

Health Protection & Health Behaviours: Agriculture & Health



Kristin Bash MPH FFPH

**Public Health Consultant (Health & Wellbeing), OHID Yorkshire & Humber
Chair, Food Special Interest Group, Faculty of Public Health**

**Honorary Lecturer in Public Health and PhD Candidate, School of Health &
Related Research, University of Sheffield**



Today's talk:

- Our food system – overview & sustainability
- What are the impacts on population health?
- Impacts outside of nutrition?
- Three key areas to cover
- What can we do about them?

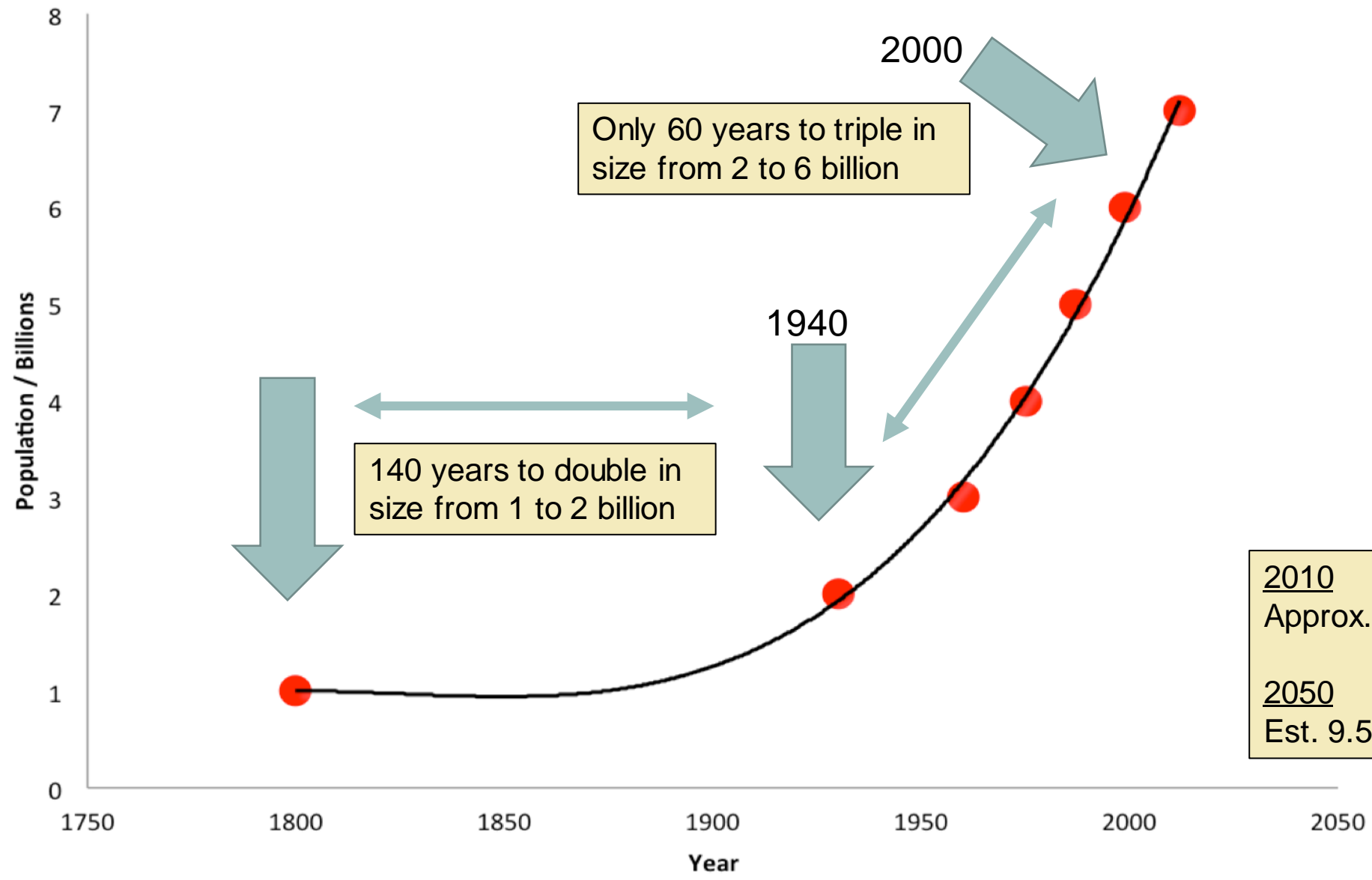


Public health and food - what comes to mind?

- Nutrition – obesity, HFSS foods, Type 2 diabetes, CVD
- Food safety – food borne illness, safe handling and food hygiene
- Food insecurity?
- Environmental damage?
- High use of non-renewable resources?
- Other impacts on population health?



Human Population Growth



2010
Approx. 7 billion

2050
Est. 9.5 – 10 billion



2011 Foresight Report – Outlined environmental impacts of global food system.

Concluded that without change, it will:



**CONTINUE TO
CONTRIBUTE TO
CLIMATE CHANGE**



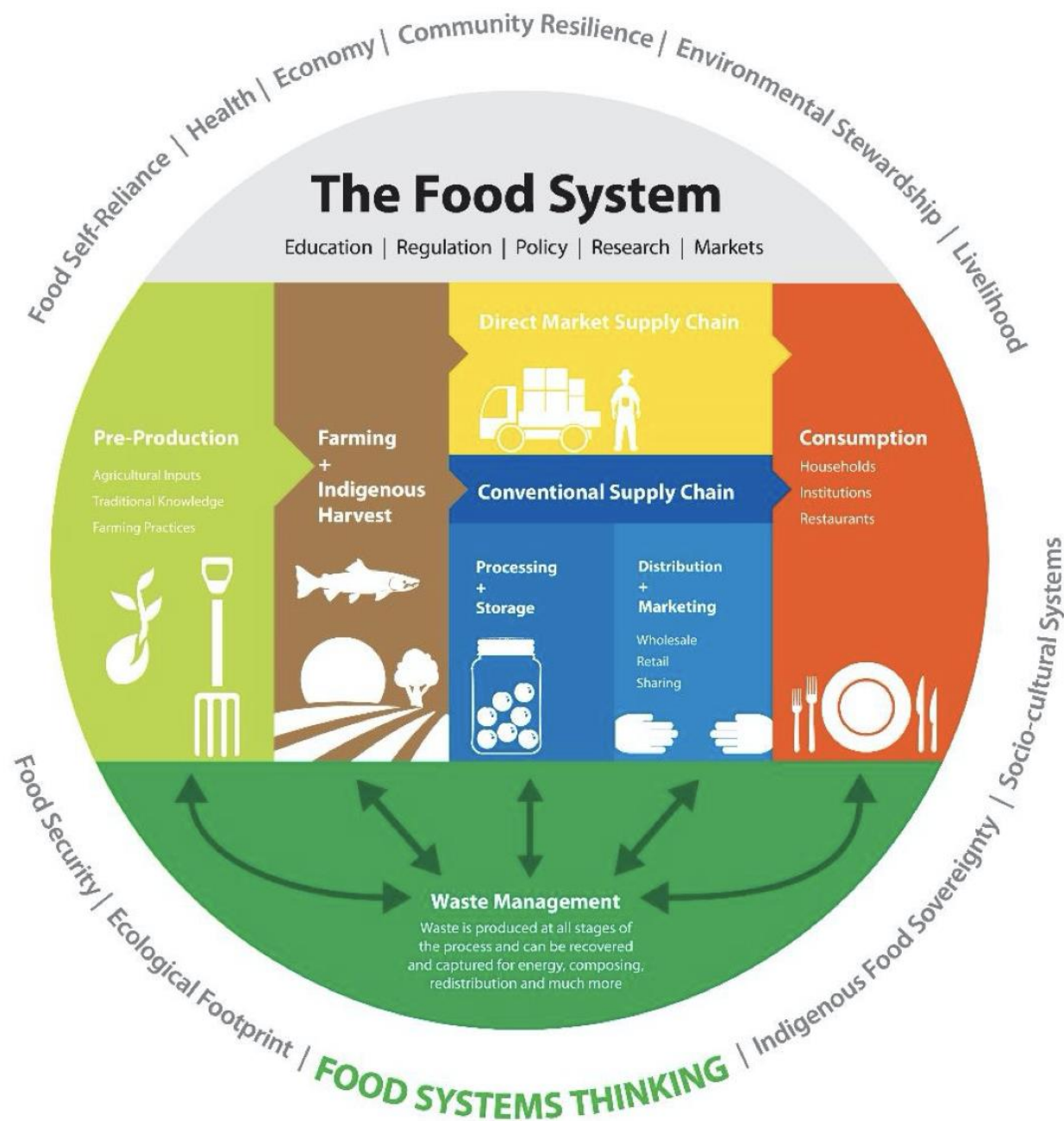
**CONTINUE TO
DEGRADE THE
ENVIRONMENT**



**CONTRIBUTE TO
BIODIVERSITY
DESTRUCTION**



**COMPROMISE
THE WORLD'S
CAPACITY TO
PRODUCE FOOD
IN THE FUTURE**



The food system

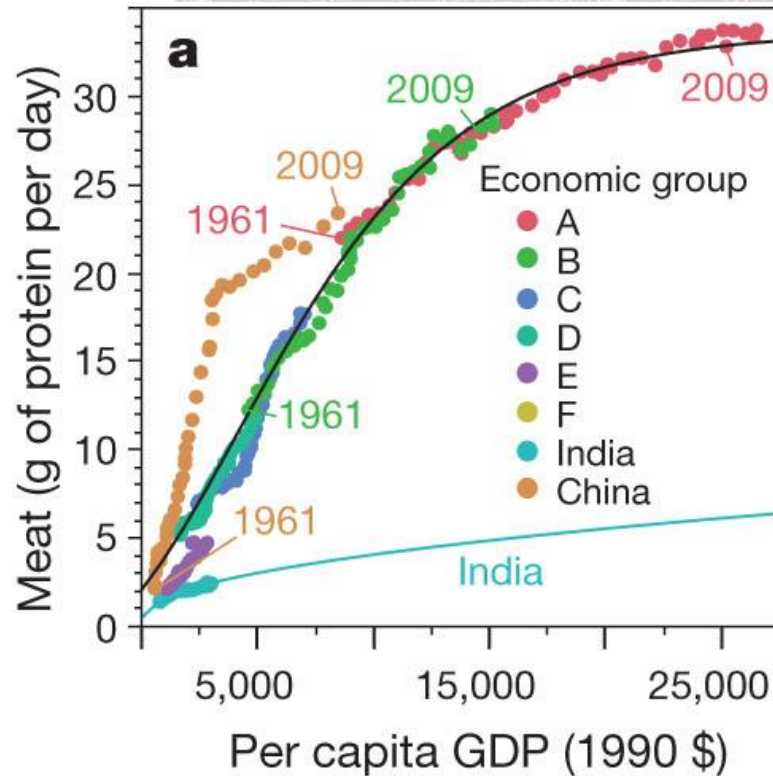
Circular relationships:

- Production & Environment
- Consumption & Production
- Consumption & Environment

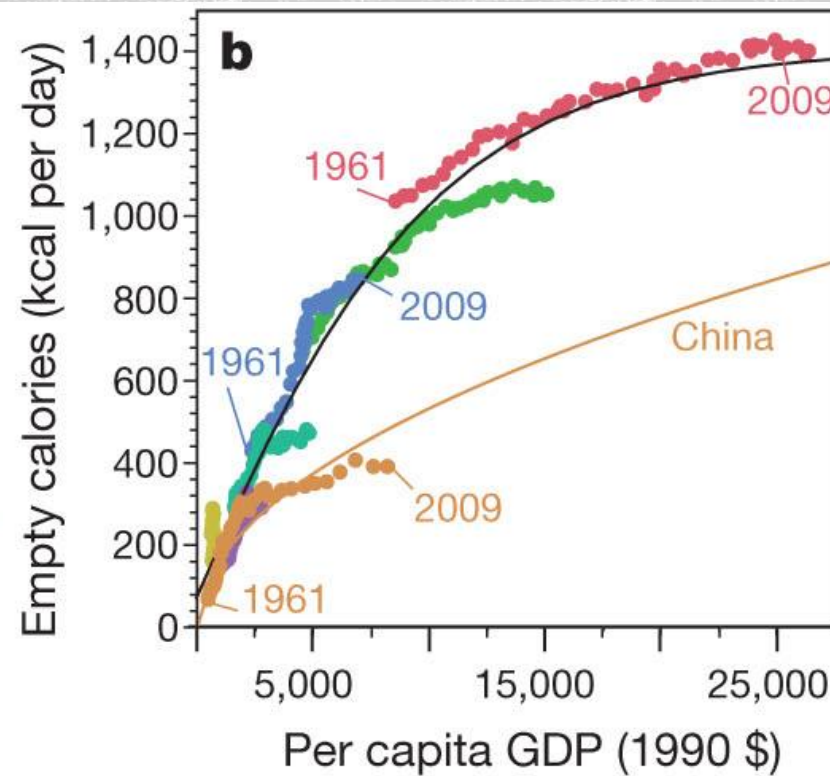


DIETARY TRENDS & INCOME

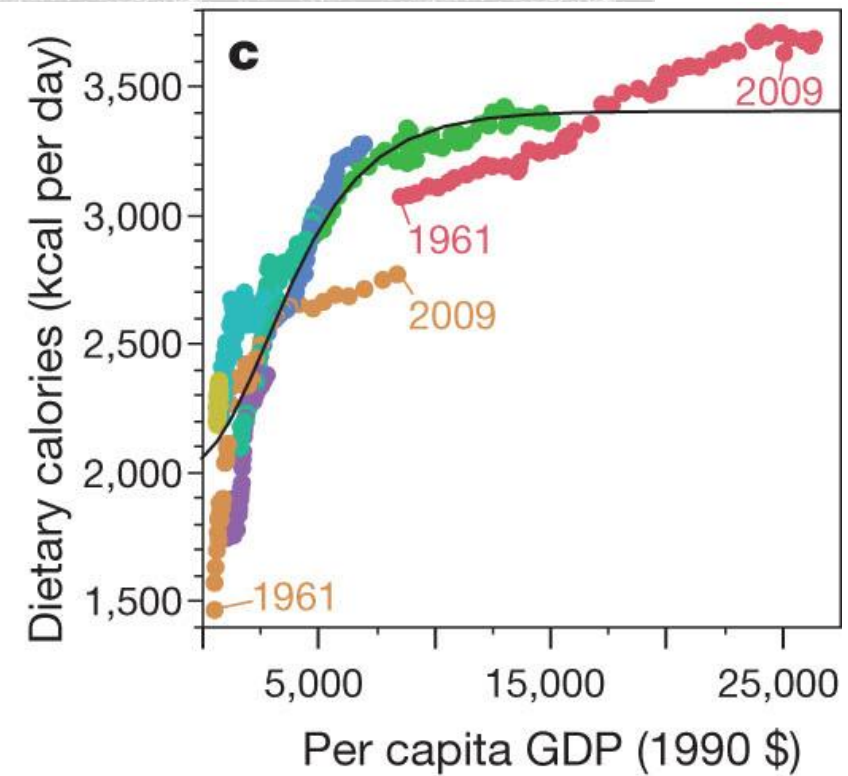
Meat protein



Refined sugars, animal fats, oils & alcohol



Calories

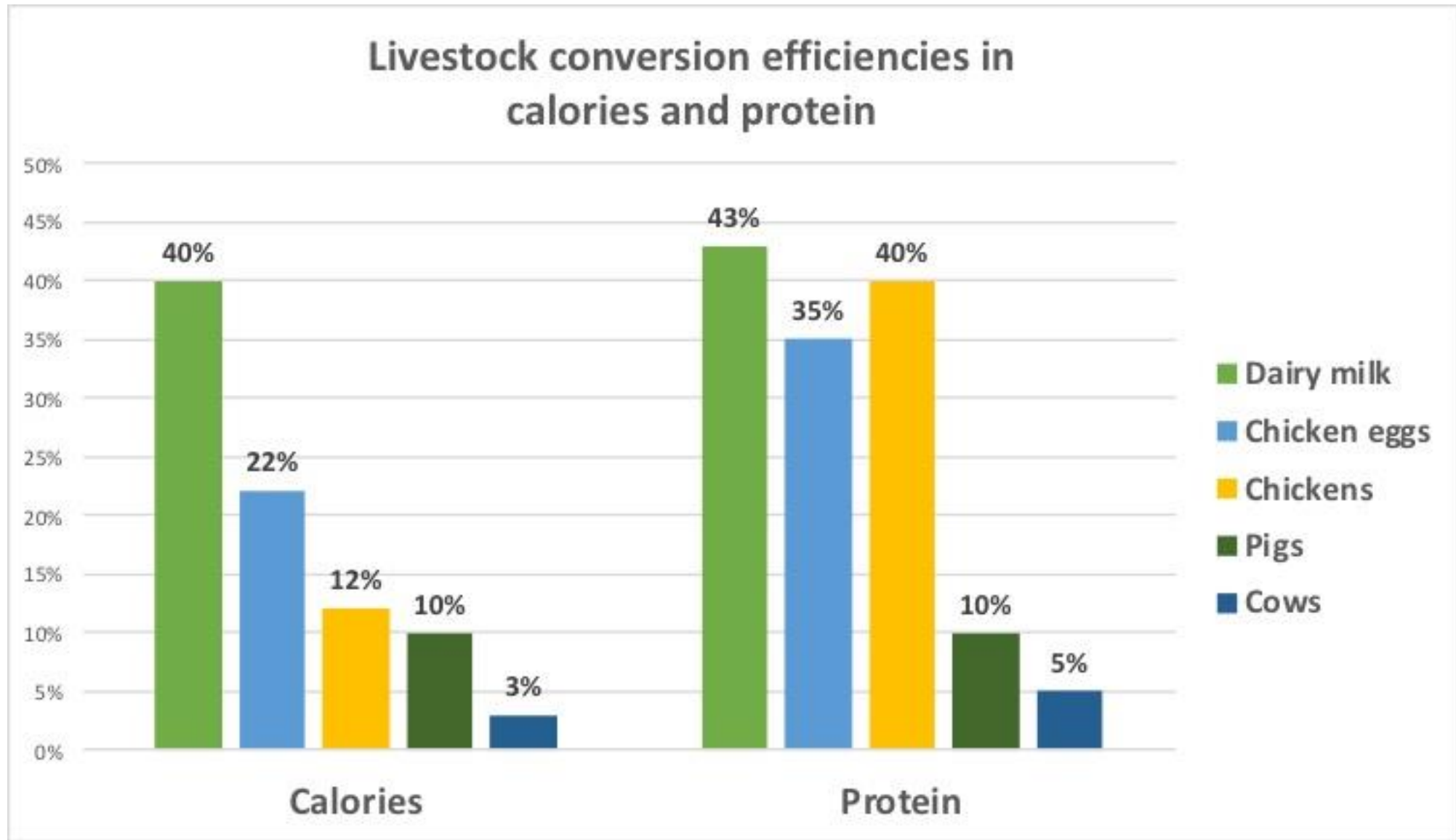


Dependence of per capita daily dietary demand for: **a**, meat protein; **b**, refined sugars+refined animal fats+oils+alcohol; and **c**, calories on per capita gross domestic product

So what?

(Or: Why is this a problem?)





