

Animal agriculture at COP27 climate conference

The [COP27 Food4Climate Pavilion](#) aims to bring food system transformation and sustainable diets to the heart of COP27, mainstreaming a transition toward diverse and resilient food production and consumption systems.



PHOTO BY KARPENKOV DENIS/ISTOCK.COM

With over 88 billion land animals raised and slaughtered for food globally, the animal agriculture sector contributes at least 16.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the clear link between animal agriculture and climate change, this issue has historically been sidelined from meaningful discussion.

Animal agriculture is worsening the climate crisis

- Worldwide, meat, egg, dairy and aquaculture production provide just 37% of the world's protein and 18% of calories but use 83% of global farmland.
- Business-as-usual growth scenarios for the animal agriculture industry project that by 2030, the livestock sector could account for nearly half (49%) of the world's emissions budget allowable under the 1.5°C warming target.
- Research indicates that even with the immediate cessation of emissions from fossil fuels, current trends in world food production could make it impossible to limit warming to the 1.5°C target and make it difficult to realize the 2°C target.
- By shifting current dietary patterns to climate-friendly plant-rich diets and allowing the resulting saved agricultural land to re-wild, high-income nations could cut their yearly agricultural emissions by 61% while sequestering nearly 100 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent.
- A joint report by the International Labour Organisation and the Inter-American Development Bank revealed that a transition to a net-zero emission economy in Latin America and the Caribbean, driven primarily by a transition from meat-heavy diets to more plant-based diets, would result in the net creation of 15 million more jobs in the region than under a business-as-usual scenario and would reduce the region's agricultural GHG emissions.

HSI and COP27

Around the world, global animal protection organization Humane Society International works directly with food service professionals and institutions to replace animal-based proteins with plant-based offerings – one of the most effective strategies to mitigate the environmental footprint of the food industry supply chain.

These demand-side policies must work in tandem with supply-side measures, which is why HSI is advocating for member states to adopt policies that support and incentivize healthier, plant-rich diets. To ensure a just food system transformation, national action plans must include measures and tools for supporting diet change – including a shift in procurement when public funds are involved. These should focus on shifting diets to plant-rich models; supporting farmers in shifting to more resilient, plant-based agriculture; and fostering and promoting innovation and growth in the protein landscape.

IPCC Report

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that “(b)alanced diets, featuring plant-based foods, such as those based on coarse grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and animal-sourced food produced in resilient, sustainable and low-GHG emission systems, present major opportunities for adaptation and mitigation while generating significant co-benefits in terms of human health (high confidence). By 2050, dietary changes could free several million km² (medium confidence) of land and provide a technical mitigation potential of 0.7 to 8.0 GtCO₂eq yr⁻¹, relative to business-as-usual projections (high confidence).”

Additional information

- [Food4Climate Pavilion announcement](#)
- [Letter to Egyptian COP27 Presidency from over 160 global NGOs calling for more plant-based foods at COP27](#)
- [Salvador's municipal school plant-based initiative](#)