

#### ABSTRACT

For many years, the meat industry has shown us alarming consequences. What people do not realize is that there are many ways to help reverse this problem. Becoming a vegetarian or reducing your meat consumption will hugely benefit our environment. Realizing the problems and fully addressing them is the only chance we will get to make a difference. The meat industry is affecting not only the environment but also people's health. The meat industry is wrongfully impacting our Earth. More land is becoming deserts everyday. The way livestock is handled is wrong. The producers aren't thinking about the environment, they are thinking about the profit. Millions of gallons of water is being used to create produce for us to eat. They aren't being ecologically efficient. We need to change the way meat factories handle their meat because that is causing a huge dent in our planet. Once we figure out how to sustainably handle livestock then we can also focus on food distribution. Food distribution is so important to our society. Most people depend on it.

#### MEAT ON WATER USAGE

This chart (Figure 1) shows how much water, land, feed, and fossil fuel energy go into making one beef patty. This is affecting our environment, and no one seems to care. "It takes an enormous amount of water to grow crops for animals to eat, clean filthy factory farms, and give animals water to drink. A single cow used for milk can drink up to 50 gallons of water per day—or twice that amount in hot weather—and it takes 683 gallons of water to produce just 1 gallon of milk. It takes more than 2,400 gallons of water to produce 1 pound of beef, while producing 1 pound of tofu only requires 244 gallons of water. By going vegan, one person can save approximately 219,000 gallons of water a year" (PETA). The amount of water going into the production process is disgusting. If we all try to stop eating meat, less and less every day, we can save so much water that will help the environment.

