

Animals

What you can do?

The amount of meat we eat

Current meat consumption have grown a lot in comparison to the past: FAO has estimated that they have been raising globally by almost 400% in comparison to 1961. Today in industrialized countries meat per head consumption is around 80k. In Europe, in 2002, have been consumed 74,3 k of meat per capita but in Italy the European average has been overcome with 90,4 k of meat consumed per capita! Globally meat consumption is destined to grow more, especially in developing countries where incomes are in constant increase and 30 k per head consumed today will become 36 k in 2020. China, instead, will increase its meat consumption by 55% in comparison to 1993, reaching 73 k per head. As for our regards, in industrialized countries, consumption will increase to reach overallly 90 k per head per year. As we have seen, meat, eggs and cheese production can have a strong impact on the environment and not always can preserve the well-being of animals, especially if these are raised with an intensive and industrial system. To understand how we “consumers” can choose the less harmful products for the environment and for our health we should think about the different actors involved in the animal production chain and identify which tools are available for them to produce more sustainably. Consumers, finally, can lower their meat consumption and make sustainable buying choices.

Knowing our consumption

Paying attention to how much meat we eat in the form of a steak or ham (because often we don't think about this but cold cuts are meat!) is the first step to start a sustainable dietary path. It's not necessary to become vegetarians to eat sustainably, we only need to be aware that food consumption has an impact on the environment and we must act as a consequence. Modifying our consumption is the only solution to eat sustainably. Let's see how we can modify our meat consumption.

Integrating our diet

It's generally better to lower our meat consumption, especially red meat: a kilogram of beef meat, in fact, is responsible for the emission in the atmosphere of the same amount of CO₂ emitted by an average European car every 250 kilometres and burns sufficient energy to keep a 100 watt light bulb lighted for 20 days!! Moreover, according to some experts an excessive consumption of meat would have negative effects on our health: it would increase, in fact, occurrence of cancer, vascular diseases, diabetes and obesity. Proteins that our body needs can be also found in non-animal derived foods: it's important to know this to substitute sometimes meat with legumes (chickpeas, beans, lentils) or other food produced with less energy cost and limited impact on the environment as quinoa.

Eating local products

Favouring local products, or the so-called “zero-kilometre products” is a good solution to avoid long trips of animals and food coming from the other side of the world. This solution, at the same time, allows to emit in the atmosphere, indirectly, less amounts of greenhouse gases. You can also address farmsteads of your area to buy meat, cold cuts, cheese and other dairy products. You can also collect fresh milk from raw milk distributors spread in farmsteads and also in our cities

and remember to bring your own empty bottle to fill it! In this way, besides preventing greenhouse gas emissions you will prevent squandering packaging and you will also save money as, avoiding the production chain phases, milk costs less!

Eating biological products

The choice of biological products today is still influenced by their price that is higher in comparison to traditional foods. Buying biological products directly from producers in the so-called “farmers markets” or directly in farms is a solution to avoid the overpricing problem. Buying biological food means choosing products that have been produced without pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers reducing their impact on the environment and avoiding soil and groundwater pollution by these substances. Moreover, the well-being of animals raised with this system is respected.