



FACT! – Food Action!

FACT! Workbook

To help you discover and explore your food habits
and to change some of them,
in three topics:

Part 1: Food & Waste

Part 2: Food, Climate & Environment

Part 3: Food & Health

Part 4: Ripples on the water





FOOD ACTION PROGRAM: Part 2

Food is the biggest single cause of climate change.

Food production is the hardest hit by climate change.

Huge numbers of farm workers go hungry.

It's easy to make a difference!

"We are what you eat"

Food is the biggest source of a household's environmental damage. The climate damage caused by food is even larger than that caused by cars and airplanes. And how it's produced, processed and travels affects everything from its nutritional content to the structure of society.

Social effects of modern food production are conspicuous. In the commercial push for cheaper and mass production of food plants and animals, many farm workers work under dangerous conditions for minimum payment. In many cases this is not even enough to meet their basic needs, not to mention schooling for their children.

The good news is that this is easy to change, even without drastic lifestyle changes.

What and how should we buy in order to avoid spending too much, while also being as gentle as we can? That's what this program is about.

Food for thought

Modern farming methods are sawing off the branch we all sit on:
polluting the water
destroying the soil

Global food production occupies 25% of all habitable land
uses 70% of fresh water
causes 80% of deforestation, and one **third** of the climate-changing gas emissions





CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Why act

Modest changes in eating habits are as beneficial as radical change, like selling the car.

We eat quite differently from our grandparents. If we can change once, we can do it again: not back, but forward.

Invitations to action

CHANGING HABITS

Think seasonal
Meat-free meals
Sprouting
Kitchen harvest

THINK FOOTPRINTS

– or FOODPRINTS
Find your farmers
Think travel
Certification

BONUS ACTIONS

Cook together
Allotments and square metre gardening

EASY COOKING

Russian roots
Summer stir-fry
Greek salad with variations

Food for thought

- * 'Western' eating habits come from a time when we lived quite different lives and our food was produced using quite different methods.
- * The world's population is still increasing – but food production is not.

What works for you?

These recipes – for action and for food – are invitations. Try out those you find attractive.

Think up new ones. You're welcome to post your ideas in our Facebook group, 'Care to Eat'.

If you're following the program on the web site, the quiz will help you keep track of your progress.



Changing habits: Think seasonal

Why act

There's the sheer pleasure of savouring locally grown fruit when it comes into season. Have you noticed how little flavour many out-of-season fruits and vegetables have?

It's not surprising: when you buy seasonal products from local producers you're getting fresh, nutritious food; as well as investing in food that has a small food-print.

Recipe for action

A good sign that something is in season is that the price drops – particularly for local produce. Keep an eye on prices! Not the reduced prices that many stores offer on nearly-best-by produce, but the genuine across-the-board price drops. That's your signal to give the family a treat!

You can also try this:

- * For an entire week eat only locally seasonal fruit and vegetables. Is it possible?
- * Search out new recipes for those vegetables you know best
- * Share your experience with others

In harsh climates, there may be no readily available options for fruit and vegetables during the coldest (or hottest) months.

- * Frozen and otherwise preserved food can carry you over to the next season
- * You can also investigate the best import options: food that is in season where it is produced, and with as short a distance as possible to travel.

Expected results

You save money as well as waste. You spend less time shopping.

Energy content vs energy put in	
Corn	102 %
Cheese	31 %
Eggs	19 %
Apples	15 %
Chicken	15 %
Pork	8,5 %
Beef	4,3 %



Changing habits: Meat-free meals

Why act?

Meat production is a major contributor to climate change. Because of their sheer numbers, animals produce a huge volume of greenhouse gases – such as methane and nitrous oxide – that contribute to climate change.

