There is a growing global epidemic of obesity and associated diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) and the American Institute for Cancer Research say there is now “convincing” evidence of the link between red and processed meats and colorectal cancer, the third most common cancer in the world, causing 50,000 deaths a year. They recommend that we eat a variety of mostly plant-based foods, limit consumption of red meat and avoid processed meats such as sausage, ham, bacon and salami (WCRF/AICR, 2007).

High intake of animal products is also associated with increased mortality from ischaemic heart disease. Studying the diets of 9,514 people, researchers found that eating lots of red meat increased a person's risk of suffering from a cluster of risk factors known as metabolic syndrome by 26%, compared to those who had only two servings of meat a week. The symptoms of metabolic syndrome include high cholesterol, high blood sugar and high blood pressure, all risk factors for heart disease (Lutsey et al, 2008).

Findings from a Swedish study suggest that red and processed meat consumption may increase the risk of cerebral infarction in women. Cerebral infarction is the most common kind of stroke caused by blockage of an artery that supplies blood to the brain (Truelsen et al, 2006).

Researchers at the Center for a Livable Future, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, recommend public health measures to “curb the current increase in high-meat diets worldwide by changing policies to encourage diets lower in meat and saturated fat and higher in vegetable, fruits and grains” (Walker et al, 2005).

The World Health Organization says, “Industrialized countries need to reduce their meat consumption from the current 224g/person/day. Global convergence to 90g/person/day would have a significant effect on carbon levels and health” (WHO, 2008).

Whilst fish consumption can have beneficial health effects, there are health and environmental problems associated with some wild-caught and farmed fish, including toxic residues, heavy metal contamination in some species and pollution of local waters, as well as the known decline in wild fish populations.

A UK government Cabinet Office report concluded: “Evidence on health and the balance of environmental analysis suggests that a healthy, low-impact diet would contain less meat and fewer dairy products than we typically eat today” (Cabinet Office, 2008).

The United Nations Environment Programme noted that: “A substantial reduction of impacts [on the environment] would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products” (UNEP, 2010 (b)).

In recent years, 75% of emerging human diseases have originated in animals (Taylor et al, 2001). Intensive rearing of thousands of animals in enclosed environments provides an obvious environment for disease transmission and mutation of dangerous viral infections such as avian flu.

Intensive animal production relies heavily on antibiotics to treat and prevent disease outbreaks (and in some countries to promote growth in animals). Around half the world's antibiotics are used on animals (Save our Antibiotics! Alliance, in press). Over-use in animals is a contributor to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which can result in devastating illness in humans and make effective treatment very difficult. The use of such drugs in farm animals should be restricted to treatment of disease in individual animals under veterinary supervision.

Public health policy-makers, from governments to intergovernmental organisations, should promote diets lower in meat and dairy products and set an example in their public procurement policies. Such policies must be linked to their policies on livestock farming as a whole, so that production is also modified and high health, environmental and animal welfare standards incorporated.

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Further Reading

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Voices of philosophers, religious leaders, writers, politicians and historians across the centuries who have called for humane treatment of the creatures with whom humans share the planet. "Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace." (Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, from *The Philosophy of Civilization*, MacMillan, 1955).



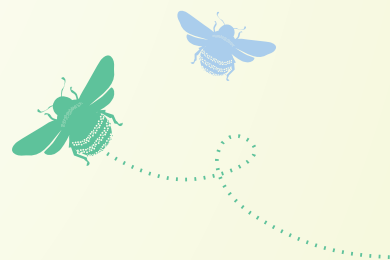
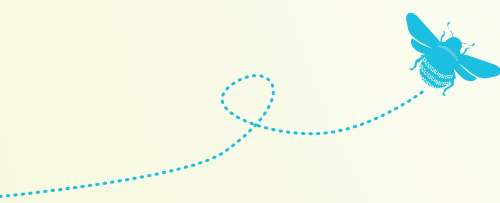
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