

Changes in Farm and Food Production Can Cut Greenhouse Emissions by a Third

Affordable, readily available actions can make food supplies more secure and resilient, especially for vulnerable and poor people

WASHINGTON D.C., UNITED STATES, May 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The global agrifood system presents a huge opportunity to cut almost a third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions through affordable and readily available actions, while continuing to feed a growing population, according to a new World Bank report.

[Recipe for a Livable Planet](#): Achieving Net Zero Emissions in the Agrifood System outlines actions that every country can take. These will make food supplies more secure, help the food system better withstand climate change, and protect vulnerable people during this transition.



High-income countries can lead the transformation of food systems by giving more support to low- and middle-income countries so they can adopt low-emission farming methods and technologies. (Credit: Vincent Tremeau/World Bank)

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Axel van Trotsenburg, World Bank Senior Managing Director

“While the food on your table may taste good, it is also a hefty slice of the climate change emissions pie,” said Axel van Trotsenburg, World Bank Senior Managing Director. “The good news is that the global food system can heal the planet –making soils, ecosystems, and people healthier, while keeping carbon in the ground. This is within reach in our lifetimes, but countries must act now: simply changing how middle-income countries use land, such as forests and ecosystems, for food production can cut agrifood emissions by a third by 2030.”

The report notes that the agrifood system is a huge, untapped source of low-cost climate change action. Unlike other sectors, it can have an outsized impact on climate change by reducing

emissions and drawing carbon naturally from the atmosphere.

Recognizing that countries will meet their climate goals in different ways, the report identifies a menu of solutions to choose from:

- High-income countries can lead the way – by giving more support to low- and middle-income countries so they can adopt low-emission farming methods and technologies, including technical assistance for forest conservation programs that generate high-integrity carbon credits. High-income countries can also shift subsidies away from high-emitting food sources. This would reveal their full price and help make low-emission food options cheaper in comparison.
- Middle-income countries have an outsized role to play – by curbing up to three-quarters of global agrifood emissions through greener practices — such as reducing emissions from livestock and rice, investing in healthy soils, and cutting food loss and waste — and using land more efficiently. One-third of the world’s opportunities to reduce agrifood emissions relate to sustainable land use in middle-income countries.
- Low-income countries can chart a different way forward – by avoiding the mistakes made by richer countries and seizing climate-smart opportunities for greener and more competitive economies. Preserving and restoring forests would promote sustainable economic development in low-income countries, given more than half of their agrifood emissions come from clearing forests to produce food.

Action should happen across all countries to get to net zero, through a comprehensive approach to reducing emissions in food systems, including in fertilizers and energy, crop and livestock production, and packaging and distribution across the value chain from farm to table.

The report finds that payoffs for investing in cutting agrifood emissions are much bigger than the costs. Annual investments will need to increase to \$260 billion a year to cut in half agrifood emissions by 2030 and to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Twice as much money is spent yearly on agricultural subsidies, many of which harm the environment. While cutting wasteful subsidies can finance some of this investment, additional financing is essential to get to net zero.



Action should happen across all countries to get to net zero, through a comprehensive approach to reducing emissions in food systems. (Credit: Arne Hoel)

Making these investments would lead to more than \$4 trillion in benefits, from improvements in human health, food and nutrition security, better quality jobs and profits for farmers, to more carbon retained in forests and soils.

Nicolas Douillet

World Bank

ndouillet@worldbankgroup.org

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