Cassidy, E.M et al, 2013. Redefining agricultural yields: from tonnes to people nourished per hectare. University of Minnesota. Environ. Res. Lett. 8 (2013) 034015



Behavioural risk factors

Dietary risks

Tobacco smoke

Low physical activity

Alcohol & drug use

Metabolic risk factors

High systolic blood pressure

High body mass index

High total cholesterol

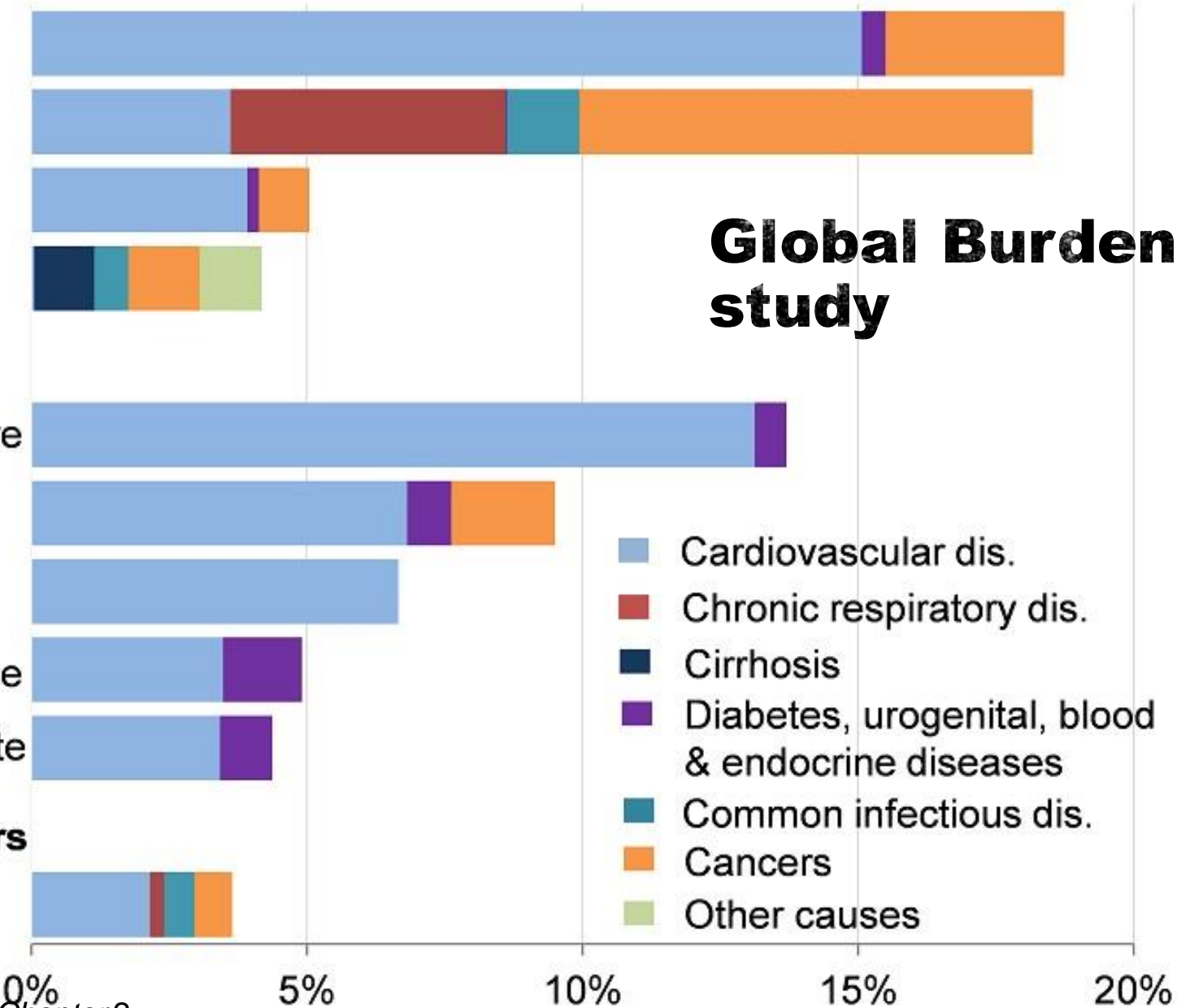
High fasting plasma glucose

Low glomerular filtration rate

Environmental risk factors

Air pollution

Global Burden of Disease study



Source: Health Profile for England, Chapter 2, July 2017





Fresh water



Soil



Eutrophication



Acidification

Environmental Impacts



Breakout session 1

What are the impacts of agriculture on our health that are not related to nutrition?

What are the biggest risks?

Locally? Globally?

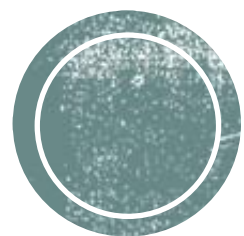


What did we think?

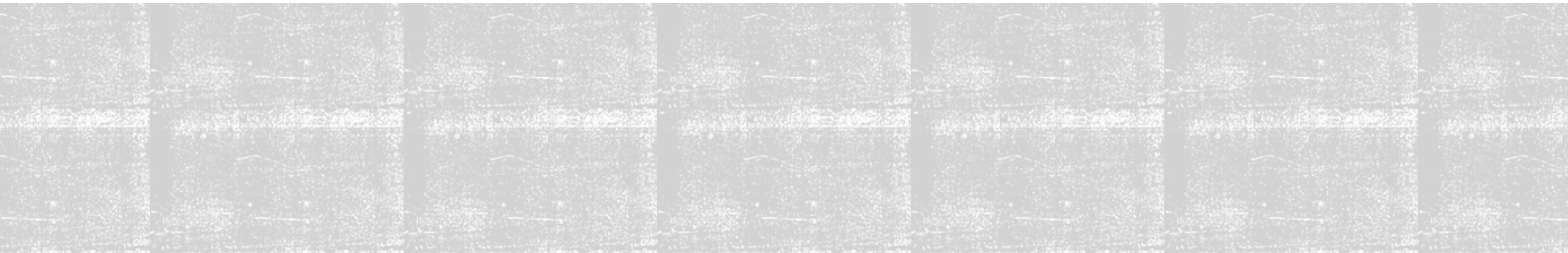
What are the impacts of agriculture on our health?

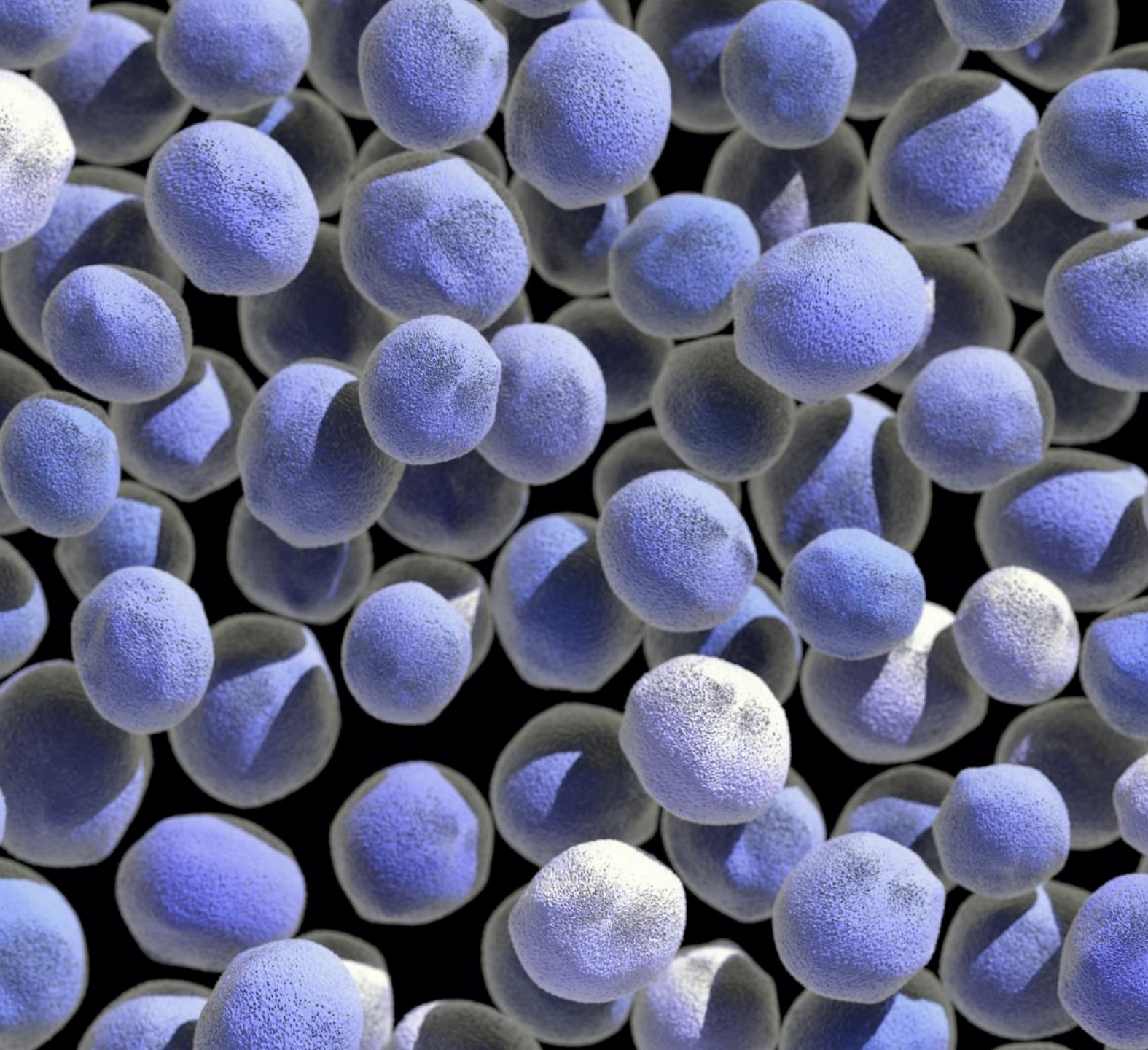
What are the biggest risks? Locally? Globally?





AMR





Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

‘As is now quite well known, we suggested that without policies to stop the worrying spread of AMR, today's already large 700,000 deaths every year would become an extremely disturbing 10 million every year, more people than currently die from cancer. ‘

Jim O'Neill, Forward to ‘Tackling Drug-Resistant Infections Globally: Final Report and Recommendations’ May 2016



Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

Resistant pathogens of interest

- Campylobacter spp
- non-typhoidal Salmonella spp
- Escherichia coli
- livestock-associated methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (LA-MRSA).

Key antibiotics of interest – Critically Important Antibiotics (MIAs) (WHO classification)

- Colistin
- fluoroquinolones
- 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins



Critically Important Antibiotics (CIAs)

- Essential to maintaining human health
- Defined in current regulation by the European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) recommend use only after positive diagnostic test indicates use is necessary
- 2016 – European Parliament voted to restrict or ban veterinary use of CIAs – not yet ratified



ANTIMICROBIAL USE & LIVESTOCK



Worldwide, approximately 73% of current antibiotic production is used in agriculture, most of which is to promote growth and prevent disease. (van Boekel et al 2019)



Reliance on antimicrobials in intensive livestock farming is a significant contributor to the emergence of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria that affect human health. (WHO, 2012)



A Scientific Opinion by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concludes that it is “**of high priority to decrease the total antimicrobial use in animal production in the EU**”. (EFSA, 2011)





Antibiotic use in Livestock



Treat disease



**Prevent disease
(Prophylaxis and Metaphylaxis)**



Growth promotion



Growth promotion in livestock animals



**Antibiotics mediate
growth enhancement**



**Sub-clinical levels
added to feed**



**Affects the gut
microbiota – density &
diversity**



**Banned in EU
countries since 2006**



- **Optimizes nutrient utilization**
- **Reduces energy waste**
- **Increases growth in animal.**



ECONOMIC IMPACT – 2015 ANALYSIS BY US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)



Production costs estimated 2% higher when antibiotics not used for either growth promotion or prophylaxis disease prevention



Increased growth = less time to feed broiler chickens



Each 1% reduction in feed use worth \$27.5 million for integrators





Aquaculture

Raised stressors on fish

Sanitation - high population densities, crowding of farming sites, lack of sanitary barriers or ability to isolate infected fish

Increased AMR in environment and in fish pathogens – leading to use of more/different antibiotics

Aquaculture products (e.g. fish, shellfish, and shrimp) at retail can carry bacteria that are resistant to medically important antimicrobials

FAO/WHO 2018





Citrus Greening & Streptomycin Oxytetracycline

- **Citrus greening** - caused by the bacterium *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*
- Devastated Florida's citrus industry – **estimated 90% of state's citrus trees are infected**
- **“The level of desperation is high,”** says Rick Dantzler, chief operating officer of Florida's Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) in Lake Alfred





Does this matter to human health?

ARBs of animal origin can be transmitted to humans through various mechanisms, including:

- the environment (Graham et al 2009)
- food products (Price et al., 2005)
- agricultural workers by direct contact (Smith et al., 2013)



Is antimicrobial administration to food animals a direct threat to human health? A rapid systematic review (Scott et al., 2018)

- Out of 93 studies identified - 89 studies showed (3 directly, 86 indirectly) limiting antimicrobials given to animals reduces antimicrobial resistance in animals.
- 4 studies indicated (1 directly, 3 indirectly) withdrawing antimicrobials in food animals results in decreased antimicrobial resistance in humans.
- Authors' conclusions:
 - Limiting antimicrobial use in food animals reduces antimicrobial resistance in food animals
 - Also probably reduces antimicrobial resistance in humans.
 - The magnitude of the effect cannot be quantified.



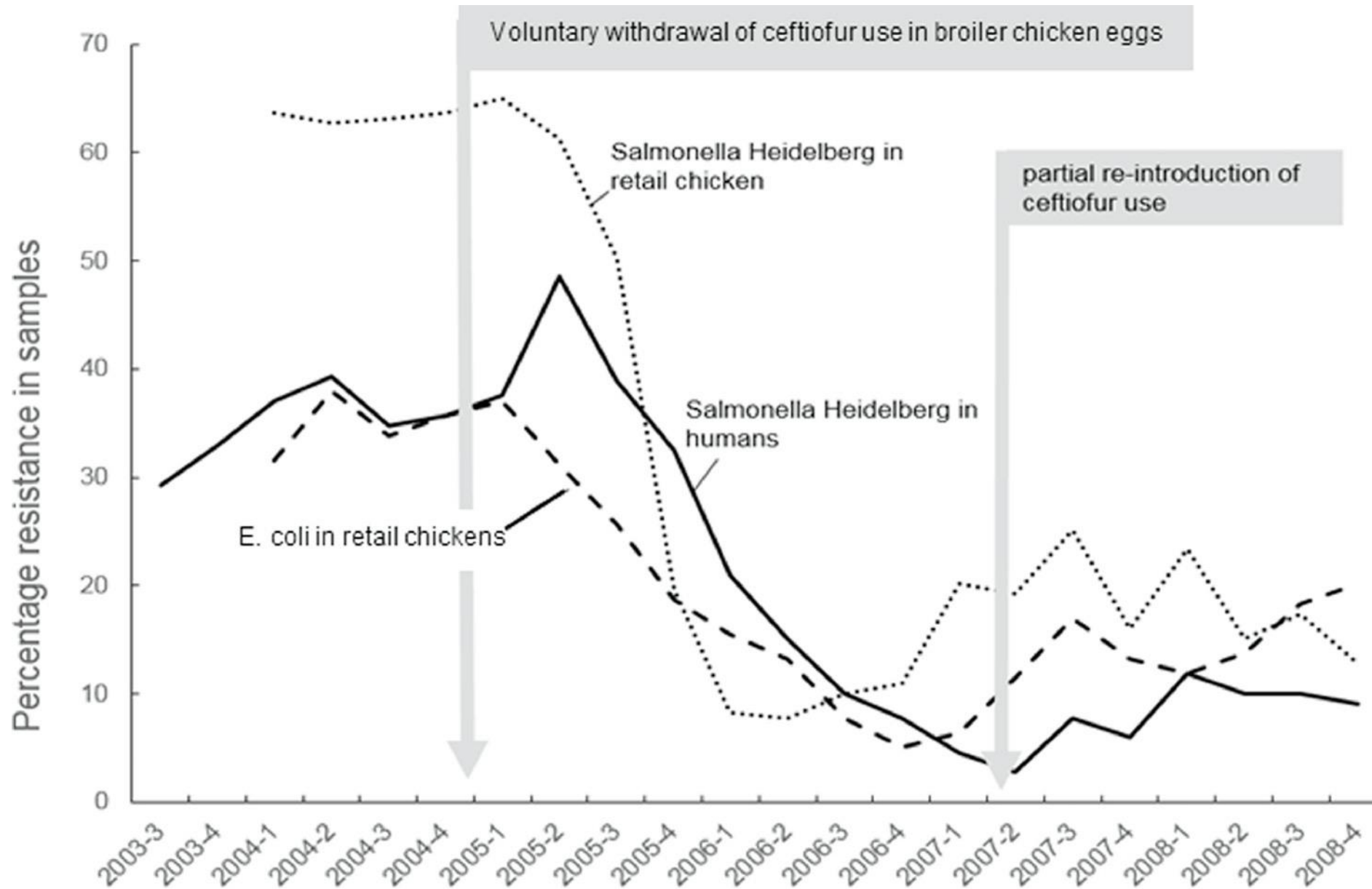
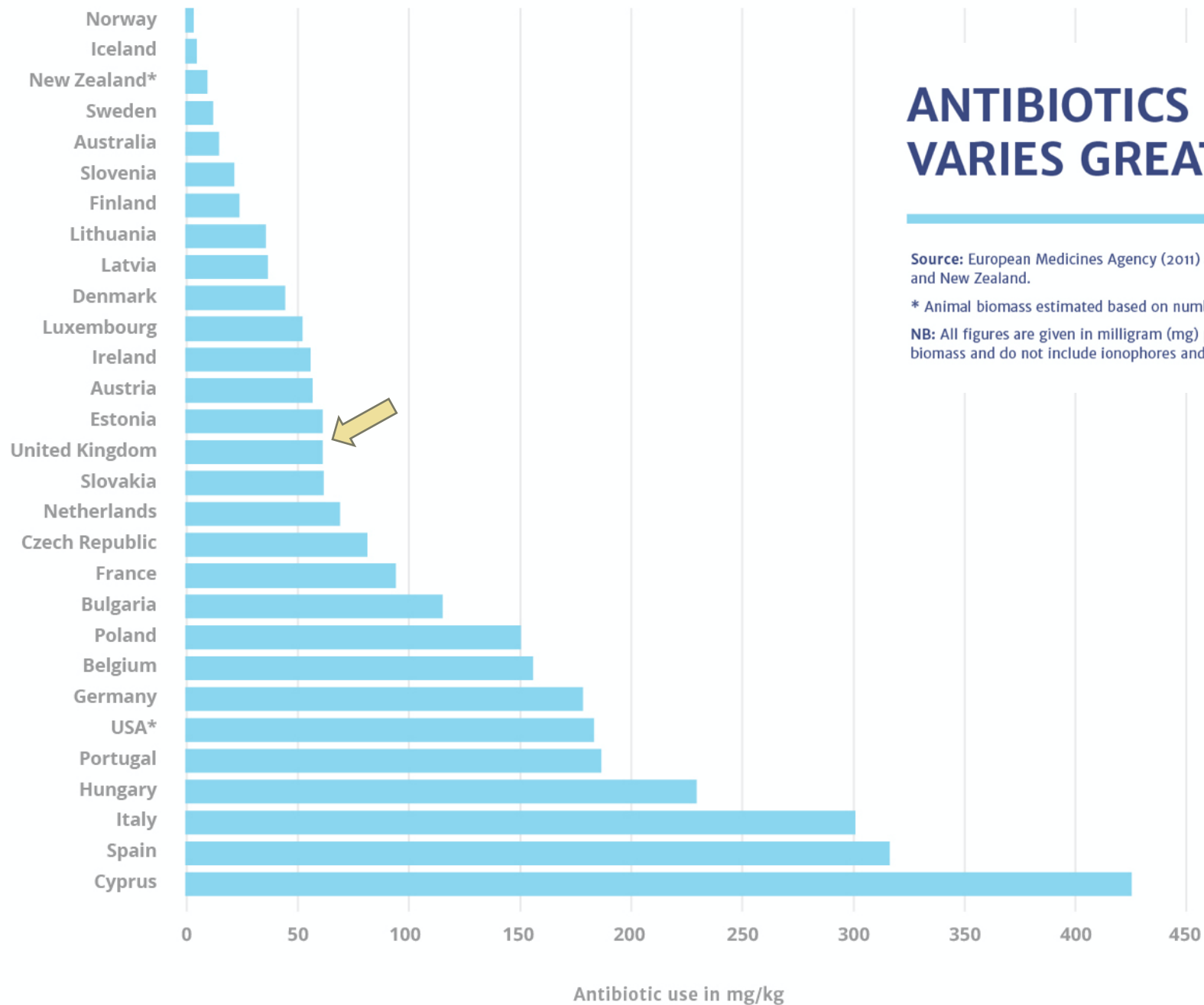


