

Good Food NEWS

How much farm land do each of us need? And how much is available?

While perched on top of a large communication hill just outside of Kitchener, Ontario, I was amazed at how the farmland went on forever. I wondered... how much land does each person need in order to live? And like a good detective, I decided to find some answers. Lucky for me the internet lets me do most of the research without sneaking into government buildings and following scientists into the field, not to mention it prevented me from getting my brand new pointy detective shoes dirty.

In his book "How to Grow More Vegetables", John Jeavons, a well admired author, farmer, and teacher, writes that the amount of land we need depends on our diet. Eating a meat based diet for a year requires considerably more land...up to 7 times more or about 1.4 hectares (30 NBA basketball courts). Alternatively, eating a modest vegetarian diet uses about 0.2 hectares (4.5 NBA Basketball courts). He believes that with extreme care and guidance from his book, we can live on even less land than we thought possible (1 Basketball court).

After a tiring game of basketball, and imagining all my veggies growing from net to net, I decided to check out the agricultural land we have available in Canada. I found that Canada uses 11% of its total land for agricultural uses and only about half of this is actually half-decent land for growing tomatoes, cucumbers and other fruits and veggies. Additionally, only 1/10th of this is really good land and the Greater Toronto Area sits on top of some of it. Canada uses about 6.25 acres (54 Basketball courts) per person to grow food, most of this is used for pasture (almost 40%), and grain crops used for animal feed. Actually, Canadian farm animals outweigh Canadians by 4.3 to 1. Countries like India have 0.2 acres of land available per person (4.5 Basketball courts) and not surprisingly vegetarian diets are commonplace.

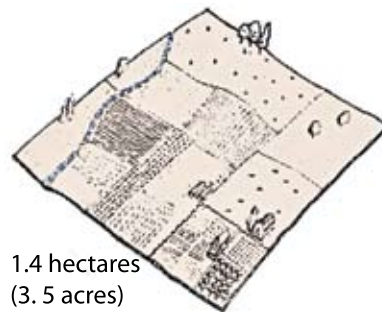
According to the vegetarian association: "Any country with reasonable growing conditions should be able to feed their population a plant-based diet using 0.2 hectares of land or less per person. Areas with harsh winter climates also have summers with long days of sunlight, ideal for producing high yields. Grains, legumes and roots can be easily stored for use during off seasons."

Just thought you should know.

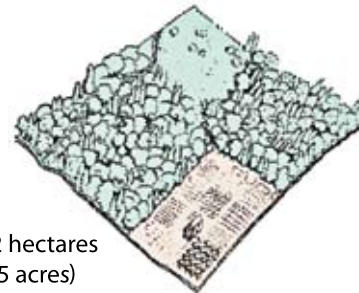
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Land Use per person in selected countries (1994)

	Agricultural land per person	Amount as pasture	% of cereal crops fed to animals	Farm animal to human weight ratio
Bangladesh	0.08	0 %	%	0.4 to 1
India	0.20	5 %	1.6 %	0.65 to 1
Indonesia	0.22	27 %	10 %	0.5 to 1
China	0.41	80 %	25 %	1.1 to 1
Mexico	1.13	77 %	38 %	3.4 to 1
Russian Fed.	1.48	40 %	55 %	2.1 to 1
USA	1.64	56 %	69 %	4.0 to 1
Canada	2.51	38 %	77 %	4.3 to 1
World average	0.87	69 %	33 %	1.7 to 1



1.4 hectares
(3.5 acres)



0.2 hectares
(0.5 acres)

The average agricultural land area in North America is 1.4 hectares per capita after adjusting for the export of grain. With a big cut in meat production this area could easily be reduced to 0.2 hectares, the rate in many Asian countries. This huge savings in land could be used for re-establishing wilderness areas.



