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Unprocessed Food Sustainability

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Unprocessed food definition:

Food that has been processed or refined as little as possible and is free from additives or other artificial substances.

Processed food definition:

food item that has had a series of mechanical or chemical operations performed on it to change or preserve it.

Sustainability: the ability to meet the needs of the current population without compromising the needs of future populations

Opposing Viewpoint:

- Cheaper than unprocessed
- Harder to obtain
- Last longer

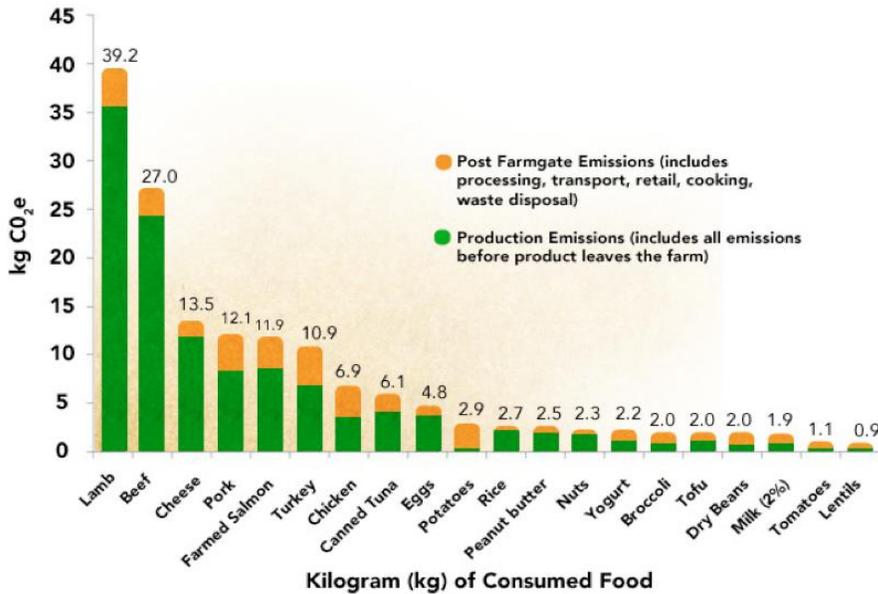


Figure caption: This graph depicts the relationship between the amount of CO2 produced and the distance traveled when transporting processed foods

WHY ARE PROCESSED FOODS UNSUSTAINABLE?

Soybeans and corn are unprocessed foods that are utilized in the process of creating processed food. These whole foods are converted into soybean oil and high fructose corn syrup and used abundantly in the production of processed foods. The reproduction of these crops in the same locations have created dead zones where vegetation is no longer able to grow. For example, in the Gulf of Mexico there exists a dead zone the size New Jersey (8,543 sq. mi.) created by the overproduction of the crops.

TROPHIC LEVELS

Unprocessed foods provide more nutritional value to the consumer, reduces transportation cost which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce food waste. Less agricultural production will be needed as the natural form of the food is being used. As there is less intermediates, there are fewer trophic levels as well. (S. Satyanarayana, P. Pindi, A. Singh, Dattatreya A, and Aditya G - 2012)

HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PROCESSED FOODS

Many of these foods are full of added sugar and fat and contribute to overweight and obesity. This matters for cancer prevention, because obesity is linked to higher risk, and a healthy diet links to lower risk for many common cancers, as well as other chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. (Bender)

FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS INCREASE WITH PROCESSED FOOD TRANSPORTATION

Processed foods can be transported further than unprocessed food due to the additives utilized in their production to increase their self life. Although this sounds beneficial, this has unintended repercussions as transporting these foods over long distances contributes to air pollution and increases CO2 emissions in the atmosphere.

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