

Majority of EAT-Lancet Authors (>80%) Favored Vegan/Vegetarian Diets

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By, Nina Teicholz
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The *EAT-Lancet* report, published by *The Lancet* last week, has been presented as the product of 37 scientists from around the world who gathered to evaluate the science on diet and both human health and the health of the planet. These are separate scientific questions that each deserve careful evaluation.



It's important to note that there are significant scientific controversies on *both* these questions. On diet and health, I can safely say that there is an enormous amount of legitimate scientific dispute surrounding the question of whether a plant-based diet is best for health and also whether minimizing red meat in the diet is healthy or even safe. The best, most rigorous (clinical trial) evidence supports the idea that red meat does not cause any kind of disease. There are also a number of analyses showing that diets low in animal foods are nutritionally deficient, thereby increasing the risk of many diseases and interfering with normal growth and brain development in children.

Evaluating the science on any subject requires convening a range of viewpoints so that scientific controversies can be fairly evaluated and discussed. Presumably *The Lancet*, an old and venerable journal, knows this. And yet an examination of the EAT-Lancet authors reveals that **more than 80% of them (31 out of 37) espoused vegetarian views before joining the EAT-Lancet project.**

This was clearly a highly biased group, and the outcome of their report was therefore inevitably a foregone conclusion. Convening a one-sided group on a topic cannot be expected to produce a balanced outcome. It would be like pretending to negotiate an agreement in Congress with only one party at the table. Like-minded people talking to themselves is not a scientific debate, and the product of these inbred conversations cannot be considered a scientific product.

Also, authors usually disclose their potential conflicts of interest when publishing. Clearly some of the conflicts listed below are "intellectual" rather than financial (and hence, not usually disclosed although at least one eminent scientist has well argued that they should be), but in many cases, the authors' potential conflicts involve their place of employment, in think tanks that promote vegetarian diets and/or meat reduction. If one's salary/livelihood depends upon supporting a certain point of view, this is arguably a very strong potential conflict of interest.

The leader on diet and health for *EAT-Lancet* was Harvard's Walter Willett, whose potential conflicts of interest are too extensive to list in this post. They include intellectual and financial conflicts, as well as affiliations with vegetarian groups, all of which are contained in a separate

8-page document here.

None of these potential conflicts of interest are disclosed in the Lancet paper, which seems to be an extraordinary oversight.

Here are two emails for The Lancet if you would like to contribute your views on this

Declaration of interests

All authors received funding from EAT and the Wellcome Trust.

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A list of the *EAT-Lancet* authors and their potential conflicts of interest are below.

EAT-Lancet Authors

Authors in red are those who have, through their work, been promoting vegetarian, anti-meat views since before joining the *EAT-Lancet* Commission.

1. **Ashkan Afshin**, Assistant Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington (<http://www.healthdata.org/about/ashkan-afshin>)

The “optimal intake for processed meat was [defined as] zero.” <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/5/5/e006385.full.pdf> (Jan 20, 2015)

2. **Rina Agustina**, Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Indonesia (<https://eatforum.org/lancet-commissioner/rina-agustina/>)

No information on diet.

3. **Victoria Bignet**, PhD student with particular focus on sustainable and healthy diets, Stockholm Resilience Centre (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2014-03-12-bignet.html>)

One of **seven** EAT-Lancet authors from this Stockholm Centre, including its director, which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.

4. **Francesco Branca**, Director, Department of Nutrition for Health and Development (NHD), World Health Organization (https://www.who.int/nutrition/about_us/brancaf/en/)

- Authored a WHO report that said people “Eat at least 400g (5 portions) of fruit and vegetable a day” to stay healthy. <http://www.janpa.eu/news/launch/Branca%20Luxembourg%20final.pdf> (Undated)
- Wrote a report that called on nations to commit to “Fruit and vegetable promotion” https://humanhealth.iaea.org/HHW/Nutrition/Malnutrition/IAEA_WHO_UNICEF_workshop/20_Branca.pdf (Undated)

