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Is Eating Bugs Really About Saving the Planet?

© Marie Hawthorne (<https://www.theorganicprepper.com/author/maree-hawthorn/>)

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Governments around the world seem intent on destroying farms. As protests rage in the Netherlands (https://www.foxnews.com/world/dutch-farmers-form-freedom-convoys-protest-governments-strict-environmental-rules), one of the world's largest food exporters, the rest of us have to wonder, what are we expected to eat? If governments around the world are trying to make farming financially impossible, what do they expect us to eat instead?

Insects.

The United Nations and the World Economic Forum want us to eat insects. (https://www.theorganicprepper.com/un-grocery-list-bread-milk-grubs-beetles-insects/) They've been talking about this for a while now, and with the farm-destroying land grabs currently underway, the food most of us are used to will be harder and harder to come by.

Got bugs?

In 2013, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization published a 200-page report (https://www.cbsnews.com/news/un-agency-urges-eating-insects-to-fight-world-hunger-malnutrition/) touting insects as an underutilized food source. Since then, groups such as the Gates Foundation and the World Economic Forum have been trying to normalize eating insects (https://allthingsbugs.com/news/company-gets-grant-to-develop-food-based-on-insects-to-fight-malnutrition/).

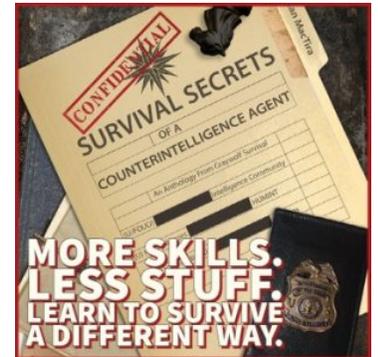
The WEF has published many articles over the years detailing the benefits of eating insects. In *Good Grub* (https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/07/good-grub-why-we-might-be-eating-insects-soon/), published in 2018, they included this table about the relative environmental impacts of insects vs. our conventional protein sources.

repper.com/eating-bugs/#comments/1044936)

- Red Fox on Is Eating Bugs Really About Saving the Planet? (https://www.theorganicprepper.com/eating-bugs/#comments/1044937)



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Photo Credit: Bloomberg

The WEF has also published articles about insect eating in the context of reducing waste (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/insect-farms-gear-up-to-feed-soaring-global-protein-demand>) from other industries as well as its potential for reducing climate change (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/how-insects-positively-impact-climate-change/>).

(https://seedsforgenerations.com/category/t-shirt/?ref=144&ref=AFFID&utm_source

There are many other publications, too. If you're curious, any of these above-referenced articles contain links to multiple other articles about the awesomeness of insects. The WEF really, really wants you to eat bugs.

Is a bug a chicken?

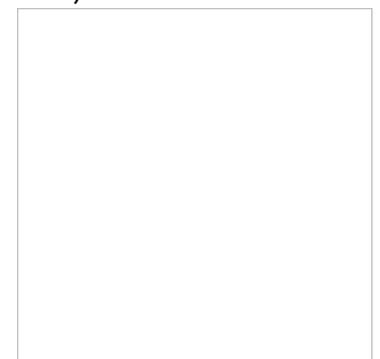
You may look at the above table and go, wow, it really does look like eating bugs uses far fewer resources. Lots of people around the world eat bugs. Maybe Americans and Europeans should just suck it up. However, none of these articles even remotely addresses any health concerns about adding insects to your diet. This is deceptive.

First of all, the pro-insect-eating lobby treats all protein as equal. You can see in the chart above that they assume one gram each of insect, chicken, pork, and beef protein are all nutritionally equivalent. This simply isn't true.

(<https://selfrelianceandsurvival.com/preppers-guide-to-post-disaster-communications/?ref=2>)

There are countless publications out there detailing minute differences between various foods' macro- and micro-nutrient levels, but let's just look at something simple. Proteins are made up of amino acids, and different foods have ~~different amino acid profiles~~ (https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Amino-acid-profile-of-beef-chevon-lamb-and-pork-Source-59_tbl5_334246529).

You can see that there are differences between the amino acid profiles of chicken, beef, pork, and lamb. They are not all identical. Chicken isn't exactly the same as beef. And grasshoppers aren't exactly the same as chicken (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19476337.2020.1746833>). I'm not



(<https://shop.foodforestabundance.com/ref-yyu-rRnDJ4hY>)

saying that one of these is better than the other in every circumstance. Most people seem to be happiest and healthiest with a variety of foods. My point is simply that

many arguments of the pro-insect eating crowd rest on the assumption that all protein is identical, which is quantifiably not true.

It is true that people around the world have eaten insects for a long time.

I've eaten insects. I was visiting friends in Mexico and ate some fried crickets I bought from a street vendor. I thought they were tasty. They reminded me of chili-lime popcorn. But there's a world of difference between supplementing your diet with insects that have been part of a country's traditional cuisine and being left with no options at the store other than industrially farmed insect food products.

Make no mistake, that's what we're being presented with. Food products such as cricket flour are yet another example of highly processed industrial food, masquerading as a healthy alternative to meat. There are real health risks to the kind of insect consumption being proposed.