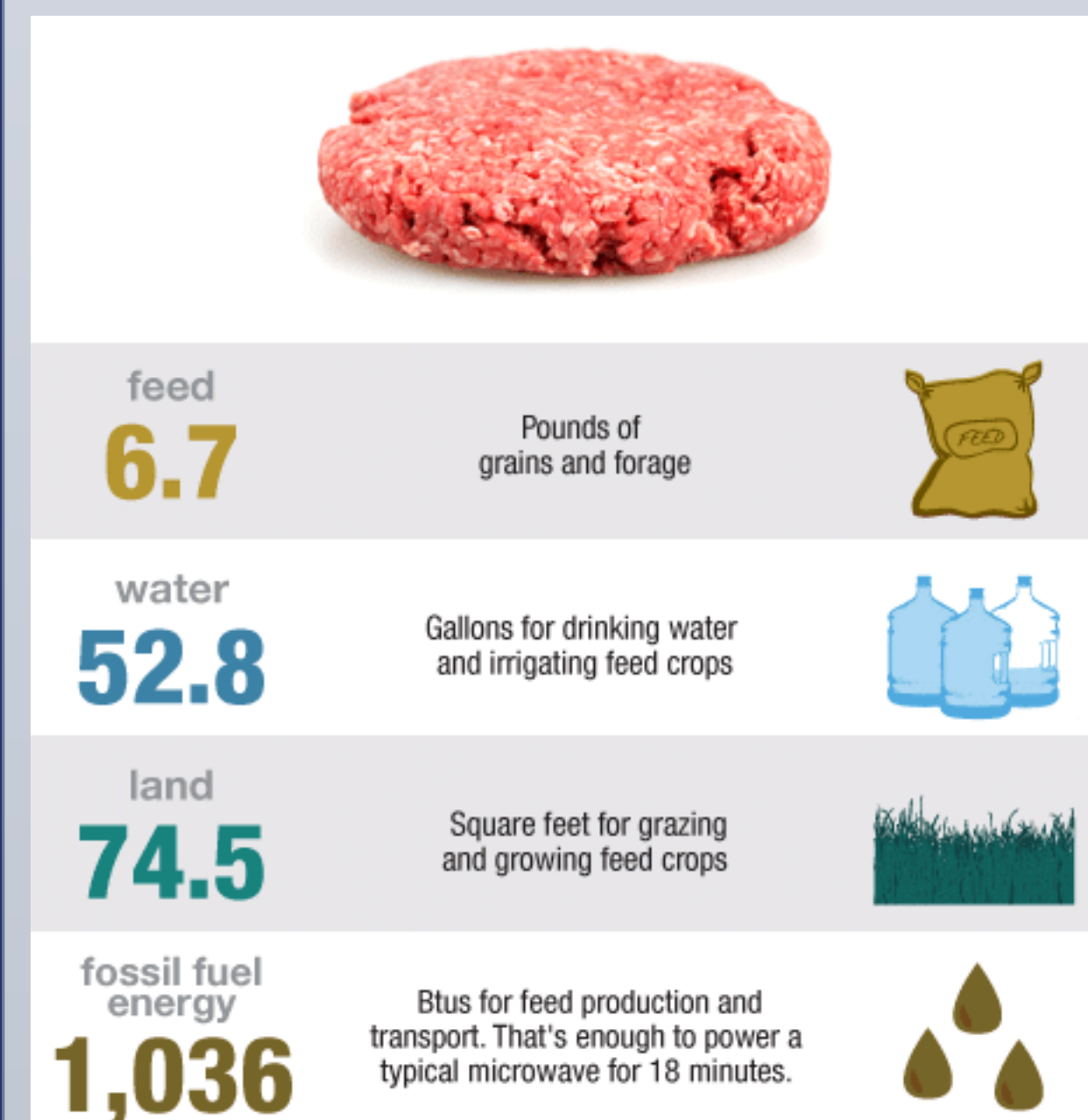


Figure 1. This graph shows the number of resources that are being used to make all these items. It shows the reality of us taking advantage of our resources.

#### MEAT ON POLLUTION

So many people around the world eat meat and a lot of it. Meat also causes pollution which we all know is bad. "Runoff from factory farms and livestock grazing is one of the leading causes of pollution in our rivers and lakes. The EPA notes that bacteria and viruses can be carried by the runoff and that groundwater can be contaminated" (PETA). This can also lead to health issues such as causing inflammatory, immune, irritation, and neurochemical problems in humans. The fact that producing meat can affect your health issues is beyond me. I don't think it is worth it.

#### CATTLE RAISING

Cattle raising is impacting the environment negatively. You could be ethically raising cattle and be organic but that doesn't surpass the issue that it takes a lot from the environment. Constantly feeding them and watering them is a lot. It is a huge burden. Not to mention their defecation or gas. Cow manure, if used for fertilizer, can cause runoff and get into water systems. This can result in creating toxins that could be problematic for humans. (See figure 2)

