

Association *for* Healthcare Foodservice



AHF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

#AHFNationalConference



GREENING THE PLATE: NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY FOR FOODSERVICE SUCCESS

Presenters

Helen Wirth, RDN

A top-down view of a wooden desk with various medical supplies. On the left is a blue folder. In the center are two blister packs of pills, one with white pills and one with blue and white capsules. To the right are a white plastic bottle, a blue plastic bottle, and a green bottle of hand sanitizer. A silver stethoscope is at the bottom center. A large green leaf is on the right side.

**Why
Sustainability?**

**Why
Healthcare?**

Why Now?

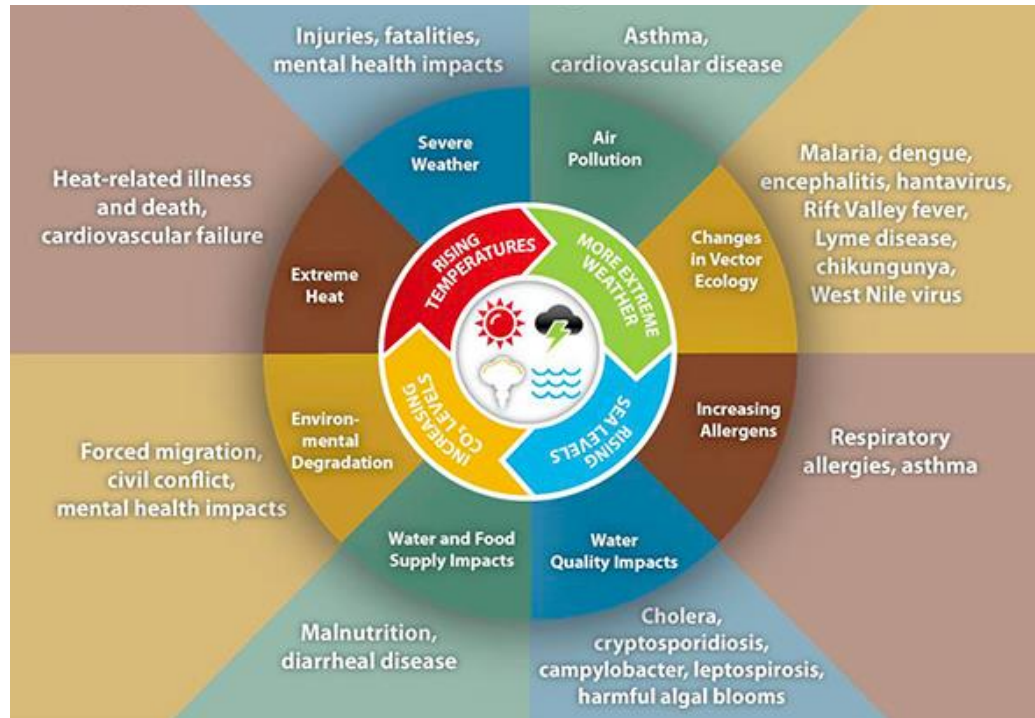


“The climate crisis is the single
greatest public health challenge
of the 21st century.”

The Lancet

New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)¹

CLIMATE CHANGE & HUMAN HEALTH



- ✓ Air Pollution
- ✓ Severe Weather
- ✓ Extreme Heat
- ✓ Environmental Degradation
- ✓ Water and Food Supply Impacts
- ✓ Water Quality Impacts
- ✓ Increasing Allergens
- ✓ Changes in Vector Ecology


SUSTAINABILITY IN HEALTHCARE IS TAKING CENTER STAGE

**HHS PLEDGE
FOR
HEALTHCARE
2022**

**INFLATION
REDUCTION
ACT (IRA)
2022**

**TJC
SUSTAINABILITY
CERTIFICATE
2024**

**CMS JANUARY
2026**



“CEOs understand that sustainability is not only a climate imperative, but also the foundation for security, growth, and resilience.”

-AHRQ Agency on Healthcare Research and Quality



What Role Does Food & Nutrition Services Play?

