

Switching from beef to chicken can have big environmental benefits — but it also means many more animals to miserable lives and death

We often talk about steak, lamb chops, bacon and chicken nuggets as if they're on a level playing field. Just 'meat'. But their impacts are vastly different. Per gram of protein, beef has [almost ten times](#) the carbon footprint of chicken. It uses [23 times as much](#) farmland. If we were to rank them in order: beef and lamb have the highest cost; pork has significantly less; chicken is even lower; and many types of fish are better still.

This means that if you want to reduce the environmental footprint of your diet, substituting beef and lamb with chicken and fish gets you really far.

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Problem solved, right? Well, not quite. This recommendation has a darker side. It's completely at odds with animal welfare. We often ignore this fact, but it's nonetheless true. The most environmentally-friendly meat choices mean condemning a greater number of animals to live miserable lives.

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[Lab grown meat offers] us a 'get out of jail free' card for this ethical dilemma. We could enjoy the same experience of eating meat without the environmental or the welfare cost that comes with it. We've yet to fully appreciate how pivotal this might be.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)