

## “Meat Consumption and Climate: Best Strategies for Behavior Change” Podcast Script

### **TAPE LOG INDEX OF SOUND BITES**

Total Running Time (4:59)

David Bryngelsson

Researcher at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden (:41)

Cam Escoffery

Researcher at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University (2:19)

Cam Escoffery

Researcher at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University (2:48)

Linnea Laestadius

Researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (3:44)

### **ANCHOR INTRO (:22)**

**Lauren Balotin**

2 degrees Celsius – it sounds insignificant, but right now, the United Nations is struggling to keep global temperature rise below this number. Most people think there’s not much they can do about this, but there are individual dietary choices everyone can make to help.

Meggie Stewart and Lauren Balotin (BAL-low-tin) report on how to best approach the issue by creating widespread behavior change .

### **NAT SOUND (:02)**

**Cows**

### **REPORTER VOICER (:17)**

**Meggie Stewart**

According to a 2017 study in *Regional Environmental Change*, meat production accounts for nearly 15 percent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Beef is the worst offender. This number will only continue to climb as economic welfare increases around the globe.

### **ACTUALITY (:37)**

**David Bryngelsson**

**Researcher at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden**

The biggest source of emissions from the agricultural sector is livestock. You need to grow more forage and crops to feed the animals. And then when you have ruminating animals, such as cows or sheep or goats, they also produce a lot of methane.

But what if we were to stop eating beef and to replace that with poultry? What if we stopped eating cheese and drinking milk and found alternatives? It would buy us about two decades of time. The same energy transformation would still need to be done, but we would have two decades more time to do it.

### **REPORTER VOICER (:47)**

## **Lauren Balotin**

That was David Bryngelsson (BRIN-gull-son), a researcher at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden. Bryngelsson (BRIN-gull-son) conducted a study and found that by globally eliminating beef from our diets, we could substantially lower our atmosphere's projected concentration of greenhouse gases. This could buy us the time we need to mitigate climate change.

But so far, there have been few large-scale efforts to reduce meat consumption. The temperature of the earth is still rapidly increasing. If a government or organization created a campaign to change dietary habits, would anyone participate? If they did, which approach would make the campaign most effective? Should we focus on education about the role of meat consumption in climate change or the promotion of new dietary social norms? We asked researchers to learn their perspectives.

## **REPORTER VOICER (:15)**

### **Meggie Stewart**

Dr. Cam (COM) Escoffrey (es-COF-ree) is a professor in the Department of Behavioral Science and Health Education at Rollins School of Public Health who develops and evaluates interventions. She is also a Certified Health Education Specialist. She compared our idea to an environmental health campaign that we all know and love.

## **ACTUALITY (:13)**

### **Cam Escoffery**

#### **Researcher at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University**

So if you think about Smokey the Bear Campaign about 'Only YOU can prevent forest fires,' stuff like that, there are public health ad agencies that promote either attitudinal shifts or behavior change.

## **REPORTER VOICER (:15)**

### **Meggie Stewart**

Dr. Escoffrey (es-COF-ree) thinks that education and new social norms are both important factors which serve different roles in the reduction of meat consumption. She also noted that individual interviews are the only way to shed light on which factors are most important to a particular community.

## **ACTUALITY (:35)**

### **Cam Escoffery**

It's multi-faceted, so at the individual level we will say that people have to be aware of an issue, then you have to educate them about the issue because we can't make the assumption that everybody has that common base. Social support, sometimes social pressure, helps too. So you know in behavior change those are important factors but you don't know the valence, or strength, of those factors unless you do what we call community assessment, and sometimes you can't intervene with them all, but you have to recognize the role that each of those play.

## **REPORTER VOICER (:17)**

### **Lauren Balotin**

Linnea (LIN-nay-ya) Laestadius (Lis-TODD-ees), a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, had a similar viewpoint. She said it can be difficult to change public perception of meat consumption.

Meat is tied into culture, and telling others what to eat is often met with negative reactions. She believes the best way to make change is to use a grassroots approach.

## **ACTUALITY (:39)**

### **Linnea Laestadius**

#### **Researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee**

I think normative change is really going to be more effective than just education. So with any education, you run into this attitude-behavior gap. Just because people understand something doesn't mean that they'll actually do it. But if you can change the norm around meat consumption that would be much more influential.

It can be small things like if you go to a restaurant, the meat dish isn't the first thing listed. Or if you order a brown bag lunch at a conference, the default is a vegetarian option, and you have to specifically request meat. So if we change the baseline, and people have to actually go out of their way to request meat, you'll see less meat consumption.

## **CLOSING (:39)**

### **Lauren Balotin**

Laestadius (Lis-TODD-ees) added that choosing the right strategy is currently a huge debate. She added that behavioral scientists are doing a lot of research to determine the best choice. Once we have their results, we will be better equipped to influence public behaviors.

### **Meggie Stewart**

Because climate change is a global issue, many people don't consider the personal actions they can take for mitigation. However, decreasing meat consumption can be done on an individual level, and it has very strong, beneficial effects. We can take the advice of these researchers to understand the most effective factors in convincing others to take action.

## **TAG**

### **Lauren Balotin**

Lauren Balotin (BAL-low-tin) and Meggie Stewart, Emory News Now