



TOPIC: Climate change and food

Many scientific studies have highlighted the dramatic impact of livestock farming on the planet, biodiversity and human health. At the same time, this system, which has evolved over centuries, has long ensured that more people can be fed at a relatively low price. On the one hand, there are those who argue that global warming can be combated by reducing consumption of red meat and switching to a meat-free diet; on the other hand, there is a group of consumers who do not want to avoid the use of meat, but who still care about the environment.

PRO THESIS: "Climate change can be combated by switching to a meat-free diet".

AGAINST THESIS: "Climate change can be combated by following a diet that includes meat."

Current situation and context.

Global food production is responsible for approximately 26% of greenhouse gas emissions; this figure can be broken down into 4 sub-categories to better understand the impact of different sectors. Livestock and fishery are responsible for 31% of these emissions, while 27% are linked to agricultural production, 24% to overuse of land and 18% to the distribution chain.

According to a study by the World Resource Institute, given the UN forecast that the world's population will increase to 9.8 billion by 2050, we should find ways to produce 50% more food to meet the daily needs of the planet.

Intensive animal farming is a major contributor to global pollution, mainly through the extensive use of natural resources, above all water and land, the reduction of biodiversity and the release of high levels of nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. Changing our food choices and adopting a meat-free diet would have a significant impact on global CO₂ and methane emissions.

However, meat plays a vital role in providing essential nutrients, ensures jobs and food security for a large part of humanity, improves quality of life in many cases and, sometimes, simply makes it possible. There seems to be a divide between those who defend tradition and those who push for innovation by eliminating meat from the diet. Are we sure that innovation should be seen as a threat to tradition? Or are our food choices and our disproportionate consumption of meat undermining the right of millions of people to live on a cleaner, healthier planet?

Pro arguments:

- Meat-free diets protect against certain diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and some cancers. It also avoids ingesting toxic substances and pollutants from the food chain or drugs used in animal feed for farms.
- Many studies have highlighted the impact of food choices on the planet. A meat-free diet seems to be a necessary long-term solution to curb the impact on the environment and the climate.

Against arguments:

- Authoritative analyses and studies show that diets that include meat in the right quantities provide a balanced lifestyle in harmony with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Innovation allows the use of technologies that make agriculture more sustainable and livestock farming more efficient, which would be an option alongside more responsible meat consumption.

Further Insights:

- Harvard: [Becoming a vegetarian](#)
- FAO: [Transforming the livestock sector through the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- The Guardian: [Why you should go animal-free: 18 arguments for eating meat debunked](#)
- Debating Europe: [Arguments For and Against Veganism](#)
- BBC: [Why the vegan diet is not always green](#)