The growing of animals for food is a very inefficient process in terms of energy and water; and so is processing and transport



Recipe for action

Make it a habit: one meat-free meal per day and/or one meat-free day per week

- * Plan ahead – find some yummy recipes for meatless meals before going shopping to get inspired!
- * Ask your mother or grandmother about traditional recipes using very little meat – every culture has some Can we add some sample recipes?
- * Try veggie restaurants or the vegetarian choice at other restaurants

Want to know more?

1. Test some of your favourite recipes using the [eaternity](#) app. Try reducing the amount of meat, and see how the climate-changing gases are affected.

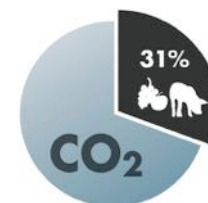
2. Ask your shopkeeper about meat from local animals that are reared outdoors and forage for their own food. The animals still release methane – but a lot of the energy invested in feed and shelter is saved.

Expected results

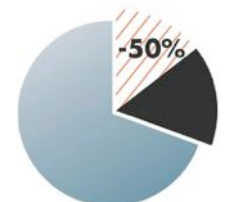
You help to stabilize the climate. Meat is often the most expensive item on the plate, so you should save money.

And if, like many people, you tend to eat more meat than is good for you, your health will also benefit.

1/3 of our emissions originate from our foods



reduction with climate-friendly eating





Changing habits: Sprouting

Why act?

'Living' food is a source of special nourishment. Sprouting is an easy and cheap way to put fresh and tasty food on your table, year round. And it's quite a spectacular and fun activity you can also do with children.

You will need

- * Seeds that can be sprouted (good if you find organic seeds, as other seeds may be chemically treated)
- * A jar suitable for sprouting, gauze and rubber band for sealing (or invest in a 'sprouter')
- * A little time and attention

Recipe for action

Sprouts are available in the stores as well, but why would you spend a lot of money for something you can inexpensively make yourself?

You can sprout the seeds of a number of plants so make a choice to your own taste.

- * Soak the seeds in lukewarm water and keep them covered in a dark place at room temperature for a few hours – for instance, overnight
- * Discard the water – or use it as fertiliser on your pot plants
- * Rinse the sprouts once or twice a day
- * Once grown long enough, the sprouts (well drained) can be stored in the fridge

Expected results

A modest contribution to the environment and a bigger one to your economy and health: sprouts are a healthy addition to the family diet, with very little work.





Changing habits: Kitchen harvest

Why act?

Every piece of food you grow yourself is a saving for the environment: no transport, no packaging, no preservatives, and usually no artificial fertilizers or chemicals.

Added to which: there is no greater joy than following the growth of our own plants, reaping the fruits of our labour and finally biting into our own tomatoes or seasoning our food with our own herbs.

Don't be sad if you don't have a garden that is suitable for growing vegetables. You have numerous opportunities even without that. Use your balcony or windowsill!

Recipe for action

Getting started

If you're new to this, start by buying seedlings/small plants, rather than growing from seed.

- * Check what is available in your farmers' market or garden centre
- * Pick out the plants you're most interested in, and ask about the conditions they need: which will fit easily into your available space and your daily life?
- * That's it! Follow the instructions

Want to try raising from seed?

- * Check what is available in your farmers' market or garden centre
- * Pick out the plants you're most interested in, and ask about the conditions they need: which will fit easily into your available space and your daily life?

- * Set yourself up with potting soil, and flower pots/window box (empty juice containers will do as well)

Bonus if you have space in cellar or larder

Think about growing mushrooms or another edible fungus in the dark. Many garden centres sell packs – just follow the instructions.

Expected results

Less pollution, less waste. Healthy vegetables, meaningful leisure activity, great pleasure in being able to do something like this!

PS Did you know that caring for plants is one of the more effective 'medicines' for numerous mental afflictions, from depression to schizophrenia?!

