

# MEATLESS MONDAY – PRESS RELEASE

## OBAMA URGED TO REVIVE NATIONAL MEATLESS PROGRAM

*Environmental and public health experts call for Americans to go “Meatless” on Mondays*

With World Health Day and Earth Day both in April, health and environmental advocates are calling on President Obama to take a page from history and proclaim national “meatless” days, as three of his predecessors in office have done. Watch the Meatless Monday video [here](#).

Presidents Wilson, Truman and Roosevelt all instituted national meatless days in order to divert food to troops overseas and alleviate worldwide food shortages. Today, a growing body of experts say that moderate reductions in meat consumption will mitigate climate change, lessen fossil fuel dependence, conserve fresh water and help reduce the chronic preventable conditions that today kill 70 percent of all Americans —cancer, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Robert Lawrence, director of the Johns Hopkins [Center for a Livable Future](#) at the Bloomberg School of Public Health says, “With the President’s notable embrace of healthy food and strong support for environmentally sound policies, reintroducing ‘Meatless Mondays’ at the White House will demonstrate a great way for Americans to improve their health, while lightening our nation’s carbon foot-print.”

Meatless Monday envisions meatless menus and recipes issuing from the White House every Monday, inspiring Americans to cook healthier meals, and the administration providing international leadership by directing the White House Chef to plan and prepare meat-free banquets and state dinners.

At December’s international summit on global warming in Poznan, Poland, United Nations emissaries cited meat production as a primary source of greenhouse gas. Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has called eating less meat “one of the most important personal choices we can make to address climate change.”

“When we think about the climate crisis, we tend to think about Big Oil or dirty coal-fired power plants,” says Anna Lappé, author of [Taking a Bite out of Climate Change](#). “Meanwhile, the global food system is responsible for as much as one-third of our total greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock alone contributes more to the global warming effect than emissions from the world’s transportation.”

Eating less meat also makes economic sense. More and more people are finding that forgoing meat for just a few meals each week can yield significant savings.

[Sustainable Table’s](#) Regina Weiss says, “Asking Americans to forgo meat just one day a week will attract strong support from pediatricians and parents, economists and environmentalists, farmers and foodies alike.”

Marion Nestle, nutritionist, advocate and author of the prizewinning Food Politics and What to Eat, says, “This is a great opportunity to expand our vegetable repertoire and do good things for health and for the planet.”

Peggy Neu, President of Meatless Monday, says, “Looking back to a period when millions of Americans made simple sacrifices for the greater good, President Obama can urge Americans to cut out meat, just one day a week. It’s easy to do and can have huge benefits for our health and the health of our planet.”

**CONTACT:** Regina Weiss 212-991-1069 [regina@sustainabletable.org](mailto:regina@sustainabletable.org)

**MEATLESS MONDAY.COM**

# MEAT: THE CONSEQUENCES

The meat industry generates nearly 1/5 of the man-made **greenhouse gases** that are accelerating climate change worldwide, far more than transportation.<sup>1</sup>

About 40 calories of **fossil fuel energy** go into every calorie of feed lot beef in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Compare this to the 2.2 calories of fossil fuel energy needed to produce one calorie of plant-based protein.<sup>3</sup>

The estimated 634 gallons of **fresh water** required to produce one 5.2 ounce hamburger would be enough for a four-hour shower.<sup>4</sup> Compare this to the 143 gallons of water required to produce the same quantity of tofu.<sup>5</sup>

2/3 of Americans are overweight or suffer from **obesity**.<sup>6</sup> Studies show that individuals on vegetarian or low-meat diets have significantly lower body weights and body mass indices.<sup>7</sup>

Chronic preventable conditions like **heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer** kill 1.7 million Americans each year, 70% of all deaths in the U.S.<sup>8</sup> Diets abundant in red and processed meats have been linked to increased cancer risk, especially of the digestive tract;<sup>9</sup> while diets high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.<sup>10</sup>

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Steinfeld, H., et al., Livestock's long shadow: Environmental issues and options. 2006, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Rome, Italy

<sup>2</sup> Pimentel, D. and M. Pimentel, Sustainability of meat-based and plant-based diets and the environment. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2003. 78: p. 66S-3S.

<sup>3</sup> Pimentel, D. and M. Pimentel, Sustainability of meat-based and plant-based diets and the environment. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2003. 78: p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Hoekstra, A.Y. and A.K. Chapagain, Water footprints of nations: Water use by people as a function of their consumption pattern. *Water Resource Management*, 2007. 21(1): p. 35-48.

<sup>5</sup> Kreith, M., Water Inputs in California Food Production. 1991, Water Education Foundation: Sacramento, CA.

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, Health, United States, 2008, With Special Feature on the Health of Young Adults. 2008, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Hyattsville, MD. p. pp. 50, 327, 336.

<sup>7</sup> Berkow, S.E. and N. Barnard, Vegetarian Diets and Weight Status. *Nutrition Reviews*, 2006. 64(4): p. 175-188.

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Chronic Disease Overview," *Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*, March 20, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm#2> [Accessed February 5, 2009].

<sup>9</sup> Cross, A.J., et al. "A Prospective Study of Red and Processed Meat Intake in Relation to Cancer Risk." *PLoS Medicine*, 2007. 4(12): p. e325.

Susanna C. Larsson, A.W. "Meat consumption and risk of colorectal cancer: A meta-analysis of prospective studies." *International Journal of Cancer*, 2006. 119(11): p. 2657-2664.

**JOIN US.** [info@meatlessmonday.com](mailto:info@meatlessmonday.com)

**MEATLESS MONDAY.COM**