**One Day a Week Meatless Challenge**

Name:

Current level of certification:

A one-day-a-week meatless challenge is one of the more controversial ways individuals are believed to be able to reduce their carbon foot print. The following are 7 reasons, published on [www.enveg.org](http://www.enveg.org), that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recommended reducing meat consumption in the publication *Livestock’s Long Shadow*.

1. Livestock production leaves a hefty carbon footprint, accounting for **18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions**, more than all the world’s cars & SUVs combined.

Aside from carbon dioxide, the livestock sector emits 37 percent of global methane, a greenhouse gas far worse than CO2; and 65 percent of nitrous oxide.

1. 2.4 billion tons of livestock-induced CO2 emissions are a result of the deforestation of **over 7.4 million acres of trees cut for pastures and feedcrop land** each year. This loss of forest means the destruction of billions of trees, each of which had the potential to offset around 1,400 pounds of CO2.

According to the FAO report, “Some 70 percent of previously forested land in the Amazon is used as pasture, and feed crops cover a large part of the remainder.”

1. 60 percent of US corn crops and 40 percent of soybeans are used as animal feed. We could be using the land and resources needed to produce these crops to grow food for human consumption. Instead, we are using it to feed farm animals, which are extremely inefficient converters of grain — Note: **it takes 6 to 10 pounds of grain to produce a single pound of beef**.
2. Livestock production is the **#1 cause of soil erosion** in the United States. Without a healthy topsoil, we can’t grow the crops that are necessary to feed people. Many civilizations throughout history have collapsed for this reason. In the United States, it is estimated that we have lost 1/3 of our topsoil in the last two centuries.
3. Meat production is **heavily reliant on pesticides**, which are toxic both to people and to the planet.

“70 percent of the volume of herbicides used in agriculture can be attributed to animal feed production in the form of soybean and corn,” according to the FAO study. Of all chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticide residues in the U.S. diet, 55% are supplied by meat, while only 6% are supplied by vegetables, 4% by fruits and 1% by grains.

1. The livestock sector is the **leading contributor to water pollution** by Nitrogen and Phosphorous in the United States. It also makes a strong contribution to water pollution by pesticides and antibiotics (accounting for 50 percent of the volume of antibiotics consumed in the United States).
2. Animal agriculture **consumes 1/3 of fossil fuels** produced in the United States. According to a study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the production of one calorie of animal protein requires more than 10 times the fossil fuel input as a calorie of plant protein. Fossil fuels are used heavily in the production of herbicides, fertilizers, to power machinery on the farm, and for transport between the farm and the store.

This worksheet is designed to help you consider what it takes to put food on your plate, and the consequences that are associated with it. For this activity, you are asked to try a one-a-day meatless challenge for 4 weeks. Once you have completed the activity, answer the following questions and e-mail to sustainability@wartburg.edu.

Dates of challenge:

1. What were your initial thoughts about eliminating meat from your diet one day a week? What were your expectations? Where the positive or negative?
2. Was it difficult to eliminate meat from your diet one day a week? How has this challenge helped you become more aware of the foods that are put on your plate?
3. After completing the activity, do you think you will continue the meatless challenge? Why or why not?