

Q&A: Veganuary—the environmental benefits of a low and no meat diet

January 19 2024



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Dr. Mike Clark, Director of the Food Program at the Oxford Smith School, discusses the environmental impacts of eating meat, the key research questions we still need to answer, and what individuals can do today.

Why talk about low meat and no meat diets?

Food systems are major sources of environmental harm and [poor health](#). They emit a third of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), are the leading source of biodiversity loss, and occupy almost half of Earth's [land surface](#). At the same time, [dietary patterns](#) are the world's largest source of poor [health](#), [with one recent study](#) showing more deaths attributed to obesity than smoking in the U.K. Without rapid, ambitious global action, these impacts will only worsen and prevent achieving urgent targets on climate, biodiversity, and [human health](#).

This introduces a complex [triple challenge](#): how to fix [food systems](#) in a way that supports [environmental sustainability](#), human health, and other aspects of human well-being.

A key part of this will be to support [transitions](#) to diets that are simultaneously healthy and environmentally sustainable. In the U.K. and other [high-income countries](#), this typically means a transition to diets that contain smaller quantities of animal-based foods and are mostly plant-based.

[One recent analysis](#), for instance, found that transitioning to lower [meat](#) diets in the U.K. (defined as

Citation: Q&A: Veganuary—the environmental benefits of a low and no meat diet (2024, January 19) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-01-qa-veganuary-environmental-benefits-meat.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.