

Our **FOOD SYSTEM** & **CLIMATE CHANGE** are strongly linked to each other

(by Peter Vaniher, 6CG)

Most probably the process of climate change is nothing new to the majority of our readers. But did you know that the choice of your daily meal has a great impact on the future of our planet and further developments of climate change? We from *climate-education* have done some research to inform our readers about this fascinating connection between food and climate.

As the world population continues to grow at an alarming rate, the global community is facing one of the biggest challenges in history: How can a nutritious diet for so many people be provided without doing even more damage to the world's ecosystems? The answer to this question is certainly not easy and we will confidently leave it to the leading scientists and politicians of our time. This highly complex problem does not have to be solved at once – remember: think locally, act globally! So, we will break down the issue to a more familiar level – our daily lives: Daily meals have a great impact on climate change. If you do not know why, the next few paragraphs might interest you.

As foodstuffs undergo the various steps of a food system, an immense number of different resources is needed. This already starts with production: For instance, to produce one kilo of beef, 10,000 liters of water are needed on average. But this problem does not only affect the production of meat – also irrigation consumes lots of water. The next step in the procedure is packaging, for which high amounts of materials, such as plastic, are needed. In this process the chemical industry does not only consume limited resources and contaminate the environment due to frequent chemical accidents, but after being used the plastic has to be disposed of again, which is a problem in itself. Probably the best-known impact of food consumption behavior is the creation of greenhouse gases emitted during the transport via land, water or by plane. This, in succession, speeds up the common greenhouse effect and global warming as a whole.

You can easily see that food production does have an impact on the environment. Now it is everyone's duty to contribute their part to slow down and – in the best case – reverse global warming by buying locally grown food etc. If this does not happen, the world's food supply chains will be heavily affected by climate change. Droughts, storms and floods are just some keywords beside a potential change of the growing seasons and the possibility that some of the earth's regions might become infertile over time. Also the oceans could experience dramatic change. Overfishing is commonly understood as a harmful method which has already destroyed many marine ecosystems. At the same time, it is, however, the basis of existence for many who depend on the fishing industry.

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Apparently, our food system and climate change influence each other heavily. In conclusion, for taking effective measures against climate change, it is vital also to consider the influence of food and food production.