

# The Contribution of Agriculture to Climate Change

Food is a necessity for human life, and as our society has grown, so has our demand for it. Today, you could sit down at a restaurant in London, and enjoy a bowl of rice from India, with vegetables from Brazil. This scale of production and transportation is neither environmentally friendly nor necessary, in any way.

One of the issues within this is its release of greenhouse gases. Between 2001 and 2011, global emissions from crop and livestock production increased by 15 %. This growth mainly occurred in developing countries, because of the rise in total agricultural output. This rise was caused by a growth in global food demands and changes in people's dietary habits, favoring higher meat consumption. This is unfortunate because meat and dairy products have the highest global footprint of carbon, raw materials, and water per kilogram of food.

Another problem with the agricultural industry is deforestation. 7 million hectares of forest get destroyed every year to clear the land for crops such as soy, or palm. However, these crops can only grow for a few years, before the soil is ruined because of the aggressively maintained microclimate and waste away. All that will then remain is barren, desert-like land on which none of the original biodiversity can thrive. This contributes to climate change in many ways. Firstly, fewer trees result in less carbon dioxide being absorbed, and as well as this, cutting down trees and transporting them away produces greenhouse gases (see pg 1 for the negative impacts of that).

But, if it is so bad, why are we not doing anything about it? Because people don't know. Food companies spend millions producing propaganda to cover up the less ecological aspects of their products. This is extremely misleading, I believe that, with education, we can all learn to eat sustainably.

In conclusion, agriculture is one of the greatest contributors to climate change as we know it today. This is painfully obvious when you know that as well as deforestation and high emission rates, this toxic industry is also guilty of chemical pollution of water supplies, excessive use of plastic, and large-scale transportation. But change is coming. Farmers in Britain are being paid to re-plant hedges around their fields to create a passageway for local wildlife. This may seem small but if all companies and businesses in agriculture took small steps like these, we could be looking into a brighter and more sustainable future for the food industry.