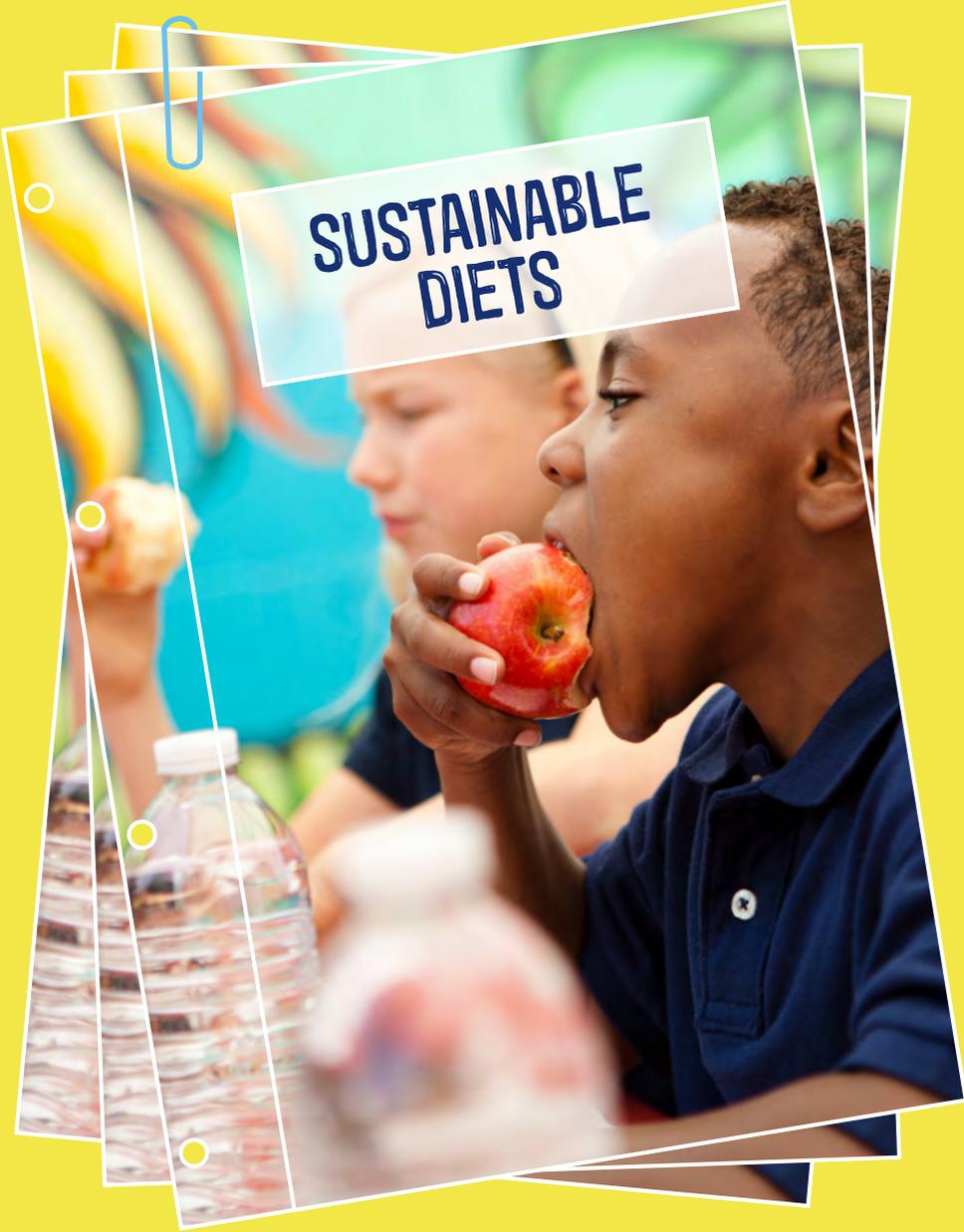


Our Position Paper on:

 **friends of
the earth**
see things differently



**SUSTAINABLE
DIETS**

IN A NUTSHELL

A typical diet in the UK is high in meat and dairy products, as well as sugar, fats and salt. Such a diet causes illness, including heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Dietary demands have resulted in intensive meat and dairy production that pollutes, is wasteful, uses massive amounts of water and contributes towards climate change. We need to embrace healthier and sustainable diets, and cut global meat consumption by half by 2050.

