**The meat on our plate is killing the planet (but we might be able to fix it)**

Some people already started eating no meat, they are vegetarians. It was estimated that 4.5% of the people in the Netherlands do not eat meat. That would mean that at least one person in this class doesn’t eat any meat. The number of part-time vegetarians increased. Part-time vegetarians are vegetarians that eat meat once or twice a week.

There actually some reasons why we should stop eating meat. I’ll name a few of them.

The first reason is that the environmental impact is huge! This is because livestock farming has environmental consequences, such as land and water degradation, biodiversity loss and deforestation. Also, the production of meat requires masses of grain, water and land. Meat production is highly inefficient. To produce one kilogram of beef requires 25 kilograms of grain to feed the animal and 15,000 litres of water. Around 30% of the earth’s land surface is used for livestock farming. That’s a lot! Because we feed grain to our livestock, the grain prices go up. This makes it really hard for the poorer people to feed themselves. We could use that grain to feed people and water to irrigate crops. With this amount of grain we use to feed animals, we could feed 3.5 billion people.

One of the other reasons is that eating loads of meat cause animal suffering. This is the reason everybody knows. We all know that millions of cows, pigs and chickens are slaughtered for us consuming meat. We all say: ‘Oh yeah that’s sad.’ But we still continue eating meat. Most meat, dairy and eggs are produced in ways that almost completely ignore animal welfare. For example, enough space to walk around, contact with other animals etc.

And it also affects our own health. High meat consumption is linked to poor health outcomes, for example, heart disease, a heart stroke, diabetes and various cancers. Currently, the average meat intake of a person in a high-income country is 200-250 grams a day. That’s far higher than the 80-90 grams recommended by the United Nations (UN). As you see on the picture on the screen, people in the USA started eating way more meat.

Can we avoid those problems but still eat meat? I think we can. Via the way, you see on the screen. I think it will take a long time until we finally developed this, but in the end, this will be possible. It might not be possible, it might be. We don’t know what the future will bring us. But this might be a nice way to solve a lot of the problems I just mentioned.

I hope I made you think about how eating this much meat affects a lot of issues that need to be solved. Thank you for listening to my speech.