Fig. A.3. Resistance to [ceftiofur](#) over time in Quebec, Canada (Scott et al., 2018 - redrawn from data in Dutil 2010 [\[15\]](#))





ANTIBIOTICS USE IN AGRICULTURE VARIES GREATLY BY COUNTRY

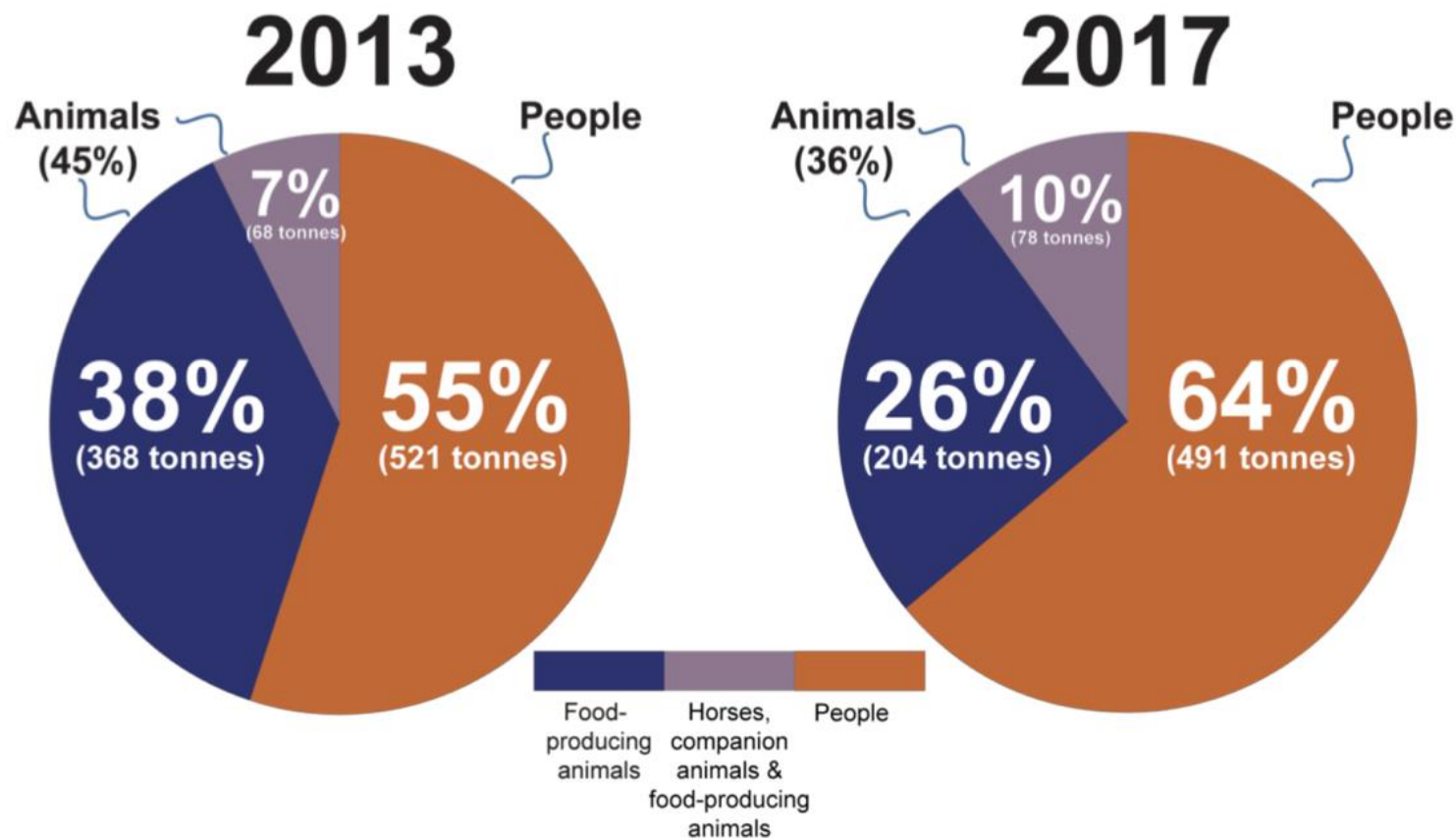
Source: European Medicines Agency (2011) and the national governments of the US, Australia and New Zealand.

* Animal biomass estimated based on number of animals.

NB: All figures are given in milligram (mg) purchased for every kilogram (kg) of livestock biomass and do not include ionophores and oligosaccharides.

Review on
Antimicrobial
Resistance





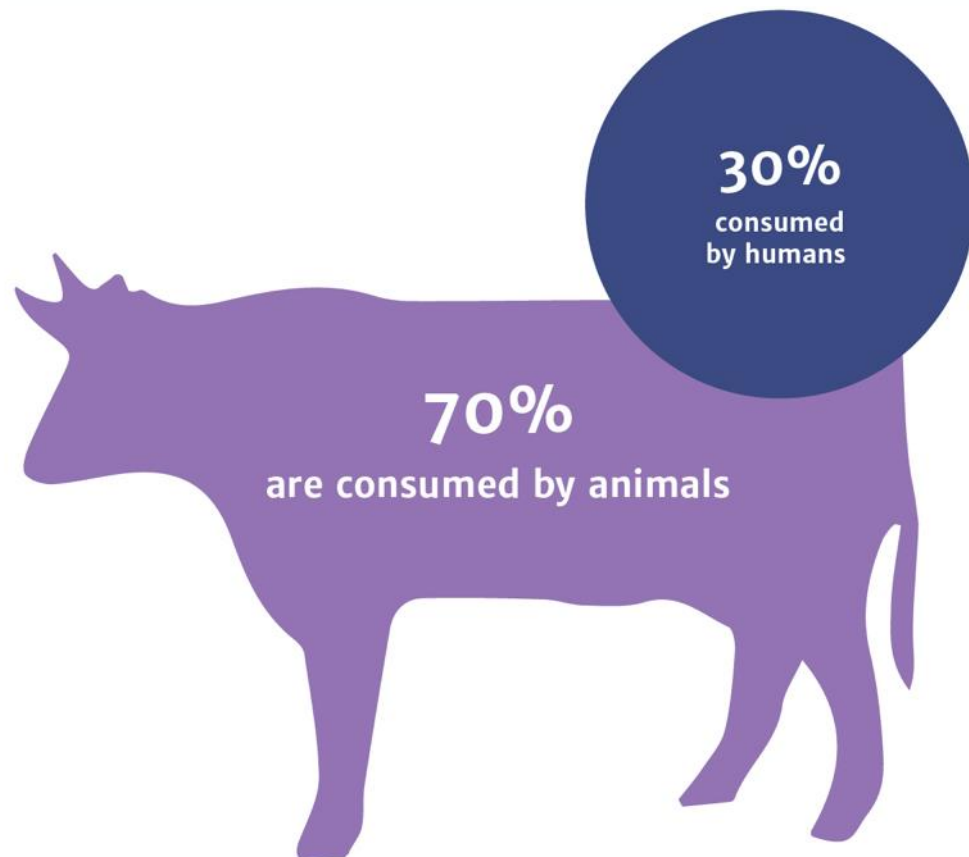
UK Reductions in total tonnes between 2013 and 2017

In the UK reductions in farm antibiotic use have been achieved in recent years, (Directorate 2019)

As one example, a 2010/11 survey undertaken by the Department for Environmental and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) found 85% of non-organic dairy farms in the UK used routine antibiotic therapy during the non-lactating phase (Brunton et al, 2012).



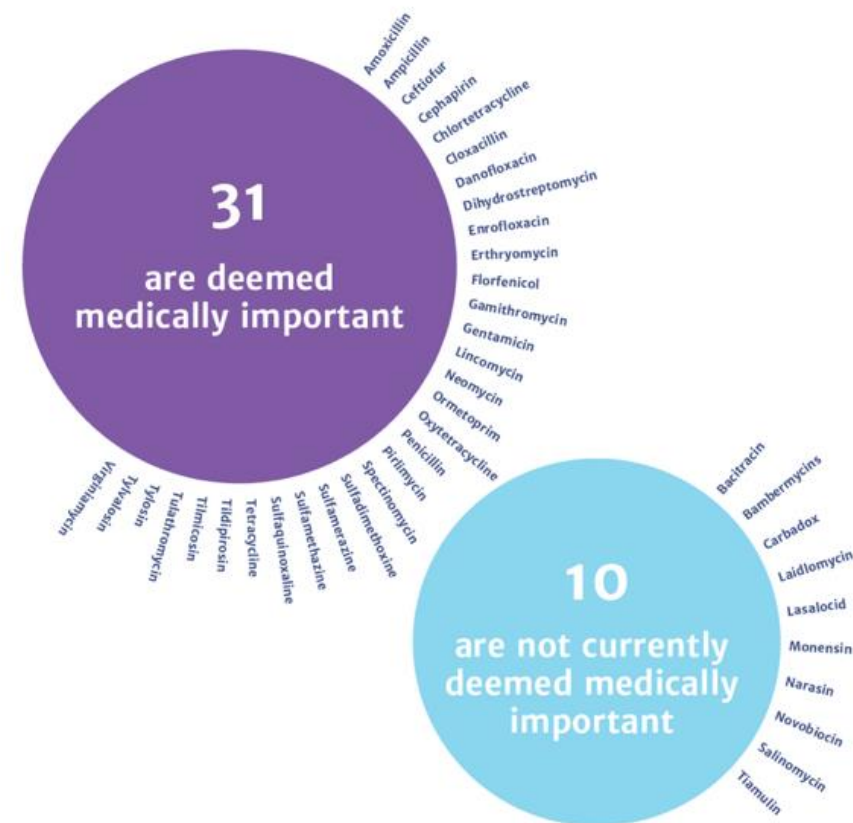
ANIMALS IN THE USA CONSUME MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY MEDICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIBIOTICS AS HUMANS



Source: Animal consumption figure of 8,893,103kg from FDA, 2012. Human consumption of 3,379,226kg in 2012 based on calculations by IMS Health. The figures are rounded from 72.5% used in animals and 27.5% used in humans.

MOST ANTIBIOTICS USED IN ANIMALS ARE MEDICALLY IMPORTANT FOR HUMANS

Of the 41 antibiotics* that are approved for used in food producing animals by the FDA, 31 are categorised as being medically important for human use.



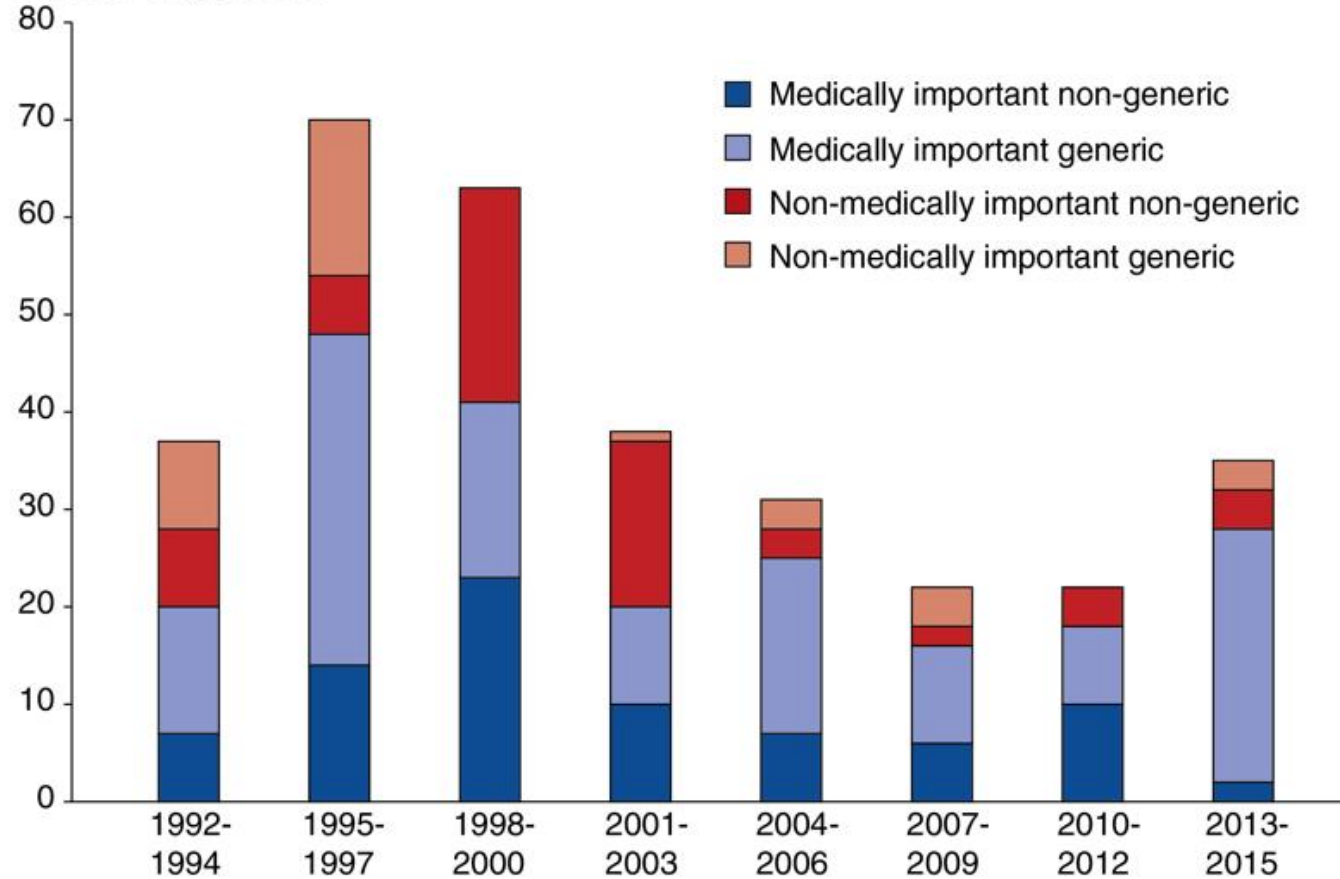
Source: FDA, 2012 Summary report on Antimicrobials sold or distributed for use in Food-producing animals.

* Includes ionophores



Between 1992 and 2015, most new antibiotic approvals for use in food animals have been generic drugs that are also used in human medicine

Number of approvals



Note: Medically important antibiotics are those important for human-disease treatment.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service analysis of Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine Green Book (FDA-CVM Green Book) reports of animal pharmaceutical product approvals.



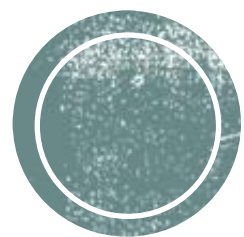
Breakout Session 2

How can we reduce use of antimicrobials in agriculture?

What would be the most effective?

What level is acceptable?





**5-minute comfort
break**

What did we think?

How can we reduce use of antimicrobials in agriculture?

What would be the most effective?

What level is acceptable?



Agriculture sector

To prevent and control the spread of antibiotic resistance, the agriculture sector can:

- Only give antibiotics to animals under veterinary supervision.
- Not use antibiotics for growth promotion or to prevent diseases in healthy animals.
- Vaccinate animals to reduce the need for antibiotics and use alternatives to antibiotics when available.
- Promote and apply good practices at all steps of production and processing of foods from animal and plant sources.
- Improve biosecurity on farms and prevent infections through improved hygiene and animal welfare.

