

STELLA MCCARTNEY

Sir Paul McCartney calls for MEAT FREE MONDAY to help slow climate change

Sir Paul McCartney, with his daughters Mary and Stella, is launching a new food campaign – MEAT FREE MONDAY – on Monday 15th June which encourages people help slow climate change by having one meat free day a week.

The campaign has already gathered an impressive list of supporters from the worlds of entertainment, politics and the environmental sciences including Chris Martin, Jeff Koons, Alec Baldwin, Woody Harrelson, Doris Day, Sheryl Crow, Kevin Spacey, Kelly Osbourne, Zac Goldsmith, Gillian Anderson, Jake and Dinos Chapman, David de Rothschild, Monty Don, Sam Taylor Wood, Sharleen Spiteri, John Frieda and Ricky Gervais.

In addition several of the UK's most renowned chefs are supporting the campaign – including Simon Rimmer, Skye Gyngell and Bryn Williams who have pledged to provide great vegetarian recipes for the Meat Free Monday website, which the whole family can enjoy. Restaurateurs such as Oliver Peyton will also be highlighting meat free dishes on the menus of their restaurants.

Most people understand that our food choices can influence our own health, for good or for bad, but increasing amounts of scientific information published over the last few years have shown that our food choices are also linked to the health of the wider environment.

For instance, the UK's Food Climate Research Network estimate that food production is responsible for between 20–30 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and that livestock are responsible for around half of these. Livestock production releases gases such as methane and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere and have a much more powerful climate changing effect than CO₂.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, livestock production is responsible for more climate-changing GHG emissions globally than transportation – up to 18 per cent of emissions as opposed to 13 percent for transport.

Environmental group Greenpeace estimates that every kg of beef we eat represents roughly the same GHG emissions as flying 100km and the group, Compassion in World Farming, estimate that if the average UK household halved its consumption of meat, this would cut more emissions than it they cut their car use in half.

Last year Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Nobel Prize winner and Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, (the group of scientists that produces much of the global climate change data that we read daily in the newspapers) stated that “. . . [The] IPCC found that changes in lifestyle and behaviour patterns can contribute to climate change mitigation across all sectors. One area where individuals can make a difference in this regard is by altering their diets through consuming less meat, say by giving up meat at least one day a week. Reducing meat consumption in this manner will make individuals healthier as well as the planet.”

Having a MEAT FREE MONDAY every week is a simple way to start making a real difference in the world. The more people who join in, the more difference we can make.

“I think many of us feel helpless in the face of environmental challenges, and it can be hard to know how to sort through the advice about what we can do to make a meaningful contribution to a cleaner, more sustainable, healthier world. Having one designated meat free day a week is actually a meaningful change that everyone can make, that goes to the heart of several important political, environmental and ethical issues all at once. For instance it not only addresses pollution, but better health, the ethical treatment of animals, global hunger and community and political activism.”

Sir Paul McCartney

NOTES TO EDITORS

The MEAT FREE MONDAY campaign will be officially launched on Monday 15th June 2009.

The campaign is supported by Linda McCartney Foods and has a dedicated website www.supportMFM.org. The Meat Free Monday website will feature useful tips and recipes from Linda McCartney's cookbooks as well as the UK's leading chefs. It will also provide a community of support and information for those who want to know more about the way diet choices can influence a healthier environment.