VEGETARIAN ACTION NEWSLETTER #25, January 13, 2016

http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2016/01/vegetarian-action-newsletter-25-january.html

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

(#4 Feb. 12, 2014; #5 March 12, 2014; #6 April 9, 2014; #7 May 14, 2014; #8, June 11, 2014; #9 July 9, 2014; #10, August 11, 2014; #11 September 10, 2014; #12 October 8, 2014; #13, November 12, 2014; #14, December 10, 2014; #15, January 14, 2015; #16, Feb. 11, 2015; #17, March 11, 2015; #18, April 8, 2015; #19, June 10, 2015; #20, August 12, 2015; #21, September 9, 2015; #22, Oct. 14, 2015; Dec. 9, 2015). Thank you Marc.

190331 pageviews - 1543 posts, as of Nov 6, 2015

http://omnicenter.org/donate/

Veggie and Vegan Potluck

Wed - 6:00 pm @ OMNI

A food-friendly event with delicious dishes every second Wednesday. We want to meet you, at a place and time where you can talk with others not only about recipes, nutrition, and health, but about the meat industry monopoly, care for other species, for the environment, and the climate. Hope to see you!

Wednesday, January 13, members of OMNI350 and CCL are invited to attend our potluck and enjoy vegetarian cuisine and consider our philosophy, and we are invited to attend their meeting following, which concentrates on the fee-dividend approach to reducing carbon in our atmosphere. This newsletter especially focuses on the significant connections of vegetarianism/veganism, nutrition, animal rights, and climate change. As in all of OMNI’s activities, we connect the dots.

Vegetarian Potluck starts at 6, and CCL at 7. Make a special sign or announcement if your
dish is vegan. If you wish, provide your recipe, or at least its name and main ingredients.
Notice how *Vegetarian Action* is increasingly becoming interactive. Send your comment.

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NUTRITION AND HEALTH


Zoe’s Kitchen

This new restaurant near the anticipated Whole Foods offers fresh veggies, tasty dressings, and reasonable prices. I had Quinoa Salad for $7, and my friend a veggie pizza with side salad for $8.50. ZK has several other veggie salads, Veggie Kabobs, and veggie sides. The menu is color coded for veg, vegan, and gluten-free. Tell the manager and all the employees about OMNI’s Vegetarian Potluck.
Michael Pollan brings 'In Defense of Food' to PBS. The best-selling book is now a documentary airing Dec. 30. By: Robin Shreeves

December 29, 2015, 8:42 a.m.


Now, "In Defense of Food" has been turned into a documentary that "debunks the daily media barrage of conflicting claims about nutrition." In the film, Pollan travels around the world visiting supermarket aisles while continuing to answer the question, "What should I eat to be healthy?"

The timing of this documentary film is beneficial. Many of us have spent the holidays eating a whole lot of food and chances are much of it was not plant-based. It will be a good reminder to readjust our eating habits for the new year.

"In Defense of Food" premiered on PBS Dec. 30.

Related on MNN:

Michael Pollan's 'Food Rules' in stop animation
Will Ferrell gets schooled by kids about healthy eating
How to train your brain to eat healthy foods

Related topics: Books, Health & Well Being, Healthy Eating, Michael Pollan, TV Shows

Michael Pollan’s Book In Defense of Food Now a Film on PBS, Google Search, Dec. 31, 2015

Watch Full Episodes Online of In Defense of Food on PBS ...

www.pbs.org/video/2365614145/  PBS

In Defense of Food. Trailer. 1:35Aired: 11/22/15Rating: NR. Journalist Michael Pollan distills a career's worth of reporting into a prescription for reversing the ...
Forget Weight Watchers, Paleo, and Dry January: Let Michael Pollan and 'Bon Appetit' Preach the Virtues of Eating ...
The Atlantic - 20 hours ago

A new PBS documentary and Bon Appetit's January issue espouse a radically moderate ...

In Defense of Food | Kikim Media

www.kikim.com/xml/projects.php?projectId=88

December 15, 2015 -- Kikim Media is proud to announce that our film In Defense of Food, based on the book by Michael Pollan, will premiere on PBS December ...