Food Share

Field to Table Centre



recipes

LETTUCE SOUP

- 2 TBS Minced Onion
- 1 TBS Butter
- 1 TBS Flour
- ½ tsp Salt
- ¼ tsp Nutmeg (fresh grated)
- 1 dash Fresh Ground Pepper
- 3 ½ cup Chicken Stock
- 1 Med. Head Lettuce, shredded
- 1 Egg Yolk, slightly beaten
- ½ cup Cream

Saute onion in butter until lightly golden. Stir in flour, salt, nutmeg & pepper. If using bouillon cubes, dissolve in boiling water; add to onion mixture slowly. Cook over medium heat, stirring until thickened. Add lettuce. Cover and let cook 3 minutes. Mix together egg yolk and cream. Stir 1/4 cup Soup into yolk/cream mixture. Pour this mixture into soup, stirring constantly. Cook over low heat, stirring, until soup comes to a boil. Remove from heat and serve at once! This is a great way to use up wilted lettuce of any kind.
Serves 6.

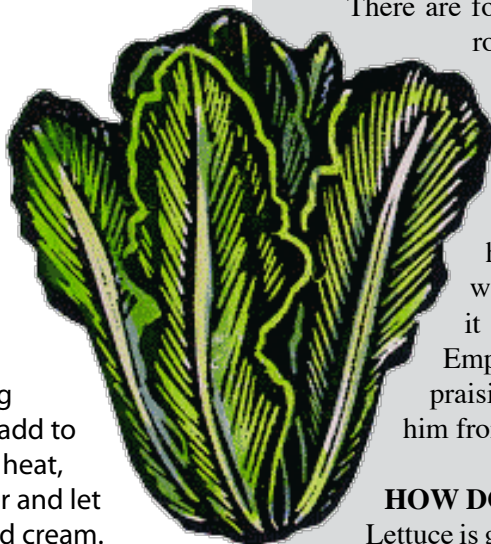
LETTUCE SCOOPS WITH CORIANDER YOGURT CHEESE

- 500 ml. container plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup finely chopped seeded cucumber
- 1/2 cup finely chopped radish
- 1/3 cup finely chopped fresh coriander
- 12 small inner leaves of Bibb lettuce or Romaine, rinsed and spun dry

In a large sieve lined with a double thickness of rinsed and squeezed cheesecloth and set over a bowl let the yogurt drain, covered and chilled, for 8 hours. Transfer the yogurt cheese to a bowl, discarding the liquid, and stir in the cucumber, the radish, the coriander, and salt to taste. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the cheese mixture onto each lettuce leaf. (Do not combine the cheese and the vegetables more than 1 hour in advance or the mixture will become watery.)
The yogurt cheese can be used in a variety of ways similar to cream cheese.
Serves 6.

featured this week: LETTUCE

Lettuce, a member of the sunflower family, is one of the oldest known vegetables and is believed to be native to the Mediterranean area. In the United States and Canada lettuce ranks second only to potatoes as the most popular vegetable.



There are four main types of lettuce: head lettuce, romaine, loose leaf and butterhead. Head lettuce is better known as iceberg lettuce. Up until the 1920s it was known as “crisphead” but was renamed when California growers began shipping the lettuce under mounds of ice to keep the heads cool and crisp. Romaine lettuce was named by the Romans, who believed it had healthful properties. In fact, the Emperor Caesar Augustus put up a statue praising lettuce because he believed it cured him from an illness.

HOW DOES LETTUCE GROW?

Lettuce is grown by either direct seeding into fields or by transplanting seedlings. Loose leaf lettuce takes about 6 weeks to mature; other varieties take longer. Romaine lettuce may take up to 12 weeks to mature. Head lettuce is harvested when the heads reach 2 pounds. Because lettuce is so perishable, it is harvested by hand in the field, packed into boxes or bins and immediately transported to a cooling facility or fresh cut salad factory.

NUTRIENTS IN LETTUCE

Iceberg lettuce doesn't offer much nutritionally, but romaine and loose leaf lettuce are nutrient rich. In fact, romaine and looseleaf provide five to six times the amount of vitamin A and five to ten times the vitamin A compared to iceberg. Romaine and butterhead also are good sources of folate, which helps prevent birth defects and may decrease risk of heart disease.

DELIVERIES

for the week of: July 3rd orders are due 5 pm Tues. June 26th

for the week of July 10th orders are due 5pm Tues. July 3rd



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