Unsustainability of meat overconsumption

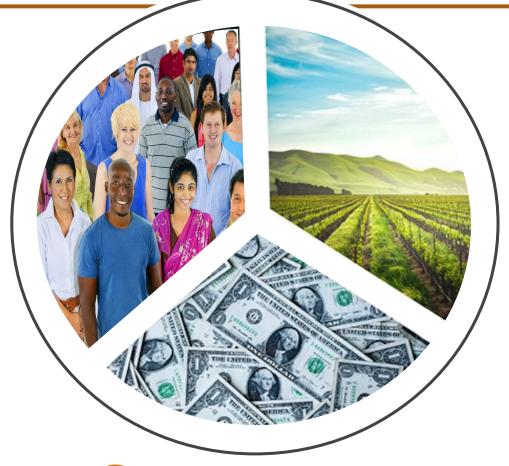


Social

Environmental



- 20% higher risk of bowel cancer for consumers eating highest amount of processed meat compared with lowest.
- 34,000 cancer deaths/year due to high processed meat consumption; 50,000/yr due to high red meat consumption.
- If animal feed (and other non-food) crop production was directed at human consumption, 70% more calories would become available to feed up to 4 billion more people.
- Controlling use of antibiotics in animal agriculture reduces antibiotic resistance prevalence in humans by 24%.



- Conversion of habitat for livestock production is the major cause of deforestation and biodiversity loss.
- Animal agriculture is responsible for a third of phosphorous and nitrogen loading into freshwater, 55% of erosion and sediment, half of antibiotic use, and 37% of pesticide use.
- Animal products create
 56% GHG emissions from
 As.the food sector.

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Economic

- By 2020, overconsumption of red and processed meat could cost the global economy £219 billion in health-related costs, equivalent to 0.3% of the global GDP.
- If diets followed recommended dietary guidelines, we would produce US \$234 billion/year in environmental benefits and save US \$735 billion/year in reduced health-related costs; these values increase the more plants and less meat people eat.

How to reduce overconsumption of meat

Eliminate choice No-meat days in canteens

Vegetarian days in Finnish schools resulted in 18% less food consumed from the canteen but no difference in food choice or food waste compared with controls.

Change defaults Menu Placement & Visibility

Due to changes in vegetarian meal placement, vegetarian meal purchases increased by 6%, which reduced carbon emissions by 5%.

Restrict choice Substitution

Replacing beef with beans in the US could free up 42% of US cropland and reduce GHG emissions by 334 mmt, accomplishing 75% of the 2020 reduction target.

Provide services Cookery classes

A 6-week cooking program in the US resulted in increased consumption of fruit and vegetables, and reduced spending on meat and unhealthy snacks.

Fiscal (dis)incentives Tax and Price Change

A Danish saturated fat tax reduced consumption of high-fat beef by 9% (but an increase in low-fat beef by 8%). & negative effect on the economy.

Provide information Healthy-eating counselling

A systematic review of interventions to reduce meat consumption found healthy lifestyle counselling were associated with reduced meat consumption.

How to transition to reduced-meat diets that benefit people and the planet Rust et al. Science of The Total Environment. Feb 2020 doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.137208