In Defense of Food: The Movie - Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/indefenseoffoodthemovie/

A new PBS documentary and Bon Appetit's January issue espouse a radically moderate approach to ... Wednesday's TV Highlights: 'In Defense of Food' on PBS.

Wednesday's TV Highlights: 'In Defense of Food' on PBS ...

www.latimes.com/.../la-et-st-wednesday-s-tv-highlight...

Los Angeles Times

1 day ago - Nutritional Expert and best-selling author Michael Pollan explores what to eat and what to avoid in the new special "In Defense of Food" on ...

In Defense of Food 1x55 - PBS International

pbsinternational.org/programs/in-defense-of-food/

Based on Michael Pollan's best-selling book, In Defense of Food shows how a combination of uncertain and incomplete science, politicians, and clever ...

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ANIMAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

I am enjoying my new subscription to VegNews, a bimonthly for only $20 a year reporting nutrition and health vegan news “newsfoodplanettravelbuzz.” Here’s its home page:

http://vegnews.com/

VegNews is an award-winning vegan magazine and website packed with recipes, travel, news, food, reviews, and so much more.

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National Pizza Chain Now Offers Vegan Cheese. By Veronica ...

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Vegan + Vegetarian Jobs

Vegan Grill Team Member / Los Angeles, CA ... Macro ...

Here’s some contents from the Jan/Feb 2016 number:
The Politics of Cheese, Veganism Saved My Life (five people whose plant-based diets improved their health), The 300-Pound Vegan (the best protein comes from plants). Main focus on food, nutrition, and health but its central principle—avoiding all animal products—includes compassion for animals and for the planet's atmosphere and soil. For example, see p. 20 on the men's vegan boutique in Brooklyn, "Brave GentleMan"; the vegan handbag company, Freedom of Animals; and Whole Foods Market dropping rabbit meat.

Letter to VegNews’ “Your Say” 12-26-15

Although I am glad to be a new subscriber to VegNews, but your contents are disappointingly almost exclusively about nutrition and health. That is why I dropped my subscription to Vegetarian Times. In your Nov.-Dec. number you did report briefly on favorite animal organizations and the ethics of the chocolate industry, but the Jan.-Feb. 2016 number offers even less. In VegNews I hoped to contact the full range of vegetarianism—from nutrition and health, the harms of industrial food industry, the rights of and protection of animals, to a sustainable, plant (and solar, wind)-based civilization.

Dick Bennett

PBS, Nature, “Animal Odd Couples” (1-6-16)

Friendships between a dog and a deer, duck and turtle, horse and goat and more. Animals have complex emotions and experience not only individual but also group relationships that are like human, just less complex. Large implications: all relationships are possible, and we should not torture or kill animals.

“Meet the Odd Couples” http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/animal-odd-couples-meet-the-odd-couples/8025/

Essay on Vegan Ethics forwarded by Morgan MacDonald

Here's something to share with people who think "helping people" takes priority over helping animals by not eating them:
For a Peaceful World: Stop Killing Animals by Deborah Bird

Vegginess is the single most important thing anyone can do to change the world. Supporting any kind of violence, increases the vortex of violence from which all violence receives its food. I once listened to an extremely scholarly lecture given by a Hare Krishna Sanyasi, who a Harvard educated linguist. He spoke in a scholarly manner, which was well documented about how cow slaughter causes war. It was a long time ago, so I can't remember the details. One of the primary examples he use is India. The Hindu population of India is vegetarian. As a result, I believe he said that India has never instigated a war. His name is Hrydyannada; his website is: http://www.hdgoswami.com/. I am sure he would love it if you contacted him and explained your interest. He will be able to explain to you the vast and imposing non-physical impacts of people becoming vegetarians. Deborah Bird 12-14-15 [On the importance of understanding the full, numerous contexts of violence in US domestic and foreign policies and practices, see my newsletters on Violence. Here is the most recent: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/12/us-violence-newsletter-10-dec-20-2015.html --Dick]

VEGETARIANISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Your Festive Meal Could Be More Damaging Than a Long-Haul Flight by George Monbiot, The Guardian, Dec. 25, 2015: One kilo of protein from either beef or lamb reared on a British hill farm causes more greenhouse gas emissions than a passenger flying from London to New York. We miscalculate environmental risk; eating certain meats is about the worst thing you can do to the planet.

