

Name

Emma Garnett

Organisation

University of Cambridge

Question 6 - Hard-to-reduce sectors

It is vital to reduce meat production and consumption in the UK (particularly beef and lamb) to both reduce emissions and free up land for reforestation [Springmann et al (2018) Nature and CCC Land use report (2018)]. A shift to a more plant-based diet with more vegetables and pulses would also bring public health benefits. Although the British government has been reluctant to put forward policies to encourage more climate-friendly diets there are some relatively simple policies that could be effective without public backlash.

My PhD research has found that increasing the availability of vegetarian options (number of vegetarian options/total number of options) in university cafeteria is a highly effective strategy to increase the selection of vegetarian meals and reduce meat consumption. Doubling vegetarian options from 1 in 4 to 2 in 4 increased vegetarian sales by 41%, 62% and 79% in three cafeterias. This research has been selected as a top ten finalist in a global contest for innovative behavioural approaches to combat climate change [1, 2].

Policies to encourage serving more vegetarian and vegan options in public cafeterias could help reduce the UK's emissions, and is likely to be uncontroversial as meat options would not be removed from the menu. In 2016 Portugal made it a legal requirement for public cafeterias to provide a vegan option [3] and the UK could do something similar.

The government could also introduce policies to encourage the domestic production of pulses and other protein-rich crops for human consumption [4], instead of for export or as use in animal feed.

[1] <https://solutionsearch.org/entityform/3341>

[2] <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/university-cambridge-finalist-global-solution-search-contest>

[3] <https://metro.co.uk/2017/03/10/it-is-now-illegal-not-to-offer-vegan-food-at-prisons-hospitals-and-schools-in-portugal-6501872/>

[4] <https://hodmedods.co.uk/>

Question 9 - Behavioural change

Behaviour change is vital for combatting climate change but this will not be possible without a supportive policy environment.

While it is still cheaper and more convenient to fly or drive than take a bus or train we will struggle to reduce our emissions from transport. We need a joined-up approach to transport policy so that between major cities it is both faster and cheaper to travel by train than car. Farming subsidies reduce the cost of meat for the consumer whilst the financial and environmental costs are borne by all citizens and society; it will be hard to shift behaviour whilst these externalities are not priced properly.

File

- [Springmann-et-al. Health-and-nutritional-aspects-of-sustainable-diet-strategies-and-their-association-with-environmental-impacts-a-global.pdf](#)
- [Springmann-et-al. Options-for-keeping-the-food-system-within-environmental-limits_2018.pdf](#)