

## Should U.S. Dietary Guidelines Include Reduced Meat and Dairy Consumption to Meet Sustainability Goals?



Quinoa and White Bean Burger

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The U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee is currently in the process of revising the official dietary guidelines for 2015. The committee will review new scientific evidence and public comments to help them formulate these new guidelines. For the first time ever, the committee is taking sustainability concerns into consideration. This is an incredible opportunity to revisit the way we

think about food and diet as a nation, and the new guidelines hold an incredible amount of sway and influence over the public.

It has been long understood that Americans consume quantities of meat and dairy that far exceed current recommendations. At this pivotal point in time, when we are beginning to wake up to the impact that our food choices have on the planet and the other species that call Earth home, it has become apparent that our overconsumption of meat and dairy needs to stop.

More than any other form of agriculture, animal agriculture contributes 51 percent emissions of global greenhouse gas emissions, and it has been linked to environmental pollution, extinction of species, and mass habitat degradation. With this in mind ... should the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee include a recommendation to actively decrease consumption of meat and dairy?

The Center for Biological Diversity has submitted comments as part of the public forum asking the committee to reconsider current guidelines for meat and dairy intake.

Stephanie Feldstein, director of the population and sustainability program for the Center of Biological Diversity, explained in a press release, “in order for the American diet to be sustainable, it must include drastic cuts in meat and dairy consumption.”

According to a study by University of Michigan, recently published in the Journal of Industrial Ecology, if Americans continue to consume meat and dairy according to current guidelines, we can expect to see a 12 percent increase in greenhouse gasses.

Livestock production has been identified as a key contributor to climate change, habitat loss, and species extinction, and in the wake of the release of the news that the planet has lost over 50 percent of its wildlife in the past 40 years – it’s pretty clear we’ve got to make a change.

You don’t need to wait for the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to come out with the 2015 guides; you can start making a change right now. By reducing your consumption of dairy and meat, you can save precious land and water resources, and reduce your carbon footprint. Innumerable benefits all derived from one simple food choice.

Ready to make a change? Click [here](#) for hundreds of meat and dairy-free recipes that will make helping the planet all the more delicious.