WHO Guidance

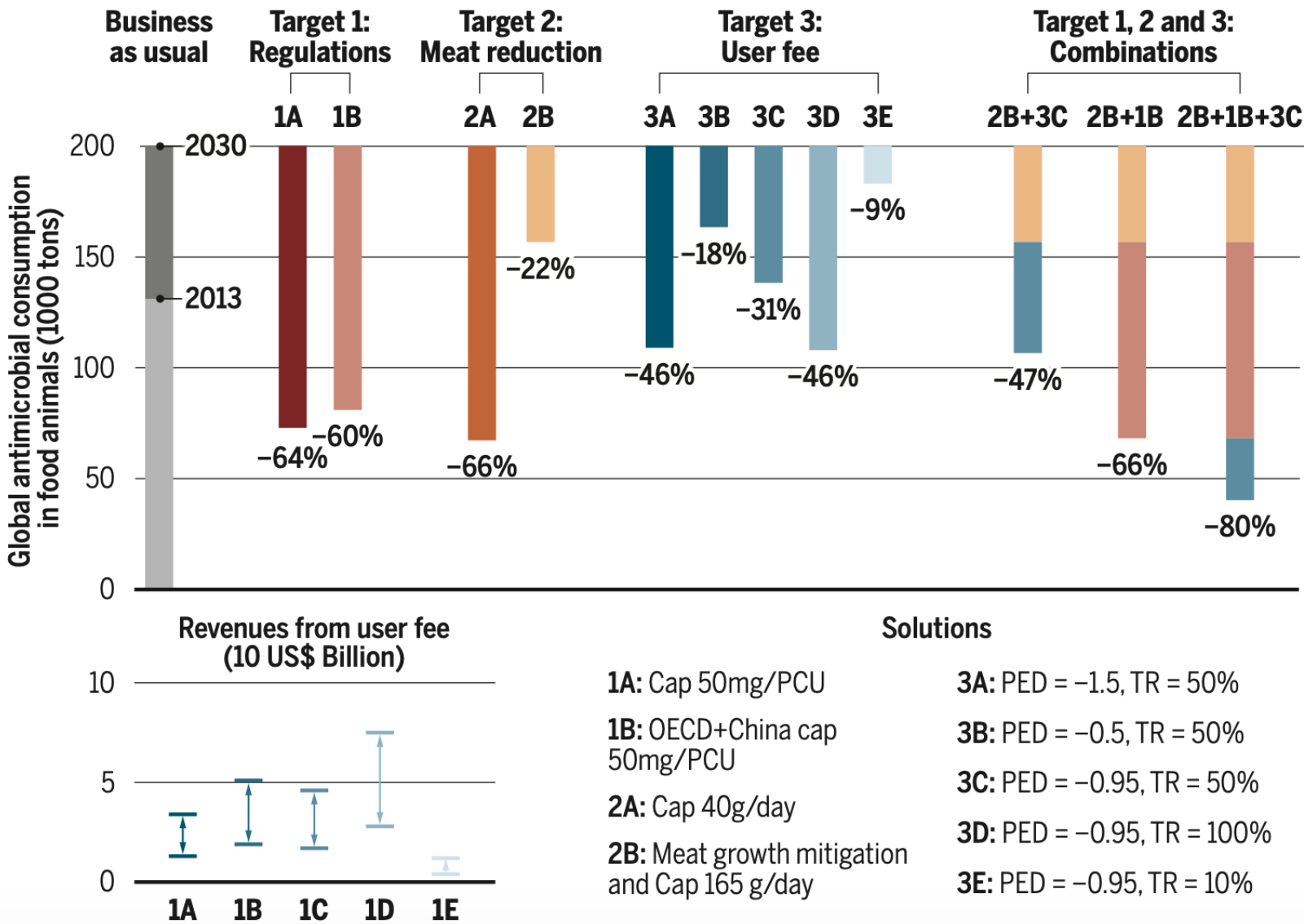
WHO Antibiotic Resistance Fact Sheet (2020)

<https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antibiotic-resistance>



Antimicrobial consumption in food animals by 2030

Business as usual and intervention policies are shown. Revenue ranges are estimated for different fee rates (TR) and price elasticities of demand (PED). For 3C, 3D, and 3E, PEDs are derived from time series of imports of veterinary antimicrobials in each country (Protocol S4); the global average PED was -0.95. See supplementary materials for discussions of uncertainty in all estimates shown in figures. PCU, population correction unit.

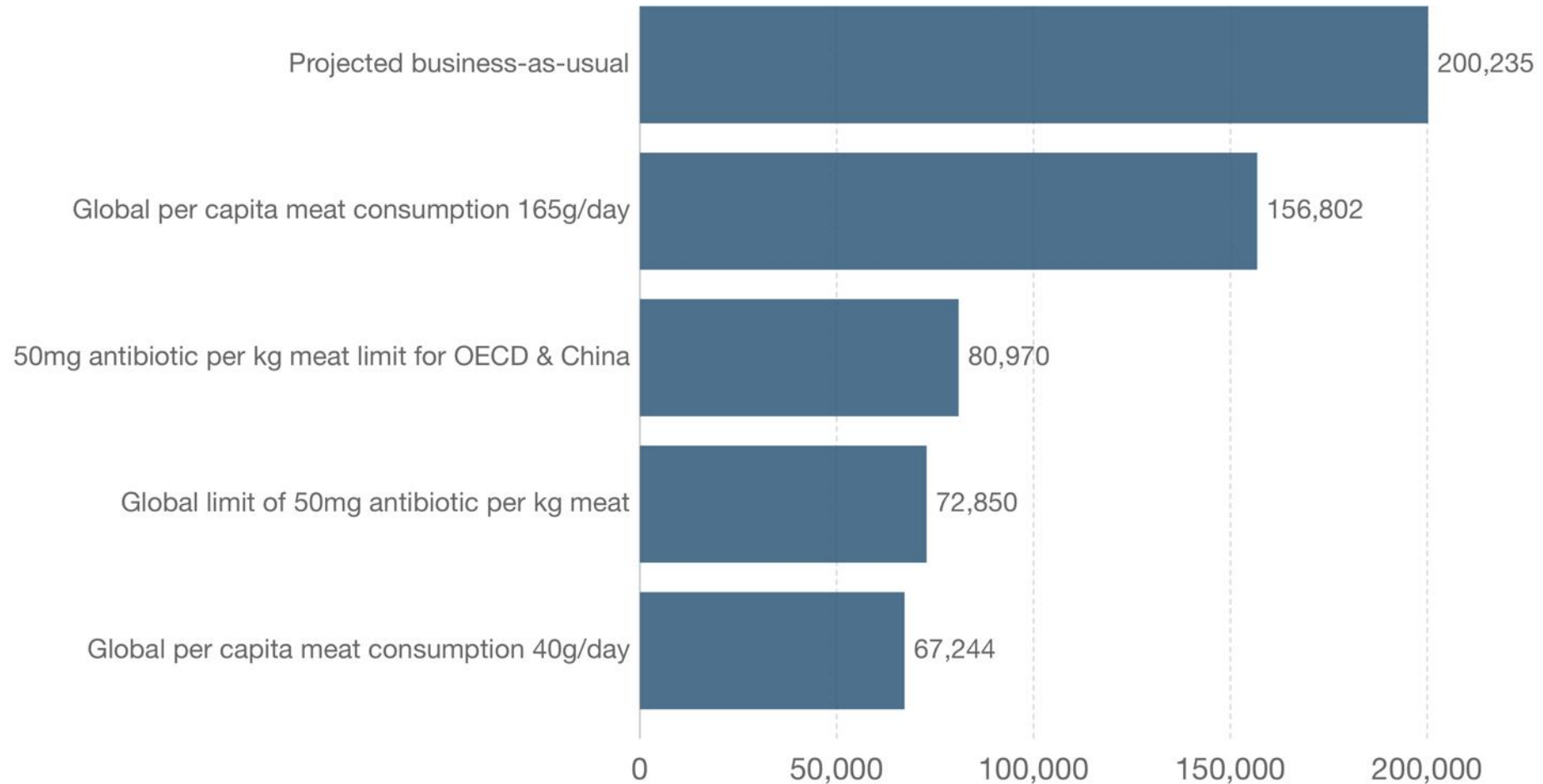


(Van Boeckel et al., 2017)



Global antibiotic use in livestock under reduction scenarios, 2030

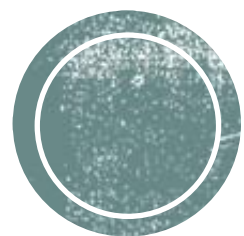
Projected global antibiotic use in livestock under expected meat consumption levels in 2030, and a range of modeled reduction scenarios based on antibiotic use limits, reductions in meat consumption, and a fee on antibiotic sales. Further details on each scenario are given in the sources tab. Global antibiotic use is measured in tonnes per year.



Source: Van Boeckel, T. P., Glennon, E. E., Chen, D., Gilbert, M., Robinson, T. P., Grenfell, B. T., Laxminarayan, R. (2017). Reducing antimicrobial use in food animals. *Science*, 357, 1350-1352.

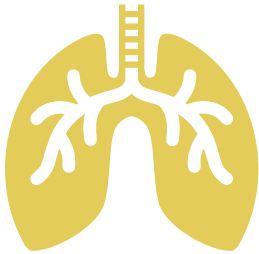
OurWorldInData.org/antibiotic-resistance-from-livestock • CC BY



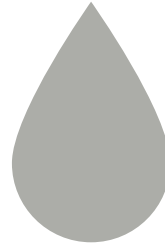


Nitrogen

How does nitrogen impact on population health?



Air Quality



Water Quality



Climate





Ammonia
 NH_3



Nitrogen and Air Pollution



Deaths attributable to ambient air pollution, 2016

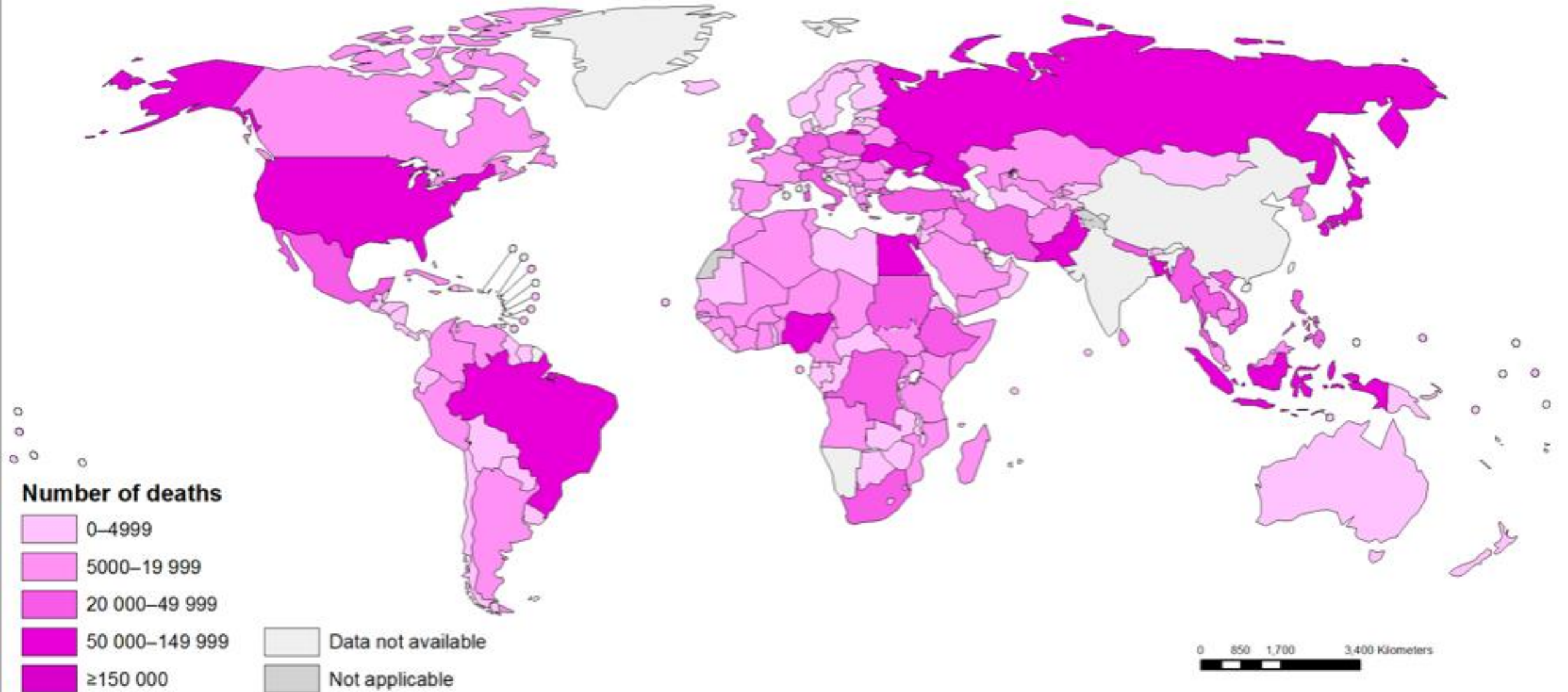
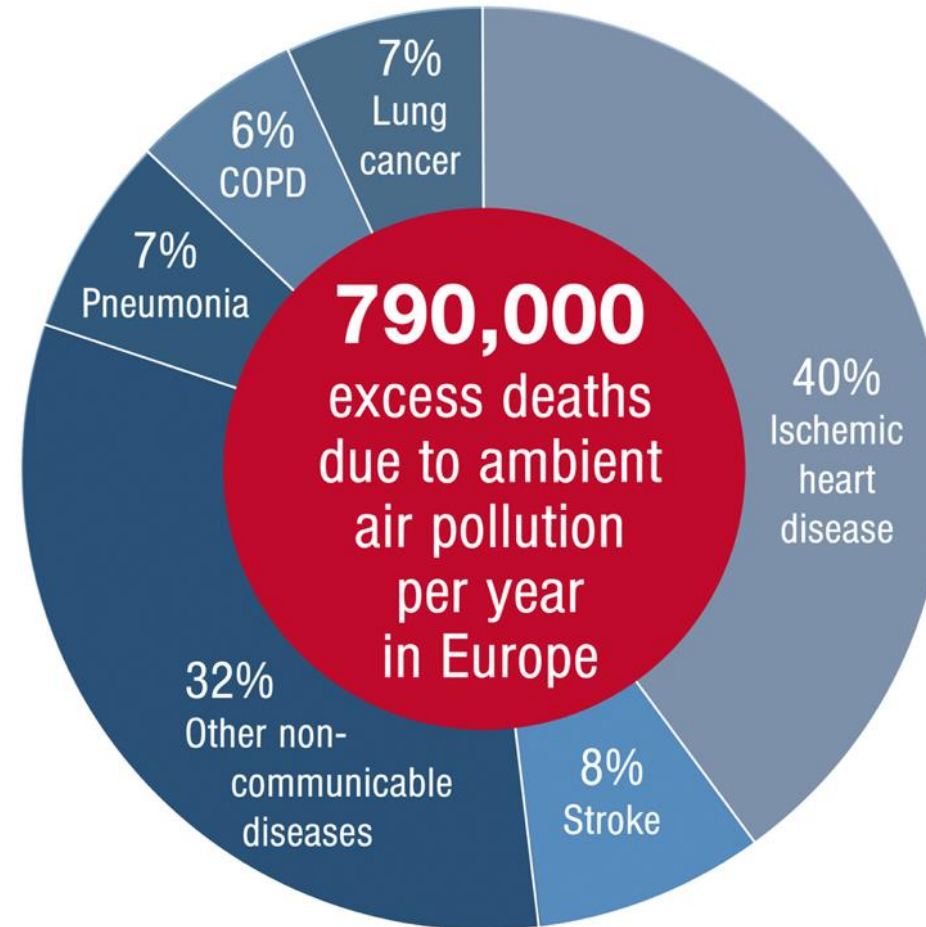
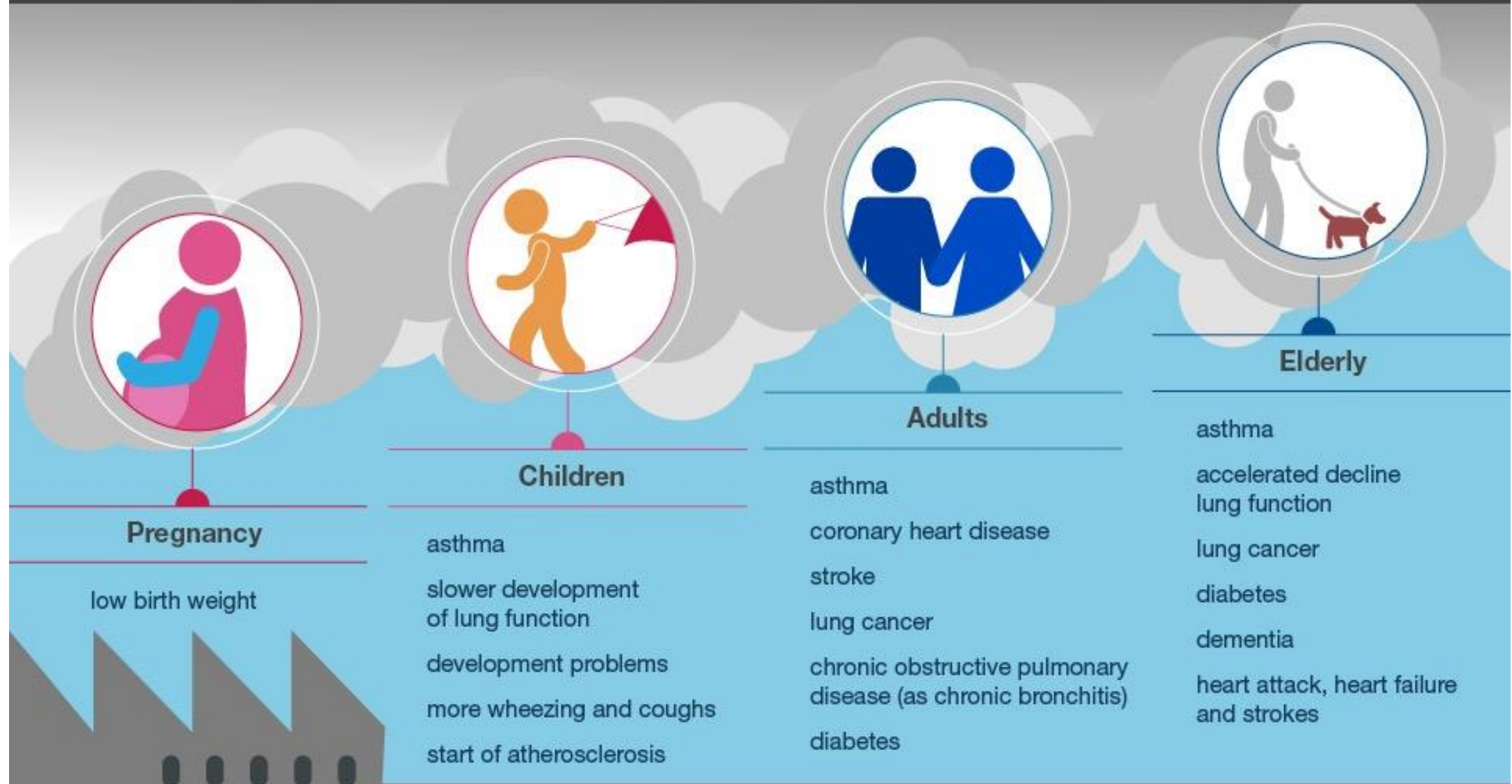


Figure 4 Estimated excess mortality attributed to air pollution in Europe, and the contributing disease categories. At ...



Air pollution affects people throughout their lifetime

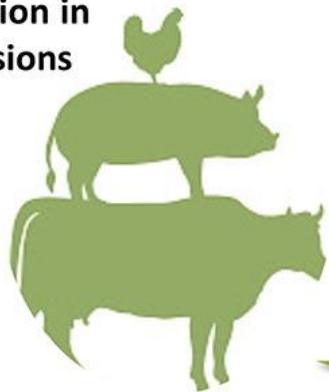




Air Pollution – a local issue?



