



FACT SHEET: Dairy's Impact on the Environment

Waste:

- Waste from a dairy farm of 2,500 cows is equivalent to waste from a city of 411,000 people.⁽¹⁾
- There are approximately 270 million dairy cows on the planet. Each cow produces about 120 pounds of waste per day. So: 120 x 270 million = 32.4 billion pounds of waste per day.^(2,3)
- Excess nutrients from agriculture, including chemical fertilizers and dairy manure, are a major source of water pollution across the US.⁽⁴⁾
- The USDA estimates that the manure from 200 milking cows produces as much nitrogen as sewage from a community of 5,000 to 10,000 people.⁽⁴⁾

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN estimates that the global dairy sector contributes 4% of total global anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHG). Further, 52% of GHG produced by dairy is comprised of methane, which can trap 100 times more heat than CO₂ and contribute to rapid climate change.⁽⁵⁾

Water Use:

- 1,000 gallons of water are required to produce 1 gallon of cows' milk.⁽⁶⁾
- Animal agriculture makes up 1/4 of the global water footprint, 19% of which is from dairy cattle.⁽⁷⁾
- It takes 605 gallons of water to make 1lb of cheese.⁽⁶⁾

How Ditching Dairy Can Save the Planet

- Researchers have calculated that going vegetarian can reduce an individual's carbon emissions by on average 31%, land use by 51%. Ditching the dairy and going vegan, can reduce a person's carbon emissions by on average 45%, land use by 55%.⁽⁸⁾
- Water-saving shower heads produce about 2 gallons of water per minute. Knowing that it takes 1,000 gallons of water to make 1 gallon of milk, a

person can save the water equivalent to 50 10-minute showers for every gallon of milk they don't drink.⁽⁹⁾

- If everyone in the US ate no meat or cheese just one day per week, it would have the environmental benefit of not driving 91 billion miles or taking 7.6 billion cars off the road.⁽¹⁰⁾
- Eating 60% less cheese and 4-6 more servings of beans will help keep the global temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius by 2050.^(11,12)
- Eating 4 ounces of cheese contributes the same amount of carbon dioxide emissions as driving 3.5 miles. Americans eat an average of 35 pounds (560 ounces) of cheese every year—that's 490 miles worth of extra carbon emissions per person!⁽¹⁰⁾

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