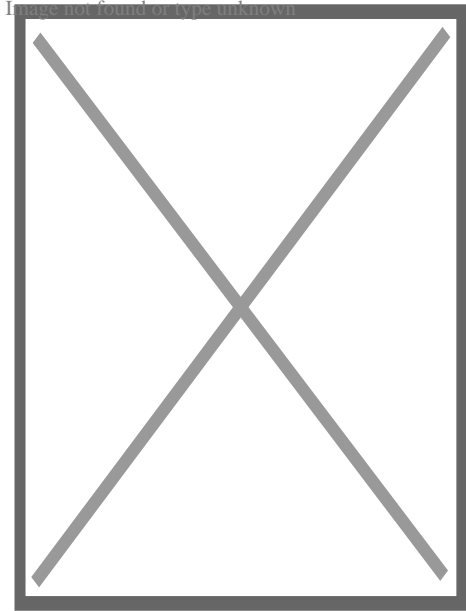


The Guardian's anti-GMO columnist George Monbiot reports organic, pasture fed beef and lamb are 'some of the world's most damaging food products'



George Monbiot. Credit: Tank Magazine

What are the world's most damaging farm products? You might be amazed by the answer: organic, pasture-fed beef and lamb. I realise this is a shocking claim. Of all the statements in my new book, *Regenesi*s, it has triggered the greatest rage. But I'm not trying to wind people up. I'm trying to represent the facts. Let me explain.

Arable crops, some of which are fed to farm animals, occupy 12% of the planet's land surface. But [far more land \(about 26%\)](#) is used for grazing: in other words, for pasture-fed meat and milk. Yet, across this vast area, farm animals that are entirely pasture-fed [produce just 1% of the world's protein](#).

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

Many livestock farmers now claim to practise "regenerative grazing". The minimum definition of ecological regeneration is permitting trees to return to formerly wooded lands. In the uplands of Britain, to judge by [the experience of deer managers](#), this means a maximum of about one sheep for every 20 hectares (50 acres). They might as well not be kept at all.

In the lowlands, the [Knepp rewilding project](#) in Sussex [shows how far production has to fall](#) to permit the return of trees and other wildlife: it generates just 54kg of meat a hectare. If, as many chefs and foodies and some environmentalists propose, meat were to come only from regenerative farms, it would be so

scarce that only millionaires would eat it.

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