

It's not necessary to completely cut meat out of your diet – just by eating a little less; you can make a big difference. According to Environmental Defense, if every American skipped one meal of chicken per week and substituted vegetables and grains, the carbon dioxide savings would be equivalent to taking more than half a million cars off of U.S. roads. If every American had one meat-free meal per week, it would be the same as taking more than 5 million cars off our roads.¹

If you need more incentive to make these small lifestyle changes, consider this:

Raising animals for food generates more greenhouse-gas emissions than all the cars, trucks, trains, ships, and planes in the world combined;² in fact, 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from livestock.³ Two of the biggest concerns are methane and nitrous oxide. Methane is 20 times more powerful than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in our atmosphere, and, animal agriculture is the number one source of methane emissions in the U.S.⁴ Nitrous oxide is about 300 times more potent as a global warming gas than carbon dioxide, and the meat, egg, and dairy industries account for a staggering 65 percent of worldwide nitrous oxide emissions.⁵

There are other environmental impacts of raising animals for food. Worldwide, grazing occupies more than a quarter of the ice- and water-free surface of the planet – more if you count the land needed to raise crops to feed the animals.⁶ Also, the livestock sector accounts for over eight percent of global human water use, and is the world's largest source of water pollution.⁷

The livestock sector accounts for over 8 percent of global human water use, while 64 percent of the world's population will live in water-stressed areas by 2025. The world's largest source of water pollution is believed to be the livestock sector.⁸

¹ <http://www.edf.org/article.cfm?contentid=6604>

² Food and Agriculture of the United Nations Report, *Livestock's Long Shadow* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>

³ Food and Agriculture of the United Nations Report, *Livestock's Long Shadow* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>

⁴ "Sources and Emissions: Methane," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2 Jun. 2006.

⁵ H. Steinfeld *et al.*, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, Livestock, Environment and Development (2006)

⁶ Montavailli, Jim. "Meat of the Matter," E Magazine. <http://www.emagazine.com/view/?4264&src=>

⁷ Food and Agriculture of the United Nations Report, *Livestock's Long Shadow* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>

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