Impacts of Food Systems on ENVIRONMENT

25% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture

1/3 of all food produced is lost or wasted, approximately 1 billion tons every year

1/2 cows and other ruminants contribute roughly half of all emissions from agriculture and land-use change

Food travels on average 1500 miles farm to fork



Impacts of Food Systems on ENVIRONMENT



Impacts of Food Systems on PEOPLE





**“Without changing diets,
agriculture alone could produce
enough emissions to surpass
1.5°C of global warming.”**

– WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

MANY ROLES!

Sustainable Sourcing

Food Waste Management

Menu Mix

Marketing & Education

Energy and Water Conservation

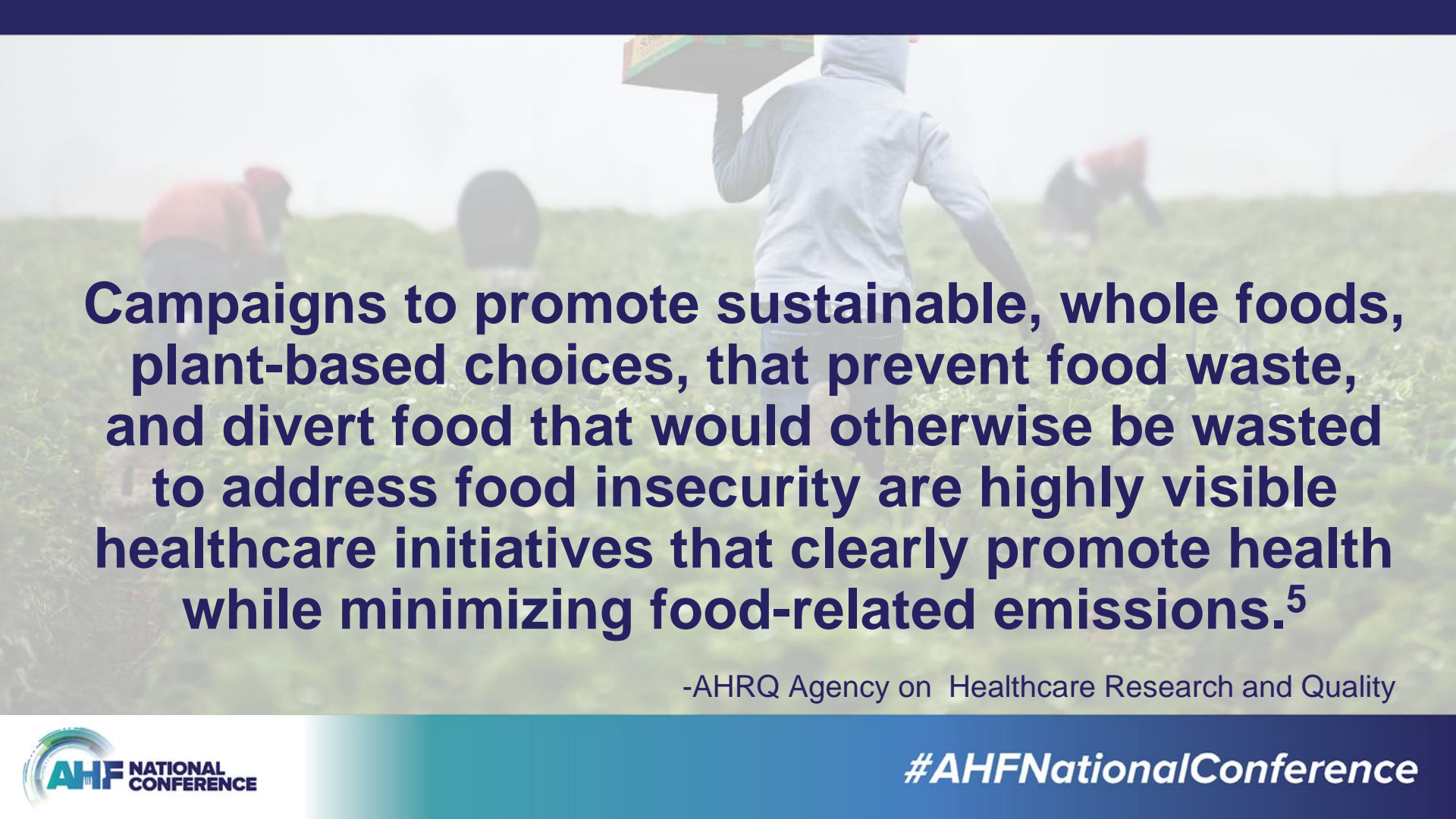
Regulatory Compliance

Community Engagement

Composting Programs

Plastics Use Reduction

Biodegradable Products



Campaigns to promote sustainable, whole foods, plant-based choices, that prevent food waste, and divert food that would otherwise be wasted to address food insecurity are highly visible healthcare initiatives that clearly promote health while minimizing food-related emissions.⁵

-AHRQ Agency on Healthcare Research and Quality

Where to Start

Start slow, gain momentum, become the showcase operation.



