

Transition campus catering to 100% plant-based

This proposal has reached the required number of signatures for consideration at Student Parliament.

As this proposal has financial and reputational repercussions, if this is passed at Student Parliament, it will also require approval from Strath Union's Trustee Board.

Student Parliament notes:

We are currently in a climate and ecological emergency. If significant change is not made, we will far exceed the 1.5 degree global warming limit set out in the Paris Agreement. Animal farming and fishing combined use up to 76% more land space than plant-based farming and is responsible for at least 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions.

A plant-based food system has massive regenerative potential - it can provide more food, with fewer emissions, whilst also increasing carbon drawdown. Transitioning to a plant-based food system will free up land equivalent to the size of Europe, Australia, the US and China combined. The UK has the potential to be carbon negative if we have a plant-based food system and rewild the freed up land.

Strath Union has proven to be open to plant-based change:

- Passing the increasing vegan awareness policy which deemed to educate students about the negative impact of animal farming and to promote plant-based food on campus
- During COP26/COY16, Strath Union was the first Union to endorse the plant-based treaty, promoting a transition away from animal farming and onto more sustainable alternative protein

The Plant-Based University campaign has results that show that students want to move towards a plant-based catering system:

- the University of Stirling Student Union has signed a policy motion to transition to plant-based catering by 2025
- University College London now has default plant milk at all their campus outlets, Bournemouth University has lowered the prices of plant-based alternatives
- Cambridge University student Union has signed a motion to support the transition to a 100% plant based catering menu

Also a recent YouGov has shown that 55% of students in the UK would like to see more plant-based options on university campuses.

Student Parliament believes:

Due to the facts stated above, we believe that Strath Union should be taking more action towards being a sustainable union. The Plant-Based Universities campaign is already in line with the Union's current plant forward approach and the increasing vegan awareness policy. Acting on the research that shows we should be moving towards a plant-based future is an opportunity for our university to demonstrate a true commitment to environmental sustainability and to align with its sustainability commitments.

Student Parliament instructs:

- Strath Union should support the transition to 100% plant-based catering
- For Strath Union owned outlets to be 100% plant-based by 2025
- For Strath Union event catering to be 100% plant-based by 2025
- For these changes to be in writing and embedded within the university climate strategy
- Strath Union should lobby the University of Strathclyde to facilitate a necessary plant-based transition.
- Strath Union should the Plant-Based Universities campaign professional support to ensure a smooth transition. This includes support from three catering and nutritional organisations to ensure changes are swift and easy - ProVeg facilitates menu innovation, which is overseen by Plant-Based Health Professionals to ensure nutritional adequacy of the food provided, and Forward Food offer training to catering staff as well as climate footprint calculations.

Transitioning to plant-based should include:

- To develop alternative, more nutritious, cheap and tasty plant-based menus
- Test the menu and listen to student/staff feedback to improve the menu offering the most popular plant-based meals
- Provide climate footprint calculations for menus which can be advertised on products

Useful Links

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-63662788>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/feb/21/cambridge-university-students-vote-for-completely-vegan-menus>

[IPBES-IPCC C-Sponsored Workshop. Biodiversity and Climate Change](#)

“The UN, in 2019, for the first time in history, brought together scientists working on climate and mass extinction crises to identify the crucial solutions. They determined that the **key solution is to restore forests and ocean ecosystems**. And identified that the **biggest barrier is animal farming and fishing**, which are the leading drivers of habitat and species extinction.”

[New estimates of the environmental cost of food | University of Oxford](#)

“If we transition to a plant based food system, **we can free up 76% of global farmland**, the size of Australia, Europe, United States and China combined.

[Global Green house gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice those of plant-based foods](#)

Globally, the **largest proportion of emissions from food production comes from animal agriculture (57%)**. Comparatively, the production of **plant-based foods only contributes to 29%** of global emissions. The *worst* emitter of plant-based food contributes 12%, while beef contributes 25%.

[Eating Away at Climate Change with Negative Emissions. Repurposing UK agricultural land to meet climate goals](#)

'The UK could be **carbon negative, with no changes to fossil fuel consumption**, if we have a plant-based food system and rewild land' which can also restore our precious wildlife and help to end mass extinction.

[Farming for Change Charting a course that works for all](#)

A sharp reduction in animal protein consumption can **make the spread of agroecology a credible option in the UK.**

Agroecology could supply enough food for 530 million Europeans, while maintaining export capacity, reducing agricultural GHG emissions by 47% compared to 2010, and helping to restore biodiversity, and protect natural resources.