Research paper on food consumption

Environment

List of foods

Fruits

- Apples
- Oranges
- Bananas
- Pineapple
- Watermelons

Vegetables

- Carrots
- Lettuce
- Cabbage
- Lentils
- Potatoes

Meats

- Beef
- Bacon
- Pork
- Chicken

Dairy products

- Ordinary fresh milk
- Cream
- Cheese
- Butter

Cereals

- Wheat

- Barley
- Rice
- Beans
- Peas

Top ten foods eaten

1. 1000 grams of beef every week
2. 800 grams of French fries every week
3. 400 grams of buttered whole flour bread per week
4. Seven glasses of fresh milk per week
5. 600 grams of breakfast cereal per week
6. Five bananas per week
7. Three oranges per week
8. 800 grams of Chicken per week
9. 1000 grams of rice per week
10. 250 grams of butter per week

Three major foods and their sources

Beef

Beef is produced in most of the states in America. Since the animal production requires a relatively warm weather, most of the beef production is concentrated in the northern part of the continent and especially in Canada where its large scale beef farming is done.

Wheat

Just like beef, wheat is produced in most parts of America. The northern part of the continent however, is a major producer of this commodity. Major production of wheat is done in California and the Great Plains.

Bananas

Bananas are not widely grown in the United States. Almost all the bananas consumed in the United States are imported from the Latin American states of Costa Rica, Colombia and Ecuador. This is because the topographical and climatic set up of these regions is quite suitable for the production of this crop.

Environmental impacts

Beef

Production of beef requires a large piece of grazing land. This means that a lot of land will be put under ranches for the purpose of rearing the beef cattle. This leads to land degradation. The destruction of arable land for the production of beef also leads to loss of biodiversity.

Livestock sector is regarded one of the most significant contributors to serious environmental problems. In a report published by the Livestock, Environment and development initiative (2006), livestock sector was ranked the second largest contributor to environmental degradation.

Animals feed on grains and fodder and require a lot of water both for their rearing and slaughter. Slaughtering animals requires gallons of water for each animal and this is not environmentally viable in areas where water is a scarce commodity.

Wheat and bananas

These crops require a large intake of fertilizers and other chemicals in the form of pesticides and herbicides. The production of theses fertilizers requires natural gas and petroleum. These items are not renewable and thus

a greater uptake of the two may lead to the reduction of their deposits. The manufacturing plants of the fertilizers lead to emission of green house gases to the environment which is hazardous for climate change.

Fertilizers applied to the wheat crops and a banana plant is not exhaustively used. The remainder is pollutes the soil while the rest evaporates to the air and usually results to acid rain in many parts of the world.

Run off of fertilizers remnants into the marine areas leads to alterations of the aquatic ecosystem by promoting the growth of some species of plants and bacteria that may be harmful to aquatic and marine life.

Foot print results

Based on the foot print calculator, this lifestyle would require 5. 2 planet earths for its sustainance. it will also require approximately 23. 3 global acres of the earths productive land. On exploring scenarios, the following results were found.

Eating fewer animal products would reduce the human foot print by 0. 4 from 5. 2 planet earths to 4. 8 planet earths.

By purchasing products that are less packaged and that are made from recycled materials, the human foot print would reduce by the same 0. 4 planet earths to bring it to a total of 4. 9 planet earths.

The reduced use of planes for holidays and taking of local holidays would reduce the human foot print by a mere 0. 1 planet earths to bring the total required number of planet earths to 5. 2 planet earths.

Of scenarios explored, eating fewer animal products would reduce the foot print with the biggest margin of 0. 4 planet earths. Americans really love animal products. This is witnessed by the obesity and weight problems reported in almost every household. A campaign on the importance of reducing the consumption of animal products would not only reduce the foot print but also help Americans combat the health problems associated with animal products.

Reduced use of packaged products is also a feasible possibility. Americans should adapt the use of fresh products and reduce the quantity of processed and packaged products that they consume. This is not a very easy case though. It will require the use of advanced practices to increase food productivity in the farms (Harvey 1997)

In the case of the use of air transport, it may not be very easy to convince the average American to avoid the usual holiday abroad. The expected reduction in foot print is however quite minimal.

Conclusion

Food consumption as noted has far reaching impacts on the environment in general. Even with these conservative amounts of foods consumed by this household, we still need much more planet earths to support this rather reserved lifestyle. The impacts that result from these lifestyles is that pollution is increased, more land is more land is required to support these lifestyles and there is also increased competition for resources in the world (David. 1997).

Since the size of planet earth is fixed, the demand for these commodities and the reduced supply as a result of the restricted earth’s production capacity has led to the increase in prices of these commodities and also the unavailability of some of these commodities in some parts of the world.

A lot of land has also been put into agricultural or farm use with the intention of meeting the increased demand for both agricultural and animal products. The demand for the land has led to the destruction of natural forests and conservations leading to loss of biodiversity and threat to wild life. People should check their habits and adopt more environmentally friendly consumption habits to save planet earth.

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