5. **Abhishek Chaudhary**, Assistant Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington (<https://eatforum.org/lancet-commissioner/ashkan-afshin/>)

Transitioning toward more plant-based diets that are in line with standard dietary guidelines could reduce global mortality by 6-10% and food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 29-70%. PNAS April 12, 2016 113 (15) 4146-4151 (Mar. 21, 2016)

6. **Michael Clark**, University of Minnesota Natural Resources Science and Management, University of Minnesota; Centre on Population Approaches for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention (<https://eatforum.org/initiatives/the-eat-lancet->

[commission/commissioners/](#)

Co-authored a letter saying, “plant-based foods have the lowest environmental impacts; eggs, dairy, pork, poultry, non-trawling fisheries, and non-recirculating aquaculture have intermediate impacts; and ruminant meat has impacts ~100 times those of plant-based foods.” Environ. Res. Lett. 12 (2017) 064016 (Jun. 16, 2017; received Dec. 28, 2016)

7. **Sarah E Cornell**, researcher in global sustainability science, Stockholm Resilience Centre, <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2011-11-01-cornell.html>

One of **seven** EATLancet members from this Stockholm Centre, including its director, which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.

8. **Beatrice Crona**, Associate professor, deputy science director, Stockholm Resilience Centre (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2008-08-19-crona.html>)

One of **seven** EAT-Lancet members from this Stockholm Centre, including its director, which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.

9. **Fabrice DeClerck**, Senior Scientist, Agricultural Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Biodiversity International (<https://www.biodiversityinternational.org/about-us/who-we-are/staff-bios/single-details-bios/declerck-fabrice/>)

- Serves on the advisory board of Menus of Change, a group dedicated “To accelerate the move among American consumers—and college students, faculty, and staff in particular—towards healthier, more sustainable, plant-forward diets.” Menus of Change advises Americans “to reduce consumption of red and processed meats,” says that “higher intake of red meat, irrespective of its total fat content, increases risks of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes,” that vegetables and nuts be “used as a substitute for other protein sources, such as red meat,” “red meats have an outsized impact on the land, water, and climate,” meat has “significant impacts on human health,” and that meat contributes to the “risk of chronic diseases and premature death.”
http://www.menusofchange.org/images/uploads/pages/CIA-Harvard_MenusofChange_AnnualReport_2015a.pdf
- Contributed to a report whose central argument is that people should eat less meat. It asks, should people “be voicing concerns about...the appropriateness or otherwise of a meat-rich diet?” TEEB for Agriculture & Food Interim Report, http://img.teebweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TEEBAgFood_Interim_Report_2015_web.pdf (Dec. 2015)

10. **Wim De Vries**, Professor, Wageningen University & Research (<https://www.wur.nl/en/Persons/Wim-prof.dr.ir.-W-Wim-de-Vries.htm>)

No information on diet.

11. **Shenggen Fan**, Director General, International Food Policy Research Institute (<http://www.ifpri.org/profile/shenggen-fan>)

His organization has published numerous articles promoting a tax on meat and elaborating on the problems of excessive meat.

12. **Jessica Fanzo**, Director, Johns Hopkins Global Food Ethics and Policy Program Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Global Food & Agricultural Policy and Ethics Berman Institute of Bioethics, Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Dept. of International Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (<https://bioethics.jhu.edu/people/profile/jessica>)

fanzo/)

Made a presentation stating that people in high-income countries should eat mostly plants, and consider “edible insects?” <https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/dual/worldfoodsystemcenter-dam/WFS%20Conference/Presentations/Session%2013-1%20Jessica%20Fanzo.pdf> (2013)

13. **Elizabeth Fox**, Hecht-Levi Fellow with the Berman Institute of Bioethics of Johns Hopkins University, working in the Global Food Ethics and Policy Program (GFEP) with Jessica Fanzo (<http://www.bioethicsinstitute.org/people/elizabeth-fox>)

Co-investigator of a study aimed at “Identifying ways to further reduce the consumption of animal source foods, specifically beef consumption, in the United States to levels that sustain planetary and human health”