Read the Article http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/34177-your-festive-meal-could-be-more-damaging-than-a-long-haul-flight

US gives meat producers a pass on climate change emissions

By Nathan Halverson / December 22, 2015
[From the arrogance of US exceptionalism and power comes double standards and the refusal to carry out our side of the emissions agreement while holding others accountable. –Dick]

If the Paris climate pact is going to succeed at staving off climate change disaster, the 195 participating countries will need to achieve a difficult feat – trust.

Yet the U.S. government already is failing to implement its own rules on tracking emissions. It is not collecting emission reports from one of the country’s largest sources of greenhouse gases: meat production.

In its latest appropriations bill passed Friday, Congress renewed a provision that prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from requiring emission reports from livestock producers. The move came only days after U.S. officials stressed to other governments the importance of accurate reporting at the Paris climate negotiations.

The U.S. government collects the reports from 41 other sectors, making the meat industry the only major source of greenhouse gases in the country excluded from filing annual reports.

Livestock producers, which include meat and dairy farming, account for about 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions around the world. That’s more than all the world’s exhaust-belching cars, buses, boats and trains combined.

The EPA has called the emission reports “essential in guiding the steps we take to address the problem of climate change.”

As a result of having inadequate information on livestock producers, the U.S. government is vastly underreporting its true greenhouse gas emissions, according to a growing consensus of American scientists.

In 2013, a team of researchers from Harvard University, Stanford University, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and elsewhere worked together to collect air samples and analyze actual emissions near large livestock operations such as cattle feeding lots in California, Nebraska and Iowa. They found that greenhouse gas emissions from livestock were twice as bad as what the EPA estimated. Subsequent studies have found similar results.

The United States is underreporting its total greenhouse gas emissions to the United Nations by about 4 percent per year as a result of bad livestock data – nearly equivalent to the entire emissions of Spain, according to the 2013 study.
The EPA’s ban on collecting reports from the U.S. livestock industry, which is the second-largest in the world behind only China, goes back several years.

In 2008, Congress instructed the EPA to draft regulation requiring the country’s largest greenhouse gas emitters to file annual reports. The following year, the EPA finalized those regulations, requiring dozens of industries – including large-scale livestock producers – to report their emissions.

But the EPA never received a single report from meat producers. In 2010, when the first reports were to be collected, Congress attached a provision to the EPA’s budget. It prohibited the agency from spending money to collect emission reports on livestock producers – specifically the greenhouse gases emitted from some of the 335 million tons of manure produced each year.

Monitoring and curbing greenhouse gases from livestock is considered vital to stopping global warming, according to scientists.

A recent report published in the Environmental Law Reporter cited several studies showing that forecasted growth in worldwide agricultural emissions alone – unless curbed – will push global temperatures past the tipping point.

“Global demand for livestock products is projected to grow 70%, if not double, by 2050,” wrote Debra Donahue, law professor at the University of Wyoming College of Law. “Plainly, neither the United States nor the earth can continue on this track, yet this is precisely our course.”

Decomposing manure is one source of livestock emissions. Technology exists to capture the methane and turn it into electricity, although it is rarely used in the United States. The other major source of emissions are the cows themselves, which belch and fart methane. Scientists also have developed methods for reducing methane emissions from the cows, such as changing their diets. But there is little incentive for large-scale farms to adopt these practices in the U.S.

Under current regulation, there are even disincentives. If a livestock operator were to capture the methane, turning it into electricity or another form of energy, it would then fall under climate change regulations. By doing nothing and simply allowing the methane pollution to escape into the atmosphere, livestock operators do not have to deal with the EPA greenhouse gas rules.

Methane is 72 times more potent than carbon dioxide when it comes to trapping heat and increasing global temperatures. But it stays in the air for a far shorter period of time – it mostly
Scientists say changing our food system will have a quicker impact on stopping climate change than altering our fossil fuel habits.

But politicians and even environmental groups are afraid to talk about it because they fear a backlash from the meat-loving public, according to a 2014 report by Chatham House, a London-based think tank. The report found governments such as the United States were doing little about the problem and that “recognition of the livestock sector as a significant contributor to climate change is markedly low.”

