

**ARE YOUR MEALS**



**COSTING THE EARTH?**

Insatiable appetites for meat and milk  
may ultimately cost us the planet





## GLOBAL WARMING

The United Nations FAO report, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, states that: "The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. This is a higher share than transport." (Transport causes 13.5%).

## LAND

25% of the world's land surface is given over to grazing more than 1.25 billion cattle. Grazing is often said to be the only use for such land but, in many cases, a more efficient and sustainable use would be to grow trees for timber, fuel and food – such as nuts and fruits. More than 1/3 of the world's agricultural land suffers desertification through: clearing forests for grazing; overgrazing; overcultivating croplands to feed farm animals as well as people; using poor irrigation techniques. A vegan – who eats only plant foods and products based on them – requires just 1/4 of the land needed to feed a meat-eater.

## ENERGY

Farm animals convert only a fraction of their food into meat, eggs, or milk. The fossil energy input to produce a day's food for a vegan is only one-third that for a meat-eater and half that for a vegetarian. Much of the land now wasted in feeding farm animals could be used to grow 'industrial crops' – for example, to make renewable fuels and fibre (hemp, flax, etc)

## WATER

Farm animals are voracious consumers of water. A day's food for a meat-eater requires over 5,000 litres (enough to take 100 baths) – compared with 2,600 for a vegetarian and a mere 1,900 for a vegan.

## WASTE

Farm animals produce large quantities of urine and excrement – 23 kilograms per day for each cow. The ammonia and nitrates from this waste leach into the ground and surface water, polluting wells and rivers. Such pollution causes algal blooms, removes oxygen from the water and kills fish. Ammonia from farm waste also contributes to atmospheric pollution.

## HUNGER

Nearly one billion people are undernourished or starving, despite the world producing enough food to feed twice its human population of 6 billion. Yet 1/3 of the grain we grow is fed to farm animals. Nobody seriously suggests that animal products (eg meat, eggs and milk) are essential for health.

Animal farming represents a squanderous misuse of scarce natural resources and is a major contributor to environmental destruction. Vegan diets use less land, water and fuel and are gentler on the planet and all of its inhabitants.

For further information visit [www.vegansociety.com](http://www.vegansociety.com). For a free information pack contact The Vegan Society, Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18 6HJ. Email: [info@vegansociety.com](mailto:info@vegansociety.com) Tel: 0845 45 88244 or 0121 523 1730

