

Food, Climate Change, *Laudato Si*, Food Insecurity and Food Injustice

The Impact of Food on the Carbon Footprint

The world's food system is responsible for one quarter of the planet's annual greenhouse emissions. These emissions come from raising and harvesting plants and animals, the production of plant and animal products, as well as the processing, packaging and delivery of food. The largest impact is from meat, especially beef and lamb, and dairy. The "simple" choice is to adopt diets rich in plants and to minimize food waste. Low impact diets are healthier and minimizing food waste is more economical.

Unhealthy and unsustainable diets are a global threat. Dietary trends and projected population growth will exacerbate the risk widespread starvation. Climate change migration is taking place around the world, because of crop failure and food injustice is found in all countries. Food waste is particularly acute in the United States, where the food system is controlled by agribusiness that produces large volumes of food in a rigid system and produces large volumes of waste while low income people go hungry. More food is not the same as less hunger. The entire food system needs reevaluation. Transformation to healthy diets is necessary to reach sustainability goals and address the causes of chronic diseases related to bad food habits. To learn more visit

Your Questions about Food and Climate Change Answered

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/30/dining/climate-change-food-eating-habits.html>

Resolve to eat a healthy diet and minimize food waste. Shop at local farmers markets and local stores that offer foods grown and/or prepared in Tidewater. You will enjoy healthy food and support local farmers. Some local options include:

Farmers Markets of We Dig Tidewater, LLC.

<https://www.norfolkfarmersmarket.com/>

- Hampton Blvd.
- Harvest Market @ O'Connor's Brewing Co.
- East Beach

Westside Produce and Provisions

<https://www.westsideproduceandprovisions.com/>

To find more options visit the Virginia Farmers Market Association

<https://vafma.org/>

***Laudato Si* and Ecological Conversion**

Laudato Si points to the need for education on issues related to climate change and calls the world's people to refocus. The most difficult change is to begin viewing the wealth and resources of this planet as other living organisms with which we must interact and share the earth, our common home, rather than as commodities at our disposal. Pope Francis reminds us that, "Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies."¹

Laudato Si calls everyone to a new solidarity with the vulnerable in the world who suffer disproportionately from climate related problems. In *Laudato Si* Pope Francis challenges everyone to adopt an integral ecology that flows from his understanding that “everything is closely related” and that “today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis.” We are being called to make a radical change and making this change will require prayer, learning, a change in personal habits and political action. The problems are global and local and everything is connected. For the future of the planet and justice for the vulnerable we are called to act.

Looking Locally: Issues of Food Injustice and Food Insecurity in Hampton Roads

The only grocery store in the St. Paul’s quadrant closed in June, creating a food desert in downtown Norfolk. It is unclear how the vulnerable community that depended on the Save-a-Lot store will get healthy food in the future. Low income residents and seniors will need to rely on public transportation to get to a proper store and to bring the groceries home. The struggle will be too much for many and they will go without proper food. The closure of Save-a-Lot is a visible example of food insecurity in Norfolk; however it is not the only one. In a recent survey 25% of military families reported they do not have reliable access to food. In addition during the pandemic food banks have been overwhelmed with requests for food and school meals have not been readily available. Food insecurity is widespread and it should not exist in the richest country in the world.

Taking action: FEAST Virginia

Food injustice and food insecurity are complex issues. Making healthy food available and finding the resources to pay for it are only part of the solution. FEAST Virginia has been organized in Hampton Roads to address the issues of preparing nourishing and economical food that empowers healthy eating. FEAST Virginia (<https://www.feastva.org>) provides food education and training to teach people how to prepare easy, healthy and inexpensive meals. “FEAST Virginia is an innovative, community solution to the very real problem of hunger in Hampton.” FEAST Virginia is another force for good in our community.

To bring us closer to an ecological conversion the Global Catholic Climate Movement has developed a *Laudato Si* Pledge that commits us to three actions:

- Pray for and with creation
- Live more simply
- Advocate to protect our common home

Consider visiting the Global Catholic Climate Movement (<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/>) and making a commitment to care for our common home.

¹Gauthier, Josianne. **Agroecology: Radically Changing How We Face Food Insecurity and Climate Change**, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/10/16/agroecology-radically-changing-how-we-face-food-insecurity-and-climate-change> [visited 6 August 2020]