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From The Times

October 27, 2009

Climate chief Lord Stern: give up meat to save the planet



Methane is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a global warming gas

Robin Pagnamenta, Energy Editor

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People will need to turn vegetarian if the world is to conquer climate change, according to a leading authority on global warming.

In an [interview with The Times](#), Lord Stern of Brentford said: "Meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases. It puts enormous pressure on the world's resources. A vegetarian diet is better."

Direct emissions of methane from cows and pigs is a significant source of greenhouse gases. Methane is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a global warming gas.

Lord Stern, the author of the influential 2006 Stern Review on the cost of tackling global warming, said that a successful deal at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December would lead to soaring costs for meat and other foods that generate large quantities of greenhouse gases.



Times Archive, 1851: Meeting of the Vegetarian Society

Her Majesty's health was drunk with loud acclamations in iced water, milk and tea

Letter: Vegetarianism, 1879

Vegetarianism at the Health Exhibition, 1884

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He predicted that people's attitudes would evolve until meat eating became unacceptable. "I think it's important that people think about what they are doing and that includes what they are eating," he said. "I am 61 now and attitudes towards drinking and driving have changed radically since I was a student. People change their notion of what is responsible. They will increasingly ask about the carbon content of their food."

Lord Stern, a former chief economist of the World Bank and now I. G. Patel Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, warned that British taxpayers would need to contribute about £3 billion a year by 2015 to help poor countries to cope with the inevitable impact of climate change.

He also issued a clear message to President Obama that he must attend the meeting in Copenhagen in person in order for an effective

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the changes needed to address climate change, or of the importance of the UN meeting in Copenhagen from December 7 to December 18. "I am not sure that people fully understand what we are talking about or the kind of changes that will be necessary," he added.

Up to 20,000 delegates from 192 countries are due to attend the UN conference in the Danish capital. Its aim is to forge a deal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to prevent an increase in global temperatures of more than 2 degrees centigrade. Any increase above this level is expected to trigger runaway climate change, threatening the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Lord Stern said that Copenhagen presented a unique opportunity for the world to break free from its catastrophic current trajectory. He said that the world needed to agree to halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to 25 gigatonnes a year from the current level of 50 gigatonnes.

UN figures suggest that meat production is responsible for about 18 per cent of global carbon emissions, including the destruction of forest land for cattle ranching and the production of animal feeds such as soy.

Lord Stern, who said that he was not a strict vegetarian himself, was speaking on the eve of an all-parliamentary debate on climate change. His remarks provoked anger from the meat industry.

Jonathan Scurlock, of the National Farmers Union, said: "Going vegetarian is not a worldwide solution. It's not a view shared by the NFU. Farmers in this country are interested in evidence-based policymaking. We don't have a methane-free cow or pig available to us."

On average, a British person eats 50g of protein derived from meat each day — the equivalent of a chicken breast or a lamb chop. This is a relatively low level for a wealthy country but between 25 per cent and 50 per cent higher than the amount recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Su Taylor, a spokeswoman for the Vegetarian Society, welcomed Lord Stern's remarks. "What we choose to eat is one of the biggest factors in our personal impact on the environment," she said. "Meat uses up a lot of resources and a vegetarian diet consumes a lot less land and water. One of the best things you can do about climate change is reduce the amount of meat in your diet."

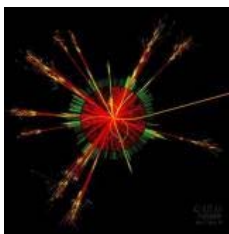
The UN has warned that meat consumption is on course to double by the middle of the century.

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Oscar Vilac wrote:

It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and for athletes. A vegetarian diet is defined as one that does not include meat (including fowl) or seafood, or products containing those foods. A lots articles reviews the current data related to key nutrients for vegetarians including protein, n-3 fatty acids, iron, zinc, iodine, calcium, and vitamins D and B-12. A vegetarian diet can meet current recommendations for all of these nutrients. In some cases, supplements or fortified foods can provide useful amounts of important nutrients. An evidence-based review showed that vegetarian diets can be nutritionally adequate in pregnancy and result in positive maternal and infant health outcomes. The results of an evidence-based review showed that a vegetarian diet is associated with a lower risk of death from ischemic heart disease. Vegetarians also appear to have lower low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, and lower rates of hypertension and type 2 diabetes than nonvegetarians. Furthermore, vegetarians tend to have a lower body mass index and lower overall cancer rates. Features of a vegetarian diet that may reduce risk of chronic disease include lower intakes of saturated fat and cholesterol and higher intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, soy products, fiber, and phytochemicals. The variability of dietary practices among vegetarians makes individual assessment of dietary adequacy essential. Be Veg , Go Green , Save The Planet!

October 29, 2009 5:25 AM GMT

RECOMMEND?

Pip Cheerio wrote:

Vegetarianism is dangerous for all alive.

Why?

Meat eating acts as a break on population growth.

Shifting resources from cattle raising to crops yields more food, but less nutritious food. Thus, more mouths can get fed, albeit without sufficient caloric intake and nutrient profile. With more mouths, comes more sex and more humans -- more humans living at the margin.

Having less humans would improve living for all. The surest way to achieve this is to reduce grain consumption as well as the promotion of vegetarianism.

Clearly, the simple-minded vegetarian or vegan do not get demographics and economics.

What is with the never-ending misanthropic push to enslave everyone, pushing them to subsistence that we witness in the suffering of poor Africans or Bangladesh?

October 29, 2009 4:33 AM GMT

RECOMMEND?

David Tong wrote:

I support it .
Be Veg , Go Green , Save The Planet !

October 28, 2009 10:35 PM GMT

RECOMMEND? (3)

Triantafyllos Pliakas wrote:

Following a vegetarian diet has several health benefits and meat consumption has been related to certain diseases. There is no question about that.

But what about fish consumption? What about B12 deficiency which affects certain age groups and populations across the globe?

I believe that being moderate and following a balanced diet, which may also include some meat and dairy products is the right answer.

October 28, 2009 10:08 PM GMT

RECOMMEND? (4)

Warren Boisselle wrote:

If cows eat vegetation and pass gas, bad for the planet, what do humans pass when they eat vegetation?

October 28, 2009 9:25 PM GMT

RECOMMEND? (3)

Bob Lucifer wrote:

If vegetarians want to do something for the plant they can start by topping themselves. Cows are not the problem, people are.

October 28, 2009 8:53 PM GMT

RECOMMEND? (3)

Graeme G wrote:

Deena P

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