Think footprints: Estimate your foodprint

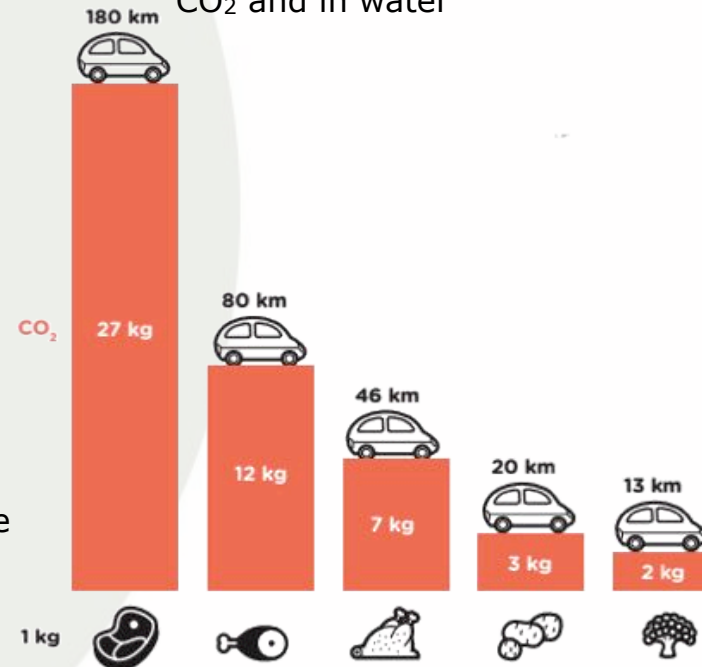
Why act?

Food production and processing requires energy, soil and water. The ecological footprint represents the amount of land it takes to produce goods and services; a water footprint indicates the average amount of water used. When the two are combined, you can calculate your 'foodprint'.

One thing you can be almost sure of: the burden you're currently placing on the environment is too big to be sustainable. We all need to shrink our foodprints, if our grandchildren are to have a reasonable chance of a comfortable lifestyle.

Recipe for action

1. Take a look at your foodprint and see which items on your regular menu are 'heaviest' in CO₂ and in water



A glass of milk 'contains'	200 litres of water
A kilo of apples	400 litres of water
A hamburger	2400 l of water
A kilo of chicken	3900 l of water

2. Consider what you might most easily change. Apart from reducing food waste and eating less meat, what can you do in your household? Decide to try one or more new habits
3. Review after a month. How is it working? Is there anything else you would like to change?

Expected results

This action enables you to make the changes that give the biggest positive effect for the environment, while still fitting with your taste and lifestyle. Congratulations!



Think footprints: Find your farmers

Why act?

Direct contact with the people growing, raising, and maybe processing your food not only makes shopping and cooking more fun, but also gets past those irritating questions like 'How do I know the label actually means something?'

Recipe for action

Vote with your fork! Buy organic and local whenever possible and let your local farmers know organic is the way to grow.

- * Talk to local food stores and markets about where they buy their produce; find out which are local, and especially which come from small farms
- * Farmers' market: You may be lucky enough to have one near you. Almost all the produce sold is actually grown, caught or

made by the people selling it. You know it's fresh.

- * If possible choose food that is organically grown and locally produced – read the labels!
- * If you have to choose between 'local' and 'organic but from a long way away', it's a good rule of thumb to go for the local; not least because you may be able to influence your local farmers

Want to do more?

- * Visit a local farm. Find out which accept visitors; maybe invite a group of friends. See for yourself how things are done
- * If your local farmers haven't yet 'gone organic', encourage and support them to do so
- * Find out about Community-Supported Agriculture. Is there a CSA group near you? If not, maybe you can help start one.

Expected results

Small-scale farming is key to supplying the growing world population with nutritious food.

- * Small-scale farmers tend to take better care of the soil; when soil 'dies' ("soil mining" when no living ecosystem remains), it takes a long time to get back. Think of dust bowls!
- * Small farms often have more than one crop, as with agroforestry or permaculture, and with integrated crops and animals. Such farms have fewer problems with pests, need less fertilizer, and have higher yields per hectare compared with industrialized farms



Think footprints: Think travel

Why act?