Build a better pantry on a budget

(<https://selfrelianceandsurvival.com/product/build-a-better-pantry-on-a-budget/>) if you opt to skip the bugs!

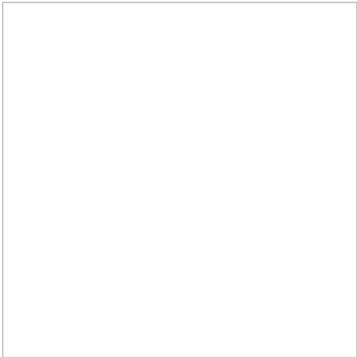
If you're into eating bugs, you very well may catch one.

A study was conducted in Europe in 2018 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6613697/>) to determine if edible insects played a role in transmitting various parasites throughout the food chain. Out of 300 farms and pet stores studied, over 80% had insects harboring parasites. 30% of the farms had insects harboring parasites pathogenic to humans.

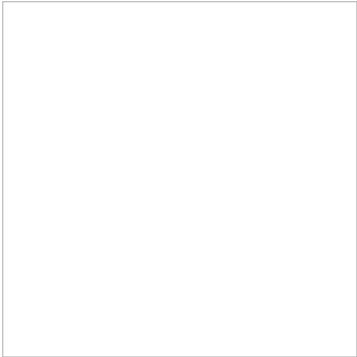
I found this gross enough, but it gets worse. If you look at the WEF articles about the awesomeness of bug-eating, they regularly refer to insects' ability to process waste. They frame this as a wonderful thing. It's true; insects do process waste, but let's think about what that actually means for a minute. The authors of the European study referenced above found that some farms were feeding their insects animal feces from pet shops, corpses of small animals, and rotting food. Eating grasshoppers you find while foraging in the woods is one thing. Eating a grasshopper raised in a shed, eating dog poop, is something else entirely.

The authors of this study did not condemn insect-eating, but they condemned the lack of regulatory oversight. They believe that, for insects to be a safe food source, they need to be part of the same regulatory framework that oversees conventional food production. Otherwise, the risks, not only to humans but to other animals such as pets and livestock, are very significant.

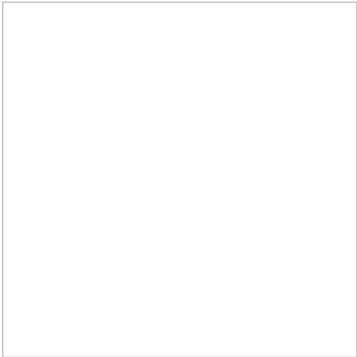
Don't get caught up in the hype on eating bugs.



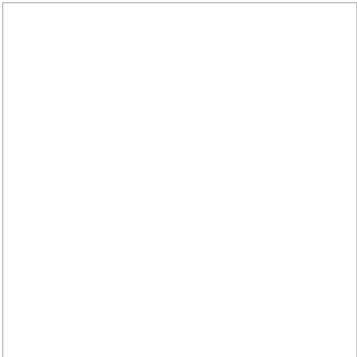
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Furthermore, marketing any highly-processed food as “sustainable” is disingenuous. When you read that 2 g of greenhouse gases are produced for each kilogram of live weight, that literally just means “live.” It does not include the energy required to dry and grind the insects, which is considerable when done on a large scale. When you add in the additional energy required to make insects widely palatable, insects may not be that different (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eustaciahuen/2017/04/30/why-eating-insects-may-not-be-as-sustainable-as-it-seems/?sh=6047377044c1>) from more conventional livestock.

(Want uninterrupted access to The Organic Prepper? Check out our paid-subscription newsletter (<https://selfrelianceandsurvival.com/product/the-official-newsletter-of-the-apocalypse/>.)

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A study conducted in California (<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0118785>) in 2015 suggested that the benefits of eating insects were overhyped, as well. Scientists at UC Davis conducted a series of experiments feeding crickets different substances and then measuring their feed conversion ratios. Just like everyone else paying attention, these scientists had heard about how eating insects could save the world, and they wanted to quantify it.

They made some interesting observations. They raised crickets on five different types of feed: poultry feed, grocery store food waste that had been pre-digested via an enzymatic process, minimally processed consumer food waste, wheat/maize silage normally used for dairy cows, and a 2:1:1 poultry manure/wheat straw/rice straw mixture. They raised three batches each of crickets on these five different substances.

The first two groups did indeed have a good feed conversion ratio, but poultry feed and enzymatically treated grocery store waste require a lot of energy to produce. Crickets raised on this are only marginally more sustainable than poultry. And, as the authors pointed out, a huge infrastructure for raising, processing, and packaging poultry already exists. When you add in the infrastructure investments that would be needed to make insect-eating economically significant, there really isn't much difference between eating crickets and chicken at all.

The WEF likes to promote insect-eating as a way to process waste, but the three groups of crickets that were raised on minimally processed waste all died before reaching a harvestable weight.

The authors of the study, while not condemning insect-eating, insisted that further research was necessary before making any large-scale investments. They concluded that developing insects as a food source would depend largely on the local availability of high-quality organic side streams that were not already being used in conventional livestock production.

