



## Prairie Climate Stewardship Network

*A project of Prairie Stewardship Network*

*In partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Environmental Stewardship Committee and Presbyterians for Restoring Creation, Northern Plains Presbytery*

### Some Daily Choices That Affect the Environment

#### **Environmental impact of bottled water: Several reasons to drink tap water if your tap water is safe to drink.**

- The Container Recycling Institute estimates that supplying Americans with water bottles for one year consumes more than 15 million barrels of oil, which is enough to generate electricity for more than 250,000 homes or fuel 100,000 cars for a year.
- Over 22 million tons of the bottled liquid is transferred each year from state to state, or country to country.
- Energy and water are used in bottled water processing and filtration. An estimated two gallons of water is wasted for every gallon purified.
- Energy is used and toxins are emitted in the manufacturing of water bottles. Roughly 1.5 million tons of plastic is used each year. Most water bottles are being made of the oil-derived polyethylene terephthalate (PET). While PET is less toxic than many plastics, the Berkeley Ecology Center found that manufacturing PET generates more than 100 times the toxic emissions — in the form of nickel, ethylbenzene, ethylene oxide and benzene — compared to making the same amount of glass.
- Container Recycling Institute (CRI), says nine out of 10 plastic water bottles end up as either garbage or litter — at a rate of 30 million per day. If plastics are buried in landfills, not only do they take up valuable space, but potentially toxic additives such as phthalates may leak into the groundwater.
- According to the Climate Action Network, when some plastic bottles are incinerated along with other trash, as is the practice in many municipalities, toxic chlorine (and potentially dioxin) is released into the air while heavy metals deposit in the ash.
- Replacing used water bottles with new containers made from virgin resources consumes energy and pollutes the air, land and water.

(from *Message in a Bottle: Despite the Hype, Bottled Water is Neither CLEANER nor GREENER Than Tap Water* by Brian C. Howard <http://www.emagazine.com/view/?1125>)

#### **Environmental impact of a diet primarily based on red meat consumption: One reason to reduce red meat consumption.**

- Globally, ruminant livestock (including cattle, goats, sheep, buffalo) produce 80 million metric tons of methane a year, roughly 28% of man-made methane emissions.
- The production of 2.2 lbs of beef results in the emissions of green house gases with a warming equivalent of 80 lbs of carbon dioxide (calculated by the Japanese National Institute of Livestock and Grassland Science, Tsukuba).

(from *How Better Food for Cows Could Cool the Planet* The Christian Science Monitor, August 16, 2007 pp 13, 17)

#### **Environmental impact of eating non-local produce: One sound reason to buy local food.**

- The average distance food travels from farm to plate is 1,500 miles.
- For more reasons, see *10 Reasons to Buy Local Food*

(from *Checking the food odometer: comparing food miles for local versus conventional produce sales to Iowa institutions* by Rich Pirog, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Andrew Benjamin, Iowa State University Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineering, July 2003).