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PlantPureCommunities.org

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## Leadership Coalition Forming around the Food-Climate Connection

Nonprofit coordinating food and environmental leaders to address the climate impacts of the standard American diet (aka SAD)

[New York, NY] Healthy food and environmental groups today announced a new coalition building initiative, part of a larger Food-Climate Connection Campaign coordinated by PlantPure Communities (PPC). The coalition of nutrition leaders and climate/environmental leaders will work collaboratively to develop principles and a common agenda and actively carry out strategies that reflect the climate impacts of our food choices.

This announcement comes on the heels of the October 2018 [report](#) from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which put the food-climate connection squarely on the public agenda. Acknowledging the direct connection between climate change and animal agriculture, the IPCC report [recommends that everyone immediately reduce their consumption of animal products by 30%](#). This report reflects a growing recognition of the close connection between our food choices and climate.

Yet, there remains an enormous gap. The coalition building initiative that is being announced today aims to bridge that gap by developing a common language and joint strategies that will result in on-the-ground action. PPC, with its strong roots in the food/nutrition arena and a leadership team with a track record of building consensus on thorny environmental issues, is uniquely positioned to serve as the catalyst for such a coalition building process.

Central to the coalition building effort is the recognition that people often feel disconnected and unable to affect climate change. Yet, their food choices have a significant climate impact and often substantial water and air quality impacts. But even once they understand this, it may not be enough to get them to take the very significant step of reducing animal-based meals in their diet. However, when the health consequences of eating a meat-heavy diet are added to the equation, it can be much more persuasive. This Initiative will amplify and shift the public's understanding of both the climate and health impacts of eating a western meat-heavy diet.

According to **Nelson Campbell**, Board Chair of PlantPure Communities and producer of the 2015 documentary film, *PlantPure Nation*, "Although most people think greenhouse gas emissions are mostly from energy, transportation and fossil fuels, a 2009 study by environmental specialists with the World Bank Group concluded that, when taking full account of land committed to animal agriculture and deforestation, animal agriculture accounts for a major portion of the annual worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, more than many people realize. While it is hard to know with certainty the precise contribution of animal agriculture to warming, it is clear that if we want to save our planet, while also improving our individual health, we need to change what is at the end of our forks."

“Our food affects us and our communities in so many ways – our health, our well-being, our local and global environment. So each and every food choice we make matters. And, the food choices that are available to us matter,” said **Peter Lehner**, Senior Strategic Advisor at Earthjustice. “Now is the time to ensure that people understand the full effect of what they are buying and eating, and making it easier and more affordable for all people to choose a healthy, and more climate friendly diet,” added Lehner.

**Dr. T. Colin Campbell**, author of the bestselling book, *The China Study* (based on the most comprehensive study of nutrition ever conducted), has been speaking and writing about the food-climate connection for more than 20 years. Dr. Campbell, who serves on the PPC Board of Advisors, said, “With the growing consensus about animal agriculture’s enormous impact on climate change, the time is ripe for a powerful coalition of organizations and prominent individuals from both the food/nutrition and environmental arenas to come together to advance their mutually aligned interests.”

The coalition building initiative will bring key stakeholders together around the understanding that many of our most urgent problems stem from our animal-based western diet. Potential allies include environmental groups, food/nutrition groups, health groups, farmers, food justice entities, climate justice organizations and science groups, among others. In addition, the coalition building process will be inclusive, and as it unfolds other compatible interests and concerns will no doubt surface and be included, e.g., groups focused on animal welfare issues. **Allen Zerkin**, JD, a professional facilitator out of the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, is working with PlantPure Communities to help design and implement this Initiative. The coalition building initiative is a one-year process, starting in November 2018, and culminating in a face-to-face gathering in May 2019, by invitation only, at the [Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund](#), in New York.

“We were gratified to see [CNN](#), the [World Resources Institute](#), [Nature](#), and other publications issue reports in the last few weeks that make it clear that reducing the consumption of animal-based foods is on the critical path to climate solutions,” said **Jody Kass**, Executive Director of PlantPure Communities, who is coordinating the Initiative. The dire projections from the IPCC report highlight the timeliness of this coalition building initiative.

For more information, see <https://plantpurecommunities.org/foodclimateinitiative/>

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