

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Beef production damages the environment

24th July, 2014



A new study says beef production is very damaging to the environment. It damages the environment around ten times more than the production of pork, lamb, chicken or other farm animals.

Scientists said cows need 28 times more land and 11 times more water than pigs, sheep or chickens. They also produce a lot of greenhouse gas after they eat. Compared to food like potatoes, wheat, and rice, beef production needs 160 times more land and produces 11 times more greenhouse gases. The scientists said farming (of livestock and crops) is a major cause of global warming. It causes 15 per cent of all greenhouse gases. About half of this is from livestock.

One scientist said we could all reduce our carbon footprint by eating less beef. Professor Mark Sutton from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in the UK said cutting down on the amount of beef we eat is better for the environment than using the car less. He also said that if we ate less beef, we could use the wheat that farmers give to cows to feed starving people. He said this sounds simple, but many governments would not try to do it. Professor Sutton said: "Governments should consider these messages carefully if they want to improve overall production." He added: "The message for the consumer is even stronger. Avoiding excessive meat consumption, especially beef, is good for the environment."

Sources: BBC / The Guardian / Huffington Post

Writing

We should not give wheat to cows when people are starving. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

beef / environment / chicken / farm animals / greenhouse gas / potatoes / crops / scientist / cutting down / using the car / starving people / production / consumer

True / False

- a) Beef damages the environment 10 times more than lamb or chicken. T / F
- b) Beef production needs 28 times more land than lamb production. T / F
- c) Lamb production needs 11 times more water than chicken production. T / F
- d) Agriculture causes 1.5% of all greenhouse gases. T / F
- e) A scientist said our carbon footprint could be lower by eating less beef. T / F
- f) The scientist said using the car less is better than eating less beef. T / F
- g) The article said governments want to try to reduce beef production. T / F
- h) A professor said we should not eat too much beef. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. study | a. requires |
| 2. damages | b. easy |
| 3. produce | c. reducing |
| 4. needs | d. harms |
| 5. half | e. think about |
| 6. reduce | f. shopper |
| 7. cutting down | g. report |
| 8. simple | h. lower |
| 9. consider | i. make |
| 10. consumer | j. fifty per cent |

Discussion – Student A

- a) Do we need to eat beef?
- b) Do we need to eat meat?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Should governments tax beef?
- e) Would the world be a better place if we were all vegetarian?
- f) Should we all try to grow some food?
- g) Should countries produce less beef and more lamb, pork, etc.?
- h) How can we eat to help the environment?

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Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. beef production is very damaging | a. of beef |
| 2. farming of livestock | b. gases |
| 3. a major cause of global | c. this is from livestock |
| 4. It causes 15 per cent of all greenhouse | d. give to cows |
| 5. About half of | e. footprint |
| 6. we could all reduce our carbon | f. warming |
| 7. cutting down on the amount | g. simple |
| 8. the wheat that farmers | h. and crops |
| 9. He said this sounds | i. production |
| 10. improve overall | j. to the environment |

Discussion – Student B

- a) Is it wrong to give cows wheat when people are starving?
- b) What could people replace beef with?
- c) What food could you never give up?
- d) Is frozen and microwave food bad for the environment?
- e) What happens if we run out of space on farms for cows?
- f) Why would it be difficult for people to change what they eat?
- g) What do you think of people wasting food?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- 1. beef production is very giaagndm
- 2. farm laminas
- 3. cpdouer a lot of greenhouse gas
- 4. potatoes, ehawt, and rice
- 5. kovlicset and crops
- 6. a major easuc of global warming
- 7. eedurc our carbon footprint
- 8. the outamn of beef we eat
- 9. feed gritsvna people
- 10. meporvi overall production
- 11. The message for the cnmuores
- 12. esexvisce meat consumption

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. a	5. j
6. h	7. c	8. b	9. e	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Beef

You think beef is the thing we need to cut down on most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their food isn't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): white bread, chocolate or French fries.

Role B – White bread

You think white bread is the thing we need to cut down on most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their food isn't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): beef, chocolate or French fries.

Role C – Chocolate

You think chocolate is the thing we need to cut down on most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their food isn't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): white bread, beef or French fries.

Role D – French fries

You think French fries are the things we need to cut down on most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their food isn't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): white bread, chocolate or beef.

Speaking – Eat less

Rank these with your partner. Put the things we should eat less at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Beef
- Chocolate
- White bread
- Burgers
- Ice cream
- Peanut butter
- Cream
- French fries

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.