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# Study shows how plant-based catering can greatly reduce events' carbon footprints

by [Mariecor Agravante](#)

[A recent analysis published by the Center for Biological Diversity's \*\*Catering to the Climate\*\* report finds that replacing meat with \*\*plant-based\*\* menu offerings at conferences, corporate gatherings and holiday parties can greatly reduce the impact of these events. Production of meat and dairy contributes to nearly 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, which play a drastic role in the planet's current \*\*climate crisis\*\*.](#)

[The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) has repeatedly warned that reducing \*\*meat\*\* consumption and its accompanying emissions can help countries meet their \*\*climate\*\* goals. In the U.S. alone, half of all consumed water goes toward meat production. Did you know that 80 percent of agricultural land is set aside for raising animals and feed crops? As a result, there is a vital need to improve current agricultural, food and environmental practices. One such initiative is to address the catering sector.](#)

[Last year, revenues for catering surpassed \\$11 billion, with industry growth in the past three years accelerating toward an annual 10 percent climb. By shifting the catering sector away from meat-dominant menus and toward more plant-based items, there's likely to be a noticeable dent in accompanying emissions.](#)

["Avoiding meat-heavy menus at holiday parties and conferences can make a surprisingly big difference for our planet," explained Jennifer Molidor, the Center for Biological Diversity's senior food campaigner. "With Earth-friendly catering that focuses on low-carbon, plant-based choices, we can save wildlife habitats and avoid a lot of \*\*climate pollution\*\*."](#)

[Through plant-based catering, a 500-person event could minimize its \*\*carbon footprint\*\* by 10 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to the amount emitted by a car driving 22,000 miles. The move will also conserve 100,000 gallons of water from food processing and irrigation, save 5 acres of habitat from animal agriculture and prevent 17 tons of manure \*\*pollution\*\*.](#)

["Public demand for plant-based, low-carbon menus is growing quickly," Molidor said. "Even small changes in purchasing, like replacing dairy with plant-based milks and cheeses, can bring substantial benefits to suppliers and their clients. When the event and catering industry serves plant-based menus, it's an environmental and culinary success."](#)