



## More Factory Farms Behind 20% Increase In Meat Consumption Over Past Decade

by Matthew McDermott, New York, NY  on 10.12.11



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Many TreeHugger readers are probably aware that the amount of meat we're eating on average is increasing, a lot. Some new research from [Worldwatch Institute](#) quantifies it, and the picture isn't pretty. In the past 10 years, worldwide meat consumption has increased 20%. Over the past 40 years it's tripled. That means really bad stuff for the environment, for animal welfare, and for human health--which are really all tied together.

Worldwatch's Danielle Nierenberg explains it all pretty well :

Much of the vigorous growth in meat production is due to the rise of industrial animal agriculture, or [factory farming](#). Factory farms pollute the environment through the heavy use of inputs such as pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers used for feed production. Pastoral farming systems, especially in developing countries, improve food security and sustain the livelihoods of millions of farmers worldwide. Eating less meat and supporting pastoralist communities at every level is essential to combat the destructive trend of factory farms.

There are some interesting factoids/talking points coming out of the new report as well:

There's a huge disparity between industrialized and non-industrialized nations in terms of quantity of meat consumed: 80 kg/person in the former versus 32 kg/person in the latter.

Pork is the world's most-eaten meat. Followed by poultry, beef, mutton.

Poultry production is the fastest growing sector of the meat industry, now accounting for 98 million tons of meat annually.

Livestock raising takes up 23% of all water used in agriculture on a global basis.

75% of all antibiotics used on livestock (and remember [80% of all antibiotics in the US go towards livestock](#)) are excreted in their waste, "posing a serious risk to public health."

Here's the bottom line health-meat eating connection: 11% of all deaths in men and 16% in women could be prevented "if people decreased their red meat consumption to the level of the group that ate the least."

Read more: [Nourishing the Planet](#)