Purchasing Practices
Menu Mix
Food Waste
Marketing

Sustainable Purchasing – Basics

- Identify Desired Attributes
- Establish Purchasing Guidelines & Targets
- Partner with Suppliers/Vendors/GPOs
- Track and Measure Progress
- Report on Results

Sustainable Purchasing – Attributes

Seasonal and Local

- < 250 miles

Support Local Farmers

Less Meat, Better Meat

- increase ratio of plant-based

Beef and Poultry

- antibiotic and hormone free

Seafood

- certified sustainable, MBA, seafood watch

Eggs & Dairy

- cage free, rbGH-Free/rBST-free

Vegetables

- local, organic, seasonal

Sustainable Purchasing – Values



Menu Mix – Plant-Forward Menus

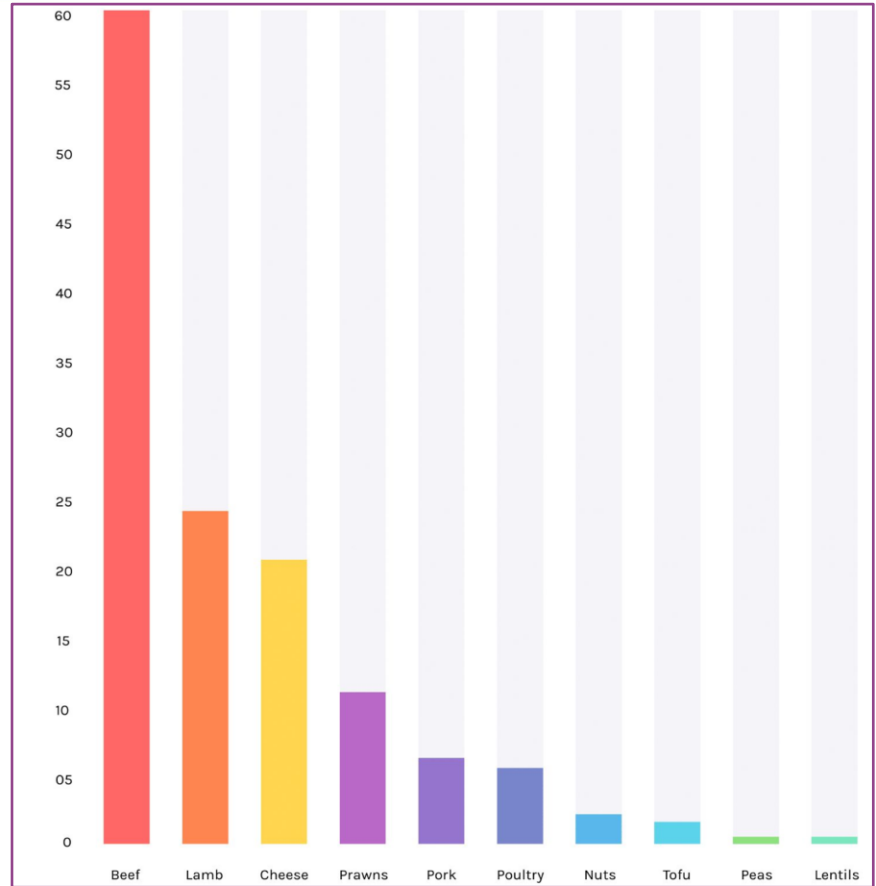


Plant-forward is a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes and celebrates, but is not limited to, foods from plant sources – fruits and vegetables (produce), whole grains, legumes (pulses), nuts and seeds, plant oils, and herbs and spices – and reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability.