<https://bioethics.jhu.edu/research-and-outreach/projects/global-food/beef-food-choices-and-values/>(Undated)

14. **Tara Garnett**, Founder and Director, Food Climate Research Network, Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food (<http://www.futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/people/tara-garnett>)

- Wrote a report stating “The current demand for animal products is simply not sustainable and enormous harm is being done in the attempt to meet it. We have to change.” <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/observations/2017/11/why-i-became-vegan-and-why-you-should-too>
- “Broadly speaking eating fewer meat and dairy products and consuming more plant foods in their place is probably the single most helpful behavioral shift one can make to reduce food -related greenhouse gas emissions” <https://www.vegkitchen.com/the-role-of-eating-animals-in-climate-change/>(Date unknown)

15. **Line J Gordon**, Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre. This center, which has numerous anti-meat publications, has more than one member on the EATLancet report. (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2008-01-08-gordon.html>)

- “in order to achieve absolute reductions in food related environmental impacts, those who eat a lot of meat will need to eat less.” [https://www.fcrn.org.uk/sites/default/files/fcrn what is a sustainable healthy diet final.pdf](https://www.fcrn.org.uk/sites/default/files/fcrn%20what%20is%20a%20sustainable%20healthy%20diet%20final.pdf)(Apr. 2014)
- Said the world needs to cut down heavily on meat consumption to save the environment, and she is surprised that reducing meat consumption is not going to be a part of the national food policy. <https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6363748>(Feb. 8, 2016)
- Seven members of her Stockholm Centre (including herself) are authors of the EATLancet report.

16. **Corinna Hawkes**, Professor of Food Policy & Director Centre for Food Policy, City University of London (<https://www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/corinna-hawkes>)

Everywhere people are consuming too few vegetables, legumes, fish, nuts, seeds and fruits, and too much fat, processed meat, sugary drinks and salt.

<https://www.nature.com/news/a-new-global-research-agenda-for-food-1.21052>(Nov, 30, 2016)

17. **Mario Herrero**, Chief Research Scientist and Office of the Chief Executive Science Leader at CSIRO Agriculture and Food and Honorary Professor of Agriculture and Food Systems at the University of Queensland, Australia (<https://people.csiro.au/H/M/Mario-Herrero>)

- “The elephant in the room is whether we should be looking to transition away from eating meat. We found that, in theory, this practice could mitigate up 5-6 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in the most extreme scenarios.”
<https://theconversation.com/to-reduce-greenhouse-gases-from-cows-and-sheep-we-need-to-look-at-the-big-picture-56509>(Mar. 16, 2016)
 - “The developing world accounts for 70% of emissions, mainly because of the large numbers of animals used for a variety of purposes beyond production of meat, milk and eggs.” <https://theconversation.com/to-reduce-greenhouse-gases-from-cows-and-sheep-we-need-to-look-at-the-big-picture-56509>(Mar. 16, 2016)
18. **Malin Jonell**, Postdoctoral Researcher, Stockholm Resilience Centre
(<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2017-02-27-jonell.html>)
- One of seven EAT-Lancet members from this Stockholm Centre (including its director) which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.
19. **Tim Lang**, Professor of Food Policy, City University of London
(<https://www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/tim-lang>)
- “The mountains of meat which US manufacturers, caterers and consumers deem to be normal portion sizes come at an environmental, not just health cost. Vast tracts of land grow grain, drawing deep on water and oil/ energy reserves, fed to cattle in huge lots. The system produces cheap meat, but for how much longer and at what blindness to sustainability? **Meat and dairy are as complicated and contentious for environmental analysis as they are for public health nutrition. Think only of the metaphorical blood spilled over their position in the US healthy eating pyramid.**”
Public Health Nutrition: 12(4), 581–583 (Apr. 1, 2009)
 - Questioned whether “**Might [meat and dairy] rationing be needed. . .**”
Proc Nutr Soc. 2013 Feb;72(1) (Feb. 2013).
20. **Anna Lartey**, President of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences, Director of Nutrition at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
(<http://www.iuns.org/people/prof-anna-lartey/>)
- “We must develop the habit of adding more fruits and vegetables to our meal. The fruits and vegetables should form 50 per cent of the food we eat”
<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghanaians-urged-to-lead-a-healthy-lifestyle-155720>(Jan. 6, 2009)
21. **Therese Lindahl**, Researcher, the Beijer Institute
(http://www.beijer.kva.se/staff_under.php?id=26)
- Was one of the authors of a study that recommended “policies to encourage a shift towards low-meat diets, for health and sustainability reasons”
<https://www.rug.nl/feb/news/2016/science-publication-co-authored-by-wander-jager?lang=en>(Oct. 17, 2016)
22. **Brent Loken**, Science Liaison Officer between Cambridge Forum for Sustainability and the Environment, and EAT Foundation
(https://www.cfse.cam.ac.uk/directory/brent_loken)
- No information on diet.
23. **Christopher J L Murray**, Director, IHME Director, Chair, Department of Health Metrics Sciences (<http://www.healthdata.org/about/christopher-jl-murray>)

