
Are Cows guilty of Climate Change?

24/09/2014



While world leaders arrive to the UN to attend the Global Summit on Climate Change, and thousands of people protested on Sunday in 2808 cities of the world to demand urgent actions, an audiovisual on the subject raised controversy and was trending topic on social networks and the press.

In a video released in YouTube, former Beatle Paul McCartney urged people to “becoming vegetarians for a day and don’t eat meat on Mondays”. Some people wrote infuriated comments to our website. Is the musician crazy?

The context of such statement is a recent study that confirmed “Cattle demands 28 times more soil and 11 times more irrigation than pigs and domestic poultry, and its meat damage range is 10 times higher”.

According to the research, published by **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** and reproduced by **Cubasí** last July, this kind of cattle issues “5 times more gases and consumes 6 times more nitrogen than eggs production and poultry meat”.

We can understand better the former Beatle’s request if we are sensitized with environmental pollution and check out this data. But some questions raised all of a sudden: Are the cows guilty, the greatest guilty of climate change? Where do we place toxic fumes generated by factories, highly polluting industries like that of oil, or the daily traffic of millions of cars around the world? Are the cows responsible for the slow development of actions, despite the governmental consensus on the need to reduce emissions to limit the rising of world temperature in less than 2 °C, which was approved at the Cancun Summit in 2010?

Likewise, one could question what do cows have to do with the climate debt of industrialized nations, which have saturated the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, several times higher than that of developing countries. Shall we pay for the sins of others?

Thereby, it is not moral to ask those who have experienced an enforced vegetarian diet: the millions of starving people in the so-called Third World, and the 40 million poor men living in the United States, not to eat meat for a day.

In short, I do not think cows are the ones to blame. Not to mention they should not be blamed for what governments fail to fulfill every year. Indeed, governments do not transfer technologies to developing countries so they can mend their economies.

I do coincide with one thing in this request: consumerist patterns (Note I am not talking about consumption) of mankind must change. As long as men continue depredating nature to an uncontrollable rhythm, and as long as there exists an unbalanced distribution system of resources, favoring a few and negatively affecting the vast majority, the future of mankind will be compromised. And the climate change effects will not distinguish between those who have polluted more, or less. Therefore, I hope sensitized voices join the Ozone layer campaign. But not against elemental objective like cows, would Ringo Starr, for instance, dare to call for a day without car traffic in all large world cities? That would be a perfect target shooting!

Cubasi Translation Staff
