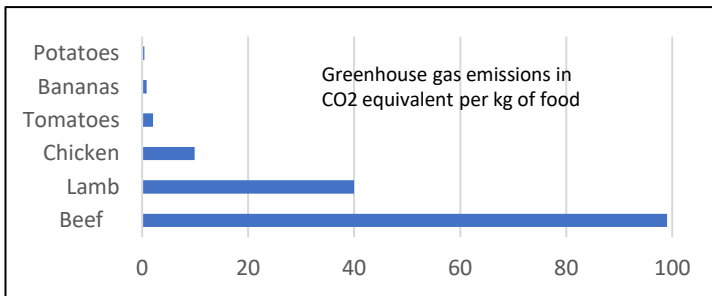




What are the problems?

The global food system accounts for around 1/3 of greenhouse gas emissions. These consist of carbon dioxide from deforestation; crop burning; the energy required to pick, process, pack, refrigerate and transport our food; nitrous oxide from nitrogen fertilisers; methane from livestock farming, rice production and waste. On top of that, livestock farming involves a large “carbon opportunity cost”. Growing plants to feed animals which we then kill and eat takes up far more land than simply growing and eating plants ourselves. If we reduced the amount of meat and dairy we ate the extra land could be allowed to return to its natural state and would store large amounts of carbon dioxide.

The soil in which we grow our food is suffering due to monoculture farming, overuse of pesticides, erosion and compaction and will produce less food if we continue using the same farming methods. These same causes, along with increasing the area of land used to grow food, are responsible for a dangerous loss of biodiversity – the web of interconnected species that sustains all life – including human life.



What can be done?

New technologies such as “precision fermentation” may provide a way to feed the world on much smaller areas of land, without the use of

fertilisers and pesticides. Large landowners such as the Church of England and the royal family could reduce the amount of their land used for pasture and livestock and release large tracts for “rewilding”. We can grow and buy more of our food locally to reduce food miles and increase food security.

What do you think?

- Could you imagine eating protein grown from yeast rather than cows?
- How else could we reduce the amount of land needed for food while still feeding the world’s population?
- The UK imports around half of its food. How can we achieve food security in the face of a changing climate?

What can we do to help?

- Eat more plants and eat less meat and dairy – Try having more meat & dairy free days. There are lots of ideas available from meatfreemondays.com
- Buy fresh local and organic produce when you can – At the Farmers market in Dorchester every Weds. Look out for the Weymouth Growers & Makers Market on the 2nd Sunday of the month in New Bond Street
- Try out a Veggie Box like riverford.co.uk
- Check out SW Coast Refills in St Thomas Street, Weymouth. This is a zero-waste shop which provides a refill service and a veg box scheme
- Start or join a food buying cooperative – to access fairtrade, organic products direct from suppliers. Bringing Back The Birds is an example operating in Rodwell / Westham communities
- Cook from scratch and batch cook, if you have the time – saves on the resources used when compared to producing processed or takeaway foods
- Avoid packaging – choose loose produce when possible. Return food wrapping to stores that collect it for recycling
- Get smarter at storing food – cook it if it is reaching its “use by” date. “Best before” dates are a guide. Make leftovers into a next meal. Buy seasonal produce, cook and freeze some for another time
- Grow some food – apply for an allotment from Weymouth Town Council. All residents are eligible. Grow some veg – an outside space in a sunny spot or on a light window sill
- On a tight budget and short of time? Choose frozen foods which are nutritious and there is less waste in their production

Keywords for further research

Biodiversity loss; food security; wildcard.land; rewilding; precision fermentation; sustainable Dorset; Zero Carbon Dorset; love food hate waste; Bridport food matters; sustainable food city; incredible edible; Dorset diet; seeding our future; community fridge