IHME runs a huge research project on global burdens of disease. It defines “The ideal diet [as] high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts and seeds – and low in salt,

trans fats, processed meats, and sugar-sweetened beverages.”

<http://www.healthdata.org/infographic/healthy-eating>

24. **Sunita Narain**, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment, treasurer of the Society for Environmental Communications and editor of the fortnightly magazine, Down To Earth. (<https://www.cseindia.org/page/sunita-narain>)

- The only diet that is definitely unhealthy is the one that has an excessive quantity of highly processed food, **including meat and junk**.<https://www.rediff.com/news/column/time-has-come-to-correct-whats-wrong-in-meat-production-market/20170529.htm>(May 29, 2017)
- Agriculture, including meat production, is bad for climate change and uses huge amounts of natural resources. But I qualified it by saying that it was about the method of meat production — cutting down forests for grazing lands; intensive and highly ‘chemicalised’ livestock keeping; and the sheer amount of meat that is consumed and wasted. <https://www.rediff.com/news/column/time-has-come-to-correct-whats-wrong-in-meat-production-market/20170529.htm>(May 29, 2017)

25. **Sania Nishtar**, Co-chairs the WHO High Level Global Commission on NCDs, Co-chair of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Improving Global Quality of Healthcare, Co-chairs the World Economic Forum’s Global Council on the Future of Health and Healthcare, Chair of the Advisory Board of the United Nations University International Institute of Global Health (<http://www.sanianishtar.info/about-sania-nishtar/>)

Recommended reduced intake of animal fats and production of white meat over red, for environmental reasons. <http://www.heartfile.org/blog/3533> (Nov. 25. 2014)

26. **K Srinath Reddy**, President, Public Health Foundation of India, an Adjunct Professor of the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University and Honorary Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney (<https://phfi.org/member/prof-k-srinath-reddy/>)

“Reduced red meat consumption” will help mitigate climate change.

https://www.slideshare.net/Glo_PAN/k-srinath-reddy-milton-j-rosenau-lecture-boston-sept-25-2015 (Sep. 25, 2015)

27. **Juan A Rivera**, Founding Director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health at the National Institute of Public Health, a Professor of Nutrition at the School of Public Health of Mexico and an adjunct professor at the Rollins School of Public Health in Emory University (<http://www.globalobesity.org/about-the-gopc/our-people/archive-scientific-advisory-board/juan-rivera.html>)

No information on diet.

28. **Johan Rockström**, Professor in environmental science, Stockholm Resilience Centre (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2008-01-16-rockstrom.html>)

One of seven EAT-Lancet members from this Stockholm Centre, including its director, which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.

