

## Meat, dairy and all foods climate-changing My mission to *change* my diet, and the diet of my friends, so we don't *change* the climate



**Ever wondered about what you eat and how it contributes towards climate change?** The climate change impacts associated with food in New Zealand tend to be ignored by consumers when making food choices. The reality is: food, including the production, packing, transport and emissions inherent in the food itself, contributes massively towards New Zealand's emissions profile.

New Zealand's emissions profile is different to the rest of the world –*nearly half of our greenhouse gas emissions come from the agricultural sector*. Most of these emissions come from cows. But it's not just New Zealand. Worldwide, agriculture directly contributes towards 12 - 13 % of global emissions. If you take into account land use change and deforestation, processing and transport, *livestock alone accounts for up to 18 % of global greenhouse gas emissions*. That's more than cars.

**What did I do about it?** My friends and I have always been part of the problem – not the solution. We eat a lot of meat and dairy foods, barely any organic foods and lots of processed, refined and packaged food. Also, so much of our food comes from overseas. After looking at the facts, I assumed my friends would care as much as I did about changing the way we look at food to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Apparently I was wrong.

When I was unsuccessful at persuading my friends to change their diets, I decided the best I could do was change myself in the hope that others would follow. I wanted to keep the rules simple – so it would be easy for people to join me. I did the unthinkable for a life-long devoted carnivore – I gave up eating meat and dairy for 7 days, and blogged about it.

**7 days a vegan** – I didn't expect to win any friends, but I was surprised. 7 days and more than 500 views from over 10 different countries later and I was feeling much more positive about influencing change. I also learned that reducing my own meat and dairy consumption was nowhere near as hard as I thought it would be – and my friends agreed.

**You can read about my experience and find some interesting articles and videos about food and climate change at [myweekwithoutmeatanddairy.blogspot.com](http://myweekwithoutmeatanddairy.blogspot.com).**