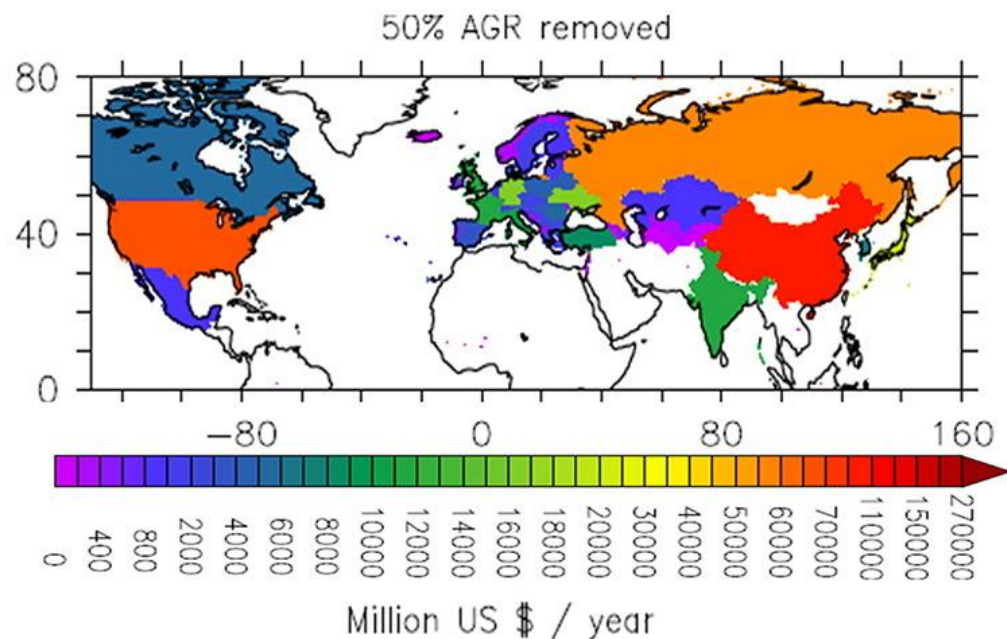
50% reduction in
AGR emissions



Economic
benefits of
billions US\$/yr



could prevent
thousands deaths/yr



Agriculture impact - UK

Modelling estimates for UK of a 50% reduction in agricultural emissions

- 21% reduction in mortality attributed to PM_{2.5} (approximately 3,300 fewer deaths annually)
- 22% reduction in associated costs (approximately US\$11.8 million reduced annual spend)



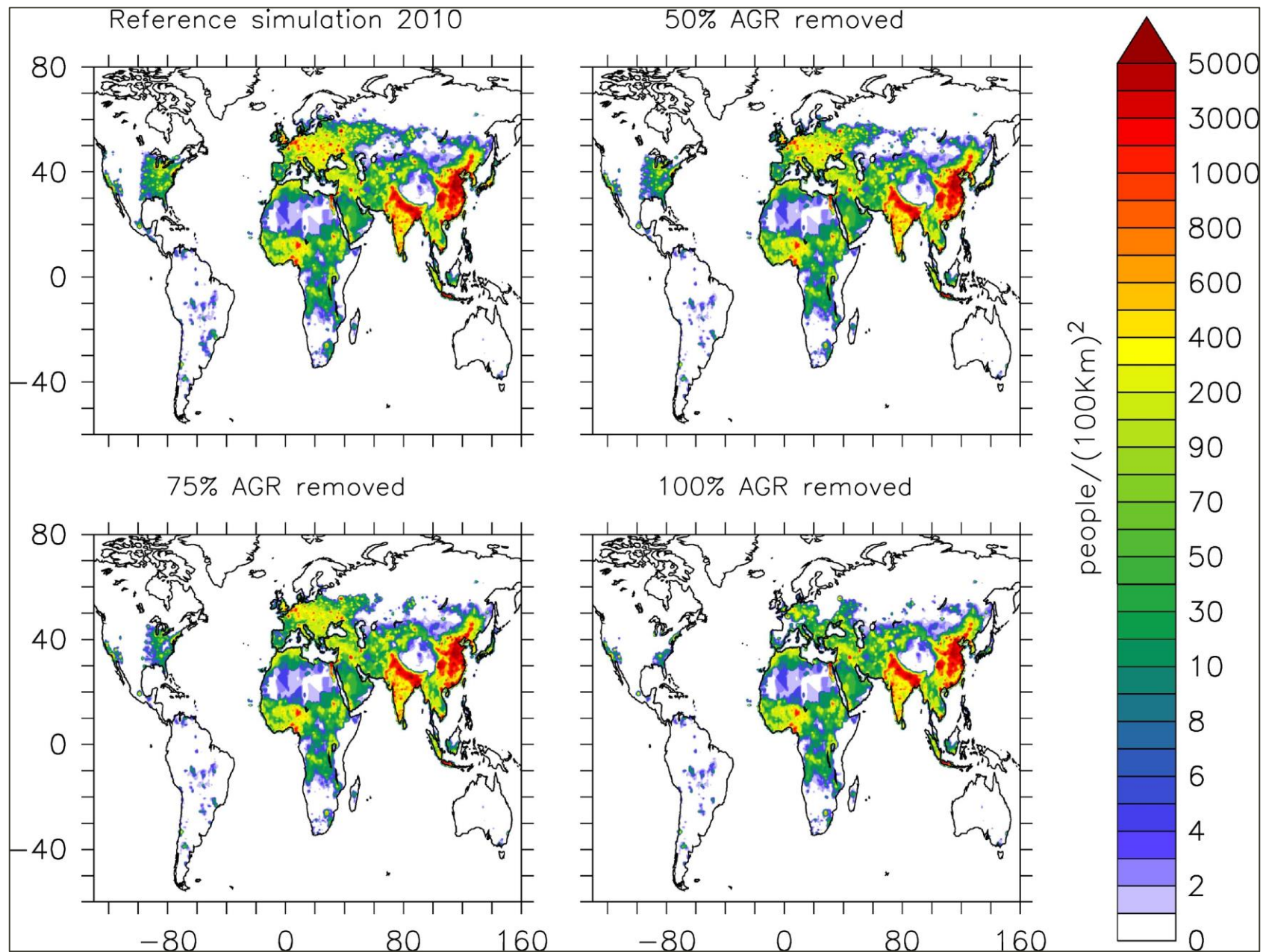



Fig. 1. PM2.5 related mortality (in deaths/area of 100 × 100 km²) for the year 2010 (top left, reference case) and the three sensitivity scenarios.



Dietary shifts can reduce premature deaths related to particulate matter pollution in China

Xueying Liu, Amos P. K. Tai , Youfan Chen, Lin Zhang, Gavin Shaddick, Xiaoyu Yan & Hon-Ming Lam

Nature Food 2, 997–1004 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)

2016 Accesses | 202 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

1 A [Publisher Correction](#) to this article was published on 07 January 2022

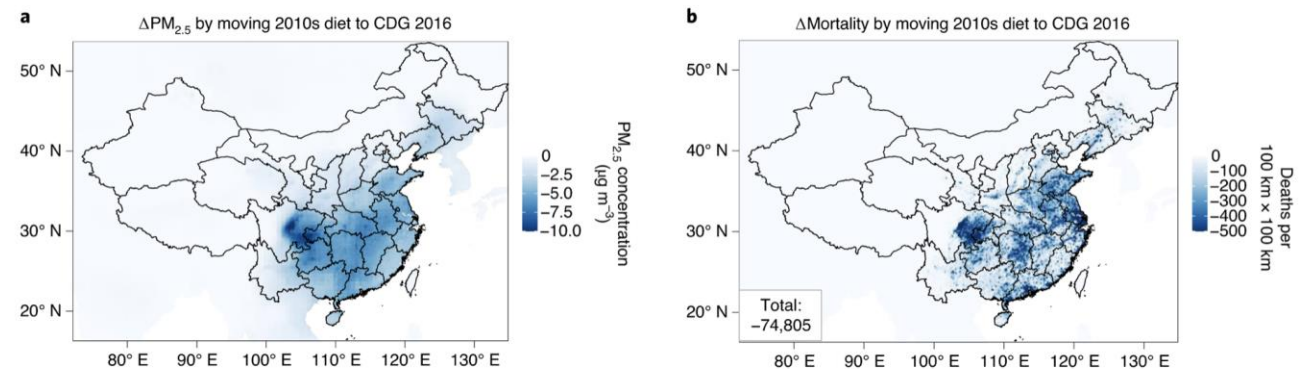
1 This article has been [updated](#)

Abstract

Shifting towards more meat-intensive diets may have indirect health consequences through environmental degradation. Here we examine how trends in dietary patterns in China over 1990–2010 have worsened fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) pollution, thereby

Fig. 5: Environmental and indirect health benefits of less meat-intensive diets.

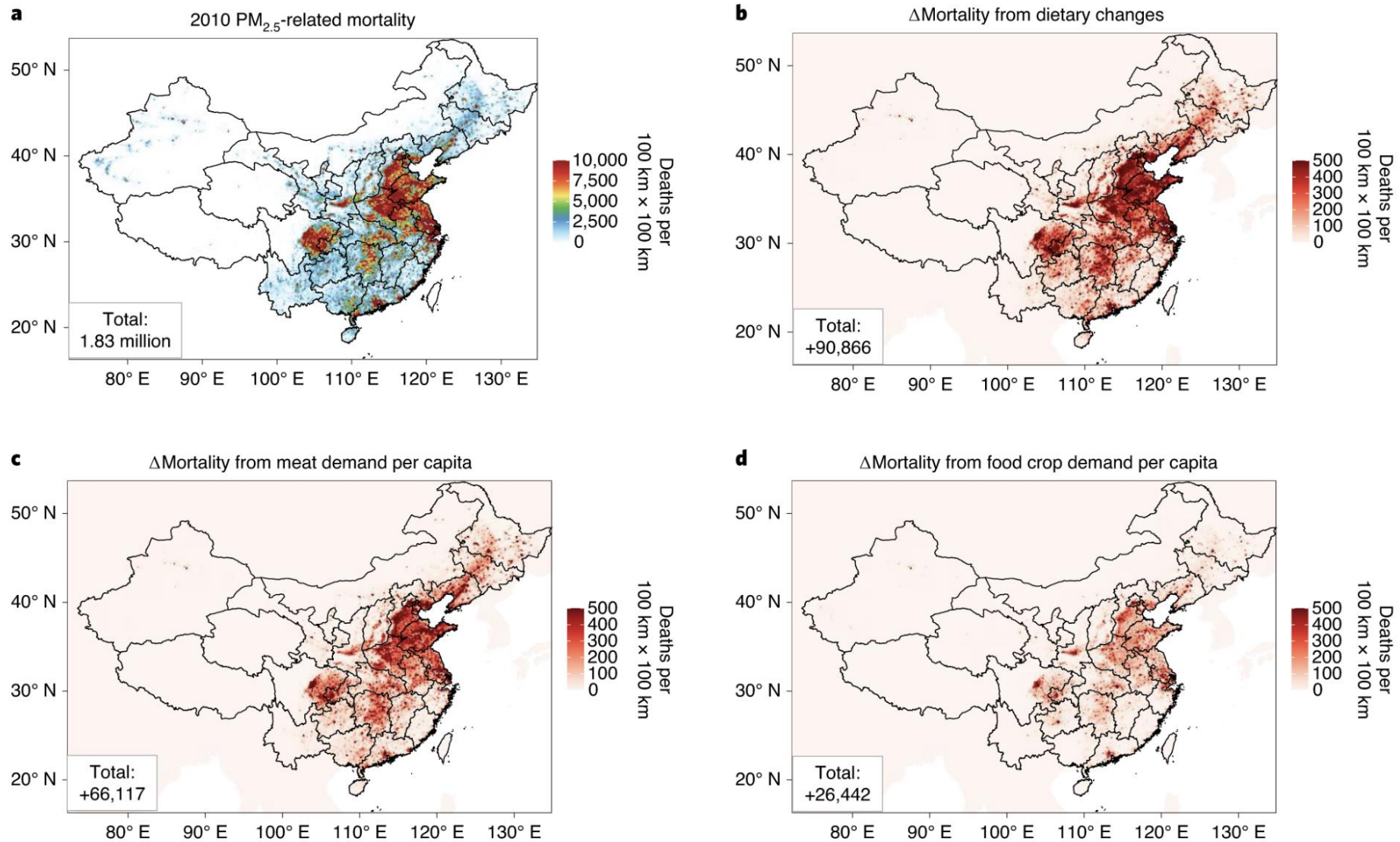
From: [Dietary shifts can reduce premature deaths related to particulate matter pollution in China](#)



a,b, Potential benefits of moving from the current 2010s diet to the healthier, less meat-intensive diet recommended by CDG 2016 in terms of changes in annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations (**a**) and PM_{2.5}-related premature mortalities (**b**). These plots correspond to [HEAL-2010] in Methods.

Fig. 4: Indirect health cost of dietary changes related to PM_{2.5} pollution.

From: [Dietary shifts can reduce premature deaths related to particulate matter pollution in China](#)



a, Chinese PM_{2.5}-related premature mortalities in 2010. **b–d**, The portions of those mortalities that could be attributable to 1980–2010 changes in dietary pattern as a whole (**b**), demand for meat (including animal feed crops) (**c**) and demand for food crops for direct human consumption (**d**).

These plots correspond to [2010] (**a**), [2010–POP] (**b**), [MEAT–POP] (**c**) and [CROP–POP] (**d**) in Methods.





Water & Nitrogen





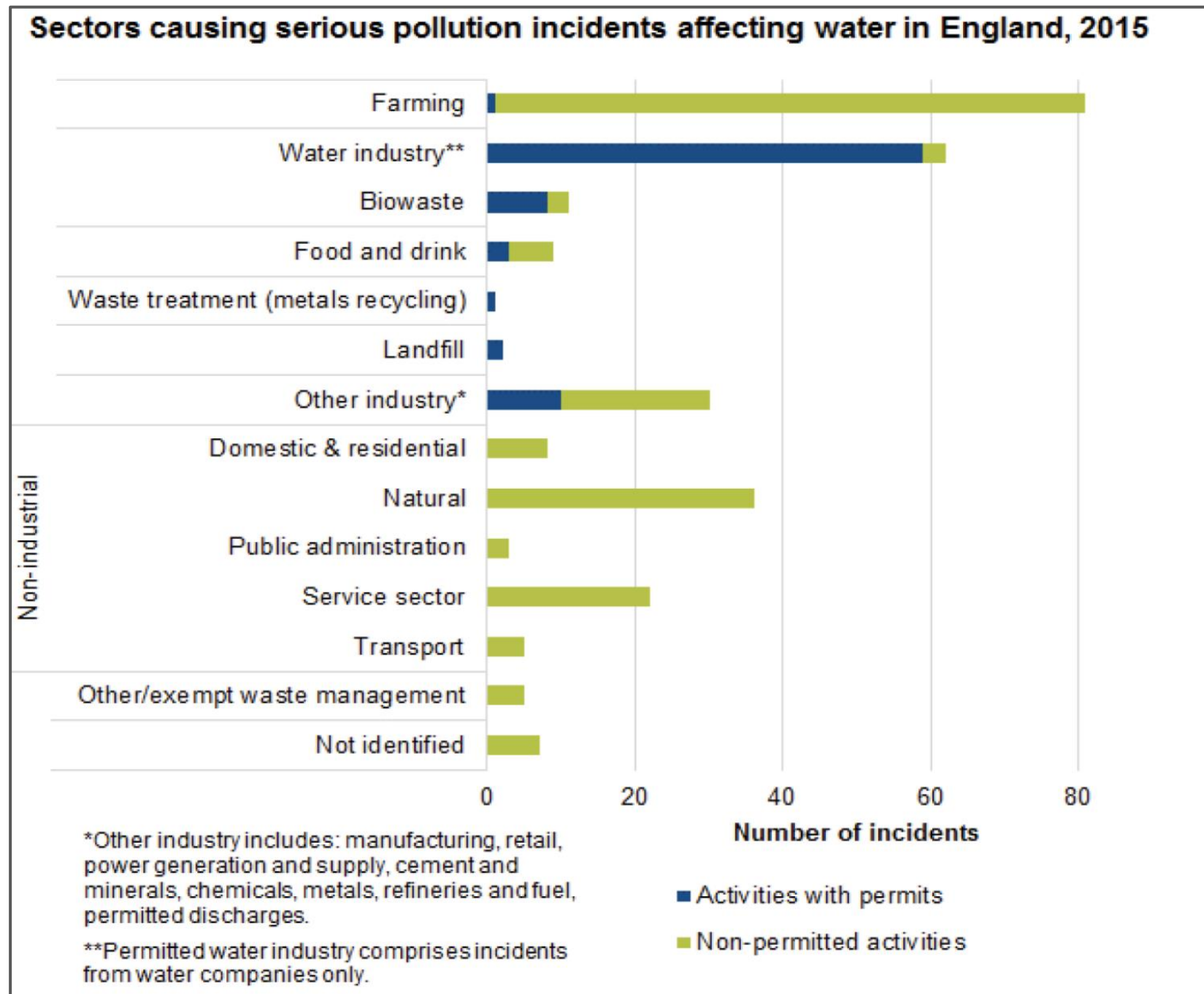
Drinking Water and Excess Nitrogen and Human Health

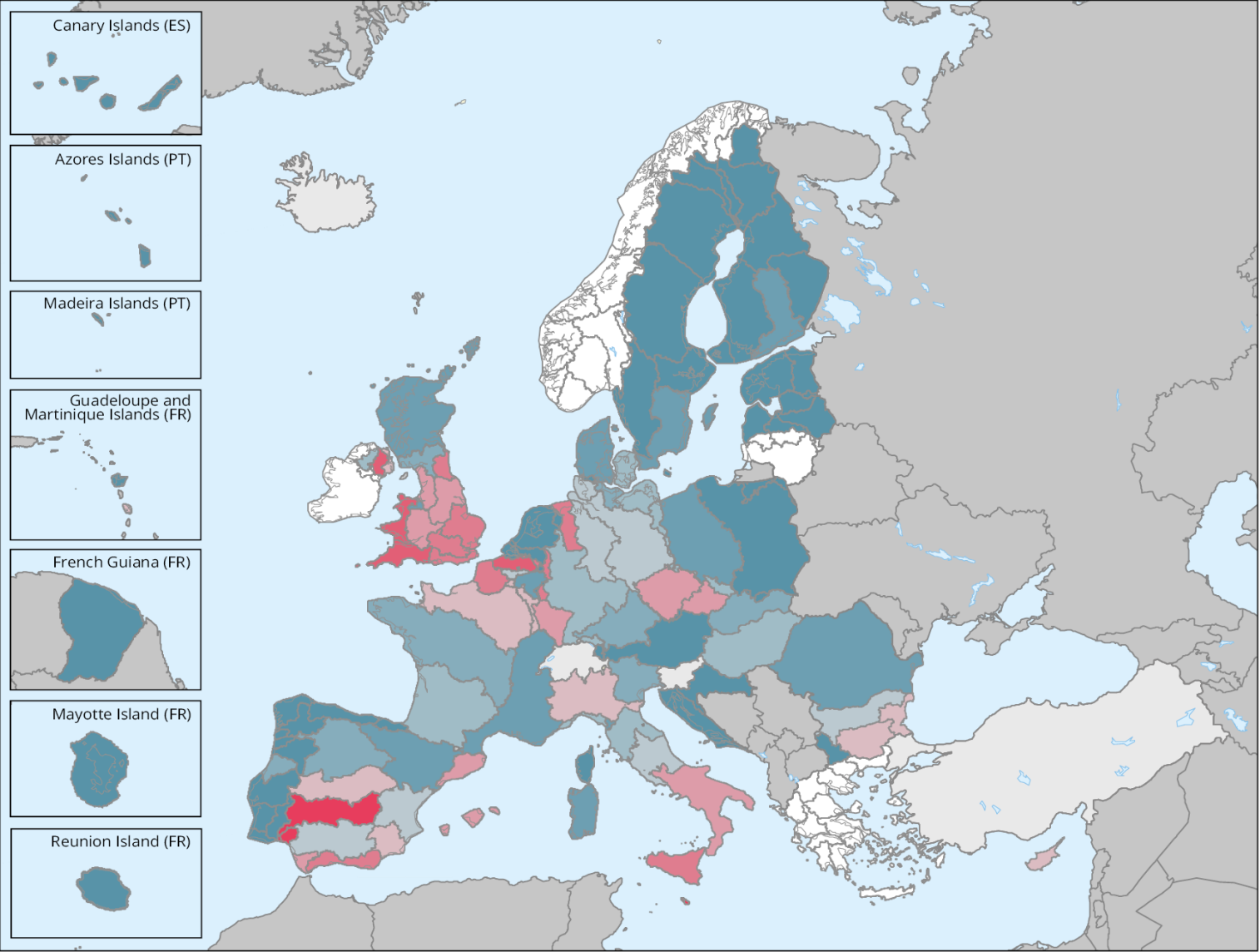
- Blue Baby Syndrome
- Pregnancy risks – increased risk of miscarriage
- Low functioning thyroid – iodine blocking effects
- Some evidence of association with certain cancers – but this may be due to interaction with other compounds?
- Other more minor issues:
 - Gastric problems
 - Headache
 - Fatigue