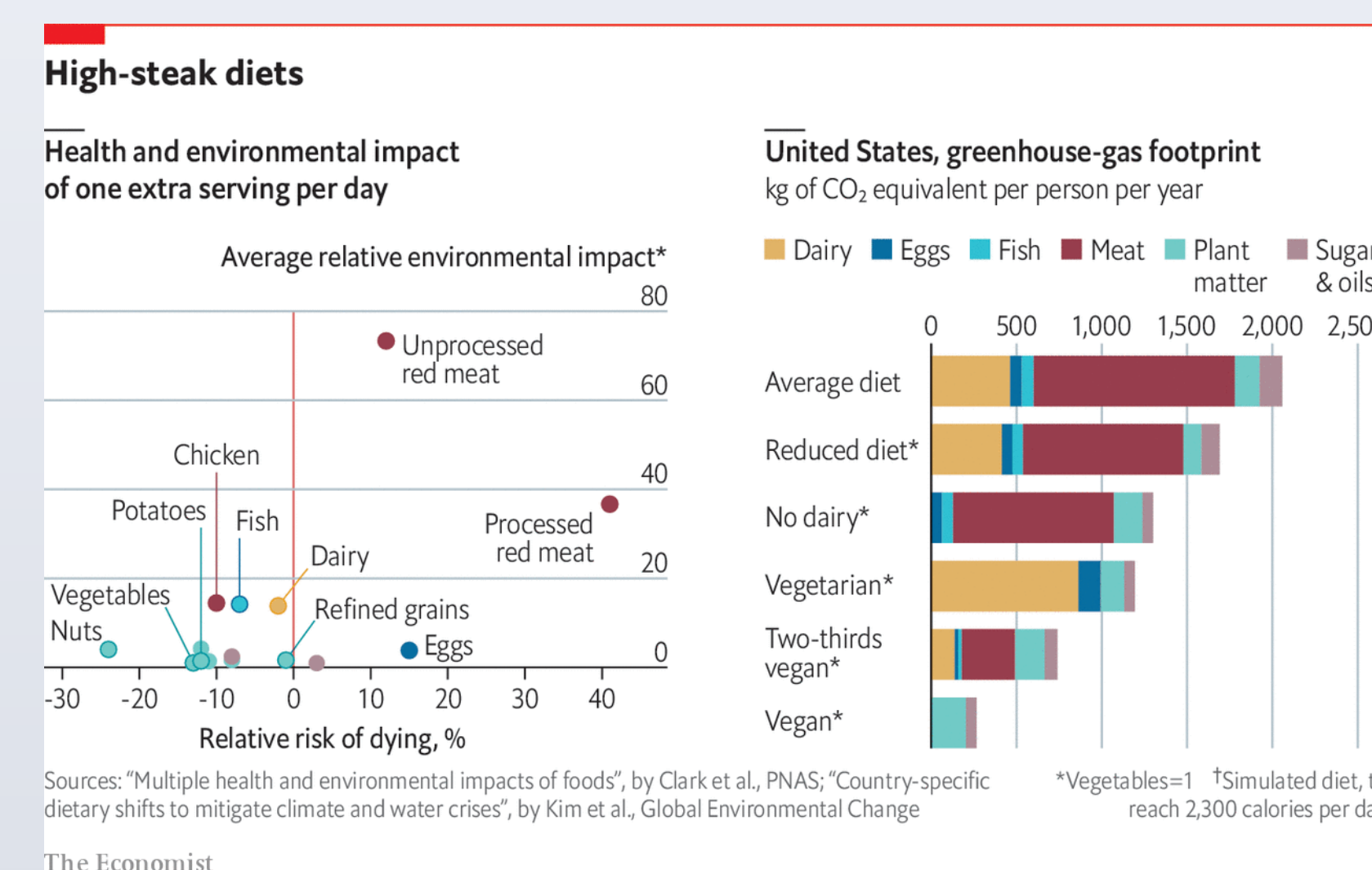


Figure 2. This graph signifies the impacts of having an extra meal per day and how that affects our environment.

Cattle raising also contributes to grazing and overuse of land to grow food crops which leads to the growth of deserts. Desertification can be caused by overgrazing of livestock, over cultivation of land, improper irrigation techniques, and deforestation. This impacts the environment because it proves that the agriculture business can negatively influence the environment. Only in areas of livestock is there desertification. If you keep on grazing, the ground becomes too dense for rainwater which then can cause the topsoil to be carried away. That waste can then become mixed in with downstream water, dams, and estuaries. (See figure 3)

