

The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

By Rocco Pallin, Food Tank
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The Center for Biological Diversity released extinction facts labels as part of its Take Extinction Off Your Plate campaign. The labels tally the greenhouse gasses emitted, habitat lost, water used, and manure produced for every serving of beef, chicken, and pork in the United States.

According to the Center, “meat production causes more environmental harm than any other single industry, endangering wildlife, contributing at least 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and accounting for 80 percent of antibiotic use, 37 percent of pesticide use, and nearly 50 percent of water use in the United States.”

Jennifer Molitor, a Senior Food Campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity, cites U.S. Environmental Protection Agency research that attributes 60 percent of the average American’s diet-related carbon

New food campaign targets extinction on your plate

As part of a new campaign, the Center for Biological Diversity released food labels that tally the greenhouse gasses emitted, habitat lost, water used, and manure produced for every serving of beef, chicken, and pork in the United States.



footprint to meat consumption. Additionally, the Center argues that greenhouse gas emissions from the production of meat and animal products are significant contributors to climate change.

According to the Center, the production of animal feed and animal grazing, as well as the high water demands of raising livestock and accompanying land degradation, destroy habitats and wipe out native species. Manure is responsible for significant pollution of rivers, lakes, and groundwater in the U.S., the Center reports.

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Advocates for reduced meat consumption further argue that adverse health effects may accompany the notable

environmental costs of high consumption in the U.S. Molitor highlights estimations that the average American consumes as much as five times more protein from animal sources as is dietarily necessary for health.

Molitor's recent letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made many of the above points, specifically in response to Secretary Vilsack's exclusion of food sustainability in the new 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs). Molitor hoped for the DGA discussion to “align federal policies and programs in support of sustainable food that will benefit public health and national food security.” She is calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to comprehensively acknowledge the unsustainability of what the Center sees as inordinate levels of animal product consumption suggested by the current guidelines.

Molitor says that starting the country on a “legitimate path to sustainability means calling for diets lower in animal-based foods and higher in plant-based foods.”