– Culinary Institute of America

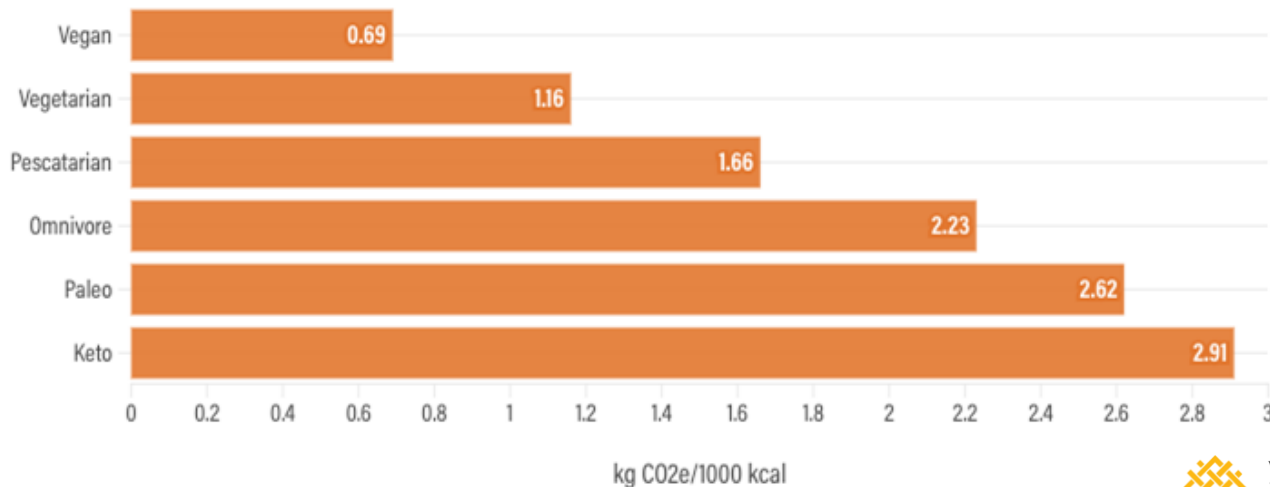
Not All Proteins Are Created Equal⁶

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Per Kilogram of Food Product
(kg CO₂-equivalents per kg product)



Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Different Diets⁷

2005 - 2010





YOUR CHOICES MATTER

By choosing a
plant-forward meal
you can...



Improve air quality

by reducing 3
major pollutants



Reduce land use

by up to 86%, protecting
forests and natural areas that
absorb CO2



Reduce energy use

by up to 89%



Reduce greenhouse gases

by up to 96%



Improve soil health

so we can grow food for future
generations



Improve water quality

for 100s of communities

Food Waste

- 80 billion lbs. of food is thrown away each year
- 40% of US food is wasted each year
- 219 lbs. per person

Source: US Dept of Ag / National Restaurant Association



Food Waste⁸

Companies Save Money by Cutting Food Loss and Waste

An analysis of 1,200 sites across 700 companies in 17 countries found that 99 percent of sites had a positive return on their investment in food loss and waste reduction, and half of the sites had a return greater than 14-fold.

