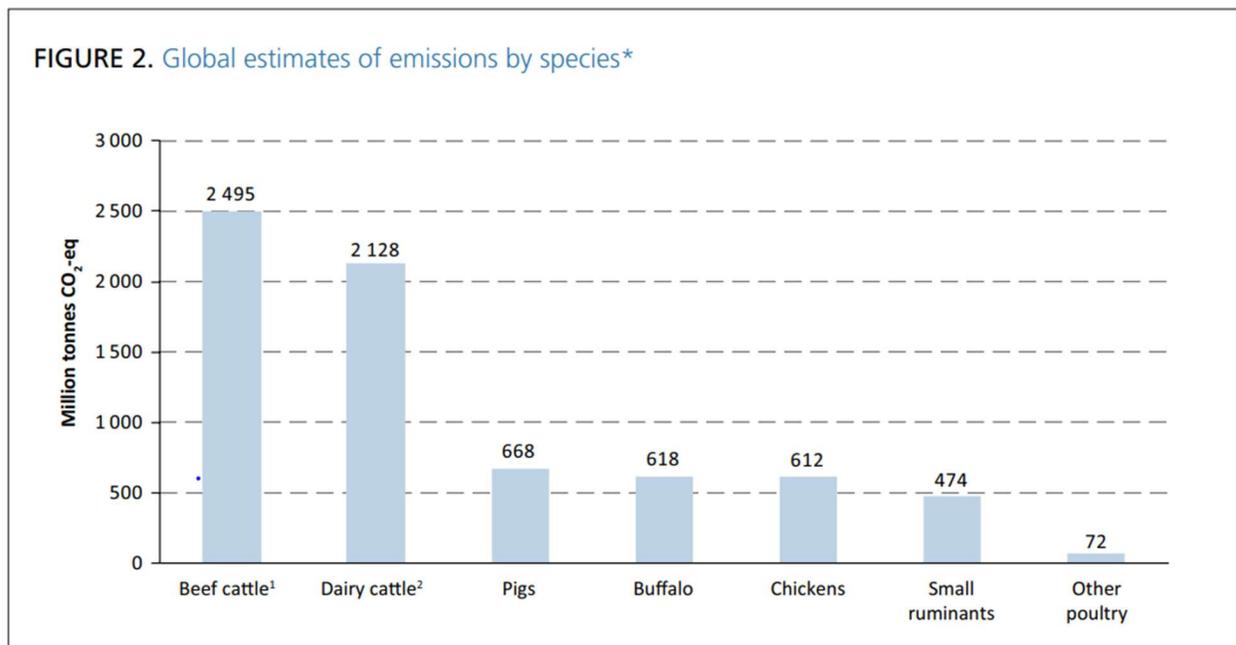


By Mandira Ganti and Tiffany Ch'en

Nowadays, people are swearing off red meat left and right in response to the gravity of the climate change dilemma. However, if you're like me and enjoy the occasional steak or hamburger, making drastic changes like this may not be something you're comfortable with, which is totally reasonable. We can't expect everyone to completely drop a part of their diet. However, what we can do is educate others about the emissions that come from the meat industry, support more sustainable meat industry practices, and learn how to make our own family's dinners more sustainable.

A 2013 study by the UN discovered that livestock accounts for 14.5% of total greenhouse gas emissions, around the same amount our vehicles produce. The graph below shows that out of all the types of livestock they were studying, beef and dairy cattle produced billions more CO2 emissions.



Because of how major of an impact cattle have on our planet specifically, it's only logical to tackle it first. According to ASPCA, "most beef cattle are sent to live their last few months in feedlots with hundreds or thousands of others." This means that they have little

to no access to natural vegetation and shelter, and the greenhouse gases they produce are automatically released into the air, adding to global warming.

Larger solutions such as silvopasture, the addition of trees to pastures for increased productivity and biosequestration, allow not only for a healthier, less stressful environment for cattle, but also for the reduction of carbon dioxide and methane. The plants and trees absorb the gases from the atmosphere as part of the carbon cycle, minimizing their impact. Project Drawdown states that “silvopasture far outpaces any grassland technique for counteracting the methane emissions of livestock and sequestering carbon under-hoof.” If this method could be fully implemented, in thirty years, carbon dioxide would be reduced by 26.58 to 42.31 gigatons. It’s an ideal solution, so getting the meat industry to change their practice would go a long way in helping our planet to reduce carbon emissions.

We can’t always depend on the big industries to make changes, though. The fastest change that can be made is being more educated and buying more sustainable foods on the get-go. The topmost sustainable way to buy produce is through farmers markets. Here in Redmond we have one every Saturday [<http://redmondsaturdaymarket.org/>]. However, sadly due to the current circumstances with COVID-19, the market’s official opening has been postponed, so I went and found some alternatives that we can take.

First off, just eating less red meat in general can make a huge difference in your footprint. Living in the PNW, it’s not hard to make seafood and fish a larger part of our diet. However, remember to make sure you aren’t buying any endangered fish species. But don’t worry, just use this handy link and you can check if the fish you are buying has been overfished or farmed in an unsustainable way [<https://www.seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations>].

On the other hand, if you’re like me, you might need a little more structure to make changes like switching up your eating habits. Luckily, many companies have come up with plans and “challenges” that you and your family can try for a few weeks to adapt your

family meals into more sustainable ones. Here is a 30-day sustainable eating plan with one simple task you can try each day, such as “choose an in-season veggie”

[<http://www.eatingwell.com/article/291628/30-day-sustainable-eating-challenge/>]

In conclusion, there are many things that can be done to be more sustainable when it comes to meat. From something as large-scale as silvopasture for cattles in the meat industry to something as small-scale as buying sustainable produce to eat for ourselves, we are preventing further damage to our climate and environment.