



How Our Food Purchases Can Help People & the Planet

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REACH Racial and Ethnic
Approaches to
Community Health

Overview

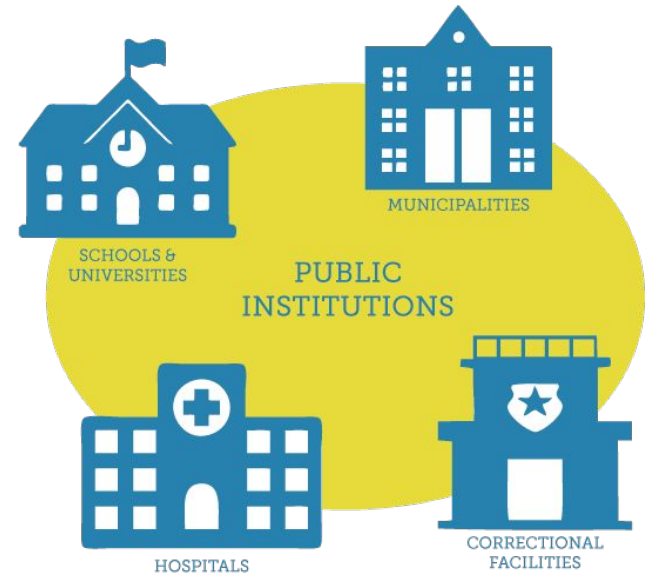
- Welcome
- Background
- Food Purchasing at Multnomah County: Promoting Equity & Sustainability
- Tips for Individuals
- Q&A
- Wrap-up Discussion




Institutional Food Procurement & its Climate Impacts

Municipalities across the country are using their economic clout, political power and cultural influence to actively address climate change.


One critically important sector than accounts for ~ ¼ of global GHG emissions has largely been ignored: food.




Public institutions can promote climate-friendly food purchasing by:

An orange circle with a thin orange border, containing text about reducing animal products.

Reducing the amount of animal products purchased using county funds

A green circle with a thin green border, containing text about serving more plant-forward options.

Serving more plant-forward options on county property

A blue circle with a thin blue border, containing text about ensuring equitable access to healthy and affordable food.

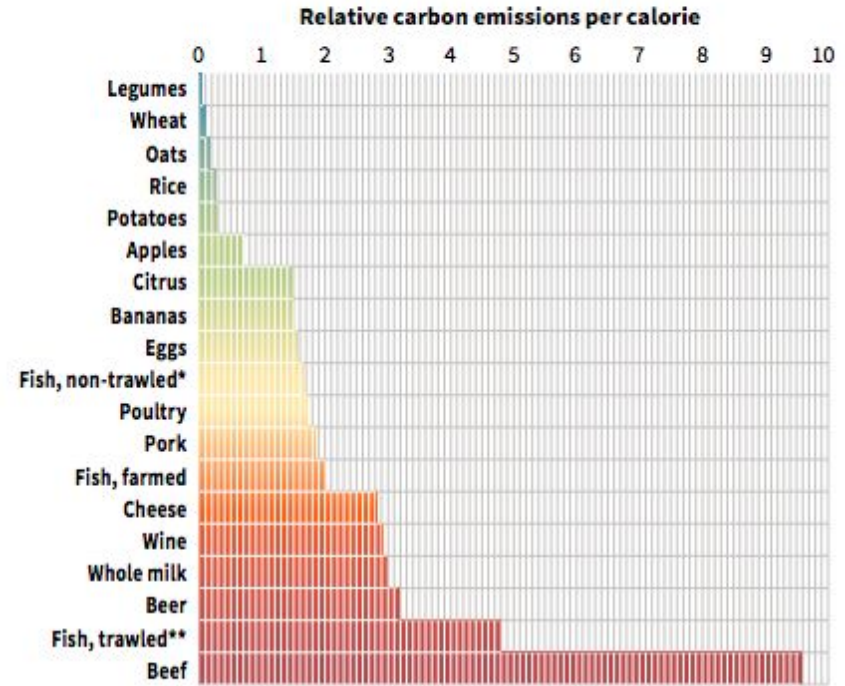
Ensuring equitable access to healthy & affordable food



Food Choice is a Key Factor in Carbon Emissions

In Multnomah County, ~15% of total carbon emissions result from supplying food and beverages to residents and businesses.

Meat and dairy production contribute significantly to climate change, accounting for more than half of all food-related GHG emissions.



PRODUCTION HAS MORE IMPACT THAN HOW FAR FOOD TRAVELS

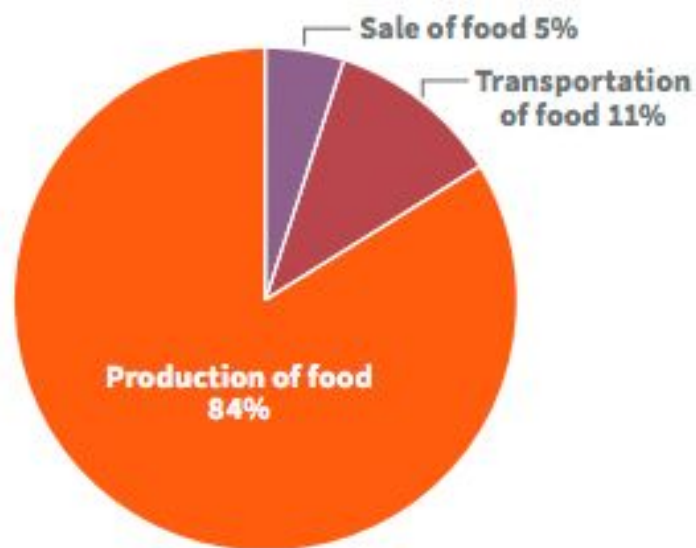


Figure 9. Carbon emissions from the food system. Source: Weber and Matthews, 2008



Producing and processing food is much more carbon intensive than the emissions from transporting food.

