

STATE CAPITAL HANNOVER

The Mayor
Department for Economic Affairs and the Environment
Agenda 21 and Sustainability Office
Trammplatz 2
30159 Hannover

Tel.: (0511) 168-45078/-49838
E-mail: agenda21@hannover-stadt.de

Written text
Ingmar Vogelsang, Franziska Harstrick

Responsible for publication
Susanne Wildermann

Design
EXNER DELUXE DESIGN, Hannover

Title image
roth-cartoons.de

Photos
complize, krockenmitte, Francesca Schellhaas/photocase.de
industrieblick, sima, Printemps. Ottilia, PhotoSG/fotolia.com

Printing
xxxxxxx
Printed on 100 % recycled paper

Version
March 2020 in accordance with the 3rd reworked version
from July 2019

LAND GRABBING FOR ANIMAL FEED

The illegal and violent confiscation of land that often takes place (land grabbing) means that the people living there, already living in poverty, are driven out. Environmental destruction through the creation of monocultures, the massive use of pesticides and the clearing of rainforests are further side effects. "Agricultural corporations are increasingly securing important water and land rights. For example, they cultivate grain to produce biofuels or animal feed for export. Governments often offer areas of land for sale that they consider to be unsold and not yet in use. Yet in only very few cases is the land really lying fallow; in most cases, it is actually being used to grow food by families with no financial means. These small-scale farmers are then denied access to land and water to feed themselves and their families. Their basic right to nutrition is being violated."²

"The soya boom is having an extremely adverse and in some cases dramatic effect on small-scale agriculture, on local populations and on the environment. The soya business model is based on the concept of monoculture and the mechanisation of agriculture. Cultivation of soya is only profitable when done on a large-scale, as it involves high costs for the genetically modified seeds, pesticides and the technology used. The farmers themselves become almost superfluous in soya production. Only one person is required to manage the cultivation of 500 hectares of soya. The spread of soya production has resulted in rural and indigenous populations being forcibly and permanently driven away, sometimes openly involving the use of violence."³

² <https://www.oxfam.de/unsere-arbeit/themen/landgrabbing>

³ <http://land-grabbing.de/triebkraefte/futtermittel/fallbeispiel-sojaproduktion-in-lateinamerika/>



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Genuinely ecological and socially sustainable meat production can only be achieved if our personal level of consumption is significantly reduced and people eat vegetarian meals more frequently. This would also be beneficial for our health. The German Society for Nutrition recommends that we halve our consumption to a maximum of 100 grams of meat and sausage per day.

Many classical Asian and Mediterranean dishes are traditionally meat-free. Plant-based alternatives to sausage, roast joints and schnitzel can now be found in almost every supermarket. And if you do opt for some real sausage or a Sunday roast now and then, this should where possible be purchased from farms with high standards of animal welfare where the meat is certified organic. This means that the animal feed must be cultivated in the local area, the use of medication is kept to a minimum and the animals must be kept in a way that is as close as possible to their natural living conditions. Once again, it isn't difficult to find organic shops where you can buy such meat products, and supermarkets have also extended their ranges in this respect.

Despite such efforts, we will not be able to solve all these problems by reducing our own meat consumption. **Our society as a whole needs to be committed to making it possible for us to lead sustainable lifestyles, to establishing regional and ecologically-based agriculture, and to setting up new economic models that are focused on public welfare.**



*KEEP OUT! ANIMAL FEED

OUR HUNGER FOR MEAT

Taking responsibility for the food on our plates



OUR HUNGER FOR MEAT

Large-scale factory farming is booming. Meat used to be considered a food for special occasions. Nowadays people eat meat almost every day. In Germany, the meat industry is mainly focused in Lower Saxony and the northern part of North Rhine-Westphalia. More and more animals are being kept under industrial conditions. Pigs and poultry in particular are bred specifically for this kind of large-scale factory farming.

The social and ecological impact of our meat consumption is being felt above all in the Global South. As the state capital, Hannover has resolved to implement the "Agenda 2030 for sustainable development" on a local level. The global sustainability goals of the "Agenda 2030" also call for action to be taken in the Global North. Development policy in this area requires that we look at the bigger picture and make efforts to address the impact we are having. Because our responsibility doesn't end at either the boundaries of our own city or on our plates.



