

Policy name: Vegan policy

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Student Council notes:

Livestock and their byproducts account for at least 32,000 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year, or 51% of all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, more than the combined exhaust from all transportation¹²³ (the transportation sector contributes 13% to global greenhouse gas emissions.)

Animal agriculture is responsible for up to 91% of Amazon destruction⁴⁵⁶⁷.

A person who follows a vegan diet produces the equivalent of 50% less carbon dioxide, uses 1/11th oil, 1/13th water, and 1/18th land compared to a meat-eater for their food⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹.

Despite the rise in popularity of veganism, some businesses/organisations still have inadequate provision of vegan options and alternatives.

Student Council believes:

¹ Goodland, Robert & Anhang, Jeff. "Livestock and Climate Change: What if the key actors in climate change are...cows, pigs and chickens?". WorldWatch. November/December 2009

² Hickman, Martin. "Study claims meat creates half of all greenhouse gases". Independent. November 2009

³ Hyner, Christopher. "A Leading Cause of Everything: One Industry That Is Destroying Our Planet and Our Ability to Thrive on It". Georgetown Environmental Law Review. October 23, 2015.

⁴ Margulis, Sergio. "Causes of Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon". World Bank Working Paper No. 22. 2003

⁵ Tabuchi, Hiroko, Rigny, Claire & White, Jeremy. "Amazon Deforestation, Once Tamed, Comes Roaring Back". New York Times. February 2017

⁶ Bellantonio, Marisa, et al. "The Ultimate Mystery Meat: Exposing the Secrets Behind Burger King and Global Meat Production". Mighty Earth

⁷ Oppenlander, Richard A. Food Choice and Sustainability: Why Buying Local, Eating Less Meat, and Taking Baby Steps Won't Work. . Minneapolis, MN : Langdon Street, 2013. Print.

⁸ Scarborough, Peter, et al. "Dietary greenhouse-gas emissions of meat-eaters, fish-eaters, vegetarians and vegans in the UK". Climactic Change. July 2014. Volume 125. Issue 2. pp. 179-192

⁹ Pimentel, David & Pimental, Marcia. "Sustainability of meat-based and plant-based diets and the environment". The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. September 2003. vol 78. no 3 660S-663S

¹⁰ "Facts on Animal Farming and the Environment". One Green Planet.

¹¹ "Vegetarianism and the Environment. Why going meatless is important". Vegetarian Guide

The science is unambiguous: globally, animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation, water consumption and pollution, is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry, and is a primary driver of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, topsoil erosion, ocean “dead zones,” and virtually every other environmental ill. Yet the livestock industry largely goes unchallenged.

As a Union we need to incorporate education of the environmental impact of the livestock industry into our environmental sustainability campaign.

The Union must also promote veganism as a sustainable and ethical alternative to the consumption of meat & dairy.

That students do not want to eat lettuce sandwiches or unimaginative pasta dishes, instead we want an eclectic choice of veganised cuisine from around the world.

That students who abstain from meat & dairy on grounds of religious, moral, ethical, environmental, health or financial reasons want burgers, curries, chilis, chicken nuggets, and hotdogs just as much as omnivores do.

That vegan options are becoming more commonplace and varied in Belfast and other urban areas, but local businesses/restaurants elsewhere have a limited choice of vegan options.

Student Council resolves:

- The Union works with key stakeholders to lobby internally and externally for an increase and greater variety of vegan food and products, and that these products are appropriately advertised and signposted.
- The Union runs an annual campaign every January, promoting veganism and educating students about the environmental impact of the livestock industry.
- The Union promotes and outlines the benefits of a veganism as part of its environmental sustainability campaigning, by compartmentalizing the benefits by: financial, health, ethical/animal welfare and environmental sustainability.
- UUSU evidence vegan initiatives in the NUS Green Impact scheme, to ensure the Union is developing its operations in line with best practice, and ensuring the Union is nationally recognized for its ethical and environmental work.

- Link up with external organizations and national campaigns, to achieve the above.

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