Sometimes, it’s even hostile. In 2013, the head of the EPA, Gina McCarthy, testified to the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kent., wanted assurances that regulators would not monitor livestock.

**Massie:** There is one other issue that affects rural America that just has us scratching our heads. I hope it is an urban legend. Is anybody in the EPA really looking at regulating cow flatulence?

**McCarthy:** Not that I am aware of.

**Massie:** (He then asks more broadly about methane emissions from cattle.) Can you assure us today that you are not investigating that?

**McCarthy:** I am not looking at that.

**Massie:** Nobody in the EPA is?

**McCarthy:** Not that I am aware of.

U.S. politicians seem concerned about voter backlash if they appear critical of U.S. eating preferences. Americans eat more meat per capita than any other nation.

However, for meat producers, the cost to better monitor emissions appears to be insignificant, at least according to the country’s largest pork producer. WH Group, a Hong Kong-based company that owns about 1 in 4 American pigs, wrote an 1,100-page prospectus to investors that included a tidbit about how it has never filed a greenhouse gas report to the EPA because of the annual intervention by U.S. lawmakers.

Yet the company’s report said the cost to disclose emissions to the EPA likely would be negligible to the company’s bottom line.
It is not expected that such costs would have a material adverse effect on our hog production operations in the U.S.

Big companies like Smithfield Foods, which is owned by WH Group, could implement monitoring technology, and it would cover much of the emissions from U.S. livestock. The largest 2 percent of all livestock farms now produce more than 40 percent of all animals, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

But for now, as a result of congressional action, the world is left guessing about American cow farts, even as U.S. officials demand accuracy from other nations. If the 194 other participants to the Paris climate pact think that stinks, who can blame them?

What if Everyone in the World Became a Vegetarian?
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/feed_the_world/2014/05/meat_eating_and_climate_change_vegetarians_impact_on_the_economy_antibiotics.html

Calculating the chaos and the changed climate.

By L.V. Anderson

Treating yourself to vegan burgers with sweet potato and chickpeas isn't just a delicious indulgence; it could help save the planet.

The meat industry is one of the top contributors to climate change, directly and indirectly producing about 14.5 percent of the world’s anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and global meat consumption is on the rise. People generally like eating meat—when poor people start making more money, they almost invariably start buying more meat. As the population grows and eats more animal products, the consequences for climate change, pollution, and land use could be catastrophic.

Attempts to reduce meat consumption usually focus on baby steps—Meatless Monday and “vegan before 6,” passable fake chicken, and in vitro burgers. If the world is going to eat less meat, it’s going to have to be coaxed and cajoled into doing it, according to conventional wisdom.

But what if the convincing were the easy part? Suppose everyone in the world voluntarily stopped eating meat, en masse. I know it’s not actually going to happen. But the best-case scenario from a climate perspective would be if all 7 billion of us woke up one day and realized that PETA was right all along. If this collective change of spirit came to pass, like Peter Singer’s dearest fantasy come true, what would the ramifications be?
At least one research team has run the numbers on what global veganism would mean for the planet. In 2009 researchers from the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency published their projections of the greenhouse gas consequences if humanity came to eat less meat, no meat, or no animal products at all. The researchers predicted that universal veganism would reduce agriculture-related carbon emissions by 17 percent, methane emissions by 24 percent, and nitrous oxide emissions by 21 percent by 2050. Universal vegetarianism would result in similarly impressive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. What’s more, the Dutch researchers found that worldwide vegetarianism or veganism would achieve these gains at a much lower cost than a purely energy-focused intervention involving carbon taxes and renewable energy technology. The upshot: Universal eschewal of meat wouldn’t single-handedly stave off global warming, but it would go a long way toward mitigating climate change.

[Negative side-effects of rapid decrease of carnivore diet.]

The Dutch researchers didn’t take into account what else might happen if everyone gave up meat. “In this scenario study we have ignored possible socio-economic implications such as the effect of health changes on GDP and population numbers,” wrote Elke Stehfest and her colleagues. “We have not analyzed the agro-economic consequences of the dietary changes and its implications; such consequences might not only involve transition costs, but also impacts on land prices. The costs that are associated with this transition might obviously offset some of the gains discussed here.”

