

## Rethinking sustainability: Does nutritional value of dairy products offset environmental impacts of milk production?

Researchers from Virginia Tech's School of Animal Sciences analyzed global data to better understand the holistic role of the dairy and meat industries with regards to human nutrition and the environment.

The researchers suggested that previous studies into the global dairy industry's environmental impact had not considered the sector's contribution to nutrition, presenting instead its outputs in terms of milk weight or energy content only. In terms of the environment, the study highlighted that prior scientific analysis had shown that removing livestock from US agriculture would only improve agricultural GHG emissions 'slightly' while resulting in a decrease of essential micronutrient supplies at the same time.

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In conclusion, the researchers commented: "Collectively, the data highlight milk as an important food within the global agroecosystem. Although there are environmental trade-offs associated with milk production globally, milk provides a critical source of important vitamins and minerals. Indeed, milk is one of the only low-energy sources of calcium available for human consumption. Despite differences in production systems globally, milk production is strongly associated with calcium supplies and with supplies of other critical nutrients such as protein, riboflavin, vitamin B12, and phosphorus. Improving global supplies of milk, along with coordinating distribution of milk among supply chains, may be important priorities for enhancing availability of these critical nutrients within food systems worldwide."

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