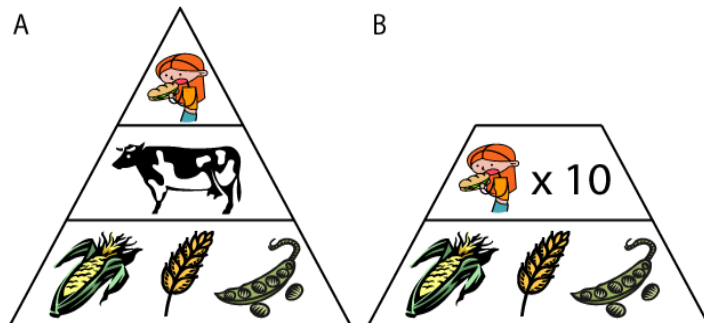


## AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE CARBON AWAY? HOW EATING YOUR VEGETABLES CAN HELP SAVE THE PLANET.

### *Background*

For the average American, meat consumption increased dramatically during the 20<sup>th</sup> century – from ~130 lbs/yr before 1950 to over 200 lbs/yr in the 1990s. As a nation, we eat pretty high on the food chain. You might remember the ‘food energy’ pyramid from high school biology. Plants convert water and sunlight into food energy. We can either choose to eat that food energy directly, or eat animals that have converted plant energy into meat energy. However, the conversion of plant energy into meat energy (in a cow, for example) loses **90%** of the energy that was initially available. So, the same plot of land producing vegetables and grains could feed 10 people directly, or 1 person indirectly if he/she eats an animal that fed on those plants.



A) In order to sustain 1 human on a diet of meat, 20,000 kcal of plant energy (which become 2000 kcal of meat energy) are required. B) Those same plants could feed **10** humans directly.

### *Why does this matter for global warming?*

Unfortunately, there is simply not enough pasture land available to support the amount of meat we’re currently consuming. Typical processes for producing meat (e.g., feed lots, hog farms) require a **huge** amount of energy. Energy costs stem from things like (1) deforestation to create pastures or grow animal food crops, (2) fertilizers and fuels to produce animal feed, (3) production of pesticides and drugs required to keep high densities of animals alive, and (4) slaughter, meat processing and packaging. Beef production alone has been estimated to account for **18%** of global greenhouse gas emissions!

### *You can make a difference!*

By cutting back even slightly on the amount of meat (particularly beef) you purchase or consume, you can make a real difference. Chicken produces about five times the greenhouse gases as an equivalent volume of vegetables, while *beef produces an amazing 20 times the CO<sub>2</sub> pollution!* So, by choosing a sandwich made of vegetables, peanut butter, or hummus rather than roast beef for just one lunch per week, you could save the equivalent of a full tank of gas by the end of the year. Ordering platters of sandwiches for group lunches? You have even more power to reduce greenhouse gases by substituting vegetarian options for even 10-20% of those meat sandwiches!

The more we can eat lower on the food chain (veggies, carbs, dairy), the more we can make a difference in the fight against global warming.