Serious water pollution incidents - UK

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/656/65605.htm>





Percentage of area of groundwater bodies not in good chemical status per river basin district (RBD) in second RBMPs



Groundwater report 2017 UK Parliament

Groundwater – supply nearly 1/3 drinking water in UK

Nitrates - main cause for groundwater not reaching good chemical status

High levels of nitrate pollution in some groundwater sources in UK

Nitrate levels in groundwater not expected to peak for another 60 years

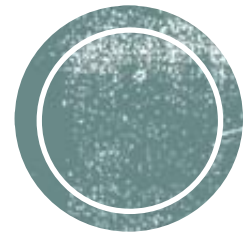




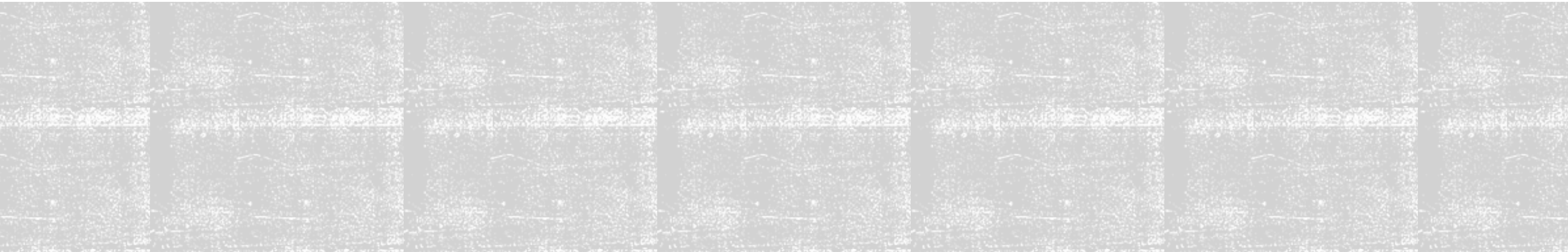
Drinking Water and Excess Nitrogen and Financial Cost

- Water companies invest significantly in facilities to 'blend' polluted water with water from a low nitrate source or in processing plants to remove nitrate
- **High levels of compliance** - regulators report high levels of drinking water quality.
- **Cost of delivering this in terms of mitigating nitrate pollution, especially in groundwater sources, are high. Such costs are ultimately passed on to the consumer.**





Climate change

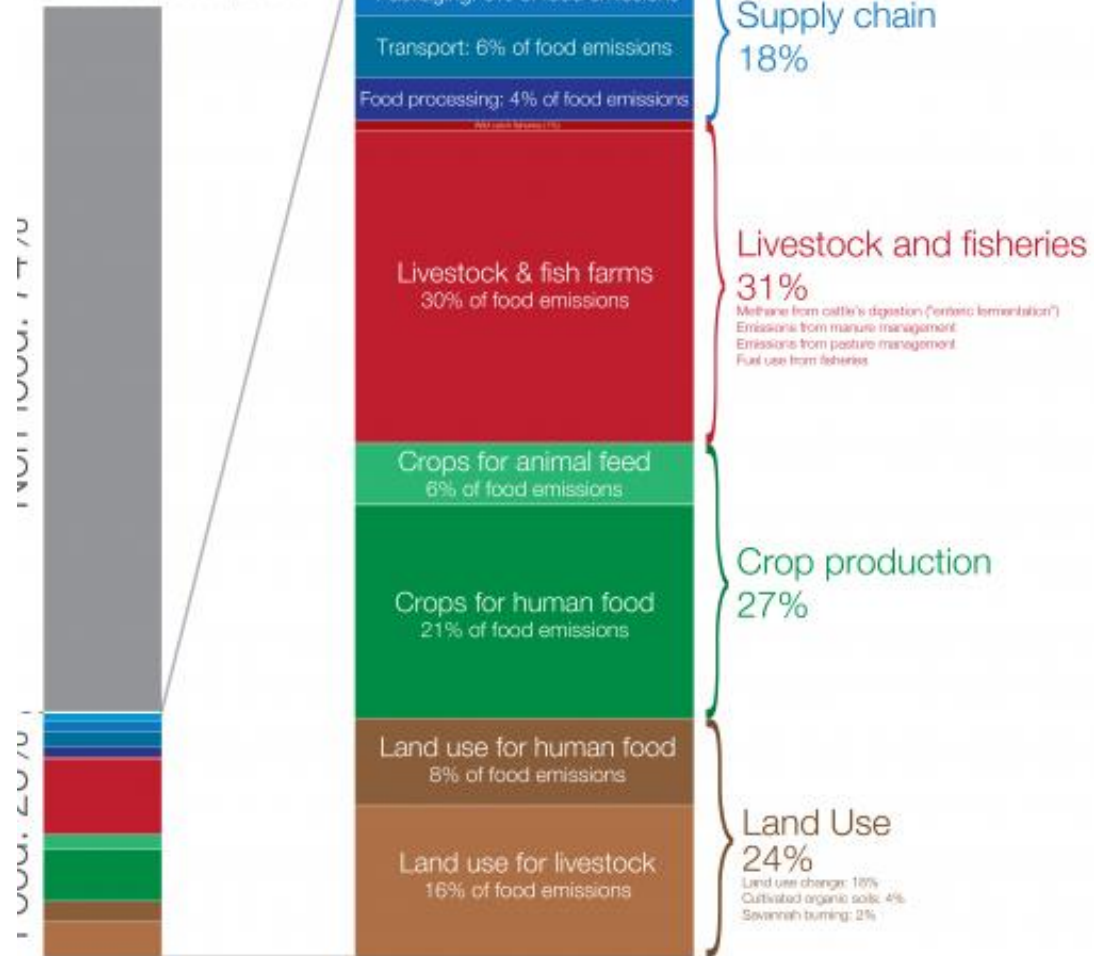


Global greenhouse gas emissions from food production

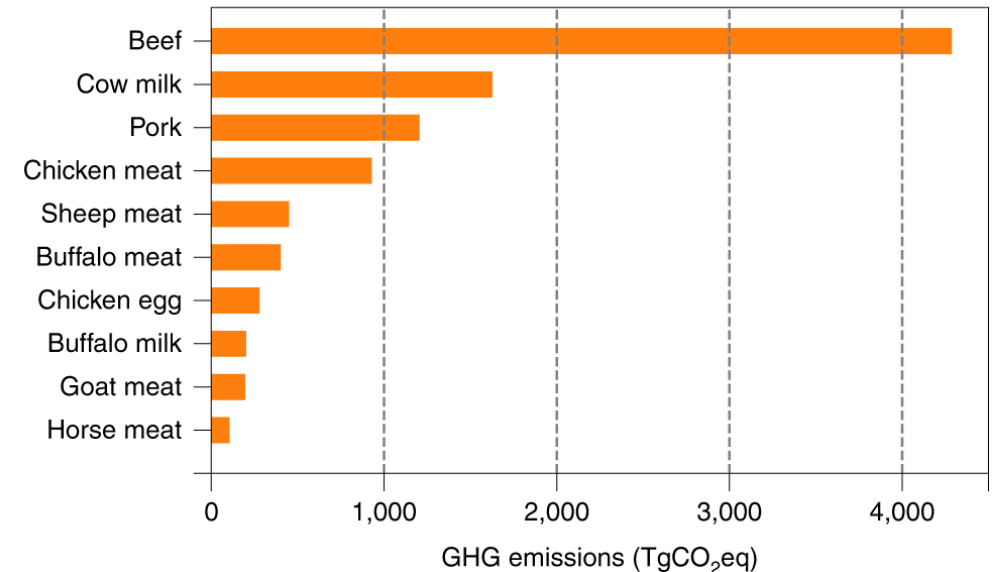
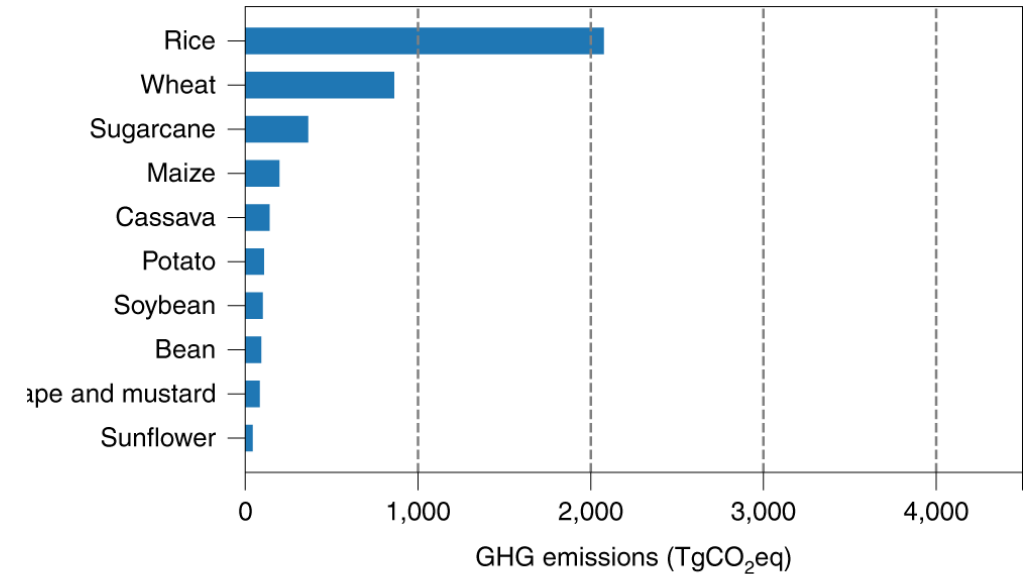
Our World
in Data

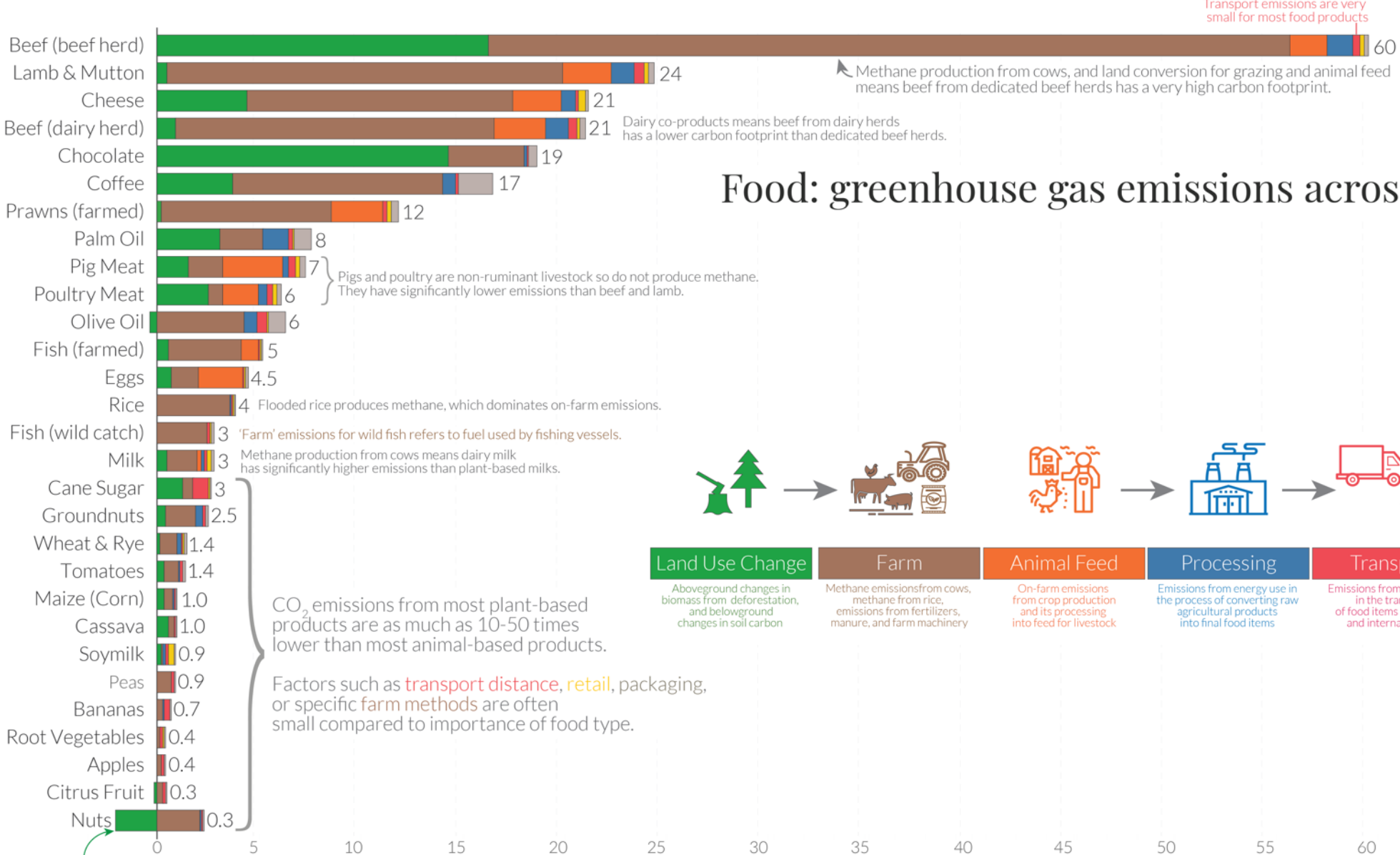
Global Emissions

11.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents

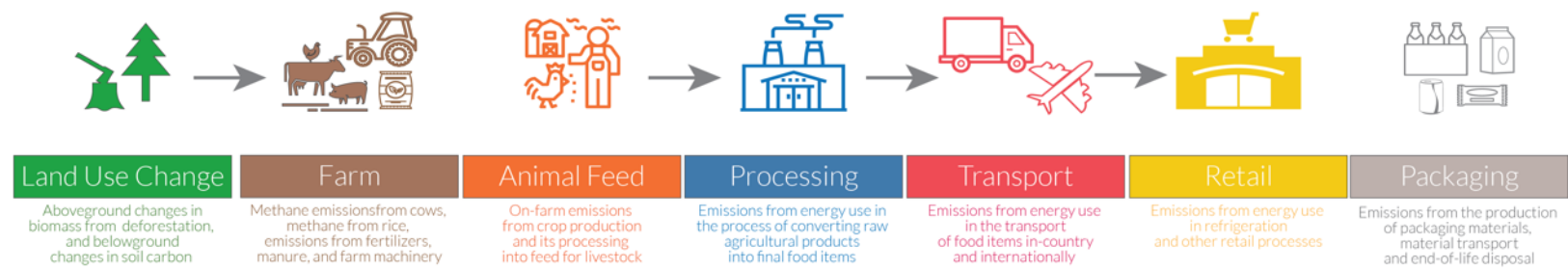


Source: Joseph Poore & Thomas Nemecek (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Published in Science.
Our World in Data.org - Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems. Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.





Food: greenhouse gas emissions across the supply chain



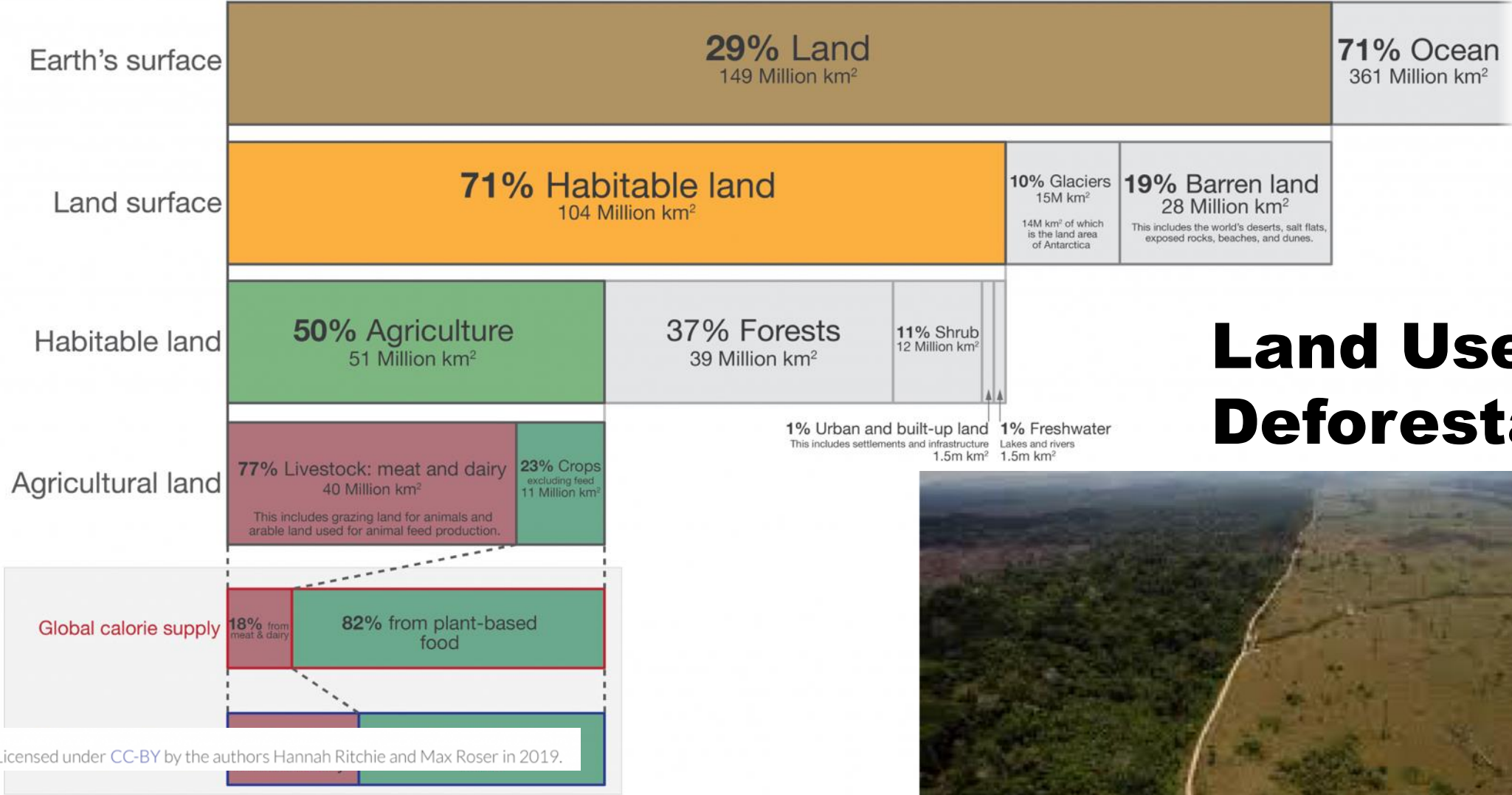
CO₂ emissions from most plant-based products are as much as 10-50 times lower than most animal-based products.