People would band together to form communes, squat on the former pasture land, and adopt a lifestyle of free love.

Indeed. If the world actually did collectively go vegetarian or vegan over the course of a decade or two, it’s reasonable to think the economy would tank. According to “Livestock’s Long Shadow,” the influential 2006 U.N. report about meat’s devastating environmental effects, livestock production accounts for 1.4 percent of the world’s total GDP. The production and sale of animal products account for 1.3 billion people’s jobs, and 987 million of those people are poor. If demand for meat were to disappear overnight, those people’s livelihoods would disappear, and they would have to find new ways of making money. Now, some of them—like the industrial farmers who grow the corn that currently goes to feed animals on factory farms—would be in a position to adapt by shifting to in-demand plant-based food production. Others, namely the “huge number of people involved in livestock for lack of an alternative, particularly in Africa and Asia,” would probably be out of luck. (Things would be better for the global poor involved in the livestock trade if everyone continued to consume
other animal products, such as eggs, milk, and wool, than if everyone decided to go vegan.) As the economy adjusted to the sudden lack of demand for meat products, we would expect to see widespread suffering and social unrest.

A second major ramification of global vegetarianism would be expanses of new land available. Currently, grazing land for ruminants—cows and their kin—accounts for a staggering 26 percent of the world’s ice-free land surface. The Dutch scientists predict that 2.7 billion hectares (about 10.4 million square miles) of that grazing land would be freed up by global vegetarianism, along with 100 million hectares (about 386,000 square miles) of land that’s currently used to grow crops for livestock. Not all of this land would be suitable for humans, but surely it stands to reason that this sudden influx of new territory would make land much cheaper on the whole.

A third major ramification of global vegetarianism would be that the risk of antibiotic-resistant infections would plummet. Currently, the routine use of antibiotics in animal farming to promote weight gain and prevent illness in unsanitary conditions is a major contributor to antibiotic resistance. Last year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that at least 2 million Americans fall ill from antibiotic-resistant pathogens every year and declared that “much of antibiotic use in animals is unnecessary and inappropriate and makes everyone less safe.” The overprescription of antibiotics for humans plays a big role in antibiotic resistance, but eradicating the factory farms from which many antibiotic-resistant bacteria emerge would make it more likely that we could continue to count on antibiotics to cure serious illnesses. (For a sense of what a “post-antibiotics future” would look like, read Maryn McKenna’s amazing article on the topic for Medium and her story about a possible solution for chicken farming in Slate.)

So what would be the result, in an all-vegetarian world, of the combination of widespread unemployment and economic disruption, millions of square miles of available land, and a lowered risk of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea? I can only conclude that people would band together to form communes in order to escape capitalism’s ruthlessness, squat on the former pasture land, and adopt a lifestyle of free love.

I kid. Mostly. It’s easy to get carried away when you’re speculating about unlikely scenarios—and sudden intercontinental vegetarianism is very much an unlikely scenario.

But if the result of a worldwide shift to a plant-based diet sounds like a right-winger’s worst nightmare, it’s worth pointing out that continuing to eat as much meat as we currently do promises to result in a left-winger’s worst nightmare: In a world of untrammeled global
warming, where disastrous weather events are routine, **global conflicts will increase**, only the wealthy will thrive, and **the poor will suffer**.

Let’s try a **middle path**. We’re not all going to become vegetarians, but most of us can stop giving our money to factory farms—the biggest and worst offenders, from a pollution and public health perspective. We can eat less meat than we currently do, especially meat from methane-releasing ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats, etc.). Just because a sudden global conversion to vegetarianism would have jarring effects doesn’t mean we can’t gradually reduce our consumption of meat, giving the market time to adjust. We not only can; we must. After all, with the world’s population slated to grow to 9 billion by 2050, we’ll be needing to take some of the 25 percent of the world’s land area back from the cows.

