

Love the Earth! Take the ...

VEGGIE CHALLENGE

Go meat-free for a week!

We make it easy!

You will receive delicious recipe ideas, easy meal solutions, nutrition info, new product tips and other valuable advice to help you along the way.

You could even win some ***fantastic prizes*** such as cookbooks and dinners at popular vegetarian restaurants!

Toronto Vegetarian Association

As a volunteer-driven, charitable organization, we rely on donations from people like you help us to achieve our mission – to inspire people to choose a healthier, greener, more peaceful lifestyle.

Support our work

"From my experience, the Toronto Vegetarian Association is one of the most professional vegetarian organizations in North America and it is definitely one of the most important health and environmental groups in Toronto."

– Rob Grand, owner of *Grassroots Environmental Products*

Toronto Vegetarian Association

online at veg.ca
or call 416-544-9800



– sample email –

Sign up today at
veggiechallenge.com



Don't miss the **Annual Vegetarian Food Fair**, coming up September 2009 at Harbourfront. This free weekend celebration attracts over 15,000 people!

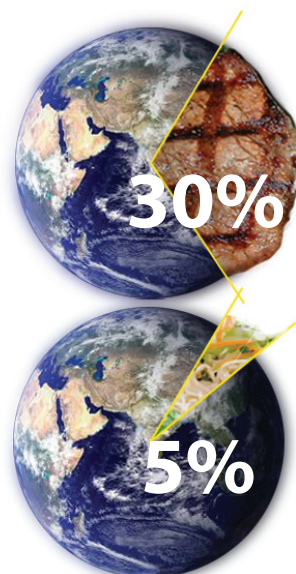
eco neutral

1 ton of carbon offsets were purchased to plant trees in British Columbia.

Eating for the Earth



A dinner fork can be a powerful tool to fight global warming and preserve wilderness.



A vegetarian world could be fed using just 5% of the Earth's surface versus the 30% currently used for meat production.

Livestock production is responsible for 18% of climate change – more than all of the world's transportation!

– Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

Vast areas of the Earth could be returned to CO₂-absorbing wilderness with a big cut in meat production. There would also be a big drop in emissions of methane and nitrous oxide, two other powerful greenhouse gases. This is the conclusion drawn from a ground-breaking 2006 study by the United Nations.

Livestock production accounts for 30 percent of the entire land surface of the planet! Feed crops are grown on a third of all arable farmland, and an even larger area is devoted to grazing – 26% of the ice-free land surface of the Earth.

Toronto Vegetarian Association

FAQs

How do vegetarians get enough iron, protein, calcium, etc?

Plant-based foods are loaded with nutrients and many include ample protein, iron, calcium, vitamin D, Omega-3 fatty acids and zinc. The options are endless and delicious. See our Nutrition page at veg.ca/nutrition for more information.

What about fish – aren't they OK to eat?

Unfortunately not: the oceans are becoming rapidly depleted of fish species and coral reefs are being destroyed beyond repair. Trawlers continue to deploy massive drag nets that damage the ocean floor and threaten the existence of many non-fish species including seabirds, dolphins and turtles. Ocean-friendly alternatives to fish include flax seed oil, an excellent source of Omega-3, and exotic tasting seaweeds such as nori and dulse.

What about organic meat?

Although organic meat is definitely a step in the right direction, it won't do much to reduce your carbon footprint. Eating low on the food chain (ie, plant-based foods) greatly minimizes land, energy and water usage. And it's a more humane step to take.

Less meat = more wilderness

In Canada, 3.5 acres (1.4 hectares) of land is used to feed each person.¹ Most of this land is used for grazing or to grow feed crops.

In contrast, only a half acre (0.2 hectares) is required to feed a vegetarian¹ – seven times less land!

If the world were to move towards a vegetarian diet, large areas could be returned to wilderness. Unfortunately the opposite is still happening. Witness the ongoing destruction of rainforests to graze cattle and grow soy for animal feed.

Considered to be the lungs of the Earth, tropical rainforests produce abundant oxygen, naturally store carbon, and sustain a rich biodiversity, providing a home to countless species of plants, animals and insects.

In total, 785 species were driven to extinction in 2007 due to habitat destruction.²

Grassland ecosystems are also threatened. About 70 percent of all grazing land in dry areas is considered degraded, mostly due to overgrazing, compaction and erosion attributable to livestock activity.³

Less meat = more food

The vast majority of cereal crops grown in Canada – 77% to be exact – are directly fed to livestock, not people.¹ And, on average, farm animals must be fed over 6 kilograms of crops to produce one kilogram of carcass meat for human consumption.⁴ Enough food is grown to easily feed everyone on the planet and alleviate high food prices. The problem is that most of it goes to fattening farm animals.

3.5



1/2

Canadians and Americans consume almost 100 kilograms of meat, per person, per year. This involves the killing of 10 billion animals annually.⁵

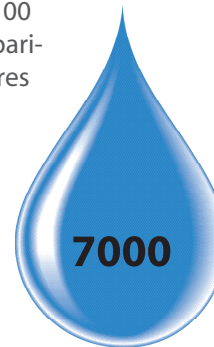
Less meat = less climate change

When people consider greenhouse gas emissions, they typically look to the automotive industry as the culprit in the climate change crisis. Yet, eating meat causes more environmental damage than all of transportation combined – representing 18% of the total globally-released greenhouse gases known to cause climate change.¹ Furthermore, manure from farm animals releases high levels of methane, nitrogen, phosphates and heavy metals into our air and water.

Going vegetarian would eliminate 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent gases per year – a bigger environmental contribution than switching to a Prius!⁶

Less meat = less water use

In general it takes a lot more water for meat. Much of it goes to irrigating feed crops. For example in developing countries it takes 7,000 litres to produce only 100 grams of beef. By comparison, it takes just 550 litres of water to produce enough flour for a loaf of bread.⁷



1. Based on facts from FAOSTAT Statistics database, FAO Web Page, June 1997

2. World Conservation Union annual Red List of Threatened Species – 2007

3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – Livestock's Long Shadow – Nov. 2006

4. Agricultural Statistics, United States Department of Agriculture, 1997

5. Globe and Mail, "Ignoring the meat of the global warming issue", Aug. 1, 2007

6. University of Chicago study, April 2006

7. Kennedy RF Jr., "Good Food versus Green Eggs and Ham," Waterkeeper Magazine, Spring 2006

Don't all agricultural practices harm the environment – why is vegetarian better?

The sheer scale of animal agriculture is the main problem. Pigs are confined by the millions on huge factory farms where their waste contaminates ground water. Billions of chickens are housed in similar conditions and herds of cattle emit voluminous amounts of methane. Vegetarian foods have a much lighter footprint. You can also go further by buying foods that are locally-grown and organic.

It's easy to make a difference.

» Start by replacing a few meals a week with vegetarian options. From veggie burgers to burritos, there are endless earth-friendly substitutes to familiar favourites.

» Try different cuisines such as Thai, Mexican, Indian and Middle Eastern for variety.

» Experiment with new foods such as, quinoa, shiitake mushrooms, tempeh, etc. You'll soon find your food selection has increased dramatically!

» Get others involved – it's more fun and easier when dining together.

» Try our Veggie Challenge (details on back).