

The Runner's Kitchen: Waste Not, Want Not

Written by Nancy Clark MS RD CSSD
Wednesday, 02 January 2019 09:42 -



In 32 years (2050), we will be dealing with major food issues. By then, the global population will have grown from today's 7.6 billion people to 10 billion people (not due to lots of new babies, due mainly to longer life spans related to better health care and nutrition). We will need 60% more food than is available today. To do so, farmers will need to increase crop yield, use water more effectively, and feed animals more efficiently. The agricultural industry is working hard on that—and climate change complicates it all.

As runners and athletes, we like having plenty of food to eat and clean water to drink. Hence, we want to think about how we can invest in a sustainable future with our food and lifestyle practices. While we may suffer less from food shortages than will the people and athletes in less developed countries, we won't be able to escape these environmental problems:

- oppressive heat that not only damages crops but also drains the fun from running outdoors;
- storms that disrupt plane travel for, let's say, the flights of thousands of recreational athletes going to Florida for the Disney Marathon;
- floods that ruin farms and crops, as well as running trails;
- droughts that kill crops, golf courses, and gardens.

The timely topic of sustainable diets and animal agriculture was prominent at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Convention & Expo (#FNCE). The message was clear: We are facing the urgent need to curb greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE) to reduce our carbon

The Runner's Kitchen: Waste Not, Want Not

Written by Nancy Clark MS RD CSSD
Wednesday, 02 January 2019 09:42 -

footprint and invest in our future well-being. Here's some of what I learned from speakers Frank Mitloehner PhD, professor and air quality specialist at the University of California-Davis, and Amy Myrdal Miller RD of Farmer's Daughter Consulting. Perhaps this information will nudge you to think more about how your food and lifestyle choices impact the climate—and inspire you to make some changes.

- *Waste less food.* Up to 40% of the food we produce gets wasted. About 16% of that happens at the farm (e.g., sick animals not treated with antibiotics, unharvested crops due to labor shortages or "ugly" produce); 40% happens in food service and restaurants, and **43% in our homes.** Who among us hasn't tossed out "ugly" apples, over-ripe bananas, and perfectly good leftovers? A huge contributor to food waste is the "best used by" date on food packages. Please note: the "best used by" date is not a "don't eat this" expiration date, but rather a marker for quality and freshness.

Wasted food required energy to be produced and then transported to your supermarket (and landfill). Wasted food takes up 21% of precious (limited) landfill space; this represents the largest percentage of all waste in US landfills. As the wasted food rots, it creates the greenhouse gas methane.

To reduce food waste, you want to shop carefully and use leftovers. Restaurants, colleges, and other quantity food producers need to figure out how to find a meaningful home for leftovers, such as by donating to food pantries, if permitted.

- *Eat less animal protein.* Farm animals produce methane, so reducing the demand for meat is another way to help the environment. Yet it is not the biggest way to help. That's because meat/food production is not the leading cause of GHGE, despite what you might have read repeatedly in the recent past. Hence, you do not need to become vegan unless you truly want to do so. If everyone were to eat a vegan diet every day, GHGE might drop only 2.6%. But you do want to eat meat less often and in smaller portions. If all Americans honored Meatless Mondays, the drop in GHGE in the US would be 0.5%. While not the cure-all for carbon emissions, every little bit helps!

Instead of blaming farm animals for being methane producers, the far bigger sources of GHGE are from the burning of oil, coal, and natural gas (fossil fuels). The environmental benefits of eating less animal protein of any type pales in comparison to the benefits from

The Runner's Kitchen: Waste Not, Want Not

Written by Nancy Clark MS RD CSSD
Wednesday, 02 January 2019 09:42 -

reducing fossil fuel use. Using fossil fuels to create electricity accounts for 30% of all GHGE. Transportation accounts for 26%, and industry, 21%. Agriculture contributes to only 9%, and animal agriculture alone, about 4% of all GHGE in America. (This number includes the carbon footprint of animals from birth to being consumed.) To put this in perspective, a recent study showed that switching from a meat-based to a vegan diet for one year equates to the GHGE of one trans-Atlantic flight from the US to Europe.

