

Green Foods Resolutions Facts & Sample Legislation



farmsanctuary
rescue • education • advocacy

What Is a Green Foods Resolution?

A Green Foods Resolution is a way of officially recognizing the importance of a sustainable food system – in other words, the importance of eating a plant-based diet and supporting local, organic plant-based food production. By passing Green Foods Resolutions, cities can take responsibility for their “foodprint,” significantly reduce their contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and improve the health of citizens, local environments and local economies.

What You Can Do

Please urge your state and local representatives to sponsor a Green Foods Resolution in their next session. Though the specifics of each Green Foods Resolution may differ slightly, the goal is consistent: to officially recognize the importance of eating a plant-based diet and supporting local, organic plant-based food production in order to lighten our ecological “foodprint.” Sample legislation is provided on the reverse side of this fact sheet.

The Environmental Impact of Our Food Choices

- ⊙ In 2006, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) calculated that the global livestock sector is responsible for 18 percent of all global GHGs, more than the entire transportation sector (14 percent).
- ⊙ In 2009, Worldwatch Institute recalculated that number, reporting that the global livestock sector is actually responsible for more than 51 percent of all GHGs.
- ⊙ Besides carbon dioxide (CO₂), the principal GHGs emitted by animal agriculture include methane and nitrous oxide, which have a much higher global warming potential than carbon dioxide (62 and 265 times higher, respectively, according to a recent report by the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production).
- ⊙ According to the UNFAO, the global livestock sector is responsible for 37 percent of global methane emissions and 65 percent of global nitrous oxide emissions.
- ⊙ Globally, the U.S. is responsible for the greatest emissions of methane from farm animal manure, nearly 1.9 million tons.
- ⊙ Almost 58 percent of GHGs from food are from meat, poultry, eggs, fish, and dairy.
- ⊙ According to the UNFAO, production of plant-based foods – whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and seeds – contributes significantly less to global warming than production of animal-based foods.

Pending Green Foods Resolutions

Introduced in July 2009, the pending New York City Green Foods Resolution – called the “Foodprint” – calls for “greater access to local, fresh, healthy food,” with a “focus on low-income/underserved communities as well as city-run institutions.” Later in 2009, in a surprising turn of events, the small town of Signal Mountain, Tennessee, took the lead in sustainable food initiatives when it became the first town in the country to pass a Green Foods Resolution. The town of Alexandria, Virginia, also has a pending Green Foods Resolution. These cities are at the cutting edge of recognizing the environmental impact and other important consequences of our food choices.

Sample Legislation

Draft Green Food Resolution for City/State of _____

Whereas, the City/State of _____ strives to be a Green City/State that promotes lifestyles that are ecologically sustainable; and

Whereas, food and farming systems have significant impacts on our health and the ecological well-being of our planet; and

Whereas, there is growing popular concern about problems associated with industrialized animal agriculture, including environmental destruction, threats to consumer health and rural communities, and the inhumane treatment of animals; and

Whereas, plant-based foods have been shown to be healthful and nutritious; and

Whereas, shifting toward plant-based agriculture can help lighten our footprint on the planet; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the _____ Legislature encourages individuals, institutions and businesses to provide more plant-based foods, especially those grown locally and organically; and

RESOLVED that the _____ Legislature promotes expansions of the number of Farmers' Markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, Community Gardens, and other venues for providing healthful plant-based foods, and encourages food retailers to offer more plant-based options.

For more facts about the environmental impacts of our food choices, please visit farmsanctuary.org/greenfoods.