

70% of Americans rarely discuss the environmental impact of their food

February 13 2020

American consumers are hungry for more climate-friendly plant-based diets, but they need more information, according to results from a national survey released today by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication (YPCCC) and the Earth Day Network (EDN).

The report, titled "Climate Change and the American Diet," found that half (51 percent) of Americans surveyed said that they would eat more plant-based foods if they had more information about the environmental impacts of their [food](#) choices. However, 70 percent rarely or never talk about this issue with friends or family. Nearly two-thirds of the Americans surveyed report having never been asked to eat more plant-based foods, and more than half rarely or never hear about the topic in the media.

However, the report found that more than half of Americans are willing to eat more vegetables and plant-based alternatives and/or less red meat. Additionally, consumers are already changing their diets and purchasing habits in favor of plant-based foods.

Although four percent of Americans self-identify as vegan or vegetarian, 20 percent choose plant-based dairy alternatives about two to five times a week or more often. Roughly the same percentage choose not to buy products from food companies that are not taking steps to reduce their [environmental impact](#).

"Many American consumers are interested in eating a more healthy and

climate-friendly diet," said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. "However, many simply don't know yet which products are better or worse—a huge communication opportunity for food producers, distributors and sellers."

The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication conducts research on public [climate change](#) knowledge, attitudes, policy preferences, and behavior, and on the underlying psychological, cultural, and political factors that influence them. It is based at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.

Americans identified other barriers to eating more plant-based foods, including perceived cost, taste and accessibility. About half (49 percent) of Americans think a meal with a plant-based main course is more expensive than a meal with a meat-based main course.

The research, a nationally representative survey of 1,043 American adults, also showed that Americans would eat more plant-based foods if they cost less than meat options (63 percent) and if they tasted better (67 percent). Barriers of cost and access, including distance from grocery stores and access to fresh produce, impact lower-income households in particular.

"This data is a wake-up call for the climate movement," said Jillian Semaan, Food and Environment Director, Earth Day Network. "Animal agriculture is one of the major drivers of our climate crisis, we need to provide people with the relevant information that connects food choices, animal agriculture and climate change."

More information: The report can be found here:
climatecommunication.yale.edu/...d-the-american-diet/

Provided by Yale University

Citation: 70% of Americans rarely discuss the environmental impact of their food (2020, February 13) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-02-americans-rarely-discuss-environmental-impact.html>

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