

Climate Crisis Issue: Food

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to God through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).”

Issue Summary:

Carbon footprint

- **Food production and consumption is responsible for 19-29 per cent of all human caused greenhouse gas emissions, up to 70 per cent of the freshwater use and, over 60 per cent of the terrestrial biodiversity loss, with animal-based foods being major contributors to these environment changes.** (United Nations: PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND NUTRITION April 2017)
- From 2010 UNEP Excerpt: **A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products.**

Main contributors/problems:

- Dietary changes towards more animal-based diets and highly processed food can increase agriculture and food greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80 per cent by 2050. (UN PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND NUTRITION April 2017)

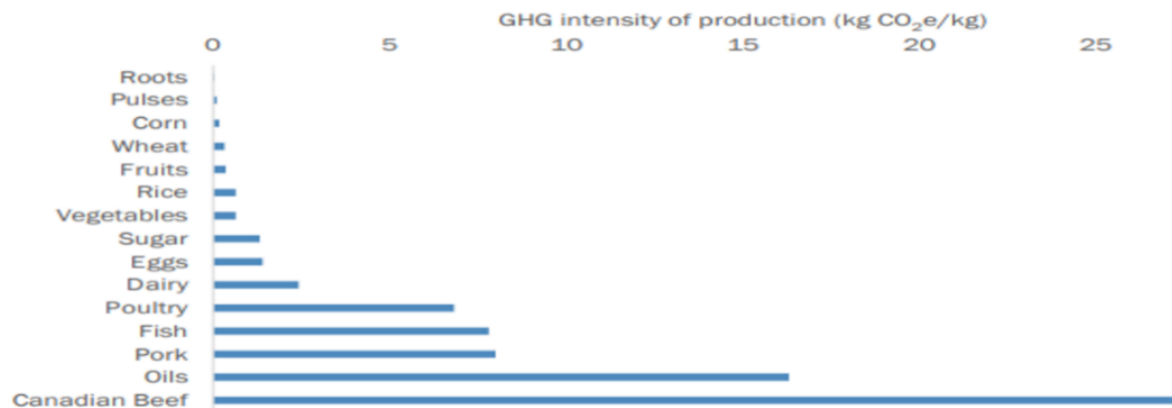


Figure 2. The GHG intensity of foods by category from the “cradle to the farm gate.”⁴³

What can we do personally and congregationally to reduce food-related emissions?

- Eat vegetarian/plant-based meals; Buy organic & local; Don't waste food; Grow your own food.
- Consider the broader environmental and other impacts of the factory farming system as a whole. If you eat animal products (whether meat, dairy or eggs), consider avoiding mainstream/factory farm products.
- When planning meals, shopping or ordering in a restaurant consider:
 - How low on the food chain is this? How far did it travel to get to the store/table?
 - How much energy goes in to producing it? Is it grown organically?
- At an event/conference or other event where you aren't making your own food? Consider: What is the most sustainable food option that is available to sign up for (eg vegetarian or vegan or other) while I am at this event/conference etc?
- Reduce over-consumption of plastic and improve management of recyclable residues.

Resources regarding Food

- The flexitarian diet to feed 10bn people <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-46865204>
- Buy Local – Waterloo Region + <http://croptouring.com/kitchener/>
- [HappyCow.net](#) (website and app): search anywhere, including KW and Toronto, and quickly find restaurants with good vegetarian and vegan food options. Makes eating plant-based while travelling much easier. :)
- **There are countless websites and books related to plant-based/sustainable/local eating – far too many to list here. Ask us for more information, or do a quick online search. More details will be on the church website.**

Websites/Links for more information

- BBC Food GHG Emissions Calculator <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-46459714>
- Canada Food Guide (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canada-food-guide-unveil-1.4987261>)
 - Here's what food guides around the world look like (CBC News Article): <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canada-food-guide-international-guidelines-1.4962611>) Most carry the same main messages: Eat a variety of foods. Drink plenty of water. Get enough exercise.
 - From 2010 UNEP Assessing the Environmental Impacts of Consumption and Production Priority Products and Materials Excerpt: **A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products.**
- “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. ... Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.” [Pope Francis in Laudato si’ (§23)]
- What on Earth is the Doughnut? <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action.html>
- David Suzuki Foundation: Queen of Greens Articles on Food Climate Change
 - <https://davidsuzuki.org/queen-of-green/food-climate-change/>
 - <https://davidsuzuki.org/queen-of-green/freeze-fruits-vegetables/>
 - <https://davidsuzuki.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/queen-of-green-five-ways-end-food-waste.pdf>

Things to consider

- "Eat Food. Not too much. Mostly plants." - Michael Pollan
- **Animal-based = higher emissions**
Plant-based = lower emissions
- Buy Organic and Local
- “Live the way you want to live but just don’t waste.” - David Attenborough
- Advocate for changes in the systems you're a part of. (This may include home/work/school /church or others.)

What is the end goal / solution?

Achieve, or exceed, the scientifically recognized recommendations (i.e. 55% by 2030 ...) through the following:

- Individual: Help minimize food-related carbon footprint.
- Government:
 - Strengthen local food production and further encourage plant-based eating; encourage diversification of crops to promote a healthy diet as well as well to increase resilience against climate change.
 - More traditional crops, that are generally more climate resistant and nutritious, are needed.
 - strengthen institutions, policies and programs and; develop and properly adopt international guidelines on healthy diets.
- Food storage, sharing, and transportation need to be improved to reduce food waste.