**POPULATION GROWTH**

We must stabilize and then reduce population if we are to stop global warming. See OMNI’s over-population newsletters—its latest: **OMNI OVER-POPULATION, GROWTH, CO2 AND TEMPERATURE RISING, SPECIES EXTINCTIONS, HUNGER, CLIMATE CHANGE NEWSLETTER #8**, [http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/11/population-choicehunger-climate.html](http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/11/population-choicehunger-climate.html)

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Representatives of Population Action International

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On Condoms

**Population: An Overlooked Factor in Climate Change Solutions**

From: **Population Action International**

*Addressing global population growth can benefit people and the climate*

by Kathleen Mogelgaard

First published in the Winter 2009 Issue of *Outdoor America Magazine*. 
A Fragile Interconnected System

I've always loved being outdoors. As a kid growing up in rural New York, I spent hours roaming the woods around my family's house. Our vacations involved hiking, camping, and swimming in freshwater lakes. In college, I was delighted to find an internship at New Mexico's Carlsbad Caverns National Park. I was intrigued by the geological mysteries of cave formation, and became enamored with the Mexican free-tailed bats that were struggling to survive in a nursery colony there. As I studied the natural history of the cave and its inhabitants, I came to see how fragile the entire system was: how the touch of our hands could change a cave formation forever; how the very flow of air in and out of the cave could make or break the habitat for bats; how things that happened on the surface of the earth—seemingly mundane decisions about elevator shafts, garbage disposal, and plumbing—always left their mark in some way, even 700 feet underground.

The more I studied the more I understood that our whole planet-like Carlsbad Caverns—is a fragile, connected system. The quality of water in one community is affected by agricultural practices far upstream; sulfur and nitrogen from a smokestack in one state can travel to another and kill its trees; an innocent release of ballast water from a ship can inadvertently introduce a species from a different continent that will completely alter a lake's ecosystem and, by extension, the economic foundation of surrounding towns.

Much of the destruction of the natural world has occurred because we don't understand these intimate connections between human and natural systems, or because we begin to understand them only after we observe the damage of our actions. We're lucky that the natural world is often resilient and forgiving—that we've been given a second chance to get things right after we mess them up, as we did with acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer, and the use of harmful chemicals like DDT.

But how often will we get second chances? What happens when the actions we take today-like burning huge quantities of fossil fuel-produce consequences that we don't fully grasp because they will be felt by people separated from us by space and time? The broad, sweeping consequences of unabated global warming—more intense hurricanes and typhoons, rising sea levels, species extinctions, drought, heat waves, major disruptions to agriculture—would be felt most keenly by a generation with very little responsibility for creating them. Will
they get a second chance?

The Climate Challenge Requires A Comprehensive Set of Solutions

At the most basic level, we understand the global trends that have contributed to the problem of climate change. The most immediate and obvious cause is the build-up of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere. What are the driving forces behind this build-up? The world's population has grown dramatically over the last 200 years, and along with it has come a rapid expansion of economic activity and energy use.

We have taken huge quantities of coal and oil-substances created and accumulated by Mother Nature over millennia-and burned them up in the briefest of moments. We have upset the natural carbon balance so significantly that we are beginning to alter the entire global climate system. The models that predict just how far we could go with this unprecedented global experiment are truly frightening, and we are only beginning to understand that the solutions will require entirely new relationships between the world's human and natural systems.

The vast scale of the climate change challenge requires a comprehensive set of solutions that can address each of the forces that contribute to the build-up of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere. We need bold strategies to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by tapping into cleaner energy sources like wind, solar, and geothermal. We need to develop and spread technologies that will help us meet our needs-and allow for continued economic development in the poorest countries of the world-while using less energy. We need to better protect and manage forests to store carbon dioxide, and find additional ways to lock up excess greenhouse gases.

And we need to address population growth. Not because ending population growth alone can solve the climate crisis, but because solving the climate crisis will be a lot harder if we continue to grow at our present pace.

We Know How to Encourage Slower Population Growth

We haven't fully grasped how quickly our planet has become crowded-and how our needs and desires have increased along with our numbers. When my grandmother was born in
Michigan in 1915, the U.S. population was about 99 million people and the world population was around 2 billion. Today, both the U.S. and the world populations have more than tripled. This growth has brought with it an even greater expansion of the economy and energy use. And we continue to grow. Each year, the world's population increases by about 78 million people-equivalent to the combined populations of New York, California, and Florida.

