



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As concerns over climate change mount, it has become increasingly evident that changes to the global food system must be included in the solutions that look to mitigate anthropogenic (human-caused) impacts of the climate crisis. Animal agriculture is an incredibly resource-intensive industry and a leading contributor to land, fuel and freshwater use. Livestock production's footprint is estimated to take up around 30% of the earth's surface and contribute 18% of all global greenhouse gas emissions. One of the reasons for this is due to society's overconsumption of animal-based food products, which has been trending upwards for decades in North America. Animal food products are any food items that are derived from the body of an animal, such as meat, eggs, milk, cheese, honey, etc. Current and projected livestock production levels outpace any type of supply that could reasonably be expected from natural, ecologically sustainable production practices. This trend has led to a system which often employs practices that are equally reckless towards the environment (such as mass deforestation and irresponsible runoff management), animal welfare (such as extreme and unnatural confinement and unnecessary antibiotics and hormones), and human health (by increasing saturated fat intake and second-hand exposure to hormones and antibiotics).

Because of these plights, the Vancouver

Humane Society (VHS) is proposing that the City of Vancouver implement a policy wherein all food purchasing activities facilitated by the City replace 20% of animal-based food items with plant-based alternatives. 20% is being recommended as a minimum benchmark, as it is effective in demonstrating the impact of the policy change, while remaining attainable in the short-term. Plant-based foods do not contain any ingredients that come from animals, but are instead derived from plant sources.

As outlined in both the EAT-Lancet Commission Report and the recent report published by the WWF and United Nations on food's role in national sustainability policy, the onus is not only on industry and consumers to take action that reduces the impact of the current food system, but it falls to policy and decision makers, at every level, to take definitive action. VHS is calling on the City of Vancouver to act on expert advice and incorporate meat-reduction efforts into the City's greater ecological objectives.

VHS conducted an analysis of the City's current food purchasing activities which fall into five distinct streams: Vancouver Civic Theatres concessions, City event catering contracts, low-cost meal programs, Parks Board concession services and golf course foodservice, and the Vancouver School Board's Food4School program.

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Purchasing data for each of these streams was analyzed (where available) to determine annual cost and greenhouse gas emissions associated with differing food types.

VHS then conducted a similar analysis for three proposed alternative procurement models that saw either:

- 20% of all animal-based products replaced with plant-based alternatives (*Proposal 1*),
- 20% of the most carbon-intensive animal-based products replaced with plant-based alternatives (*Proposal 2*). The most carbon-intensive products are defined as those wherein the difference of carbon emissions is the most significant between the animal-based and the plant-based versions of the same item.
- 20% of the most cost-intensive animal-based products replaced with plant-based alternatives (*Proposal 3*). The most cost-intensive products are defined as those wherein the difference in price per kilogram is the most significant between the animal-based and plant-based versions of the same item.

## RESULTS

Upon comparing the City's current purchasing strategy and the three proposed alternative models for each food activity (where data was available), VHS found that should the City of Vancouver implement one of the proposed policy recommendations, it can expect to **save up to \$99 000 in procurement costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 500**

**tonnes, and save the equivalent of nearly 400 farmed animal lives on an annual basis.**

Additionally, with these policy changes, it is projected that the City can experience a **14% growth in sales revenue** (with a 4% erosion rate annually which can be seen in detail in Appendix A[iii]) in food activity streams involving foodservice operations equating to over **\$400 000** in additional revenue the first year alone.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Whether the City's greatest influencing factor on policy change reflects social responsibility, sustainability or financial efficiency, both **Proposal 2** and **Proposal 3** will pose a positive impact on City objectives.

## CONSIDERATIONS

VHS also identifies additional considerations for the implementation of a policy change regarding the City's food purchasing strategies. The considerations include: the costs associated with analyzing current purchasing trends, coordinating policy with third-party program facilitators (as seen with the low-cost meal programs and the Food4School program), and considering the dietary needs and cultural relevance of foods delivered through any of these programs to structurally-vulnerable populations. A related consideration is that increasing the offering of appropriate plant-based options will improve accessibility and inclusivity for those who wish to opt for plant-based meals for health, environmental, animal welfare or personal reasons.