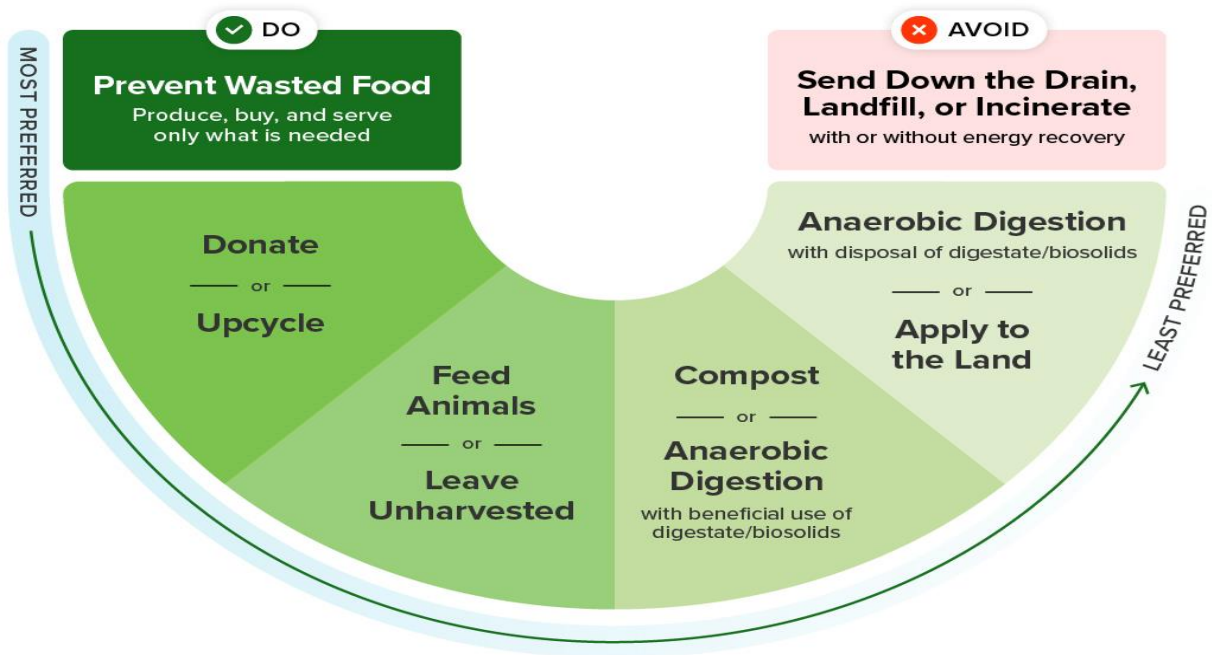


- Measuring waste 
- Training staff 
- Improving inventory management 
- Changing packaging 
- Selling imperfect produce 
- Creating new products 
- Reducing waste management costs 
- Avoiding cost of food not sold 



Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



October 2023

“The staggering amount of wasted food in the United States has far-reaching impacts on resource conservation and food security while costing businesses and consumers money.”

– Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Food Waste Reduction Essentials

1. Set Up System for Tracking:

Category of Food	Quantity	Cause of Loss	Edible vs Inedible	Destination
e.g., soup/stew, raw produce, dry goods, beef	e.g., 5 pounds	e.g., overproduction, spoilage, plate waste	To determine opportunity for donation	e.g., compost, landfill, donation

2. Analyze

3. Develop Reduction Strategies

4. Track Progress toward Goals

Food Donations



Check with your Community Health and Benefit Department for partner opportunities.



ReFED has a [solution provider](#) directory that allows you to find organizations and businesses in your area that can support your food rescue goals.



[Food Rescue Locator](#) and [Feeding America](#) have national databases that you can use to supplement your search.



Partner with local colleges and universities to support food security on campus.

Marketing and Education

Marketing Program Essentials

- Sell the Sizzle” – words matter
- Educate staff and customers on sustainability principles and your programs

Differentiators

- Culinary Demo's
- Farmer's Markets
- Partner with Local Farmers
- CSA's
- Teaching Kitchens
- On-site Farms

TRY OUR NEW

UCSF
FRESH

BURGER

70%
Niman Ranch Beef

30%
Mushrooms

100% DELICIOUS



NOW AVAILABLE AT:

THE
CORNER GRILL

“

I don't sell plant-based, I sell delicious looking and tasting food that just happens to be plant-based.

— Dan Henroid, University of California
San Francisco Medical Center

”

“

We earned \$49,774 more on our fresh mushroom blended burger compared to our original burger by marketing it simply as a 'better burger.' We also reduced our CO2 emissions and made our customers happy.

”

MEATLESS MONDAY

PRESENTS

PLANT PROTEIN POWER

BOUNTIFUL BEANS—FLAVORFUL & FILLING



Lentils

9 g. of protein in ½ cup (Cooked)



Black Beans

8 g. of protein in ½ cup (Cooked)



Chickpeas

7.3 g. of protein in ½ cup (Cooked)



Tofu

11 g. of protein in ½ cup

Put the power of plant protein to work for you. Visit meatlessmonday.com/plantproteinpower to learn more.
#MeatlessMonday #PlantProteinPower



#MeatlessMonday

Good for you, good for the planet.

