

Call for urgent climate change action to secure global food supply

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New Curtin University-led research has found climate change will have a substantial impact on global food production and health if no action is taken by consumers, food industries, government, and international

bodies.

Published in the *Annual Review of Public Health*, the study is a comprehensive 12-month review of published literature on [climate change](#), healthy diet and actions needed to improve nutrition and health around the world.

Lead researcher John Curtin Distinguished Emeritus Professor Colin Binns, from the Curtin School of Population Health at Curtin University, said climate change has had a detrimental impact on health and [food](#) production for the past 50 years and far more needs to be done to overcome its adverse effects.

"The combination of climate change and the quality of nutrition is the major public health challenge of this decade and, indeed, this century. Despite positive advances in world nutrition rates, we are still facing the ongoing threat of climate change to our global food supply, with Sub-Saharan Africa and part of Asia most at risk" Professor Binns said.

"For the time being, it will be possible to produce enough food to maintain adequate intakes, using improved farming practices and technology and more equity in distribution, but we estimate that by 2050 world food production will need to increase by 50 percent to overcome present shortages and meet the needs of the growing population.

"Our review recommends that by following necessary dietary guidelines and choosing foods that have low environmental impacts, such as fish, whole grain cereals, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, berries, and olive oil, would improve health, help reduce greenhouse gases and meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which in turn would improve food production levels in the future."

Professor Binns said that while climate change will have a significant

effect on food supply, political commitment and substantial investment could go some way to reduce the effects and help provide the foods needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Some changes will need to be made to food production, nutrient content will need monitoring, and more equitable distribution will be required to meet the proposed dietary guidelines. It was also be important to increase breastfeeding rates to improve infant and adult health, while helping to reduce [greenhouse gases](#) and benefit the environment," Professor Binns said.

"Ongoing research will be vital to assessing the long-term impacts of climate change on food supply and health in order to adequately prepare for the future."

More information: Colin W. Binns et al. Climate Change, Food Supply, and Dietary Guidelines, *Annual Review of Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1146/annurev-publhealth-012420-105044](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-012420-105044)

Provided by Curtin University

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