Factors such as transport distance, retail, packaging, or specific farm methods are often small compared to importance of food type.

Nuts have a negative land use change figure because nut trees are currently replacing croplands; carbon is stored in the trees.



Global land use for food production



Land Use & Deforestation



Data source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
OurWorldinData.org – Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.





Food Waste

Globally - 1/3 of all food produced is wasted

7 million tonnes of food wasted every year in the UK alone

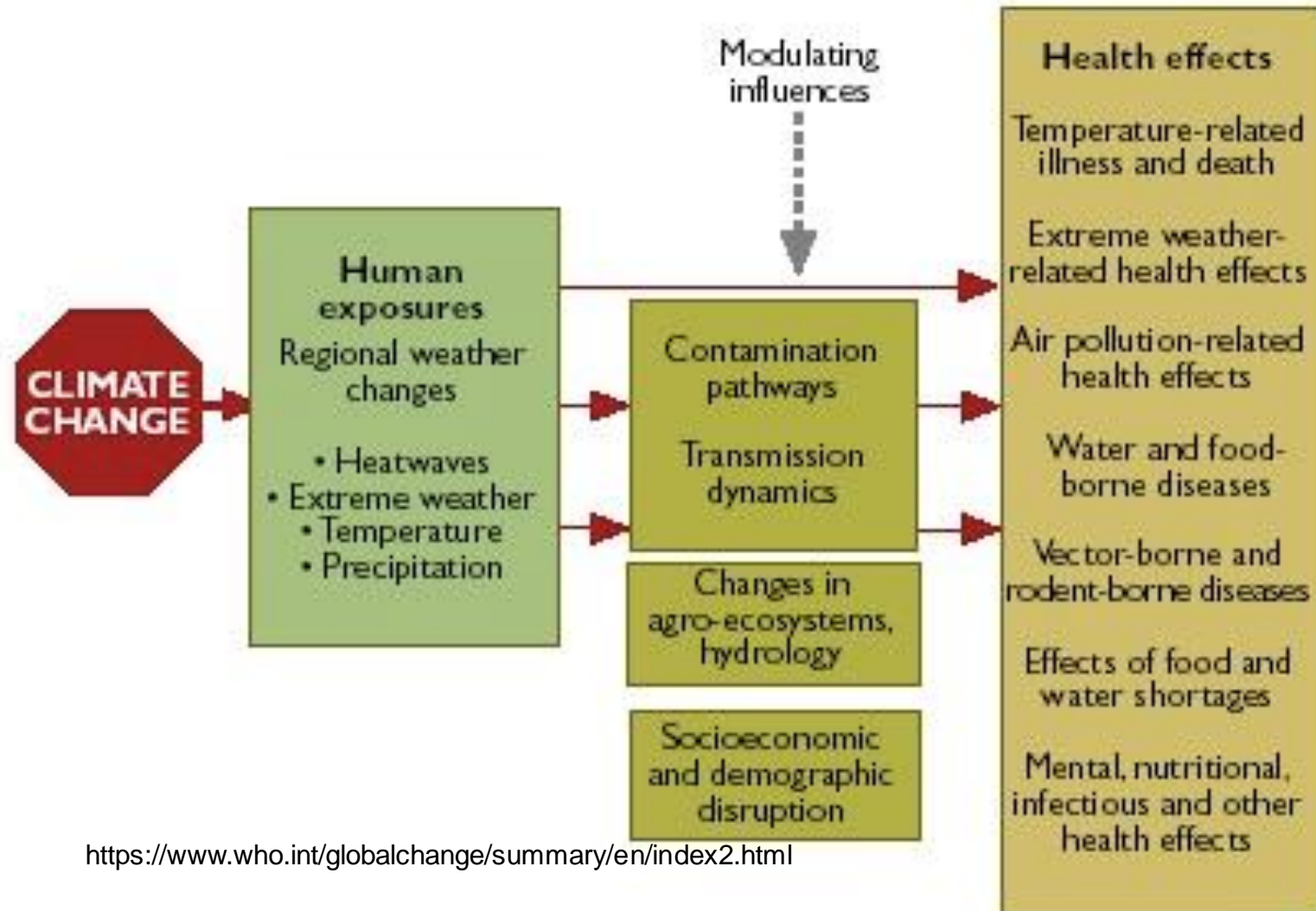
Wasted food costs the average UK household £470 per year.

Source: Food Standards Agency



These several pathways are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Pathways by which climate change affects human health (modified from reference 2)



How does climate change affect our health?



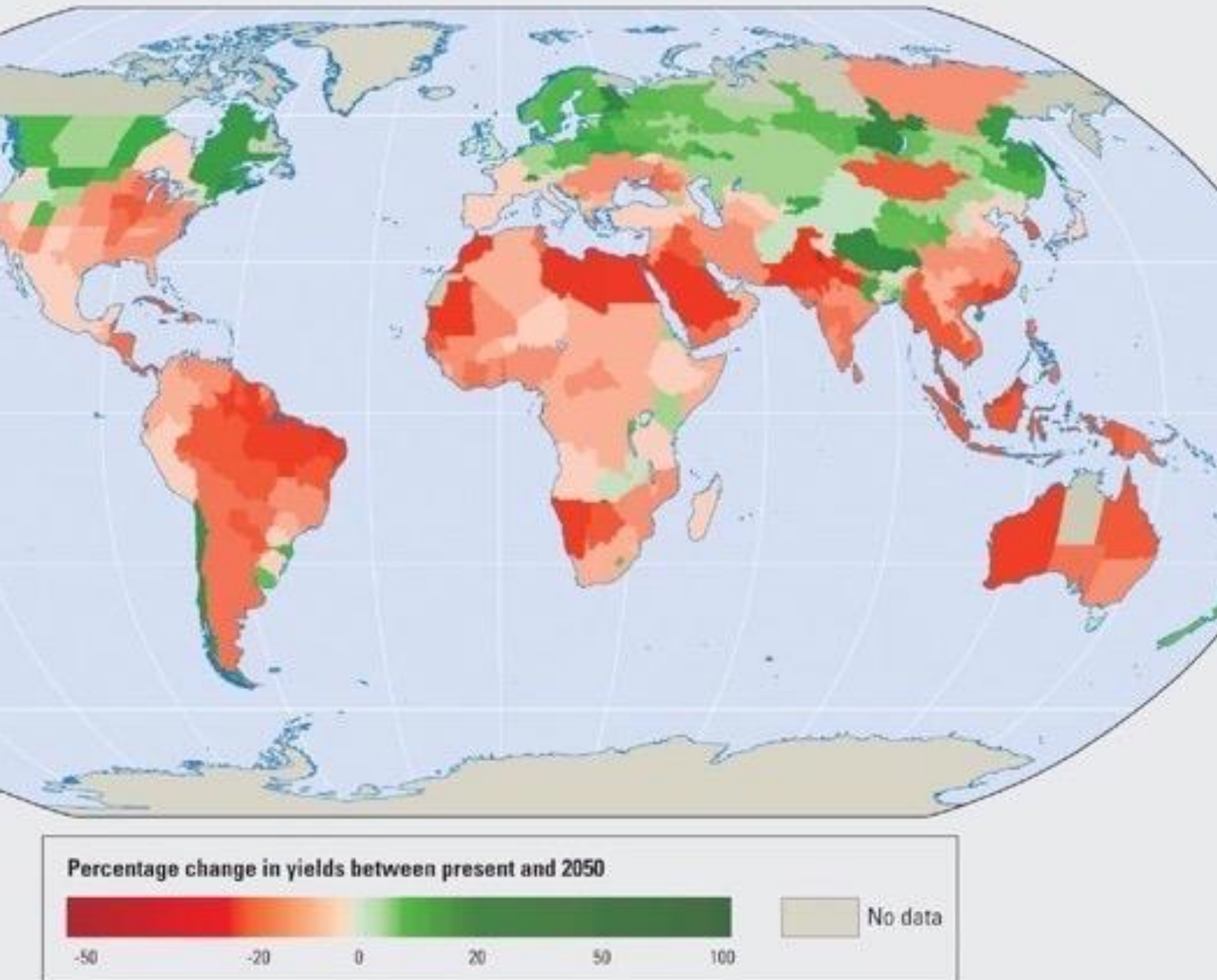
Climate change impacts related to agriculture

- WATER resources – shifting precipitation patterns, loss of glacier and early snow melt
 - Rainfall events – more unpredictable and extreme, leads to crop loss
 - Crop yields sensitive to temperature and water availability
 - Crop water stress
- PESTS – insects, pathogens, fungi and weeds – extended growing seasons, habitat creep (latitudinal range), lack of natural predators
- POLLINATORS – decrease pollinator populations, affect food production of flowering species of food plants
- AGRICULTURAL LABOUR – Physical human labour dependent on temperature and humidity levels within physically tolerable levels. Estimates that (if 540 ppm by 2100, a moderate projection) outdoor labour would be restricted to 50% of workday during hottest month of the year in India, sub-Saharan Africa and Australia.
- CONFLICT – potential for political unrest and conflict arising from stresses on natural resources and food supply
- World Bank estimates potential for 143 million climate migrants by 2050 (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/overview>)

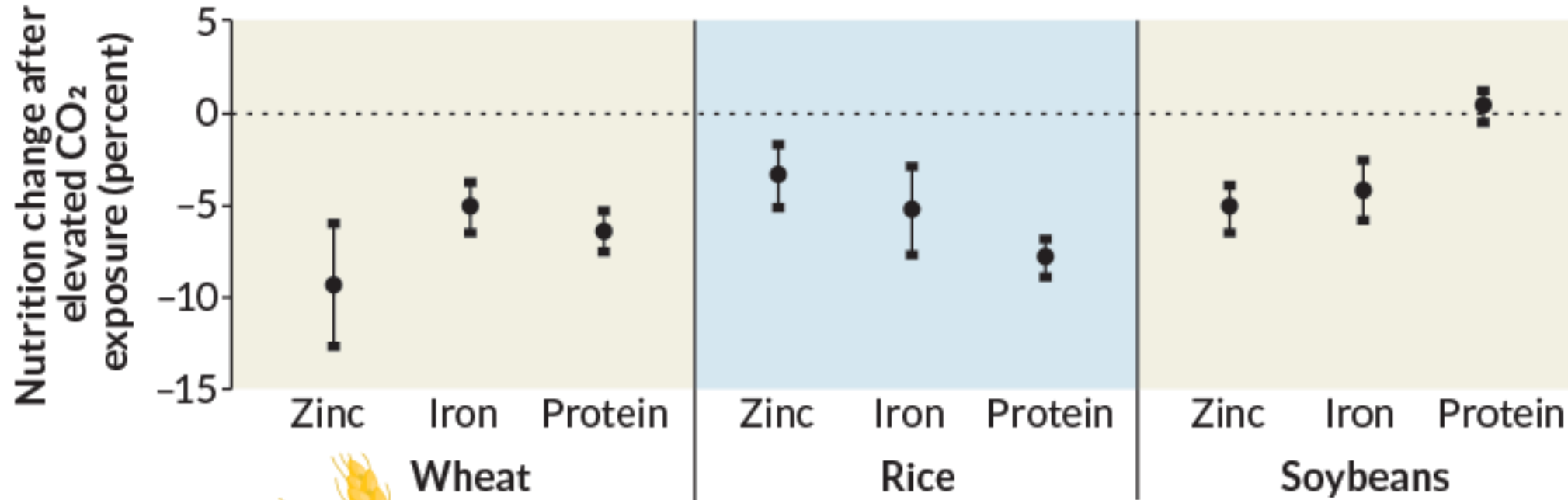


Simulated global impacts of climate change on crop productivity

- 2010 World Bank study
- Simulates changes in yields of 11 crops for the year 2050
- Depicts averages across 3 greenhouse emission scenarios and 5 GCMs




Major crops grown in experimental plots with extra carbon dioxide blown over plants (ranging from 546 to 584 parts per million).



Data source: Myers et al., [Nature](https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13179). 2014 Jun 5;510(7503):139-42

Graphic source: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/nutrition-climate-change-top-science-stories-2017->





WHAT LINKS CLIMATE AND FOOD BORNE ILLNESSES?

The climate variables with most potential influence on foodborne illness:

- **increased air temperature**
- **water temperature and**
- **precipitation**

These variables affect foodborne illness through three mechanisms:

- **abundance, growth, range and survival of pathogens in crops, livestock and the environment**
- **human exposure factors, including cooking practices, food handling and food preferences that are influenced by a longer period of warm temperatures; and**
- **transmission factors, such as wildlife vectors, that transfer pathogens to food.**

Two examples: *Salmonella* & *Campylobacter*

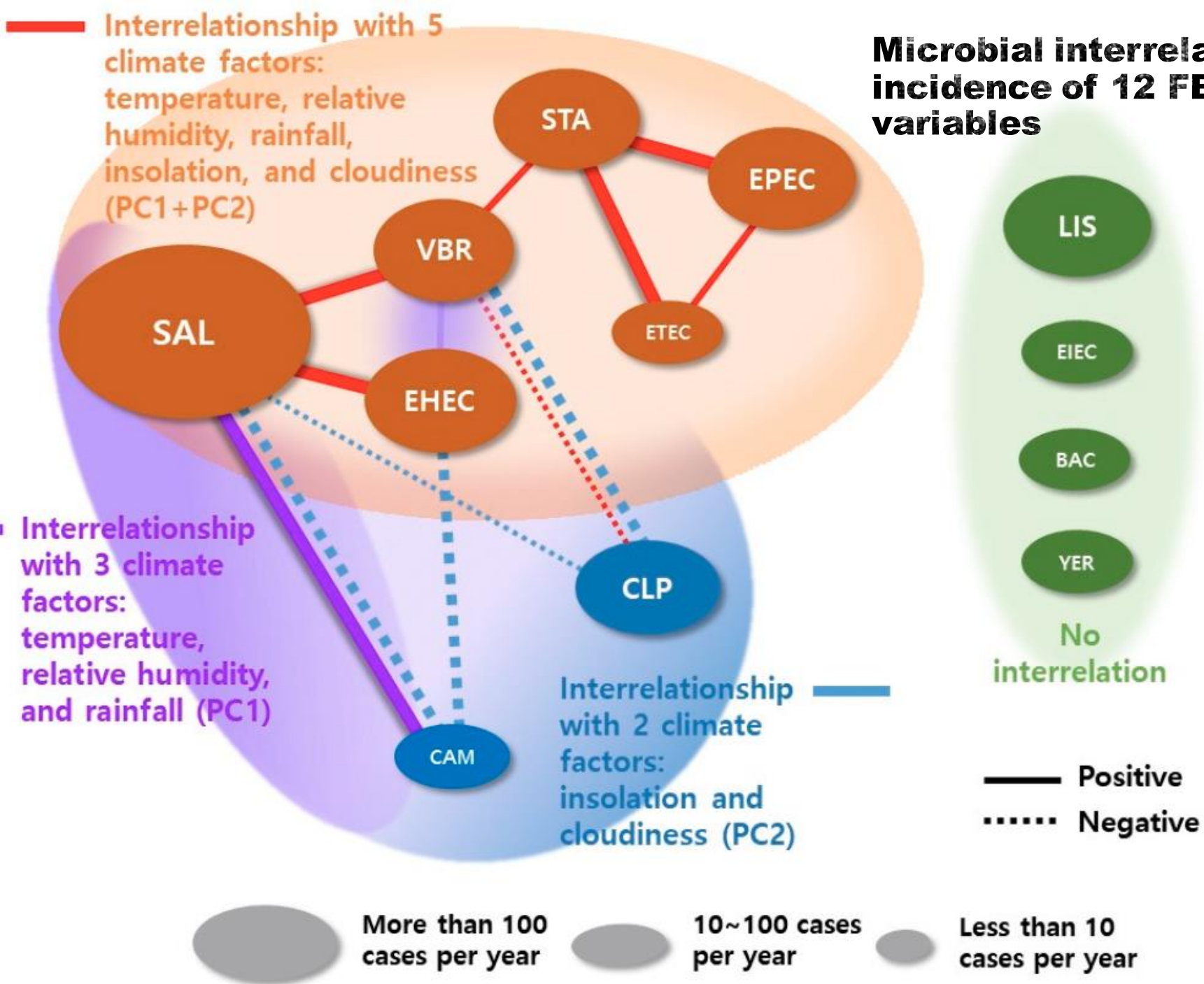
Salmonella

- Strong links between *Salmonella* and environment, esp ambient temperature
- At elevated ambient temperatures, *Salmonella* reproduction is enhanced
- Even so – UK experts don't consider that climate change will affect *Salmonella*
 - Current control measures and substantial decrease since 1990s
 - Note that over ¼ cases associated with foreign travel

Campylobacter

- Most common bacterial cause of diarrheal disease in high income countries
- Strong seasonal variability, positive association with temperature – suggest potential impact of climate change
- Ambiguity due to uncertainty over exact pathways by which weather affects incidence
 - Montreal study estimates 23% increase in incidence by 2055;
 - Study in Ireland estimated 2-3% increase
 - Other modelling suggests climate-related increase in *Campylobacter* incidence related to poultry consumption, but decrease in drinking water pathway





Nodes – incidence of bacterial FBD with size indicating number of cases/year

Lines represent significant pairwise associations between pathogens (thick p<0.01, thin p<0.05)

Red, blue and purple – 3 conditional climactic variables

Salmonella – strongest evidence of links to climactic conditions

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE INCREASED RISK OF FOODBORNE DISEASES

HOW THIS WORKS



↑ RISK OF *

↑ KNOWN INFECTIONS



↑ EMERGING INFECTIONS



HOW TO MANAGE

↑ AWARENESS



PREVENT EXPOSURE



DIAGNOSE WHEN PRESENT



TREAT PROMPTLY



ASSESS/MONITOR RISKS



Citation: Smith BA, Fazil A. How will climate change impact microbial foodborne disease in Canada? Can Commun Dis Rep 2019; 45(4):108–13.