THE FACTS

- 1 Producing meat and dairy to eat has an enormous environmental impact – at least 14.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from livestock production alone.** This is because of changes in land use, including clearing land and forests for farming, and methane from cattle and sheep's digestive systems.
- 2 Making sure everyone has enough to eat is easier if we use crops to feed people rather than livestock.** By halving the world's consumption of grain-fed meat, we could feed 2 billion more people.
- 3 Eating meat no more than three times a week in the UK could prevent 45,000 early deaths and save the NHS £1.2bn a year.** Eating less and better meat can also save money, benefiting our pockets as well as our waistlines.

THE PROBLEM

Our diets have changed considerably in the past 50 years. Demand for meat and processed foods has increased enormously. We're wasting far more food at every point along the food chain: about a third of the food we produce for human consumption is never eaten. Rising incomes, increased food marketing and poor food handling are all contributing to unhealthy food habits.

The way we use food is leading to a polarised health crisis: globally, levels of obesity are rising rapidly even while 850 million people suffer malnutrition from food shortages.

Agriculture for meat production is the biggest user of land and fresh water worldwide. It makes significant contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution, and changes land use. This has severe consequences for public health, the environment, the availability of vital resources such as water, and the security of the world's food supply.

The food industry must change, and political and public action is needed to make it happen. A lack of political leadership so far means that the food industry is generally unwilling to engage in discussions or take action on sustainable diets. It also means that the public are not given enough guidance on what to eat.

WHAT WE THINK

We must all take action to avoid dangerous climate change and help ensure there is enough food for everyone in the future.

Wealthier societies must reduce the amount of meat, dairy and junk food they eat, reduce food waste and source food they can be assured is produced sustainably. Globally, meat consumption must halve, which means major meat-eating countries like the UK and United States need to eventually cut their meat intake by around 80 per cent.

Friends of the Earth wants us all to consider making changes to our food choices.

We also wish to see policy changes so that people can more easily adopt a lower-meat diet – also known as a flexitarian diet – eating less meat, produced more sustainably.

Friends of the Earth calls on governments to:

- **Publish and promote new official guidelines on healthy and sustainable eating** – This would include the benefits of eating less and better meat and dairy, and provide businesses, health professionals and consumers with better advice on healthy, sustainable diets.
- **Introduce clear, compulsory standards for caterers** – Meals paid for by taxpayers in schools, hospitals, prisons, care homes, armed forces and all government departments must reflect environmental and health issues, including eating less and better meat.
- **Restrict marketing and advertising of unhealthy, unsustainable food.**
- **Support and encourage environmentally healthy farming** – We must help farmers produce meat in ways that benefit the environment, promote the health and welfare of their animals, and encourage the production of more UK-grown plant protein.

At a European Union level we should:

- **Stop subsidising factory farming** – Subsidies should be used to reward the production of better-quality meat and healthier, more diverse food production.
- **Introduce labelling for well managed grass-fed meat and dairy products** – Grass-fed produce is better quality. Better labelling would help people choose quality over quantity and help increase the market for these products.
- **Remove barriers to the use of more waste food products as feed**, thereby reducing the amount of soya imported for animal feed, including from rainforest wrecking plantations.

The food industry should:

- **Promote food products which have a lower environmental impact, such as organic, beyond niche markets.**
- **Talk about sustainable diets with their customers.**
- **Support farmers who produce grass-fed or waste-fed meat and dairy products** – By using and promoting high-quality produce from farms that protect the environment and animals' welfare, the food industry can encourage better farming practices.



KEY REFERENCES

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- @vickihird** Senior Campaigner, Land Use, Food and Water Security Programme, Friends of the Earth
- @ClareyOx** Senior Campaigner, Land Use, Food and Water Security Programme, Friends of the Earth
- @franalan88** Campaign Assistant, Land Use, Food and Water Security Programme, Friends of the Earth

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