You may enjoy travelling, but your food does not!

When transported over long distances, foods lose nutrient value and cause pollution from transportation, packaging and storage: distributing food is for example one of the biggest and fastest-growing reasons for climate change.

And local producers are losing out to large international food corporations. Three good reasons to buy local food!

Recipe for action

Count the kilometers!

Many people are used to counting calories. It's just as interesting to count the kilometers.

- * For one week observe and make notes of the types and amounts of local (coming from within 50-100 km), national and foreign products you bought. How much is local?
- * Find out how your favourite long-distance foods travelled – by ship, road or air. Can you find substitutes for those that travel by air?
- * Did any favourite food items need to be refrigerated during transport and storage? Can you find substitutes for them?
- * List the changes you could make, and decide which to try

Convenience foods

Convenience (ready-to-eat) foods generally travel farther. Not only the actual food, from source to table; but also the packaging and processing.

Think about your own kilometres

Do you habitually travel a long way to do your shopping?

- * How do you travel? Could you walk, bike, or combine with other journeys?
- * Do you drive off to the store (again) to pick up the one item you forgot? Could you modify the recipe instead?

Expected results

Big energy savings, less burden on the environment, and more support for local food producers.



Think footprints: Certification

Why act?

Food that is labelled “organically produced” is less of a burden on the environment: instead of impoverishing the soil it actively enriches it, reducing dependence on fossil fuel as well as reducing the risk of contamination of the food.

Other certification labels may guarantee that the food packaging is recyclable or that farm workers have reasonable contracts.

When you choose food with these labels, you not only help improve conditions for the environment and the farmers, but also encourage more producers to work towards certification.

Recipe for action

Some labels are international. You may for instance find some of these in your shops.

- * Look for other labels and ask what they mean
- * From your regular shopping list, pick a few items that you buy often and find out what certification is available. For instance, if you're a big coffee drinker, look for the coffee labels. Check the quality and price
- * Decide on one or more items that you will in future always buy with certification
- * Keep an eye open for other opportunities – not least cut-price offers. Once certification is on your mental ‘radar screen’ you will begin to notice the labels

Expected results

Step by step you reduce your burden on the environment, while supporting farmers and other food producers to adopt more sustainable working methods.





Bonus actions: Cook together

Why act?

Cooking and eating with other people brings a host of benefits: cementing good relationships, learning new recipes, exchanging experience, exploring together how you can eat increasingly sustainably.

If you do it regularly you can buy and cook bigger quantities, saving on energy as well as packaging,

Recipe for action

There are many ways to do this. For instance:

- * The 'one-off' experience: invite a few friends who are interested in cooking, with each person or family providing one dish or course
- * The 'tutorial': if you know young people who want to learn to cook, offer them a series of weekends, maybe once a month, where you explore recipes of their choice
- * The 'happy Friday': invite close friends or family to look in once a week for a communal cooking session
- * The 'multiculti': invite some people from another culture to come cook and exchange recipes with you

Consider what might work for you, set a first date, invite a few people.

You need:

A generous attitude to sharing your kitchen and equipment
Curiosity and a spirit of adventure
A good appetite

Expected results

Expect the unexpected! Some surprises, new flavours, good relations, a lot of laughs. And maybe some exciting leftovers in your freezer.



Bonus actions: Room to grow

Why act?

Even without a garden of your own, you may be able to grow a lot of your own food on a small plot and at a modest investment of time.

Your reward: a healthy hobby, more nutritious food, and money saved. As well as reduced environmental damage.



Recipe for action

Urban food production is on the rise, both commercial and private. Businesses like herb growing for restaurants and bee-keeping are taking over rooftops in many cities. For private use there are also increasing opportunities. Take a look!

