

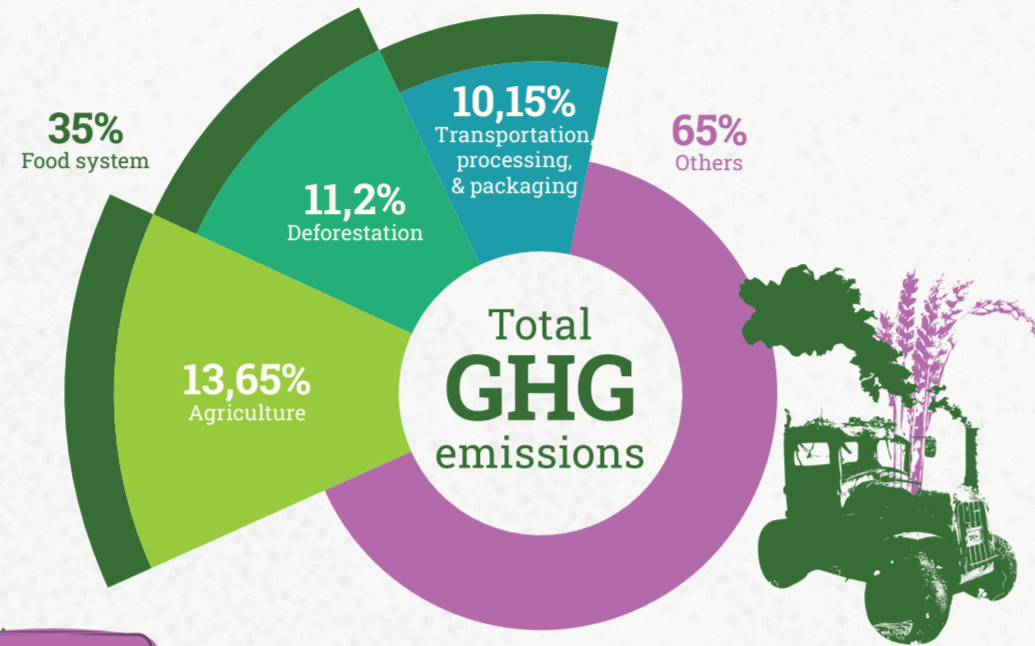
FOOD & THE CLIMATE CRISIS

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

1. The industrial food system is driving climate change

The industrial food system accounts for more than one-third of all global greenhouse gas emissions. Most of this pollution comes from: intensive livestock production for meat and dairy, the tremendous waste of food, our reliance on global trade instead of locally sourced foods, land grabbing and deforestation for the expansion of large plantations, and the heavy use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.



2. Food is power

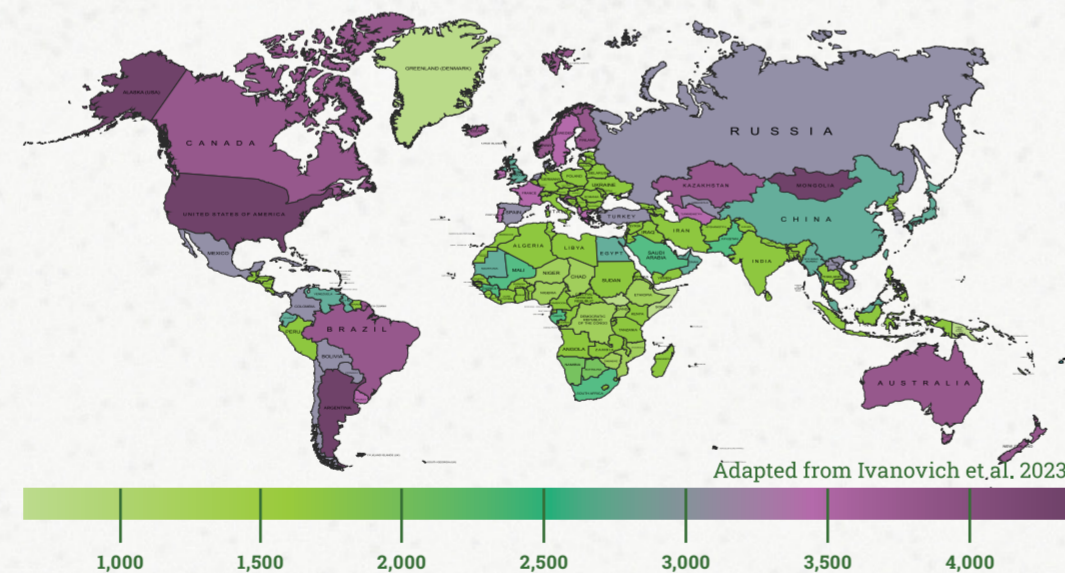
Farmers are not to blame. Companies are. They run the industrial food system for their own financial interests. Corporate influence over governments and international agencies leads to inaction on climate emissions in addition to the laws, regulations and subsidies that entrench the industrial food system. Food and agribusiness companies use greenwashing and false solutions like "offsets" to create new revenue streams for themselves while they undermine real solutions like agroecology and food sovereignty.