- *Educate yourself about the pros and cons of grass-fed beef.* With conventional agriculture, corn-finished cattle are generally raised on pastureland first for about 10 to 12 months, and then finished on a corn-based diet for the last 4 months to optimize marbling. Grass-finished cattle spend a total of 26 to 30 months on pastureland before they are slaughtered. All of that time, they are making manure, belching from the high fiber grass diet, and releasing methane. Corn-fed cattle produce far less methane and are content to eat the corn when well-balanced into their diet. (Yes, I know there are other reasons you might want to choose grass-fed cattle. I'm just talking sustainability here.)

Another way to reduce GHGE might be to start considering the possibility of eating protein-rich insects. I admit, I'm not there yet—but they are a sustainable source of protein. We just need more research to learn about the digestibility and bioavailability of insect protein—and how to make it yummy.

Solving the world's impending food (and water) crisis is a huge global issue. We need governments around the world to look holistically at the complex interplay between the environment and food production systems. While we want to work together globally, each of us can act locally. How about biking more, driving less and wasting less food, as well as eating less meat? The next generation will thank us.

Nancy Clark, MS, RD counsels both casual and competitive athletes at her office in the Boston-area (Newton; 617-795-1875). Her best selling *Sports Nutrition Guidebook* and food guides for cyclists, marathoners, and new runners offer additional information. They are available at

www.NancyClarkRD.com

. For her popular online workshop, see

www.NutritionSportsExerciseCEUs.com.

Read more of Nancy Clark's articles on: www.runohio.com

The Runner's Kitchen: Waste Not, Want Not

Written by Nancy Clark MS RD CSSD
Wednesday, 02 January 2019 09:42 -

Energy Bars: Which ones are best? -

<http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1599-energy-bars-which-ones-are-best>

Testing Your Almond Knowledge: Can you pass this quiz?

<http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1568-testing-your-almond-knowledge-can-you-pass-this-quiz>

The Sugar Debate: Is Sugar Evil or OK for Runners? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1553-the-sugar-debate-is-sugar-evil-or-ok-for-runners>

Sports Nutrition Update from the American College of Sports Medicine - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1532-the-athletes-kitchen-sports-nutrition-update-from-the-american-college-of-sports-medicine>

e

Eating for Endurance - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1472-the-athletes-kitchen-eating-for-endurance>

Are You Training Your Gut? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1451-are-you-training-your-gut>

Chocolate and Your Sports Diet - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1431-the-athletes-kitchen-chocolate-and-your-sports-diet>

The Athlete's Kitchen - Why Am I Not Getting Leaner...? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1407-the-athletes-kitchen-why-am-i-not-getting-leaner>

Peanut Butter - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1374-the-athletes-kitchen-all-you>

[u-want-to-know-about-peanut-butter](#)

Bread: Good, Bad—or Yummy? <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1357-the-athletes-kitchen-bread-good-bador-yummy>

Meal Timing: Does It Matter When You Eat? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1306-the-athletes-kitchen-meal-timing-does-it-matter-when-you-eat>

The Athlete's Kitchen - Females, Food & Fertility - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1327-the-athletes-kitchen>

The Science of Fuelling for Performance - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1296-the-science-of-fueling-for-performance>

Carbohydrates: Yes? No? Friend? Foe? <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1277-athletes-kitchen-carbohydrates-yes-no-friend-foe>

Alcohol & Runners - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1251-the-athletes-kitchen-alcohol-a-runners>

2016 Sports Nutrition News from ACSM - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1208-2016-sports-nutrition-news-from-acsm>

Taking Your Diet to the Next Level - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1179-the-athletes-kitchen-taking-your-diet-to-the-next-level> |

The Athletes Kitchen - Fighting Fatigue: Why am I so tired....??? <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1131-the-athletes-kitchen-fighting-fatigue-why-am-i-so-tired>

▯ **Sports Nutrition Update: What Does the Research Say?** - ▯▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1100-the-athletes-kitchen-sports-nutrition-update-what-does-the-research-say>

▯ **The Athlete's Kitchen For Weight-Sensitive Runners: Food for Thought** - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1088-the-athletes-kitchen-for-weight-sensitive-runners-food-for-thought>

▯ **The Athlete's Kitchen: Hot topics in Food and Nutrition: Updates from the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics** - ▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1063-the-athletes-kitchen-hot-topics-in-food-and-nutrition-updates-from-the-academy-of-nutrition-a-dietetics>

