

Demonstration at USDA Supports Meatless Monday As An Emissions-Reductions, Animal Protection, and Health Strategy

CLEVELAND, OH, USA, December 11, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Welfare, Environmental, and public health issues need greater federal support according to Jeremy Koosed, a member of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club who traveled to DC to pressure federal officials to take more of an



active role supporting the International conservation program, Meatless Monday. Meatless Monday has made gains in cities and school districts around the nation with support from the Humane Society of the US and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. However, it has not enjoyed overt support from the USDA or Obama Administration yet. Federal emissions reductions efforts have focused primarily on regulating coal and improving fuel efficiency for vehicles. Koosed says agriculture is being overlooked despite contributing a significant amount of CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide greenhouse gases to the atmosphere during the production of Animal-based foods.

"This is one of the easiest things anyone can do, with no costly green tech installments, just by relying on plants to a greater extent. It's scientifically measured to reduce emissions and will free-up water and land for uses other than livestock production, making it good for biodiversity."

Koosed's home state of Ohio is negatively impacted by [agricultural runoff](#) that produced toxic algae in Lake Erie this past summer, poisoning drinking water for hundreds of thousands of NW Ohioans. While the Ohio state legislature has a bill to regulate application of animal manure on farm fields, the group Food and Water Watch says the measure is inadequate.

"The meat industry is notoriously hard to regulate. Undercover investigations are always finding objectionable animal abuse. And watchdogs know the manure/fertilizer runoff is going to be near impossible to regulate, just like efforts to halt the overuse of antibiotics added to animal feed have been inadequate."

"If we really want to do something about the prevalence of Round Up in the environment, or

slow down the rapid pace of poultry slaughter-lines for safety," Koosed says "Instituting a Meat Free Day in institutional food services is the optimal route to actually start stabilizing many of these problems."

He points out that consolidation in the meat industry means only a few agri-business giants profit from the factory farming model of production, bringing more the 98% of animal foods to market. Tyson, for instance, was the #1 discharger of toxic pollution to American waterways in 2013, according to an Environment America report. Advocates point out that Meatless Monday, much like a farm-to-school program, overtly shifts food spending toward the "little guy" - vegetable farmers who are using less water and energy, thereby nurturing farming practices helpful in making our Agriculture system more resilient to climate changes.

According to the Humane Society, 1 Billion animals could be spared the experience on factory farms and in Slaughter houses if Americans ate [meatless on Monday](#). New Jersey Gov. Christie recent veto of legislation to relieve pigs from confinement in gestation crates has also brought the issue of animal treatment to the public's attentions. According to Koosed, "People understand it was unjust of Gov. Christie to veto that, and more needs to be done to consider the suffering animals go through, and make genuine efforts to give them relief."

Koosed's group is planning to demonstrate at the USDA on Independence Avenue daily in hopes that they will make a commitment before the UN Climate talks in Lima, Peru wrap up on Friday. For the USDA, "it can be a crop diversity program to serve beans peas, lentils, nuts and seeds more frequently in schools," Koosed says. And, "the Executive branch should support it as well, because it's right in line with Obama Care." Nutritional science shows plant-based meals can be used strategically to [reduce disease risks](#) associated with diabetes and prevent recurring heart attacks. So right there, Koosed says, "Millions of Americans at risk for these diseases can benefit from a food culture, in which more places set aside a whole day to just serve these meals, which can be made perfectly tasty!"

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