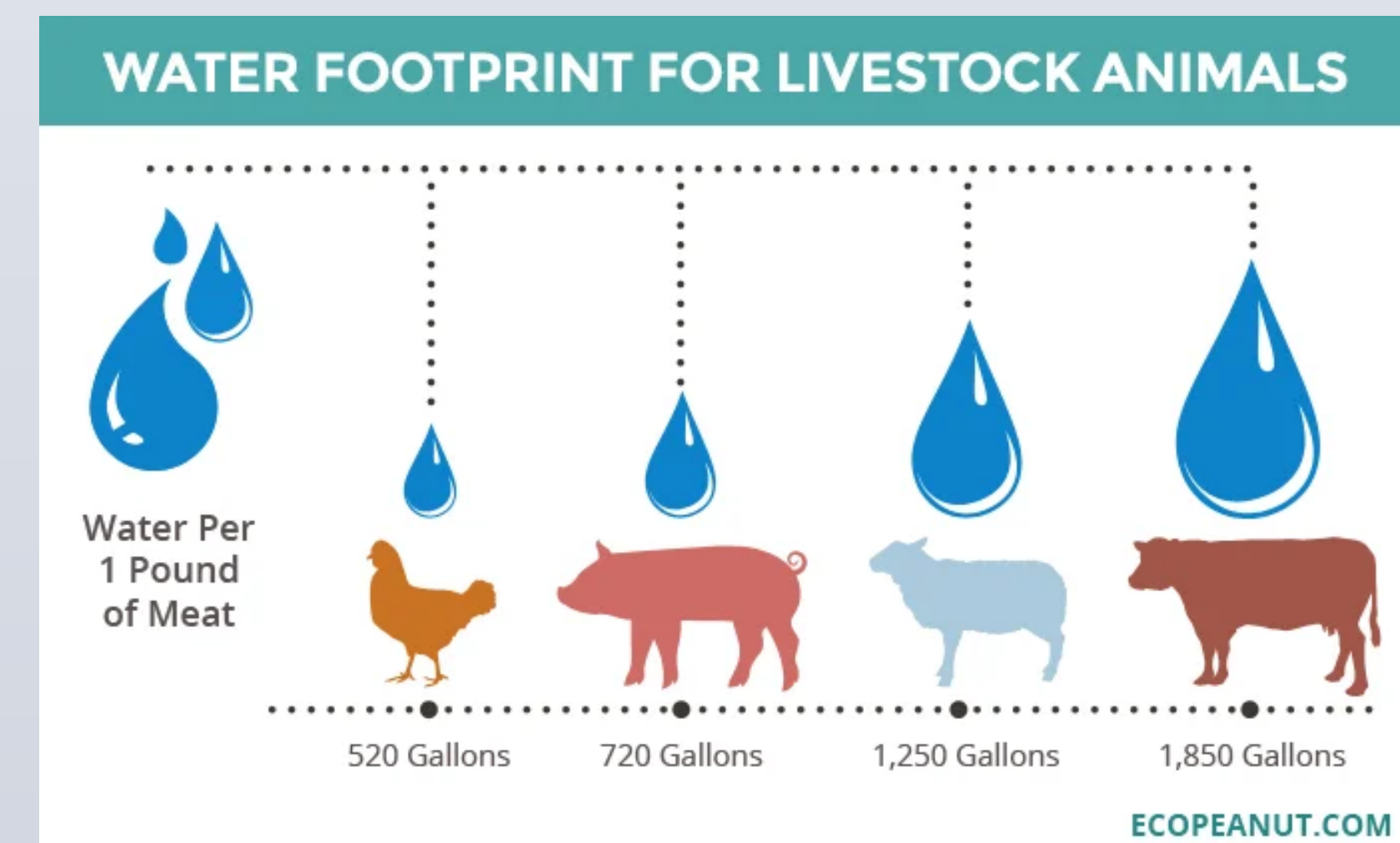


Figure 3. This graph signifies the amount of water being used to produce one pound of meat. It is imperative that we understand that livestock is using so much water.

#### FORESTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Forests are also impacted. Forests are being cleared out which leads to the loss of watershed protection, loss of plant and animal species, and contributions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Land deterioration occurs when you start to remove trees. It becomes shallow, acidic, nutrient-poor, and tropical soils lose important nutrients. This all happens when the land is being converted into a pasture. When living plants are cut down and burned, they release carbon into the atmosphere as the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide traps the heat of the sun and warms the planet. Livestock is proving to be a huge component to climate change. Livestock can also create different environmental problems. Carbon dioxide, methane, animal waste, and pesticides can cause pollution to the atmosphere. "If they get into rivers or open bodies of water, nitrogen, and phosphorus in manure over fertilizer algae, which grow rapidly, deplete oxygen supplies, and suffocate aquatic ecosystems" (Pojman et al. 530). This is huge because it is another factor that goes into the issue of agriculture. Not only are livestock ruining land but they're also ruining bodies of water that ultimately hurt marine species. (See figure 4)