* Note: An increase in foodborne illnesses with climate change involve complex systems with many interacting factors



Reducing the UK's food footprint: Demand-side action for more palatable food emissions (CREDS 2021)

Territorial emissions:

GHG emissions from food production in the UK



GHG

Consumption emissions:

GHG emissions from food production in the UK

- emissions from exported food
- + emissions from imported food



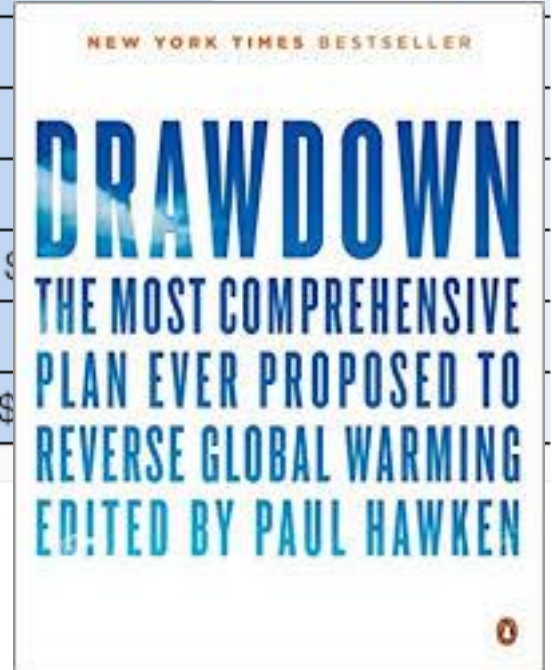
GHG

52%
higher than
territorial account



Solutions by Rank

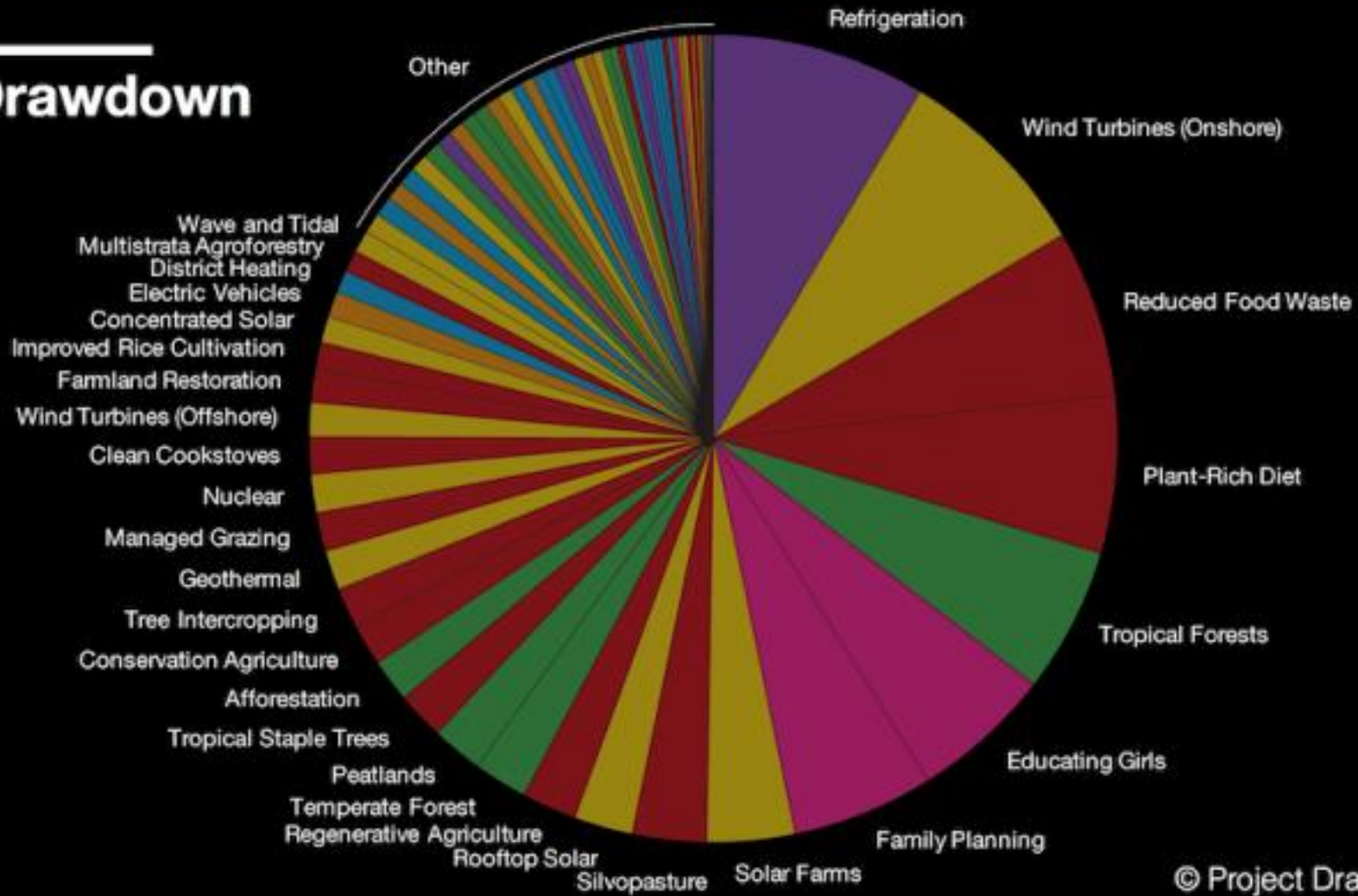
Rank	Solution	Sector	TOTAL ATMOSPHERIC CO2-EQ REDUCTION (GT)	NET COST (BILLIONS US \$)	SAVINGS (BILLIONS US \$)
1	Refrigerant Management	Materials	89.74	N/A	\$-902.77
2	Wind Turbines (Onshore)	Electricity Generation	84.60	\$1,225.37	\$7,425.00
3	Reduced Food Waste	Food	70.53	N/A	N/A
4	Plant-Rich Diet	Food	66.11	N/A	N/A
5	Tropical Forests	Land Use	61.23		
6	Educating Girls	Women and Girls	59.60		
7	Family Planning	Women and Girls	59.60		
8	Solar Farms	Electricity Generation	36.90		
9	Silvopasture	Food	31.19		
10	Rooftop Solar	Electricity Generation	24.60		



<https://www.drawdown.org/solutions>



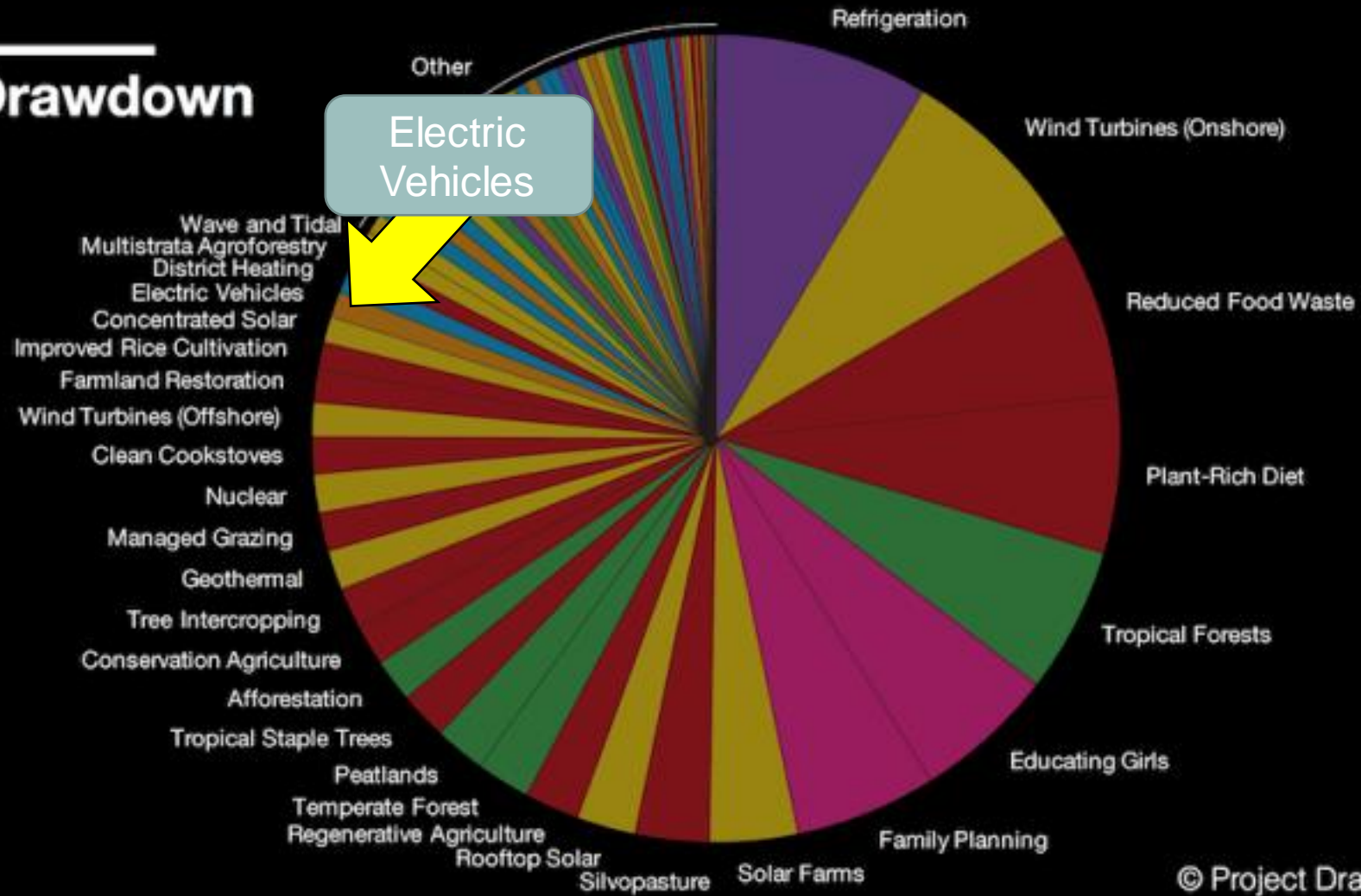
Drawdown



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Drawdown



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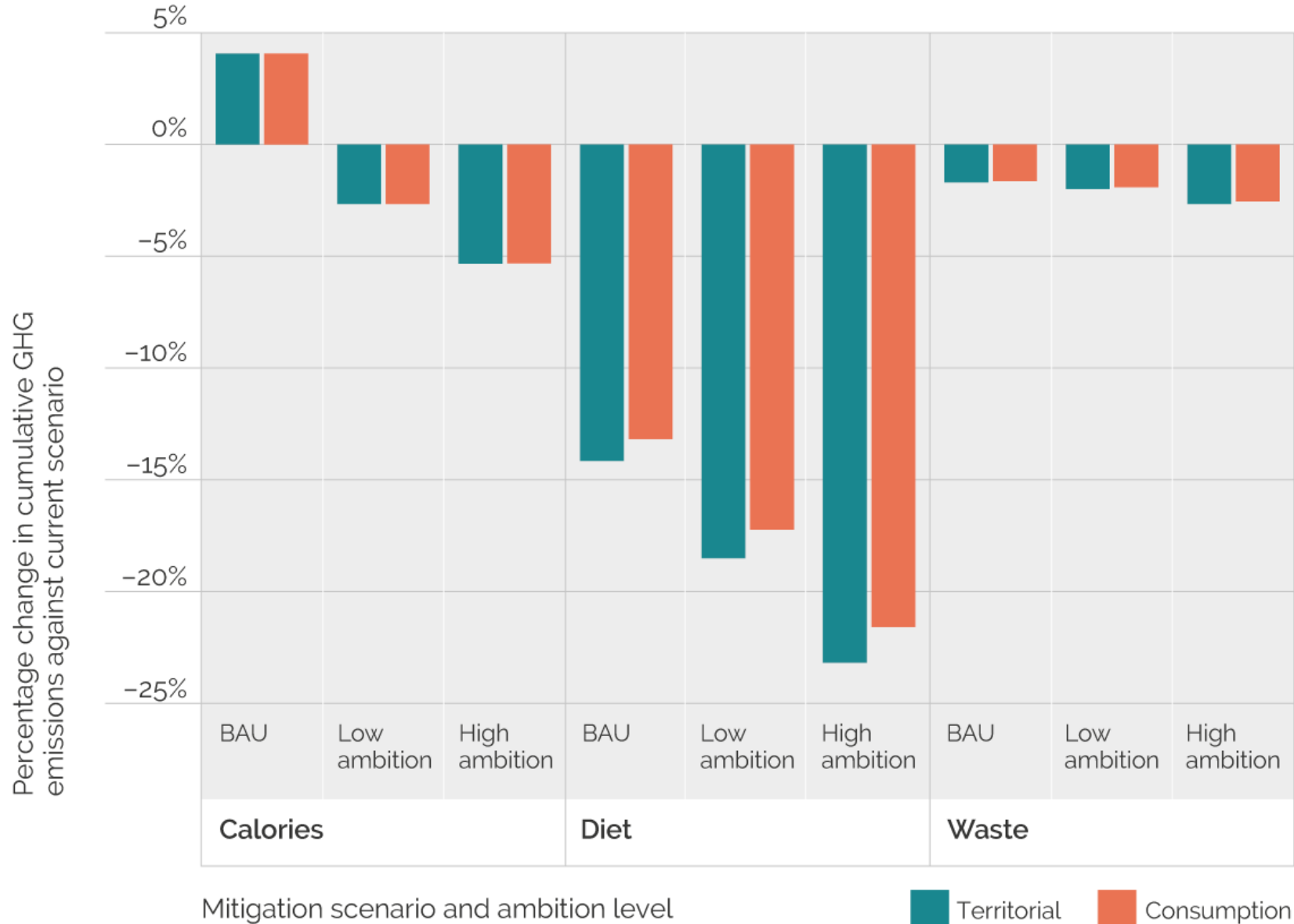


Figure 3: Cumulative GHG emissions (2017-2050; territorial and consumption) according to each mitigation option and ambition case. BAU: Business-as-usual scenario, extrapolating historic trends.

<https://www.creds.ac.uk/publications/reducing-the-uks-food-footprint-demand-side-action-for-more-palatable-food-emissions/>

Demand-side Mitigation Scenarios

Researchers used hybrid physical input-output food system model, namely:

1. following government dietary recommendations on calorific intake
2. dietary transitions towards plant-based consumption
3. reducing food waste (Garvey et al., 2021)

FINDINGS:

Demand-side scenarios of the UK food system could reduce absolute annual territorial GHG emissions by 52% (2017–2050),

dietary transitions being the single most effective measure, achieving reductions of 22–44% (see Figure 3).

Intensive farming & increased risk of epidemics?

2020 – researchers studied genetic evolution of *Campylobacter*

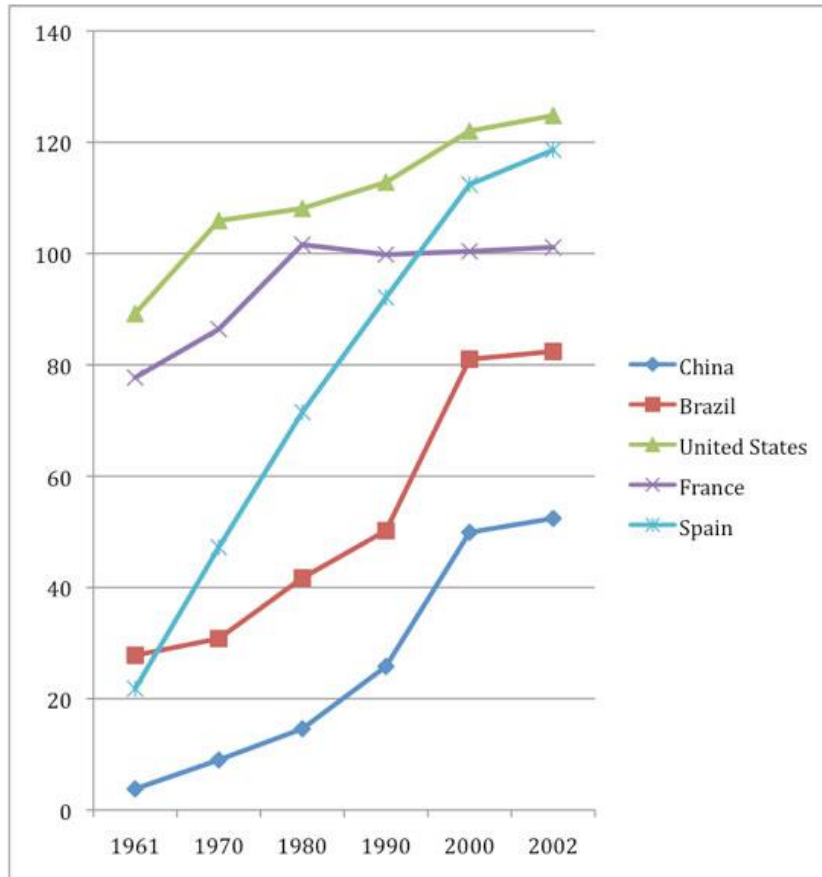
Found cattle-specific strains emerged at same time as steep increase in number of cattle in 20th Century

Changes in cattle diet, anatomy and physiology triggered gene transfer between general and cattle-specific strains – significant gene gain and loss

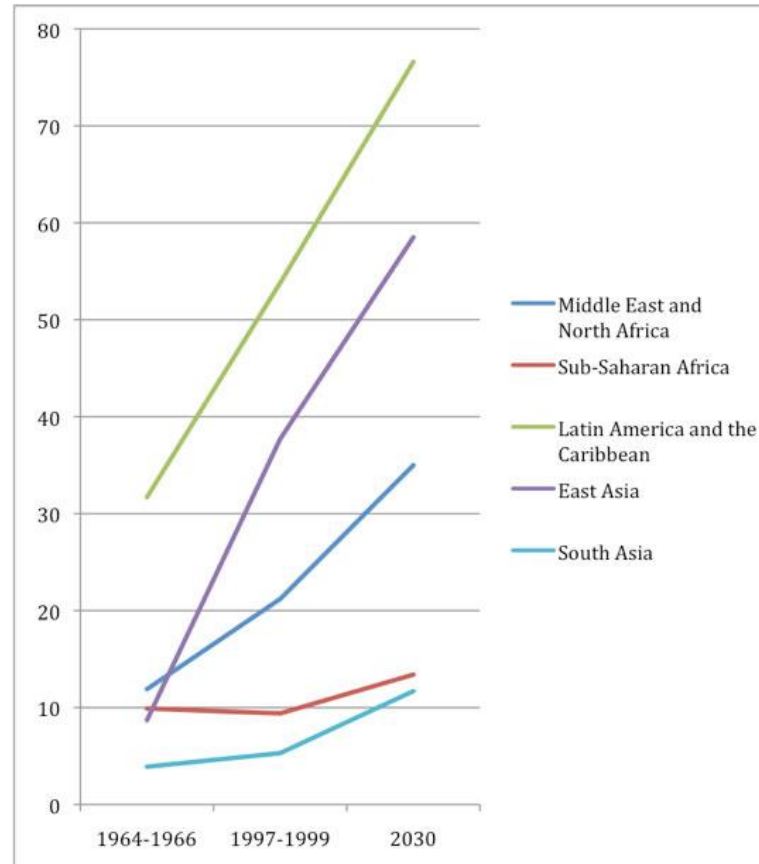
Bacteria able to cross species barrier

Intensive farming practices – and increased global movement of cattle = ideal setting for global spread via trade networks

Trends in meat consumption over time (kg/per capita/per year) – selected countries. (Source: FAO)



Trends in meat consumption over time (kg/per capita/per year) – by region (Source: WHO)



Final points from today

- The food system influences our health in a wide variety of ways
- Critically Important Antibiotics are being used in agriculture and are affecting the resistance levels of pathogens for animals, in the environment and in the human population.
- Industrial agriculture is affecting our environment at local levels, e.g., air pollution and water contamination.
- Agricultural production, particularly of meat and dairy, is a major contributor to GHGE and affecting climate change.
- The climate crisis and AMR – these are global issues: regardless of where they are being used, the potential for medicine to become less effective is one that affects everyone. Reducing this risk is an ethical imperative.
- Solutions need to come from all parts of the system: regulators, producers and consumers.



Thank you

kristin.bash@dhsc.gov.uk
@kristinbash

