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## Does Meat Consumption Affect the Environment?

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### ABSTRACT

*One day while I was eating at a restaurant that offers both vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisine. When I was leaving, I saw that all the waste meat was being discarded not in a garbage can but was just dumped onto a pile of waste. This inspired me to find out if meat consumption affects the environment. My main aim by researching and writing a report on it is to educate people on the causes, consequences of consumption of meat and what can be done to reduce its effects on the environment. Production of meat has huge environmental effects – increasing greenhouse gas discharges, usage of pastoral land and consumption of huge volumes of freshwater that are required to grow feed crops, provide animals with drinking water and clean filthy factory farms. Meat consumption also escalates the chances of long-lasting diseases along with disturbing biodiversity. Moreover, the emission of methane gas from cattle adds stress to the environment leading to global warming. Research indicates that people living in the USA, Australia and other countries rely strongly on diets containing meat, and not many actions have been taken by their governments to overcome the issue. On the other hand, the government of countries like Israel, encourage their people to follow a vegan diet to reduce the effects of meat consumption on the environment. Nationally and globally, awareness about the outcomes of meat intake on healthiness and ecosystem and the positive impact of a vegan diet can be widely spread through posters and campaigns. After researching this issue, I can now deeply understand the impacts of human dietary choices on the environment, public health, animal extinction and imbalance in ecosystems nationally and globally.*

**Keywords:** Meat consumption, Environment, Health

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### Does Meat Consumption Affect the Environment?

“Trees are our lungs, rivers our circulation...”

Earth’s natural resources are so precious to all of us...Isn’t it shocking to know that our nutritional choices can devour a negative effect on the environment? Let’s find out!

According to United Nations, increase in meat production has adversely affected the planet’s ecology and ecosystem. With rising global demand for meat in past 50 year, production of meat has multiplied more than four-times. Over 320 million tons is produced by the world each year, indicates that meat production is a global issue. Production of meat has huge environmental effects – growing greenhouse gas discharges, usage of pastoral land and freshwater consumption (Harrabin, 2019).

According to the UN, a universal change towards a vegetarian diet is required to battle the foulest outcomes of climate change. Gigantic volumes of freshwater are required to grow feed crops, provide animals with drinking water and clean filthy factory farms. To produce 1 pound of beef, around 2,390 gallons of water is required, while only 245 gallons is required to produce 1 pond of tofu (PETA, n.d.). This global organization has provided with facts and statistics and therefore information is unbiased. New study by UN displays that worldwide pastureland use can be decreased by over 75% – an area equal to Australia, China, Europe, and the U.S.A joined, without meat and dairy intake– and yet succeed in feeding the planet (Carrington, 2018). Therefore I believe that by going vegan, we can simultaneously protect both land and environment.

**United States of America** is one of the many nations facing this threat. Out of all the fossil fuels and crude materials consumed in U.S.A, over one-upon-three is dedicated to nurturing animals for food. Raw waste produced by an average pig factory is as big as a city of 12,000 people. To nurture faunas for food, 87% of the pastoral land is used. The 260 million acres stripped to create space for animal silage are responsible for 85% of soil corrosion in the United-States-of-America Approximately 2 out of every 5 tons of grains grown on earth are served to fish, poultry, and livestock, according to World watch Institute; reducing intake of beef

and these products could reduce the stress on land and release up enormous numbers of grain which could be fed to people (PETA, n.d.). Information taken from this site is authentic and non-biased as it is from a well-known organization.

**Australia** too is a prisoner of meat consumption, with 111.5 kg annual meat intake per person (Smith, 2018). Australians eat about 92kg per person – triple the average quantity per person and triple the quantity suggested by health guidelines internationally. Over 495 million chickens are yearly slayed in Australia; equivalent to chicken ingestion which from 5.5kg per person in 1965, has amplified to an astounding 41.5kg per person in 2015. Our growing desire for meat puts massive stress on ecosystems and has been connected to health issues such as cardiovascular ailments and few tumors as well. While this issue is not just secluded to Australia, there are also countries that practice meticulous control over their meat intake (Kardamitsis and Duncan, n.d.). Authentic information is provided by a nonprofit and reliable organization.

### **National Perspective**

One of the countries that exercise control over their meat consumption is **Israel**. The country's most gorgeous city, Tel Aviv has officially been stated as the „Vegetarian Capital of the World' for various reasons. The Israeli have switched to vegan diets as they are of the opinion that meat ingestion can have negative impacts on health and environment and is also a form of animal cruelty. The proud people of Tel Aviv broadcasted that they are „Not meat consumers, but saviors!“ There are over 390 vegan/vegetarian-welcoming cafés throughout the city which serve over 200,000 vegetarians staying in the entire nation and it is also promoted as „Vegan Nation' by the tourism industry of Israel (Srivastava, 2018). There was a time when the Israelis too were avid meat eaters but the moment they realized how much they were endangering the environment, they decided to switch to a purely vegan regimen.

Research indicates that the Americans and Australians heavily rely on diets containing meat, and not many actions have been taken by their governments to overcome the issue. On the other hand, Israeli government and their people are of **contrast** perspective of following a vegan régime to reduce their influence on the environment.

Meat is consumed as an essential supply of nutrients for low-income people; but it **escalates** the chances of long-lasting diseases, such as cardiac maladies and colorectal ulcers. Meat production could be a vital supplier of phosphorus, nitrogen, and other toxins. It also **disturbs biodiversity**, particularly by land transition to arable feed crops and pasture. At an international level, both the overall quantity of meat consumed and the average per capita intake of meat are escalating, guided by populace escalation and by increases in standard individual earnings.(Godfray et al., 2018). This leads to **depletion of fresh water**. And also **emission of methane gas from cattle** adds **stress** to environment leading to global **warming**.

**Nationally and globally**, awareness about the outcomes of meat intake on healthiness and ecosystem and the positive impact of a vegan diet can be extensively spread through **posters and campaigns**. Steps in favor of forest conservation must be taken on a national level; agroforestry should be encouraged and peat lands restored.

After researching about this issue, **my perspective** has completely **changed**. I can now grasp the impacts of **human dietary choices on the environment, public health, animal extinction and imbalance in ecosystems nationally and globally**. Initially I used to believe that meat consumption is favorable to healthiness as it is a source of proteins and B12. Nevertheless I shall gradually shift to vegan diet, as I now understand that everyone on the planet is entitled to life and nothing can justify us trying to seize this right from anybody.

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