

UN says eat less meat to curb global warming

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

consumption	ruminant	gluttony	simplistic	contradictory
graze	livestock	flatulence	controversial	habitat

1. An animal's _____ is the place it normally lives.
2. _____ is when a person or animal has too much gas in their stomach or intestines.
3. If two or more ideas are _____, they disagree with each other and cannot both or all be true.
4. _____ is the process of eating or drinking something.
5. If an idea is _____, it causes strong disagreement or disapproval.
6. A _____ idea treats something in a way that makes it seem simpler than it really is.
7. When animals _____, they eat grass growing in a field.
8. _____ is the collective word for animals such as cows, sheep and pigs that are kept on farms.
9. A _____ is an animal such as a cow or sheep that brings food back from its stomach into its mouth to chew it a second time.
10. _____ is the bad habit of eating more than you need.

2 Find the information

Look in the text and find the answers to these questions as quickly as possible.

1. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization how much of global greenhouse gas emissions are produced by meat production?
2. How much meat protein does the average person in the UK eat each day?
3. By what percentage is UK meat consumption above WHO guidelines?
4. Which is the more effective global warming agent – methane or carbon dioxide?
5. By what percentage does Compassion in World Farming want to reduce meat consumption by 2020?
6. What percentage of UK emissions is generated by livestock?

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- *Climate expert urges radical shift in diet*
- *Industry unfairly targeted – farmers*

Juliette Jowit, environment editor
September 7, 2008

- 1 According to the world's leading expert on global warming, people should give up meat for one day a week if they want do something that would help tackle climate change. Dr Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said that people should then go on to reduce their meat consumption even further. So far this is the most controversial advice the panel has given on how individuals can help tackle global warming.
- 2 Dr Pachauri said diet change was important because of the huge greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental problems – including habitat destruction – associated with rearing cattle and other animals. It was relatively easy to change eating habits compared to changing means of transport, he said.
- 3 The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that meat production causes nearly 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. These gases are generated during the production of animal feeds, for example, while ruminants, particularly cows, emit methane, which is 23 times more effective as a global warming agent than carbon dioxide. The agency has also warned that meat consumption will probably double by the middle of the century.
- 4 "Reducing meat consumption is the most attractive option because it can be done almost immediately and it will bring about reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in a short period of time," said Pachauri. "Give up meat for one day [a week] initially, and then continue to decrease it," said the Indian economist, who is a vegetarian. However, he also said that other changes in lifestyle would help to tackle climate change. "That's what I want to emphasize: we really have to reduce consumption in every sector of the economy."
- 5 Pachauri can expect some strong responses from the food industry to his advice, though he has received unexpected support from restaurateur John Torode, who is about to publish a new book, *John Torode's Beef*. "I have a little bit of meat and enjoy it," said Torode. "Too much meat for any person is gluttony. But there's a more important question here: where [the meat] comes from. If we all bought British food and stopped buying imported food we'd save a huge amount of carbon emissions."
- 6 Pachauri will be speaking at an event organized by animal welfare group Compassion in World Farming, which has calculated that if the average UK home reduced meat consumption by 50%, that would reduce emissions more than if people cut car use by 50%. The group wants the government to lead campaigns to reduce meat consumption by 60% by 2020. Campaigners have also pointed out the health benefits of eating less meat. The average person in the UK eats 50g of protein from meat a day, equivalent to a chicken breast and a lamb chop – a relatively low level for rich nations but 25-50% more than World Health Organization guidelines.
- 7 Professor Robert Watson, a government scientific adviser, said the government could help educate people about the benefits of eating less meat, but it should not 'regulate'. "Eating less meat would help, there's no question about that, but there are other things," Watson said.
- 8 However, Chris Lamb, head of marketing for the pig industry group BPEX, said the meat industry had been unfairly targeted and was working hard to find out which activities had the biggest environmental impact and reduce those. Some ideas were contradictory, he said – for example, one solution to emissions from livestock was to keep them indoors, but this would damage animal welfare. "Climate change is a very young science and our view is there are a lot of simplistic solutions being proposed," he said.
- 9 Last year a report into the environmental impact of meat eating claimed livestock generated eight per cent of UK emissions – but eating some meat was good for the planet because some habitats benefited from grazing. It also said vegetarian diets that included lots of milk, butter and cheese would probably not reduce emissions much because dairy cows produce the potent greenhouse gas methane, which is released through flatulence.

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3 Comprehension check

Are these statements *True (T)* or *False (F)* according to the text?

1. If people reduced car use by 50% it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions more than if they reduced meat consumption by 50%.
2. Dairy cows release methane through flatulence.
3. Meat consumption is expected to double by the middle of the 21st century.
4. The average person in the UK eats less meat than the WHO guidelines recommend.
5. Eating less meat is good for your health.
6. If everyone became vegetarian, greenhouse gas emissions would decrease dramatically.

4 Find the word

Look in the text and find the following words and expressions. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. A verb meaning *to make an organized and determined attempt to deal with a problem*. (para 1)
2. A noun meaning *a group of people who make decisions of judgments*. (para 1)
3. An adjective meaning *extremely large*. (para 2)
4. A phrasal verb meaning *to make something happen*. (para 4)
5. A phrasal verb meaning *to tell someone something*. (para 6)
6. A two-word expression meaning *of the same value as something else*. (para 6)
7. A noun meaning *effect*. (para 8)
8. An adjective meaning *powerful or effective*. (para 9)



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5 Two-word expressions

Match the words from the left-hand column with the words in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. greenhouse | a. welfare |
| 2. climate | b. benefits |
| 3. global | c. change |
| 4. environmental | d. diet |
| 5. carbon | e. impact |
| 6. health | f. dioxide |
| 7. animal | g. warming |
| 8. vegetarian | h. gases |

6 Word building

Complete the table.

	verb	noun
1	consume	
2	reduce	
3	emit	
4	destroy	
5	solve	
6	respond	
7	propose	
8	advise	

7 Discussion

Apart from reducing the amount of meat you eat, what other ways can you reduce energy consumption?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. habitat
2. flatulence
3. contradictory
4. consumption
5. controversial
6. simplistic
7. graze
8. livestock
9. ruminant
10. gluttony

2 Find the information

1. 20%
2. 50g
3. 25-50%
4. methane
5. 60%
6. 8%

3 Comprehension check

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. F

4 Find the word

1. tackle
2. panel
3. huge
4. bring about
5. point out
6. equivalent to
7. impact
8. potent

5 Two-word expressions

1. h
2. c
3. g
4. e
5. f
6. b
7. a
8. d

6 Word building

	verb	noun
1	consume	consumption
2	reduce	reduction
3	emit	emission
4	destroy	destruction
5	solve	solution
6	respond	response
7	propose	proposal
8	advise	advice