

Measuring Your Impact 11

The Ecological Footprint of Food Consumption

The following table is a compilation of data from a study conducted by the Gembloux Agricultural University, which profiled food consumption in the United States in 2004, and from a report that provided the ecological footprint for various food items.

Food item	Amount consumed (kg/person/year)	Ecological footprint (hectares/1,000 kg/year)	Ecological footprint: Based on consumption (hectares/person/year)
Beef	43	15.7	
Poultry	53	1.6	
Pork	52	1.9	
Milk	83	1.4	
Cheese	15	11.1	
Yogurt	4	1.7	
Butter	2	11.5	
Potatoes	61	.3	
Vegetables	130	.4	
Fruit	70	.5	

Source: Data from B. Duquesne, S. Matendo, and P. Lebailly, Profiling food consumption: Comparison between USA and EU, http://agriculture.wallonie.be/apps/spip_wolwin/IMG/pdf/Gblx.pdf; A. Collins and R. Fairchild, Sustainable food consumption at a sub-national level: An ecological footprint, nutritional and economic analysis, *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 9 (2007):5–30,

- For each food item listed above, calculate the ecological footprint for the amount consumed and complete the last column of the table.
- Calculate the total ecological footprint for an individual in the United States consuming all of these food items. How does this footprint compare with the world ecological footprint for food consumption, which is 0.9 ha per person per year?
- Identify three ways in which you can reduce your personal ecological footprint for food consumption.