

# *ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY ON YOUR TABLE*

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Experts from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, New York University and Columbia University have developed an accounting system to capture the food system's overall role in the climate crisis. Their paper found that the global food system was responsible for 16 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, a third of all global emissions that year ([Civil Eats](#)).

What does it take to eat sustainably? Eating lower on the food chain by transitioning to a more plant-based diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, grains and beans will make a significant impact.

- **Reduce consumption of meat and dairy.** Animal agriculture represents approximately 18% of carbon emissions worldwide. That's more than every single car, bus, train, boat and airplane on the planet combined. Oxford University produced a major study describing the impact of meat and dairy consumption on the planet. "A vegan diet is probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water use," said Joseph Poore, who led the research. "It is far bigger than cutting down on your flights or buying an electric car," he said, as these only cut greenhouse gas emissions ([The Guardian](#)).
- **Eat more vegetables.** They are rich in fiber, which will leave you feeling full so that ultimately you won't eat as much.
- **Choose organic fruits and vegetables.** They are good for both the environment and your body. The number of chemicals that are used to produce fruits and vegetables are unbelievable. Organic produce can be more expensive, but you are paying for ingredients grown from pure nature.
- **Choose seasonal and local foods** to reduce your carbon footprint. By shopping locally, you reduce the carbon emissions of the fruits and vegetables that you buy, since there is less carbon released in the form of transporting the produce for far distances. Processed foods have a higher carbon footprint because of the many steps in manufacturing. When you shop at the local farmer's market, you are not only supporting your local community, but you are usually buying organic, fresh produce and vegetables that are coming straight from the field to your table.

- **Shop at sustainability-conscious grocery stores.** It can be more expensive, but you are paying for organic produce, hard to find items and ingredients grown from nature. These stores focus on sourcing sustainable food products.
- **Grow your own food.** This is one of the most sustainable things you can do.
- **Reduce your food waste** by planning meals ahead of time, freezing the excess and reusing leftovers.
- **Compost your food waste, if possible.** There are many services that will pick up your compost at your home.

### **RAISE YOUR AWARENESS OF PALM OIL**

Palm oil is another danger to sustainability for our planet and is one of the hardest things to avoid, as it can be found in most processed meals and household products. Palm oil is already the most used vegetable oil in the world. It is commonly used in items like ice cream, chips, cookies, chocolate, biscuits, breads, margarine, detergent, soap, toothpaste and cosmetics. Palm oil is inexpensive for corporations to use but costly to our planet. Palm oil represents one of the world's leading causes of rain forest destruction in order to gain space for the plantation of palm trees. It is mostly grown in Indonesia and Malaysia, two tropical countries with large areas of rainforest home to tigers, orangutans and other species that are found nowhere else on earth. These populations are diminishing as their habitats disappear.

#### **To learn more:**

Climate Change Food Calculator ([BBC News](#))

How to Eat Sustainably: 11 Tips to Help You Eat a Sustainable Diet! ([Get Green Now](#))

### **SELF ASSESSMENT**

As a congregation we have committed to implement Laudato Si', which involves our individual and collective actions and choices. Please help us understand what practices you are already doing. Are there 1-2 choices you can make this year to make your life more sustainable?