▯ **Fruits & Veggies: Do you eat too few?** - ▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1026-fruits-a-veggies-do-you-eat-too-few>

▯ **Energy Bars, Gels & Electrolyte Replacers: Are they essential sports foods?**▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/1001-the-athletes-kitchen-energy-bars-gels-a-electrolyte-replacers-are-they-essential-sports-foods>

▯▯ **The Athlete's Kitchen - Travelling Runners & Gas Station Nutrition** - ▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/954-the-athletes-kitchen-traveling-runners-a-gas-station-nutrition>

-

▯ **The Athlete's Kitchen - Weight-related Research from The American College of Sports Medicine** - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/891-the-athletes-kitchen-weight-related-research-from-the-american-college-of-sports-medicine-acsm>

▯ **What's New? Nutrition Update from the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics** - ▯ <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/870-athletes-kitchen-whats-new-nutrition-update-from-the-academy-of-nutrition-a-dietetics>

ADHD, Runners & Appetite Issues - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/846-the-athletes-kitchen-adhd-runners-a-appetite-issues>

To Eat—or Not to Eat: The Pre-Run Question - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/843-the-athletes-kitchen-to-eat-or-not-to-eat-the-pre-run-question>

Super Sports Foods: Do They Really Need to be Exotic? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/825-the-athletes-kitchen-super-sports-foods-do-they-really-need-to-be-exotic>

Carbohydrates: Why are they so confusing? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/772-the-athletes-kitchen-carbohydrates-why-are-they-so-confusing>

The Athlete's Kitchen - Runners Staying Away From Carbs: Really? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/768-the-athletes-kitchen-runners-staying-away-from-carbs-really>

The Athlete's Kitchen - Sports Nutrition: What's Old? What's New? - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/747-the-athletes-kitchen-sports-nutrition-whats-old-whatsnew>

March is National Eating Disorders Awareness Month - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/737-the-athletes-kitchen-march-is-national-eating-disorders-awareness-month>

Quality Sports Nutrition Information: At your Fingertips - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/721-the-athletes-kitchen-quality-sports-nutrition-information-at-your-fingertips>

Getting Older, Day by Day - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/700-the-athletes-kitchen-getting-older-day-by-day>

More Sports Nutrition News You Can Use - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/649-the-athletes-kitchen-more-sports-nutrition-news-you-can-use>

Sodium, Muscle Cramps and Sweat Losses: Tips for Sweaty Runners - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/563-the-athletes-kitchen-sodium-muscle-cramps-and-sweat-losses-tips-for-sweaty-runners>

Injured Runners: Nutrition Tips to Hasten Healing - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/537-the-athletes-kitchen-injured-runners-nutrition-tips-to-hasten-healing>

Why Can't I Simply Lose a Few Pounds? Dieting Myths and Gender Differences - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/525-the-athletes-kitchen-why-cant-i-simply-lose-a-few-pounds-dieting-myths-and-gender-differences>

Lady Runners without Monthly Menses: A Cause for Concern - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/510-the-athletes-kitchen-lady-runners-without-monthly-menses-a-cause-for-concern>

Expanding Your Sports Diet: Seeds and Grains - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/495-the-athletes-kitchen-expanding-your-sports-diet-seeds-and-grains>

Protein and Athletes - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/134-the-athletes-kitchen-protein-and-athletes>

Why Is Weight Loss So Hard...? - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/195-the-athletes-kitchen-why-is-weight-loss-so-hard>

Water: Droplets of Information - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/254-the-a>

[athletes-kitchen-water-droplets-of-information](#)

Dieting—Not Allowed! - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/272-the-athletes-kitchen-dietingnot-allowed>

Sports Nutrition News from The American College of Sports Medicine - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/360-the-athletes-kitchen-sports-nutrition-news-from-the-american-college-of-sports-medicine>

Should We Enable Obesity? - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/469-the-athletes-kitchen-should-we-enable-obesity>

Yummy Holiday Gifts for Active Friends - <http://www.runohio.com/index.php/features/480-yummy-holiday-gifts-for-active-friends>

Fuelling the Ultra Distance Runner - <http://runohio.com/index.php/features/657-the-athletes-kitchen-fueling-the-ultra-distance-runner>

www.runohio.com