

The link between our food system and climate change

(by Lisa Breiter, 6CG)

We all know that humans cause climate change through deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels like gas, oil and coal. But did you know that even the food you eat has a huge impact on the climate?

Firstly, let me explain why eating meat is bad for our environment: To produce meat an extreme amount of plant-based food and water is needed to feed the animals. That means that the production uses up expensive resources that we could also use to feed humans. Especially when facing a problem like overpopulation we need to be more careful about that! Moreover, when cows digest food they emit methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times stronger than CO₂! So, what should we do? Well, everyone should at least try to eat less meat, to stop buying large-scale produced animal products and to slowly switch to a plant-based diet. It is even better for your own health if you avoid eating meat every day!

Now, let's talk about food waste: We dispose about one third of food all produced globally! As I mentioned before, we need to be more thoughtful about how we spend our resources! Food waste even accounts for the emission of 6.7 percent of greenhouse gases, which is just unnecessary and could be avoided if we acted more responsibly. To minimize this problem, we can try not to overbuy products, especially not those which are perishable and purchase only how much we need.

To protect our planet, we should also make sure the food we buy is regional and seasonal to avoid long transportation, which causes more emission of CO₂ and burning of fossil fuels, as well as energy for storage, since most food needs to be kept cool. Furthermore, fresh food contains more vitamins and minerals, since the nutrients start to break down while being on their way to the stores. Buying regional is also a great way to support local farms and smaller businesses!

It is not too late to stop climate change if we start now and everybody contributes!

Sources (20.03.2020):

<https://foodprint.org/issues/how-our-food-system-affects-climate-change/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/07/reducing-food-waste-would-mitigate-climate-change-study-shows>

<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/longform/what-you-need-know-about-food-waste-and-climate-change>