

# HOME MATTERS

A joint initiative of the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge and the Massachusetts Climate Action Network

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## About Us

This newsletter is a joint project of the following New England-based groups:



**The  
New**

### [Hampshire Carbon](#)

[Challenge](#) is committed to

helping New England residents reduce their household energy consumption, lower their greenhouse gas emissions, and thereby mitigate the risk of climate change.

## Welcome!

Welcome to the second issue of *Home Matters*, from the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge and the Massachusetts Climate Action Network. Our goal is to reach out to YOU--New England residents who want to reduce your energy use.



### **Food, the staff of life.**

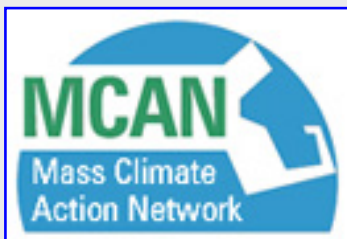
There is nothing more basic to the development and survival of the human species as agriculture. Historians tell us it was the development of agriculture in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East that allowed nomadic humans to settle

into cities and begin to build the first great civilizations. And it is the incredible advancement in the science of agriculture that has provided sustenance enough for the doubling of the world's population since 1940.

But this modern agri-machine runs on oil. From powering the mighty machines that transform the Earth from wildlands to fertile fields, to the production of fertilizers to recharge the used-up soil, to the energy needed to transport produce from farm to market, modern agriculture is an energy-dependent business. And nowadays that energy equals fossil fuels. The food we eat is a major contributor to climate change.

But there are ways you can reduce your contribution, and join others making changes in their food use that will reduce the carbon impact of agriculture and lead us to a more sustainable food future. This issue of *Home Matters* gives you some tips to start on the path to reducing your diet's climate impact.

[The Mass](#)



[Climate Action Network](#) is a coalition of locally organized groups that are fighting the climate crisis. MCAN's [Low Carbon Living Program](#) helps households reduce energy use, save money, and lower the impacts of climate change.

Thanks for reading, and on behalf of the Mass. Climate Action Network and the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge, thank you for your dedication to living an efficient and climate-friendly life.

Rob Garrity  
Director, MCAN

Julia Dundorf  
Denise Blaha  
Co-Directors, New Hampshire Carbon Challenge

## Will 'Thinking Global, Eating Local' Reduce Your Carbon Footprint?

*By Susan Altman, MCAN*



Among the most important things you can do personally to reduce your personal emissions of greenhouse gases are to drive and fly less (much, much less!) and make sure your home is as energy-efficient as possible. Transportation is responsible for about a third of global warming emissions, and home operations (energy use, construction, and water and sewage) make up another third.

But you also eat—probably several times a day. What contribution do your food choices make to global warming? [Read the rest](#)

**"Shifting less than one day per week's worth of calories from red meat and dairy products to chicken, fish, eggs, or a vegetable-based diet achieves more GHG reduction than buying all locally sourced food."**

--Christopher L. Weber and H. Scott Matthews. Food-Miles and the Relative Climate Impacts of Food Choices in the United States. *Environmental Science and Technology* 42 (10), 3508-3513, 2008.

## The Economics of Buying Local

By Denise Blaha, New Hampshire Carbon Challenge



Most of us recognize that when we spend \$9.95 for a shirt at a "big box store," we can't possibly be providing those who made the shirt and then got it to us with a decent wage, nor any real safeguards to our environment. As consumers, we get what we pay for, and sub-standard prices can only mean lower wages and other cost-cutting measures. Although it's hard to overlook the convenience, selection, and savings some chain stores offer, the negative impact of these retail giants on our local

economy and environment also cannot be ignored.

Three independent studies confirm that money spent at a locally owned business stays in the local economy, benefiting residents and area merchants. [Read the rest](#)

## There's Nothing More Local than Water

By Denise Blaha, New Hampshire Carbon Challenge

Despite the fact that an estimated 40 percent of bottled water *is* tap water, Americans purchased more than 9 billion gallons of bottled water in 2007, spending just under \$12 billion. Water is the second largest commercial beverage sold by in the United States, second only to soft drinks. To meet our growing demand, bottled water production has increased by more than 9 percent annually since 2002.1



The environmental impacts of bottled water are substantial. More than 17 million barrels of oil are required to produce the 25 billion plastic water bottles that are sold in the United States each year.

**The oil used to produce these water bottles emits more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide, from just the production and not the transportation of the bottles.**

[Read the rest.](#)

## Local Buy IN



By Edward R. (Ted) Leach  
Co-chair of the [Carbon Coalition](#)

"Buy local" is a valid component in the climate change sweepstakes, but I would like to give a little different twist to that slogan and pitch it as "Local buy *IN*."

In this presidential election year, the chatter about climate change is cranking up and, unfortunately, much of it finds its way into the swamp of partisan politics.

I have observed over the years that people of any political persuasion are often looking for permission or validation before they will fully sign on to a cause or subject. They are waiting for a candidate or some other authority figure to say, in so many words, "It's OK to be for/against this." Once that "permission slip" is out there, people feel empowered to join the ranks - to buy in to your point of view.

[Read the rest](#)

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