

Environmental impact of meat production

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Consumption of animal meat can be a good source of protein; however, it has negative consequences linked to its production process. The production of livestock for human consumption has caused a principal cause of concern as a result of its impact on the environment, human health, and animal welfare. Livestock farming can be defined as the management and breeding of domestic and farm animals to obtain their meat and products, such as milk, eggs, etc. The production process involves stages like feed production, enteric fermentation, animal waste, and land-use change that release gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and methane (CH₄). The products are responsible for more production of greenhouse gas emissions than other food sources. Enteric methane emissions represent 30% of global methane emissions. The gases together approximately contribute 18% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the world and increase the concentration of these undesirable gases in the atmosphere resulting in climate change. Also, the process involves clearing forests for the cultivation of fodder crops for the livestock resulting in deforestation. For this, vast areas of agricultural land are converted amidst the world hunger scenario. All these factors have led to conditions, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and water pollution, hence affecting the quality of agricultural production globally. To mitigate these issues, the development of an alternative to meat will effectively help in the reduction of emission of greenhouse gases and also help in the utilisation of agricultural lands to produce food for the human population.

Keywords: Livestock, Greenhouse gases, Climate change, Meat alternative, Environmental impact

Citation:

Abhinaya Shruthi G. Environmental impact of meat production. The Torch. 2021. 2(14). Available from:

<https://www.styvalley.com/pub/magazines/torch/read/environmental-impact-of-meat-production>.