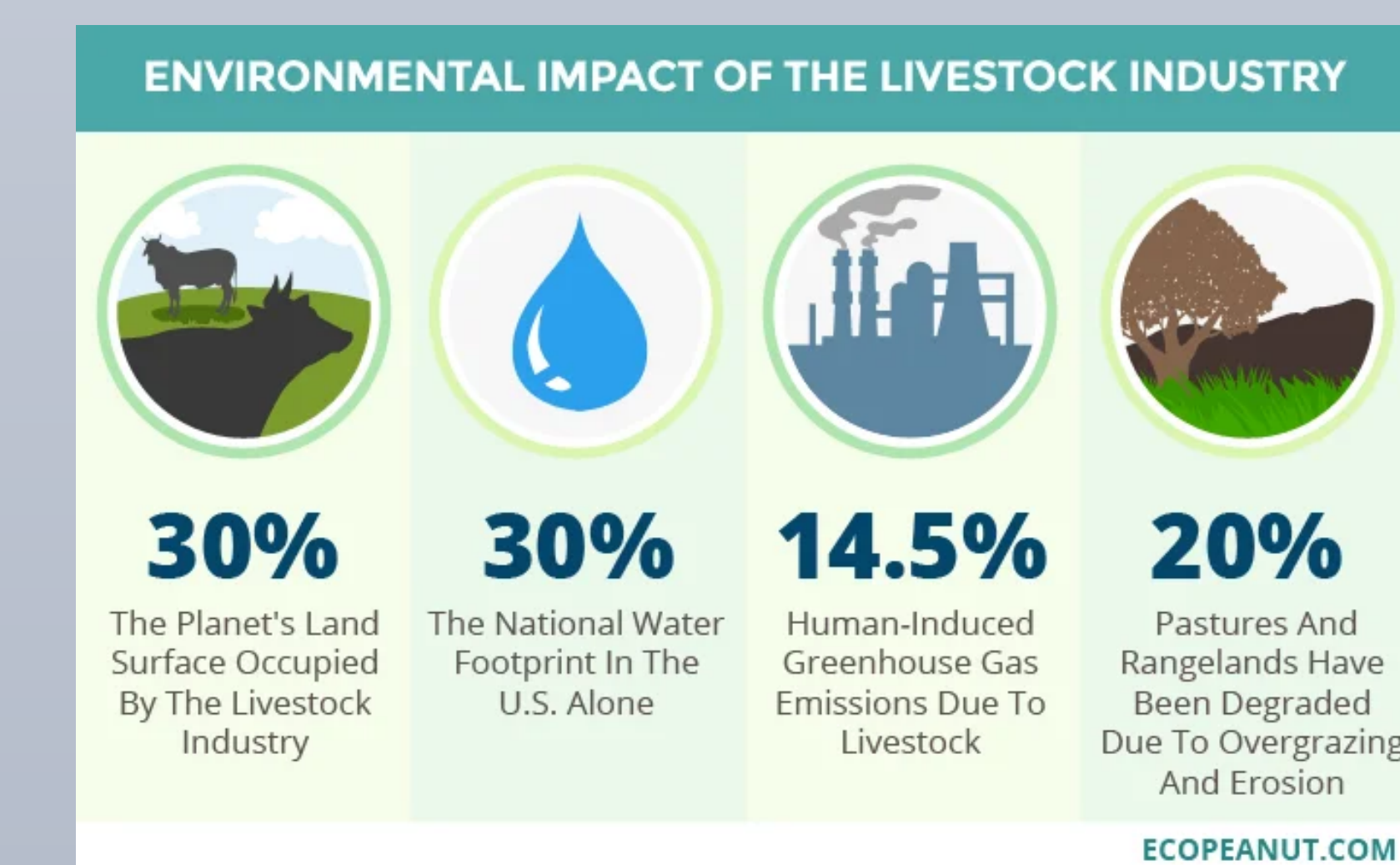


Figure 4. This graph is demonstrating the impacts that livestock has on our environment. It is taking so much to produce meat products.

#### MEAT ON OUR OCEANS

Producing meat also affects our ocean. Factory farms are ruining our land, and commercial fishing is ruining our ocean. Bottom trawling and long-lining are clearing our ocean floors and destroying the coral reefs. They also kill sharks, dolphins, sea turtles, and other "bycatch" animals. Marine life is vital to keeping our oceans alive and clean. The ocean would be nothing without those life creatures. "Coastal fish farms release feces, antibiotics, parasites, and non-native fish into sensitive marine ecosystems. In addition, since most farmed fish are carnivorous, they are fed massive quantities of wild-caught fish. For example, it takes up to 3 pounds of fish meal to produce every pound of farmed salmon" (PETA). It is absolutely horrifying that people "care" about the ocean but supporting fishing and such kills it. It's the total opposite of what you wanted. (See figure 5)