- * Communities in many countries make gardening space available to city-dwellers, for instance under the name of allotments; this is an old tradition in many countries. Check with your community
- * Increasingly common: urban 'guerilla gardening', whereby a group of people make unofficial use of dis-used land, sometimes for one growing season, sometimes for longer. Some gardens have official support. See whether there is already one near you

- * Roof-top gardening is also on the rise. One advantage is that pollution often accumulates near the ground: a few storeys up, the air is much cleaner – and you can control the quality of the soil you bring to the roof. There is also almost zero risk of vandalism. Check internet and keep an eye open in your neighbourhood.

Expected results

A big saving for the environment: reduced energy use for fertilizer and food transport. Better physical and mental health, good food, and money saved.



Easy cooking: Russian roots

You need

- * Ovenproof dish with lid, or clay pot with lid
- * 1 kg mixed root vegetables = enough for 4-6 people
- * Fresh beetroots
- * Other root veggies you like, for instance
- * Carrots
- * Parsnips
- * Celeriac
- * Swede (rutebago)
- * Sweet potato
- * A tablespoon of butter, oil or water
- * Thyme
- * If liked, white pepper or lemon pepper to taste

Time:

Preparations 15-20 minutes
Time in the oven 1-2 hours,
whatever suits your timetable

How to do it

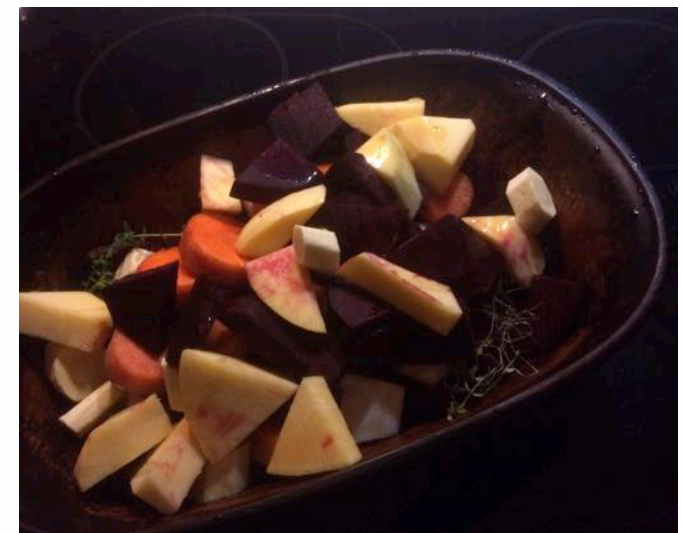
- * Grease the dish or put the clay pot to soak
- * Set the oven to 150-175 C° (2 hours at 150, quicker if hotter)
- * Peel beetroots and swede, scrub other veggies, and cut them all into similar-size chunks (1-2 'bites' per chunk)
- * Mix all the chunks in the dish
- * Add the other ingredients
- * No need for salt, there's plenty in root veggies

What to expect

Could it be easier?? Flavoursome, cheap, and dead easy to make. At least in northern climes, root vegetables are always in season and usually local.

Without the butter it's also vegan.

Serve with just a crunchy salad; or as a hearty side dish to meat.





HOW WAS THAT?

Progress!

It's so easy to forget the changes we make. Remember to give yourself a pat on the back for all you do to improve the environment.

If you're following the program on the web site, you can see how other people are doing, too. If you find yourself with lots of questions, visit our [online library](#): you may find some answers here.

While you're at it, check out some other [easy to make recipes](#) of ours.

Are there more recipes you would like to try – recipes for action or for food? Put a reminder note in your diary or on the fridge door!

Next: Food and health


You probably noticed that some of the recipes for action in Parts 1 and 2 can also help you to eat healthily.

In the third part of the program we take a closer look at food and health. Remember: food is the biggest single determinant of health. Or ill health.

This is the biggest gift you can give to yourself and your family.

And it's not even difficult...



You can't fix your health
 until you fix your
diet.