

Vocabulary

A **vegetarian** does not eat any animal flesh such as meat, poultry, or fish. A **vegan** is a stricter vegetarian who also avoids consuming dairy, eggs, and any other ingredients derived from animals.

People who do not eat meat or poultry but do consume fish are considered **pescatarians**, whereas part-time vegetarians are often referred to as **flexitarians**. Pescatarians and flexitarians do eat animal flesh, so technically, they are not vegetarians.

Organic food?

In general one would assume that the environmental impact of organic food should be lower due to the fact that synthetic pesticides (or chemicals) are not used.

But organic agriculture does employ pesticides that are organic. As some experts have warned, natural pesticides are not necessarily less harmful than synthetic pesticides. And because they often have to be used in larger quantities, their environmental impact may be greater than that of conventional pesticides.

An organic label is not a straightforward guarantee of the most environmentally-friendly product. One of the factors that raise the environmental cost of organic product is that more land must be used to generate the same volume of food, due to the reduced use of fertilizers. This leads to deforestation, which reduces the storage capacity of carbon in soils. The final effect is an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions responsible for climate change.

Obesity in the US

Over the past two decades obesity rates have climbed for all population groups with certain populations of color experiencing the highest rates, often due to structural barriers to healthy eating and a lack of opportunities and places to be physically active. Nationally, 41.9 percent of adults have obesity. Black and Latino adults have the highest obesity rates at 49.9 percent and 45.6 percent respectively. People living in rural communities have higher rates of obesity than people living in urban and suburban areas.

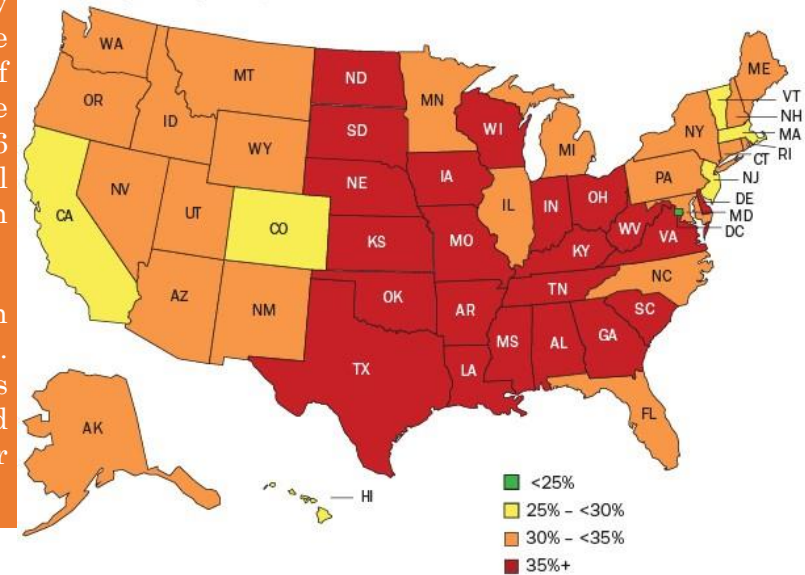
Obesity rates are also increasing among children and adolescents with nearly 20 percent of U.S. children ages 2 to 19 having obesity. These rates have more than tripled since the mid-1970s, and Black and Latino youth have substantially higher rates of obesity than do their white peers.

Hunger in the world

The number of people affected by hunger globally rose to as many as 828 million in 2021, an increase of about 150 million since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the UN's latest State of Food Security and Nutrition report evidencing that the world is moving further away from its goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030.

The war in Ukraine, involving two of the biggest global producers of staple cereals, oilseeds and fertilizer, is disrupting international supply chains and pushing up the prices of grain, fertilizer, energy, as well as ready-to-use therapeutic food for children with severe malnutrition. Supply chains are already being adversely affected by increasingly frequent extreme climate events, especially in low-income countries.

Adult Obesity Rate by State, 2022



SOURCE: BRFSS

✔ Benefits of GMOs	✘ Risks of GMOs
Nutritional value of foods could be improved (e.g. by introducing proteins, vitamins or vaccines)	New traits could cause adverse health reactions (e.g. new proteins may cause allergic responses)
Crops can be produced that lack known allergens	Removal of traits could have unknown effects
Crops can grow in arid conditions for better yield (e.g. by introducing drought resistant genes)	Crops may limit biodiversity of local environment (increased competition with native species)
GM crops can produce herbicides to kill pests	Cross pollination could lead to 'super weeds'
Improve food supply / agriculture in poor countries (GM crops can be engineered for improved yields)	Patents restrict farmers from accessing GM seeds (biotech companies hold monopolies over crop use)
GM crops may have longer shelf lives (less spoil)	Foods with GM components may not be labeled
Reduces economic costs and carbon footprint – less need for land clearing and pesticide usage	Different governments may have conflicting regulatory standards concerning safe usage

Bio-waste and composting

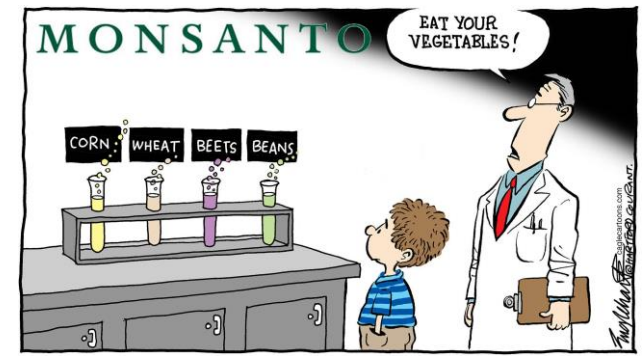
Food waste, leftovers from meals, garden waste: organic waste constitutes a third of the household waste that we throw in the garbage. When mixed with other waste, they end up in landfills or incinerators.

It is necessary to ensure that the bio-waste is sorted so that it can be composted or fermented/methanized. The result: a significant reduction in the weight of our waste, but also other environmental benefits (improved soil health, carbon capture, energy production, etc.)

Multi-buy junk food in the UK

Snacks and processed food that are high in salt, sugar, and fat would not be able to be sold in supermarket “buy one get one free” deals under the plan to ban multi-buy junk food deals in supermarkets, which was first announced in 2020 but has been repeatedly pushed back by two years – meaning the policy will not kick in until after the next General Election.

Rishi Sunak said that it would be wrong to limit options as food prices are high.



Roundup

On November 16, the European Commission decided to extend the use of glyphosate, the controversial active ingredient in Bayer's (Monsanto) Roundup weedkiller, for 10 more years until December 15, 2033.

In 2017, the Europeans had only granted the herbicide a 5-year extension. This measure is not the result of a compromise between the EU's 27 member states, but the result of a legal procedure that gave the EU Commission the final say.

On September 20, the Commission put its proposal on the table, but the member states neither adopted nor rejected it at their first meeting. Neither side could muster the necessary majority of 15 countries representing at least 65% of the EU's population.

Then, Brussels submitted the same text to the EU-27, as required by procedure. The result was identical. In the end, no majority emerged for or against the text.

As a result, the Commission decided to accept glyphosate's renewal for 10 years. This was authorized by the procedure, and the Commission announced the renewal following this second vote.