Is eating bugs really about saving the planet? Or, is it something else?

IS IT SOMETHING ELSE:

The arguments in favor of insect-eating rely mainly on appealing to people's emotional desire to "do something" to save the environment. Once you look at the numbers of what is actually needed to get insects to a harvestable size, to produce them in a way that won't make people sick, and process them in a way that makes the average American or European willing to eat them, it doesn't really make much sense. It just looks like another form of virtue-signaling

So, why? Why spend so much time, energy, and money promoting something that most Americans and Europeans find disgusting and doesn't make that much of a difference environmentally, anyway?

I think it's about control on two distinct levels. The first is the obvious physical matter of who controls farmland. In the Netherlands, for example, the drive to get farmers off the land is being framed as necessary to reduce nitrogen levels, even though the Dutch already decreased their nitrogen emissions by more than 60% (<https://bodems.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WimdeVries.pdf>) between 1990 and 2017. That's a big nitrogen reduction.

I think the push to expel farmers has more to do with the new, massive Tristate City that has been in the planning stages (<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2017/10/dutch-investors-launch-new-marketing-programme-for-nl-tristate-city/>) since at least 2017. Maybe I'm just being cynical.

But if you can convince the public that conventional farmers are destroying the environment, it makes it easier, from a public-relations standpoint, for politicians and investors to drive farmers out of business and confiscate their land.

Yes, people will need to eat, but in the WEF's *Good Grub* article, they reveal what they want the farms of the future to look like:

From the farmer's point of view, raising insects is going to be radically different from raising sheep, pigs, or cattle. No more coping with mud, muck, and filth. An end to shifting heavy sacks of feed. And forget about having to go outdoors in all weather to manhandle livestock. The requirement for investment in equipment will be different too. This will be farming on a much smaller scale, reducing the need (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/07/good-grub-why-we-might-be-eating-insects-soon/>) for large and expensive machinery.

They want farms of the future to be all highly intensive and indoors, representing a huge shift in where and how our food is produced. They won't need a "countryside" anymore; food production will occur in a series of vast industrial sheds. Again, I believe this is being done to mask massive land grabs.

(Don't want to eat bugs? Check out our free QUICKSTART Guide (<https://www.theorganicprepper.com/quickstart-guide-3-layer-food-storage-plan/>) to



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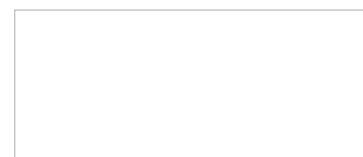
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building your 3-layer food pantry system.)

It never occurs to these people that many farmers actually like what they do.

I've had office jobs. I chose the "mud, muck, and filth." I like my livestock and rarely "manhandle" them; most of the time, we just coexist. Yes, I have to lift heavy sacks of feed. The end result has been that I look and feel better at 40 than I did at 25. And I'm not a natural mechanic myself, but I've had plenty of friends over the years that truly enjoy tinkering.

Of course, maybe it does occur to these people that farmers like what they do, but it simply feeds into the second level of control. These powerful, business-destroying folks may be trying to get us plebs to overcome our natural likes and dislikes so that we simply go along with whatever the "experts" tell us to. They're destroying the businesses of farm families that have been connected to their land for decades, sometimes centuries. They want us to ditch our food traditions for whatever they deem "sustainable."

A world filled with gray

They want all of our intrinsic likes and dislikes, the parts of us that make us quirky and disagreeable and interesting and unique, to just go away. Getting us to overcome our sense of disgust may be one small part of a massive psychological operation to get us to "own nothing and be happy."

But I could be wrong! Maybe I am just too cynical. Have you ever eaten bugs? How was it? And, if you've enjoyed bugs as a major part of your diet for an extended period of time, tell us how it went.

About Marie Hawthorne

A lover of novels and cultivator of superb apple pie recipes, Marie spends her free time writing about the world around her.



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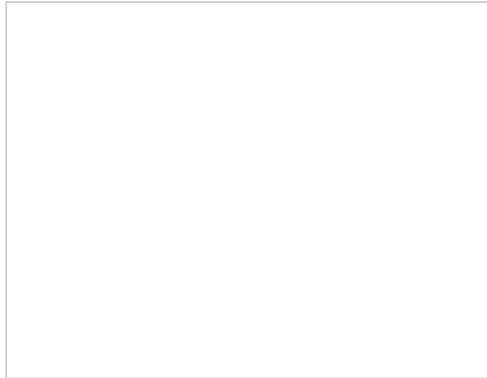
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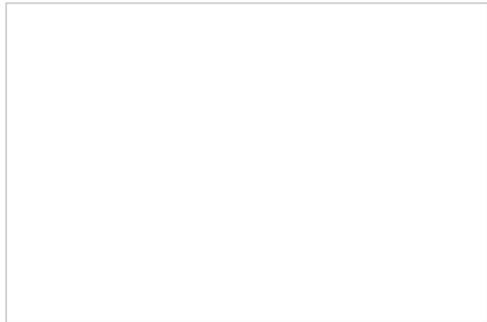
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