The Relationship Between Healthy Eating & A Climate-Friendly Diet

Eating more fresh fruits, vegetables, and less processed foods helps support healthy bodies while also reducing carbon emissions associated with food production.



The Power of Municipal Food Procurement



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Emphasizing higher-quality meat and plant-based proteins has helped one of California's largest school districts reduce its school lunches' carbon footprint, serve healthier food, and save money.

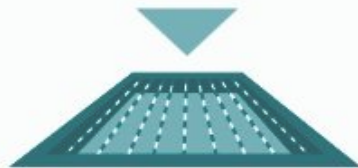


FOOD SHIFTS MATTER

Over 2 years, Oakland Unified School District reshaped its menu with fewer animal foods and more protein-rich legumes and vegetables. This shift generated considerable **water** and **climate benefits**, and **cost savings**:



SAVED 42million
GALLONS OF
WATER



63
OLYMPIC SIZED
SWIMMING POOL



14% REDUCTION
IN THE
CARBON FOOTPRINT
OF ITS ENTIRE FOOD PURCHASES

15,000

TREES PLANTED



1.5million

FEWER MILES DRIVEN



87 SOLAR SYSTEMS INSTALLED
ON THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS' ROOFS



**COST
SAVINGS**

\$42,000





**What is Multnomah
County doing to
promote sustainability
at the institutional
level?**

The REACH Approach

Core Strategies:

1. Nutrition
2. Physical Activity & the Built Environment
3. Community Clinical Linkages

Cross-Cutting Themes:

1. Communications
2. Economic Development
3. Social Cohesion



Nutrition Strategy

1. Access to Nutritious Food
2. Food Policy & Systems Change
3. Food Equity



Bringing Equity & Sustainability to Food Purchasing

Adopt a comprehensive,
values-based food
procurement policy

Establish nutrition standards
with climate-friendly
food recommendations

Make low-carbon foods
the default option
across county settings

Invest in local food systems
and extend support towards
BIPOC growers & producers





VALUES SHAPE POLICY

THE GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM IS A COMMITMENT TO:

NUTRITION

Promote health and well-being by offering seasonal fruits and vegetables, using whole grains, reducing salt and added sugars, and eliminating the use of deep frying.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Source from producers that employ sustainable production systems that reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoid the use of hormones, antibiotics, and genetic engineering; conserve soil and water; protect and enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity; and reduce on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Provide safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers and producers from production to consumption.

VALUED WORKFORCE

LOCAL ECONOMIES

Support small and mid-sized agricultural and food process operations within the local area or region.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Provide healthy and humane care for livestock.



Sustainable Food Guidance

- **Prioritize organic & sustainable products.**
- **Prioritize plant-based foods**, including protein and dairy alternatives; offer plant-based foods and dishes and vegetarian meals.
- Offer **protein foods from plants** such as legumes (beans and peas), and nuts, seeds, and soy products.
- **Place plant-based options at the front of the service line** or other highly visible locations.
- Purchase meats and poultry raised **without the routine use of antibiotics and/or growth hormones.**



Offer Low-Carbon Foods as the Default Option



Offer plant-forward meals with the option to opt-in for meat/dairy.

Climate-Friendly Ratios: Offer a minimum of 2:1 ratio of plant-based to animal-based options.

School and correctional settings might implement a “**Green Eating Day,**” where majority plant-forward meals are served.



Institutional Support for Local Food Systems



GOALS: Lower barriers to land access; support infrastructure development & capacity building; set contracting priorities that uplift minority- and women-owned businesses.



Institutional Support for Local Food Systems



POLICY & PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES: 5% of food service contracts prioritized for BIPOC growers & producers; uplift CBOs who produce fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant foods for their neighbors; connect aspiring growers to productive land through the “County Land Suitability Project”



A photograph of a garden with various green plants, including leafy greens and tall stalks, growing in a raised bed. A chain-link fence is visible in the background, and the overall scene is vibrant and green.

2015 Climate Action Plan:

“Reduce the consumption of carbon-intensive foods and support a community-based food system.”

Questions?

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Wrap-Up Discussion

- How can the County support staff in shifting towards sustainable and equitable purchasing practices? (e.g., educational materials, workday trainings, implementation guides, etc.)
- What factors would get you excited about sustainable food purchasing at Multnomah County? Are there further steps you would like to see the County take in this realm?
- Which of the “Tips for Individuals” resonated with you most?

References

- [“The Meat of the Matter: A Municipal Guide to Climate-Friendly Food Purchasing,”](#) Friends of the Earth & the Responsible Purchasing Network (2017)
- [“2015 Climate Action Plan: Local Strategies to Address Climate Change,”](#) The City of Portland & Multnomah County
- [“A Roadmap for Comprehensive Food Service Guidelines,”](#) Center for Science in the Public Interest (2019)
- [“Less Meat, Better Food, Happier Kids: Oakland Unified Reinvents its School Lunch,”](#) Center for Good Food Purchasing (2017)

