
Planetary Health Diet Proposal

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Have you ever wondered how our planet could support a nutritious diet for all people? A new report, released in January by 37 scientists making up the global “EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health,” proposes a way of eating that could “feed a future population of 10 billion people a healthy diet within planetary boundaries.” As agricultural development workers, you no doubt have a concern to see people well fed and well nourished, and also a desire to see the land sustainably stewarded and improved. This report uniquely tries to address both concerns at once.

When it comes to nutrition, recommending a particular kind of diet can be difficult, because approaches to nutrition can vary widely. If you are in a position to give guidance when it comes to local nutrition, you may benefit from knowing about this report and its recommendations. The suggested guidelines include proportions for different kinds of food, leaving room for diverse cultural interpretations. For example, the diet recommends that half of each meal be made up of vegetables and fruits. Meat is part of the diet, but legumes and nuts form a larger proportion when it comes to protein sources.

The full EAT-Lancet Commission report ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31788-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31788-4/fulltext)) ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31788-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31788-4/fulltext)) is available from *The Lancet* (register for free to view and download the report). A short and accessible Summary Report (<https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancet-commission-summary-report/>) is also available, in seven languages. The Summary Report lists five strategies to improve people’s access to nutritious food in a way that is sustainable for the earth. The strategies highlight the importance of biodiversity, encourage sustainable intensification of food production in order to “increase high-quality output,” and call for reducing food losses and waste by at least half.

EAT-Lancet has a brief written specifically for farmers (<https://eatforum.org/lancet-commission/farmers/>). Many of the recommendations in it are things ECHO already promotes, including sustainable intensification; carbon sequestration; crop diversity; precision application of nutrients [e.g. bottle cap fertilization]; cover crops; and integration of animals.

Like me, you may read the Summary Report and come away with questions about the suggested diet. For example, I wonder why the proposed proportion of root crops is so low. Also, would this diet provide enough calories for a small-scale

farmer who does a lot of manual labor? However, I hope you will be encouraged by this attempt to advocate for a healthy diet for all within our planet's physical limits. Perhaps this report will be a useful tool for addressing long-term nutritional needs in your project area.

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