MEAT PRODUCTION AND EXPORT

For many years now, meat consumption in Germany has remained stable at a high level; yet, despite this, meat production is continuing to rise. This is also reflected in prices: the price for pork has fallen to around a fifth of what it was in 1960.¹ The excess meat produced is exported – encouraged by funding from the EU. From 2007 to 2017, the percentage of exports more than tripled, from 14 % to 49 %.

The selective demand of consumers – with poultry, for example, for breast and leg – means that some parts of the animals are discarded. These are then exported – likewise supported by EU subsidies. 35 % of these exports go to West and Central Africa. Local indigenous producers in these countries cannot compete with the prices offered. This is resulting in poverty and mass migration into the cities. In addition to this, the systems for cooling goods on the way to the consumers in Africa are often unreliable, creating favourable conditions for bacteria to thrive in. This then leads to health issues and even fatalities.

¹ The price for 1 kilogram of pork has fallen from 1.27 % of average monthly net earnings (1960) to 0.28 % of earnings (2002) – de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleischkonsum_in_Deutschland

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR FURTHER READING

"Fleisch: Vom Klimawandel und dem Tellerrand" – studies on meat consumption on the Themes and Projects page of the WWF Deutschland website: www.wwf.de

"Unser täglich Fleisch - Verletzungen des Arbeitsrechts in den brasilianischen Lieferketten von Supermarkt-Chicken Nuggets" – found on the website of the Christian initiative Romero on www.ci-romero.de

"Landraub – Ackerland im Visier von Investoren" – under Themes on the INKOTA Network website at www.inkota.de

FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

In the processing of meat from the living creature to a consumer product, working conditions are often anything but fair, even within Germany. In many cases, temporary workers from Eastern Europe are employed on low wages, with the maximum number of working hours. A tightening up of the law in 2017 to counteract this kind of wage dumping did not achieve any real change. The checks to establish whether employment law regulations are even being complied with have been reduced by a half since then.

MEAT CONSUMPTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Agricultural production is responsible for 11 – 14 % of all greenhouse gas emissions. A large part of these are related to meat production. This means that, by making changes to our diets, we can also have an impact on the release of the emissions that are speeding up climate change.

With an average German diet, around 2 tonnes of climate-damaging gases are released into the environment per person every year. The largest percentage, at 40 %, is related to meat production; other animal products (dairy products and eggs) account for 28 %, and the remaining 32 % is related to plant-based products.

This shows that we can achieve considerable CO₂ savings by making only a few changes to our diets. If we were able to reduce our consumption of animal products to eating meat twice a week, and fish just once a week, the emissions of climate-damaging gases could be reduced by approx. 30 %. Changing over to a vegetarian diet would save as much as 50 %.

By changing our diets, we can therefore reduce our personal carbon footprints by 10 – 20 %.

AIR AND SOIL CONTAMINATION

More than 190 million cubic metres of slurry are produced as a waste product of factory farming and biogas production, and this figure is rising. This results in contamination of the soil and therefore also the drinking water that is obtained from groundwater. According to reports from the German Federal Office for Environmental Protection, 18 % of groundwater is already over the threshold figure of 50 milligrams of nitrate per litre. The nitrate consumed through our drinking water is transformed into carcinogenic nitrite during the digestion process. The necessary cleaning process is paid for by consumers in the form of higher prices for drinking water.

In addition to this, ammonia is produced when the slurry decomposes and this plays a key role in generating particulate matter. As a result of this, some rural communities where factory farming is prevalent have a level of particulate matter that is sometimes as high as in a city.

The ongoing unrestricted use of antibiotics in factory farming is also leading to cases of pathogens that have built up resistance to antibiotics. In the medium term, this may also be dangerous for humans if antibiotic-resistant bacteria are transferred from animals to humans and cause illnesses that are then difficult to treat.

IMPORTING ANIMAL FEED

Our huge appetite for meat is leading to more and more food-stuffs being used as animal feed. For livestock to grow quickly, it is necessary to use feed that is high in protein – meaning soya. Worldwide, 80 – 90 % of cultivated soya is used for animal feed. It is cultivated in monocultures, predominantly in the Global South and in the USA. More than a third of the soya used for feed in Germany is imported from Brazil. Some of the areas of land needed to cultivate the soya are illegally confiscated.

The UN's global sustainable development goals (SDGs) aim to make it possible for all people to achieve economic progress as well as social justice, while staying within the ecological limits of our planet. The production of meat has an impact on several of these goals. You can find information on the various individual goals here: www.17ziele.de

