

Want a more sustainable food system? Convince young westerners to eat insects

The rapidly changing climate and an expanding global population are serious risks for worldwide food security. Edible insects have a high nutritional value and significantly lower carbon footprint compared to meat production and are a viable option as a sustainable source of protein. Despite this, edible insect cultivation remains rare in Western countries, where eating insects is still considered unusual.

In a [new study](#), researchers from the University of Leeds and University of Veracruz in Mexico have reviewed current insect farming methods, processing technologies and commercialization techniques, as well as current perceptions towards entomophagy — the practice of eating insects.

Their report highlights that the benefits of increasing insect consumption have been widely explored, but not the technological and processing approaches that can help achieve this goal. The researchers [emphasize] that commercialization and processing techniques that focus on the preferences of the younger generation is the best way to normalize edible insects.

Study author Dr Alan-Javier Hernández-Álvarez from the School of Food Science and Nutrition at Leeds said: “Edible insects are fascinating. Although humans have eaten insects throughout history, and approximately two billion people around the globe regularly eat them today, research on the subject is relatively new.

“Edible insects could be the solution to the problem of how to meet the growing global demand for food in a sustainable way.

“The ‘ick factor’ remains one of the biggest barriers to edible insects becoming the norm. Eating behavior is shaped largely during early childhood and in Western countries, eating insects, especially in whole and recognisable forms, remains something seen mostly on TV shows.

“In some European countries consumers, particularly young adults, have shown interest in new food products that use insects in unrecognizable form, such as flour or powder used in cookies or energy drinks. Developing efficient large-scale processing technologies that can develop insects powders could go a long way to helping introduce insects as a common source of protein and nutrients.”

Read full, original article: [Building up an appetite for a new kind of grub](#)