

COP28 Climate Conference to Serve Mostly Vegan Menu

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Raising livestock for meat, eggs, and milk generates 14 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions - the second highest source of emissions and greater than all transportation combined. It also uses about 70 percent of agricultural land and is one of the leading causes of deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water pollution.

The upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) will consider animal agriculture's adverse impact on the environment by serving mostly plant-based food options throughout the event.

Sultan Al Jaber, the Presidency-Designate of COP28, which will take place in Dubai this November, confirmed that plant-based food choices will be prioritized for the first time in the climate summit's history.

The decision comes after years of persistent calls from activist groups, urging COP28 to recognize and confront the substantial environmental impact of animal agriculture, in part by making the menu fully plant-based, setting an example for the rest of the world.



In April, ProVeg, a global food awareness organization, rallied behind over 140 youth and civil society organizations, including the Youth and Children Constituency of the UNFCCC (YOUNGO), to urge the presidency to ensure that catering at the conference is sustainable and, therefore predominantly plant-based. [Their letter](#) advocated for a plant-based menu, making up at least three-quarters of the offerings, while also stressing the importance of cultural inclusivity in the menu choices.

In response to the [letter](#), Al Jaber said: “Inclusivity is at the core of COP28—including operations—and we recognize the urgency of the challenges you have outlined in your letter,” Al Jaber wrote in the letter. “The COP28 Presidency also has a firm focus on transformational action on food systems within the wider global climate change agenda. As part of this, we intend to demonstrate sustainable food systems in action at COP28 itself.”

Lana Weidgenant, youth activist and ProVeg International campaigns and policy officer celebrated the decision: "From ProVeg International, YOUNGO, and Food@COP, we are encouraged that the COP28 leadership has responded to us with interest in increasing plant-based options and availability at the UN Climate Conference. This is a crucial step in acknowledging the importance of food systems and sustainable, plant-forward food for climate action."



ProVeg promoting plant-based at COP27 . Credit: ProVeg International

To help put food-system transformation on the agenda of the climate conference, ProVeg International is also hosting its food-systems pavilion for the second year in a row. The Food4Climate Pavilion will hold space for discussions around topics such as agricultural climate mitigation and adaptation solutions.

“World leaders need to acknowledge the immense pressure that animal agriculture places on land and water systems, while also accounting for up to [20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions](#),” state ProVeg International.

Animal Agriculture: Choking The Earth

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A global shift towards a vegan diet is necessary to combat the worst effects of [climate change](#), according to the United Nations, and previous research from the University of Oxford shows that

going vegan is the “single biggest way” to reduce your impact on the planet. And just last month, a groundbreaking [new study](#) found that the dietary impacts of vegans are around a third of those of high meat eaters.



"Over the years, the Species Unite community has persistently advocated for COP to adopt a 100 percent vegan menu," stated Elizabeth Novogratz, Executive Director of Species Unite. "With this decision, we are thrilled that the spotlight will finally shine on the vital importance of transitioning to a sustainable food system. By moving towards a fully plant-based menu, COP28 sends a powerful message that the environmental challenges caused by animal agriculture must be recognized on the global stage of climate change mitigation efforts."