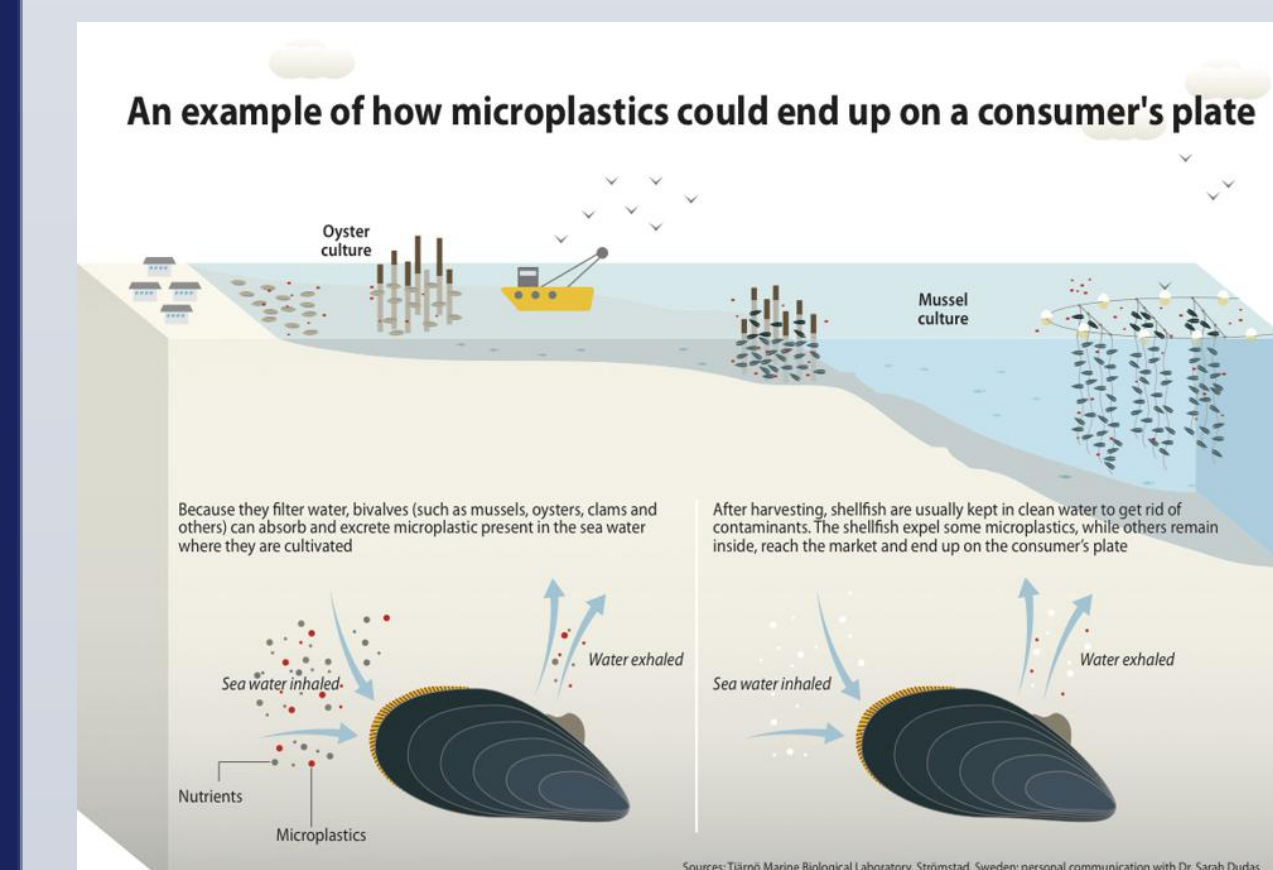


Figure 5. This graph is displaying how plastics could end up in our food. It shows that the environment is being affected and that is what is most important.

#### CONCLUSION

Becoming a vegetarian will help our planet out in so many ways. We would stop thinking of Earth as a resource. That is the biggest mistake we have made. We need to be thinking of ourselves as a part of Earth. We rely on the Earth so why are we treating it so badly? If we can stop eating so much meat and focus on ourselves becoming healthy then we have a chance to make our Earth more sustainable. Ultimately, I believe we all need to become vegetarians. We don't have to worry about finding another source of protein because soya, beans, and nuts all provide that. The meat industry just causes so much pollution and negative impacts on our Earth that I can't support it.

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