

To reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, we must shift away from intensive livestock production and toward climate-friendly diets

Submission to the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA)



A growing body of [scientific research](#) shows the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food and agriculture in order to reach the Paris Agreement target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Brighter Green, 50by40, ProVeg International, Center for Biological Diversity, members from the Food and Climate Alliance, Four Paws, Seeding Sovereignty, Friends of the Earth US, Humane Society International, and Factory Farming Awareness Coalition submit this set of recommendations to the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) process to inform the final workshop in October as well as COP26 in November. We would like to thank the UNFCCC for the opportunity to contribute a submission to help guide the KJWA process, and for considering the recommendations we provide here.

The time for climate *action* is now. The IPCC report, "[Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#)", has found that unless we as an international community implement rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), we will not reach our goal of limiting warming by 1.5 degrees Celsius. The IPCC also acknowledges the urgency of addressing [agriculture and global food systems](#) in order to reduce GHGs: a full third of anthropogenic GHG emissions [come from our food system](#), with at least 14.5% from [livestock production](#). [The Global Methane Assessment](#), released in August 2021 by the UN Environment Program and the Climate & Clean Air Coalition, has identified that reducing livestock-related methane emissions is critical to fighting climate change because of its potential for near-term impacts. In 2021, we have a responsibility and major opportunity to act quickly to reduce GHGs by rethinking the components of our global food system that contribute to climate change, including the livestock sector.

The first ever UN Food Systems Summit took place this September, engaging governments, indigenous peoples, youth, and civil society organizations from all over the world about how to transform the food system and meet all 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is imperative that the UNFCCC also address the food system and its impact on the climate in dialogues and strategy at COP26, and more effectively incorporate food systems as a whole into conference planning, with an emphasis on action and implementation.

Extractive and unsustainable agricultural practices, such as the intensive production of meat, dairy, and feed crops like soy, threaten the global climate, forests and other ecosystems, non-human animals, both domesticated and wild, as well as communities across the world. These industries are dominated by multinational corporations that value profit over food sovereignty, livelihoods, and animal welfare. They disregard animal sentience through a [number of practices](#), such as confinement, physical manipulations, and inhumane slaughter. [Industrial livestock operations](#)

contaminate water and soil, facilitate antimicrobial resistance and zoonoses, and inefficiently use land that otherwise could have been left wild or farmed by small-scale farmers in diversified, higher welfare, agroecological systems. We believe the biggest threat to smallholder farmers, besides climate change, is unsustainable industrial agriculture. It displaces traditional and more ecologically-balanced forms of farming without providing food or adding value to the communities it displaces.

Throughout the KJWA workshops and meetings, we have been quite pleased to witness testimonials from members of several constituencies, including [Women and Gender](#), Youth, Research, and Trade Union NGOs, and even some parties, on the need to curb the production and consumption of livestock in places of historically high production or consumption. We welcomed comments from a representative from the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change on the importance of reducing emissions and impacts from industrial livestock and agro-industrial companies and instead putting full support behind small-scale and traditional food producers. While we appreciate that KJWA included workshops on topics like livestock and manure management, we were disappointed that the scope remained limited to minor improvements on the production side instead of transformative solutions that include production and consumption. What is so urgently required are bold, inclusive, and participatory policies that shift *away from* business as usual. The UN Food Systems Summit, as well as the Counter Summit, stressed this as well.

In particular, we recommend KJWA support the following actions, detailed in a [previous submission](#):

- **Acknowledge meat, dairy, and feed crops as the largest contributors to GHGs in food and agricultural systems** and provide technical assistance for parties to integrate food and agriculture into [ambitious NDCs](#).
- **Align global climate and development policies and implementation to promote sustainable diets and systems of food production** to achieve accelerated emissions reductions and meet the SDGs.
- **Encourage governments to take bold steps to internalize the costs of livestock production**, including to the global climate, and consider taxes or other incentives to shift production and consumption.
- **Support governments at national and international levels to host dialogues across relevant departments** to ensure policies are aligned and not being jeopardized by measures or regulations taken in other departments.
- **Encourage governments to shift procurement and adopt low GHG policies and pathways**. This should include aligning policies with WHO dietary recommendations, and working with local farmers and scientists to develop indigenous sources of plant protein for the growing alternative plant proteins sector in the global South, which can also help provide a sustainable source of income for farmers.
- **Invest in open access research and development to accelerate sustainable plant-based protein** production to facilitate the needed transition towards plant-centered, climate-friendly diets.

We look forward to engaging with different parties and constituency representatives at COP26 and beyond, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer this submission.