

Veggie Monday : Broccoli is sexy!

You want to know why?

Once a week, there is a special menu in the canteen of the Athenée du Luxembourg, the Lycée Michel Rodange, and the Lycée Aline Mayrisch. In the framework of Veggie Monday, Restopolis cooks exclusively vegetarian alternatives to show what and how many delicious dishes can be prepared without meat. Veggie Monday was introduced because the majority of students from these high schools expressed the desire for it in a survey. But why is it actually more sustainable and more ecological? We have compiled a few facts for you here!



1

Meat production has a high land use...

About 70 percent of the total agricultural land is used for livestock farming.

- This percentage is so high because space is needed not only to house the animals but also to produce the feed for these animals.

One billion (1,000,000,000) tons of soy and corn are fed to livestock every year. By feeding animals, such as cattle, with soy, they gain proteins quickly for rapid growth. However, soy cultivation not only requires a lot of water but also takes up a significant amount of space. Particularly in South American countries, vast areas are dedicated to soy monocultures to meet the demand for animal feed in the meat production industry. This is a primary reason for the dangerous deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

To produce a piece of meat, one must first cultivate feed. **If less meat is consumed, the space can be used to grow more vegetables, legumes, and other foods that we can directly consume instead of first being processed into animal feed.** Additionally, this reclaimed space can be used to replant new forest areas, benefiting biodiversity and the climate.

If in a school with 400 students, for one year, meat is not consumed once a week, one could save an area equivalent to

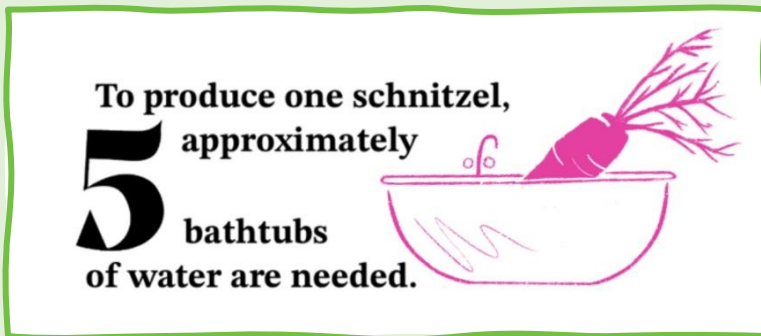
65 football fields
that would not need to be planted
with soy.



2. ...and water use.

Even though the largest part of the Earth's surface is covered by (salt) water, fresh water, essential for drinking, remains a precious resource: **only 3% of the Earth's water is actually freshwater**. Of these 3%, only 31% is usable because the rest is trapped in polar ice caps, glaciers, or permafrost. Especially in the summer, when there is prolonged dry weather, we often approach the limits of groundwater supply.

70% of our freshwater usage is attributed to agriculture. The water consumption varies depending on how meat is produced. This includes considering what the animals eat and drink



(soy from South American production has a significantly high water footprint), whether they are kept in a confined space or outdoors, and the duration of their breeding.

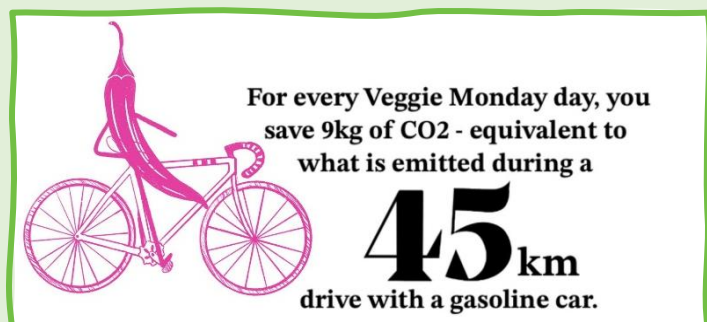
Just like land use, water can be used more efficiently for food production and conserved when

meat consumption is reduced. The way we currently produce meat requires much more plant cultivation to feed the animals than if we were to use these plants directly for human consumption.

3. Meat production has a high emission of greenhouse gases.

The anthropogenic climate change is driven by the excessive emission of greenhouse gases (CO₂, Methane, etc.) into the Earth's atmosphere. These gases trap heat, preventing thermal radiation from the Earth's surface from escaping back into space. Similar to a greenhouse, sunlight enters our atmosphere, but the heat is retained within.

Our economy heavily relies on emitting greenhouse gases. The food sector is no exception: according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), **between 21 and 37 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the food sector.**



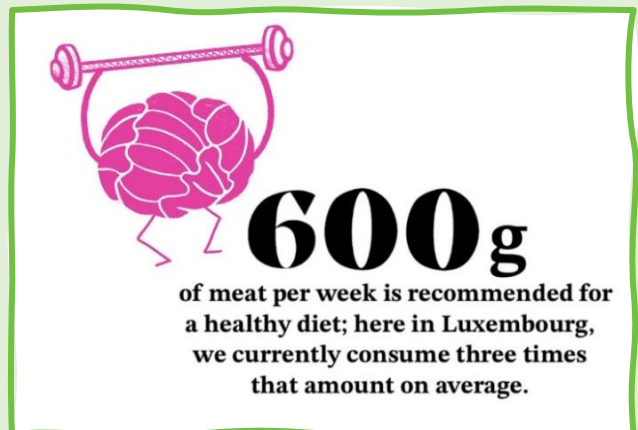
For example, in the production of meat, animals need to be transported, large barns need to be heated in winter, and tractors are driven. Additionally, cows and other ruminants emit methane, especially in industrial-scale factory farming, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas accumulation. **The production of plant-based foods is much less intensive in greenhouse gas emissions.**

4. Eating less meat is healthy

Our society consumes a lot of meat. The 'German Society for Nutrition (DGE)' recommends **not eating more than 600 grams of meat per week**. In Luxembourg, an average person consumes 80 kg of meat per year (as of 2020), which is almost three times the recommended amount. Excessive meat consumption increases the risk of diabetes, heart, and cancer diseases.

A healthy diet is balanced and varied. According to the Ministry of Health, **an adult should consume around 5 portions of fruits and vegetables each day and 1-2 portions of meat/fish/eggs/vegetarian alternatives**. If one chooses to continue consuming meat and fish, it is advisable to opt for organically produced options, as they are considered healthier and more environmentally friendly.

Is a completely vegetarian/vegan diet healthy? Eating a completely vegetarian/vegan diet is healthy, yes - if balanced with enough essential nutrients and healthy foods. However, it is advisable to consult a doctor or an official website if you are considering adopting such an eating style. This way, you can learn about the important nutrients for a balanced diet without meat and the foods where you can find them.



It's your turn!



According to a survey by the Ministry of Agriculture (2023), more than half of Luxembourg residents have reduced their meat consumption in recent years. This trend is also noticeable in schools: after a trial phase of Veggie Monday clearly showed that a significant number of students go to the canteen on Mondays, every school has decided to maintain the concept.

Do you wish that the Veggie Monday project is also started in your school? Then participate in this survey and encourage all your friends to do so! We, from move. (the youth group at Mouvement Ecologique), and CNEL (Conférence Nationale des Élèves du Luxembourg), support you in making your school canteen more sustainable.