3. Geography of injustice

Most food emissions originate from countries where agriculture is dominated by industrial meat and dairy farms and large-scale plantations of export crops, like soybeans, hybrid maize and oil palm. Examples are Brazil, the US or New Zealand. These territories produce a surplus that fuels the overconsumption of meat and processed foods, often through international trade, while destroying local, healthy food systems through land grabbing or dumping. This system is rooted in colonialism and perpetuated through so-called free trade agreements – to the extent that trade accounts for 20% of emissions from our food today. Industrial farms account for more than 70% of the world's farmland and water use, but feed only 30% of the world's population.

Per capita food system GHG emissions (kg CO₂e/100/capita/yr).



4. Broader impacts

The industrial food system is also a leading cause of biodiversity collapse, declining water tables and pollution, soil degradation, deforestation and labour exploitation. It is a major source of health problems caused by pesticides and the consumption of ultra-processed foods. And because the system is structured to generate benefits for corporations, we see hundreds of millions of people going hungry in the midst of food surpluses. Day by day, corporations expand their operations and markets through the destruction and criminalisation of local food systems, preventing communities from using their own lands, water, seeds and traditional practices and displacing them from their territories. It leaves people at the mercy of investors in far off boardrooms to decide what gets grown and who gets fed. The consequences of this are becoming more severe as the climate crisis puts increasing stress on global food production.

Profits of world's 30 largest food & agribusiness companies increased by 279% from 2016-2023



5. The solution is food sovereignty

We can address climate change by tackling the biggest source of food-related emissions while ensuring that people have sufficient access to nutritious foods and communities can maintain their livelihoods. With meat and dairy, we must stop large-scale industrial animal farming and shift to local, diverse production systems that provide people with a moderate amount of meat and dairy, using local feed sources. We can slash food waste and food miles by creating more direct links between food producers and consumers, dismantling free trade agreements and ensuring that regulations and policies support peasant-led agroecological production and marketing systems and protect them from the dumping of imports. These measures, along with increased community control over territories, will also curb deforestation. And we can phase-out chemical fertilisers through a massive transition to agroecological practices that build up soil health and keep carbon in the soil.

Big culprits	Simple solutions
Meat & dairy (57%)*	Diverse farming/moderate consumption
Food waste (50%)* & food miles (19%)*	Local markets and equitable food distribution
Deforestation (18%)*	Stop land grabbing
Nitrogen fertiliser (7%)*	Shift to agroecology

*Percent of overall food system emissions

6. Peasant agroecology now

Scientific evidence shows that agroecology is better at providing both food security and nutrition for communities in most parts of the world than Green Revolution type strategies. This means crop rotations and mixtures, integrated plant and animal production, agroforestry, organic inputs, locally adapted seeds, traditional knowledge and good soil and water management strategies. But agroecology is far more than a set of techniques. It is an approach to agricultural work and food provisioning that is grounded in territory, knowledge and culture. It needs to be peasant-led in order to keep power and vision in the hands of small scale producers, particularly women.



7. Put communities in control

The fight against climate change in and from our food systems must ensure that communities have control over their territories and that food producers, not corporations, set policies. Many initiatives are being taken by social movements, occasionally backed up by public authorities, to move us in the right direction. Actions that seek to break up corporate domination in different parts of the food chain, strengthen local markets, redistribute land, create food reserves and food social security systems, dismantle the current trade regime, promote farmer seed systems and empower food workers are all crucial steps. In the end, only community control over resources, systems and knowledge will give us food systems that are climate resilient and grounded in justice.

