The Planetary Health Diet

Adoption of a plant-rich “planetary health diet” could prevent 40,000 early deaths a day across the world, according to a landmark report. The report,?published in the Lancet, was produced by 70 leading experts from 35 countries and six continents. It builds on the?2019 report?that introduced the PHD, but includes new evidence of the health benefits of the diet

The diet – which allows moderate meat consumption – and related measures would also slash the food-related emissions driving global heating by half by 2050. Today, a third of greenhouse gas emissions come from the global food system and taming the climate crisis is impossible without changing how the world eats, the researchers said. Food production is also the biggest cause of the destruction of wildlife and forests and the pollution of water.

Severe inequalities in the food system must also be ended to achieve healthy and sustainable diets, the researchers said. The wealthiest 30% of the world’s population generates more than 70% of food-related environmental damage, it found. Furthermore, 2.8 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and 1 billion are undernourished, despite enough food being produced globally. The food system is also failing the 1 billion people living with obesity.

The report recommends shifting taxes to make unhealthy food more costly and healthy food cheaper, regulating the advertising of unhealthy food and using warning labels, and the shifting of today’s ?massive agricultural subsidies ?to healthier and more sustainable foods.

“What we put on our plates can save millions of lives, cut billions of tonnes of emissions, halt the loss of biodiversity, and create a fairer food system,” said Prof

Johan Rockström, who co-chaired the? EAT-Lancet Commission?that produced the report. “The evidence is undeniable: transforming food systems is not only possible, it’s essential to securing a safe, just, and sustainable future for all.

“Our recommendations are grounded in scientific evidence and real-world experience,” Gordon said. “Changes are already under way, from school meal programmes to regenerative agriculture and food waste reduction initiatives.” England banned? price promotions on unhealthy foods and will? ban advertising such foods online.

The report estimates that food-related ill health and environmental damage costs society about $15tn a year. It said investments to transform the food system would cost $200bn to $500bn a year, but save $5tn. Alongside a shift in diets, the report calls for other changes to the food system, including cutting the loss and waste of food, greener farming practices, and decent working conditions, as a third of food workers earn below living wages.

From an online article by Damian Carrington. Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd

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