More of us means more people driving cars, more wildlife habitat overtaken by subdivisions, more land needed to grow food, and more water drawn from our lakes and aquifers.

Research suggests that, globally, for every 1 percent increase in population size, there is a 1 percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions (controlling for economic growth and technological factors). These relationships are not simple, of course. Population is growing fastest in parts of the world where an individual's environmental impact is relatively low. Ethiopia, for example, has a very high population growth rate-and if their current growth rate continues, Ethiopia's population would double from today's 80 million to 160 million in about thirty years. However, for every 1,000 people in Ethiopia, there are only two motorized vehicles (compared to 787 motorized vehicles per 1,000 Americans). The average American emits about two hundred times more carbon dioxide than the average Ethiopian.

But as developing countries continue on a path of economic growth and industrialization, their per capita carbon dioxide emissions will increase. Last January, Tata Motors in India introduced the "world's cheapest car"-the $2,500 Nano-in an effort to extend the dream of car ownership to more than 1 billion Indians (currently, there are about 18 motorized vehicles for every 1,000 people in India). Can we blame Indians or Ethiopians for striving for a standard of living that we take for granted?

Far from being an inevitable force, the extent of future population growth is shrouded in uncertainty. United Nations demographers estimate that the world's population will grow from today's 6.7 billion people to somewhere between 7.8 billion and 10.8 billion by 2050. That's a very wide range, and the path of our growth will be responsive to policies and programs that are put into place now.

The good news is that we know how to encourage slower population growth. There are three significant interventions, each desirable in their own right, that have been clearly linked to lower birth rates in many parts of the world. These include expanding education, especially for
the world's girls; enhancing economic opportunities for women; and providing access to
voluntary reproductive health and family planning services, so that women and men can freely
decide the number and timing of their children.

These are interventions that require investment. Unfortunately, our investment as a nation,
particularly in the area of reproductive health, has declined over the past decade. The United
States was once a world leader in providing information, services, and support to developing
country governments that wanted to expand health services to their populations. Our
commitment to this work has faltered, even as the number of women around the world who
would like to plan their families has increased. Studies show that more than 200 million
women in the developing world prefer to delay or end childbearing but don't have meaningful
access to modern contraceptives-something we take for granted in the United States.
Addressing this unmet need for family planning services around the world would have multiple
benefits, such as reducing maternal and infant death, preventing unintended pregnancies,
and slowing population growth.

Slower population growth would have significant benefits in addressing climate change. When
combined with effective renewable energy and energy efficiency technology, slower
population growth would help to put the brakes on fossil fuel-related emissions growth, relieve
pressure on forests and other natural resources that absorb carbon dioxide, buy time for the
spread of green technology, and reduce the scale of human vulnerability to climate change
impacts.

Win-Win Solutions

Separately, both population growth and climate change can be seen as big, scary problems
due to their scale and potential for changing the world as we know it. Each of these
challenges involves complicated, politically charged issues-things like sex education,
contraception, soaring energy costs, and international cooperation.

But when we are able to look at these challenges as component parts of a single, larger
system, solutions that produce positive outcomes in more than one area begin to emerge.
These win-win solutions-like slowing population growth through addressing unmet needs for
family planning around the world-are powerful. They have the potential to build unique
partnerships that can mobilize people and resources behind them. These are the solutions
that carry the greatest hope for creating a more sustainable future.

I sometimes wonder how many kids today can run around in wilderness like I did when I was growing up. When I recently visited my childhood home, I was dismayed to see that much of the woods had given way to subdivisions. That is one of the consequences, I suppose, of a growing population. But a recent visit to Carlsbad Caverns was inspiring. The desert and caves were still beautiful and fascinating, and the Mexican free-tailed bats were no longer struggling, thanks to reductions in the use of DDT in Mexico where the bats spend the winter months. I believe our understanding of both natural and human systems is improving, and our will to act when we find win-win solutions is growing. Perhaps it has been a long time coming, but I have faith we are moving in the right direction. And none too soon, because with a challenge as immense as climate change, we won't get any second chances.

-Kathleen Mogelgaard is senior program manager for population and climate change at Population Action International, one of the Izaak Walton League's partners in the Population and Environment Coalition.

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Dick Bennett

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