

'Our food system and climate change are strongly linked to each other'

(by Anna Zierler, 6CG)

Melting glaciers, raging wildfires, extreme precipitation, high-tide flooding, oppressive heat, devastating hurricanes. These extreme weather events picture only a sprinkling of the cataclysmic impacts of climate change. Since the world's food system is responsible for about a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions now is the time to reflect what we are doing wrong and take action.

You might wonder how our delicious food can be denoted as one of the biggest drivers of climate change, but with profound background-information you can fathom the connections underlying: Not only are the resources required for producing all plant and animal products examined carefully but also processing, packaging and shipping food markets all over the world must be considered for a reliable analysis.

As you might conjecture that our food system is everything except efficient and sustainable, we have to take initiatives: Firstly, the consumption of meat must be drastically reduced since animals do not only account for enormous amounts of carbon dioxide but also increase deforestation especially in areas of tropical rainforest which are essential for prosperous biodiversity. Paradoxically, even meat of animals reared in Austria has a tremendous effect on forest resources since huge areas of the tropical rainforest are used for growing soybeans. A study even came to the conclusion that if Austrians restricted their meat consumption by only a fifth the entirety of all imports of soybeans would become unnecessary. (source: <https://www.diepresse.com/5657856/ein-funftel-weniger-fleischkonsum-wurde-sojaimporte-obsolet-machen>)

Secondly, instead of consuming food originating at the other side of the globe which must travel thousands of miles to finally reach our plate we have to start eating regionally and seasonally produced food. Since consumer behavior has an immense impact on transportation routes a higher demand for sustainably produced food in the neighborhood would affect the climate and ecosystem positively.

Fortunately, the solutions listed above are partly implemented in many people's lifestyles around the world, but it will need strong global coordination and rapid uptake to make their effects felt. Nevertheless every individual action is a crucial step in the right direction.

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