

MEAT RAP

Based on work by Teva educators David Blank and Simone Lindenbaum

Learning objective: To contrast the environmental impact of eating meat, specifically beef, with vegetarianism

Materials: table (optional)

Estimated length: 10 minutes – 30 minutes depending on the length of the discussion.

Instructions: This activity can either be run with counselors presenting to campers in the dining hall, or just with one group of campers. Three counselors sit down at a table or on the ground. One of the counselor is Chanie, a kid, who is hungry, and her parents (one VEG, one MEAT) have a short argument about whether or not to have meat for dinner. After the debate, have a conversation with kids about which side they agree with, or if they take a different position.

CHANIE: Mommy, Daddy, I'm so hungry – what's for dinner?

VEG: Listen up honey just sit right down
cause I'm gonna spit some rhymes that might turn you around
I know eating meat's delicious; I don't find that strange,
but it's leading to a *little* thing called climate change

MEAT: yeah, I've heard of climate change, and I'm not really impressed
what's it have to do with burgers? Take a chill pill, you're a mess
I'm not about to adopt all of your "eco-stress"

VEG: Lemme try to break this down for you if you think you're so smart
cows release a lot of methane every time they fart,
methane is a greenhouse gas, which traps sunlight energy
it's been causin' the earth's temperature to rise up by degrees

MEAT: I mean I guess I never knew that and it really is a shame
but what's my contribution, am I really all to blame?
maybe you're right, and meat production causes global warming
but just one burger- is it really worth mourning?
I'm sick of vegetarians and I'm not conforming!
If I stop eating burgers, what else am I to eat?
Every time I go to dinner, they are always serving meat

VEG: Don't you get it? This is bigger than your taste for juicy steak

Ignoring global climate change is a big fat mistake
Weather changes are a comin', that we can't deny
Super storms they are a stormin', trees be fallin' from the sky

MEAT: I'm not a fool, I don't deny climate change
but as for me being the problem, I think that's a little strange
cause everything I know about climate shift so far
is that warming is caused by smog released from factories and cars
what about families with 2 vehicles in their home
why don't you pick on their oil consumption
and leave my meat choices alone

VEG: True, smoke from cars and factories play a part
but they don't get half as hot as the gas in cow farts
eating just one burger is actually on par
with driving 320 miles in an average car!

MEAT: so don't drive and don't eat meat, now I know you is crazy
so making meat makes greenhouse gases, but your logic's getting hazy
do the words FOOD CHAIN mean anything to you?
or have you forgotten the ways of the world, you hippie dippy fooo
predators eat meat- it's not so complicated
we've been doing it for centuries and it's not yet outdated
just so you know, meat's a source of protein
that keeps up stores of energy and
makes me strong and lean
and by the way, if you're so clever,
then did you know eating cheese really isn't much better?
and are you prepared to give up your cheddar?
please daddio- and as for the weather--

VEG: you might think we are at the top of the food chain
but we also have a little brains
and for the sake of mother earth, then you would have to be insane-
to keep eating so much meat
cause it's causing the planet to warm and I already feel the heat
so maybe you can't give up meat altogether- ok
but maybe we could give up meat some of the days
meatless Monday, vegan Wednesdays
could be more manageable perhaps

that way we could slow complete ecological collapse

MEAT: ecological collapse! its time to calm down
I'm not giving up my burger and you're acting like a clown
maybe eating meat is bad for the earth
but when I think about that burgers girth
and sinking my teeth in to that juicy meat
I just ignore the bad impacts and think, life is sweet
who cares about the earth and the next generation?
this is America! the United States of Burger Nation!

VEG: Burger Nation?! Abomination!!
Our founding father never thought that this great federation
Would become a dumping ground for cow flatulation!
But there's another reason to stop meat infatuation.
And believe you me, it's a sad situation.
Did you know factory farming represents almost all
of the meat we eat? And while I guess it's your call
if you wanna eat that burger it should be understood
that it came from a cow who didn't have it so good.
They cut off his horns without anesthetic
and they branded him, too—that just isn't copacetic.
Cows should eat grass but they made him eat corn
which is bad for his stomach and makes him forlorn

MEAT: Sure, I can cut down on burgers, I guess
Didn't know factory farms could be such a mess
Animal suffering just isn't cool
so let me propose to you a new rule:
I'll lay off the beef and switch over to chicken
A fine-roasted fowl is still finger-lickin'

VEG: Sorry to nag, but I'll spin a new verse:
Our fine feathered friends have it even worse!
Chickens and turkeys have been bred to grow so fast
that they're in constant pain, man this system can't last!
breasts so large that they got trouble standing,
just cuz we consumers are so very demanding.
Their genetics have been twisted into crazy contortions,
so now they all possess frankensteinian proportions!

But this debate is over, man, it's time to wrap it up
little Chanie's/Mikey's over here and he/she's begging us to stop
let's see if he/she has made his/her choice
more than anything, I just want to hear his/her voice

CHANIE: I never thought choosing what to eat would be so COMPLICATED. Now I REALLY don't know what to eat for dinner! I want to know what all these other people think. You out there! What do you all think we should eat for dinner?

Food for Thought:

We eat dinner seven times a week – thinking about everything you just heard, how many of those seven dinners do you think should include meat? Talk it over at your tables, and then hold up on your fingers how many nights a week (from zero to seven) you think you should eat meat.

[Kids discuss for a minute and hold up fingers. Call on a few kids to share their answers, and why. Close with a discussion of meat reduction options, e.g. Meatless Mondays, Vegan Wednesdays, and MOOSHY diet (Meat Only On Shabbat and Yom tov)]