MEATLESS MONDAY



#AHFNationalConference



Putting it All Together – Tips for Success



Make it Visible:

- Track Metrics and Report

Highlight:

- Cost Savings Opportunities

Alignment:

- With your organization's Strategic Initiatives and Sustainability Goals

Culture:

- Create a culture of sustainability in your sphere of influence

Educate:

- Patients, Staff, Visitors

Your Actions Make a Difference⁹

Top 2 Actions Are:
More Plant-Rich Diets
Reduce Food Waste

TOP 20 HIGH-IMPACT CLIMATE ACTIONS FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS

The data presented here represents cumulative Gt CO₂-eq over 30 year period



BY SECTOR

Together, the individual and household actions presented here have the potential to produce roughly **25–30 percent** of the total emissions reductions needed to avoid dangerous climate change (>1.5°C rise)



PROJECT
DRAWDOWN.

Learn more about these & other climate solutions at: projectdrawdown.org



Appendix

References

1. Atwoli L, Baqui AH, Benfield T, et al. Call for emergency action to limit global temperature increases, restore biodiversity, and protect health. *New Engl J Med.* 2021;385(12):1134-1137.
2. Schaefer, J., Gen Z, Millennial Workers are Prioritizing Sustainability and Climate Change. Indeed, August 2023.
3. Arnav Shah and Lovisa Gustafsson, *U.S. Health Care Workers Want Their Employers to Address Climate Change* (Commonwealth Fund, Jan. 2024). <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2024/jan/us-health-care-workers-want-employers-address-climate-change>
4. PWC, ESG Regulations and Your Company, Actions you can take now to transform your ESG reporting strategy, <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/esg/library/sec-climate-disclosures.html>
5. Sampath B, Jensen M, Lenoci-Edwards J, Little K, Singh H, Sherman JD. Reducing Healthcare Carbon Emissions: A Primer on Measures and Actions for Healthcare Organizations to Mitigate Climate Change. (Prepared by Institute for Healthcare Improvement under Contract No. 75Q80122P00007.) AHRQ Publication No. 22-M011. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; September 2022.
6. Greener by Default, Ritchie H. You want to reduce the carbon footprint of your food? Focus on what you eat, not whether your food is local. *Our World in Data.* Published January 24, 2020. <https://ourworldindata.org/food-choice-vs-eating-local>
7. O'Malley, K., Willits-Smith, A., Rose, D., Popular diets as selected by adults in the United States show wide variation in carbon footprints and diet quality, *Amer J Clin Nutr.* 2023, Apr;117(4):701-708.
8. World Resource Institute, *By the Numbers: The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste*, <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-business-case-reducing-food-loss-and-waste>
9. Frischmann, C., Chissel, C., *The Powerful Role of household actions in solving climate change*, Project Drawdown, Oct, 2021.

Practice Greenhealth (PGH) Food Resources



Apply proven guidance



Healthy ingredients, healthy communities: Improving patient, staff, and community health outcomes by building upon the concept of ‘food as medicine’, shifting the center of the plate to minimize animal proteins and related costs, eliminating antibiotic- and pesticide-laden ingredients, and supporting local and sustainable growers.

Resources by Topic: Industry Partners

- [Health Care Without Harm \(HCWH\)](#)
- [World Resource Institute \(WRI\)](#)
- [Practice Greenhealth \(PGH\)](#)
- [HHS Pledge](#)
- [TJC Sustainability Certificate](#)

Resources by Topic: Sustainable Purchasing

- [The Coolfood Pledge](#)
- [PGH Local Purchasing](#)
- [PGH Purchasing Product Category](#)
- [PGH Purchasing Value Category](#)

Resources by Topic: Menu Mix

- [Greener by Default](#)
- [Healthy Food Playbook](#)
- [CIA Menus of Change](#)

Resources by Topic: Food Waste

- [EPA Wasted Food Scale](#)
- [ReFED](#)
- [Technology Tools to Measure Waste – Leanpath](#)
- [NRA Food Waste Reduction Strategies](#)

Resources by Topic: Marketing/Education

- [HCWH Culinary Contest](#)
- [PGH Marketing Resources](#)

Resources by Topic: Sustainability & RDNs

- [Stanford Medicine Thought Leader Article](#)
- [Food+Planet](#)
- [Today's Dietitian Sustainability Member Survey](#)