29. **Lindiwe Majele Sibanda**, Vice President for Country Support, Policy and Delivery, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Vice President for Country Support, Policy and Delivery, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) (<https://www.weforum.org/people/lindiwe-majele-sibanda>)

30. **Sudhvir Singh**, Policy Director, EAT (<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/alumni/our-alumni/40-under-40/40-under-40-influencers0/sudhvir-singh.html>)

The things we need to do to reduce our carbon pollution are exactly the things we need to do to confront the major public health problems...getting them to eat...less industrially fed red meat, for example, has both climate change and public health benefits. <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/the-wireless/373599/nz-youth-delegates-report-from-cop21>(Dec. 12, 2015)

31. **Marco Springman**, James Martin Fellow, Oxform Martin School (<http://www.futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/people/marco-springmann>)
 - Proposed “A health tax on meat.”<https://www.newfoodmagazine.com/news/75577/tax-on-red-and-processed-meat-could-save-lives-says-study/>(Nov. 7, 2018)
 - “If the world adopted a vegan diet in the year 2050, in that single year it could cut greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds, save \$1.5trillion in climate damages and healthcare-related expenditure, and reduce global mortality by 10 per cent, which means eight fewer million deaths from chronic diseases.”
<http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/interviews/what-if-we-all-turned-vegan-2050#>
 - Gave a presentation at the conference, “The End of Meat”
<https://vimeo.com/239483108>(Aug. 2017)
32. **David Tilman**, Regents Professor, Ecology, Evolution & Behavior, University of Minnesota (<https://cbs.umn.edu/contacts/g-david-tilman>)
 - Advised plant-based diets over those with animal proteins, in a talk presented at the [First International Conference on Global Food Security](https://canwefeedtheworld.wordpress.com/2013/11/08/going-vegetarian-the-answer-to-the-worlds-problems/).
<https://canwefeedtheworld.wordpress.com/2013/11/08/going-vegetarian-the-answer-to-the-worlds-problems/> (Nov. 8, 2013)
 - Wrote that diets that include meat, “if unchecked, would be a major contributor to an estimated 80 per cent increase in global agricultural greenhouse gas emissions from food production and to global land clearing.” *Nature* volume 515, pages 518–522 (Nov. 27. 2014)
33. **Max Troell**, Associate Professor, Beijer Institute (http://www.beijer.kva.se/staff_under.php?id=21)
 - This center has been a supporter of EAT-Lancet from the start.
 - Troell focuses on sustainable fish populations.
34. **Sonja Vermeulen**, Global Food Lead Scientist, Global Science, World Wildlife Fund (<https://www.worldwildlife.org/experts/sonja-vermeulen>)

Published a study that “attributed a third of global [greenhouse gas] emissions to livestock.” <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/are-cows-climate-killers>(Jan. 4, 2013); *Climate Change and Food Systems*, 37 Ann. Rev. Env’t & Resources 195, 198-202 (2012).
35. **Walter Willett**, former chair, Harvard Chan School of Public Health

Has numerous potential conflicts of interests, financial, intellectual and also with numerous affiliations. Has promoted vegetarian/vegan diets since at least 1990.
<https://www.scribd.com/document/397606854/Walter-Willett-Potential-Conflicts-of-Interest>
36. **Amanda Wood**, Researcher, Stockholm Resilience Centre (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/contact-us/staff/2017-02-27-wood.html>)

One of seven EAT-Lancet members from this Stockholm Centre, including its director, which publishes numerous documents describing meat consumption as a major threat to the environment.
37. **Rami Zurayk**, Professor of Ecosystem Management in the Faculty of Agricultural and

Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut, co-founder of the Association for Lebanese Organic Agriculture and of Slow Food Beirut, member of the Conflicts and Protracted Crisis Working Group of the Civil Society Mechanism of the Committee on Food Security (<https://eatforum.org/lancet-commissioner/rami-zurayk/>)

Utilization of food, and particularly of animal-sourced foods (ASF), from evolving and increasingly complex food supply chains, is having profound effects on human health and well-being, in some cases supplying much needed nutrients but in others giving rise to dietary concerns, for example over **excessive meat intake**.

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5795e.pdf>(Jul, 2016)

Please feel free to report errors or missed information in the comments section, and I will endeavor to update/correct as quickly as possible.

Jan 27: Updated to correct information on Tara Garnett.

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