



Climate-friendly food could cut emissions

A research analysing purchases of 7,000 Australian households finds that climate-friendly food cuts emissions by 26 per cent

#NEW DELHI

Switching food and drinks with more environment-friendly alternatives could cut down greenhouse gas emissions from groceries by 26 per cent, a new research analysing purchases of 7,000 Australian households has found.

Roughly, the same amount of emissions would be cut if over 19 lakh cars were taken off the road in the country, according to researchers.

Making bigger changes, such as swapping a frozen meat lasagne for the vegetarian option, could reduce emissions by as much as 71 per cent, they said.

To make this happen, the authors called for on-pack labelling of greenhouse gas emissions for every packaged food product so that consumers can make informed choices.

"While consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental impact of the food system and willing to make more sustainable food choices, they lack reliable information to identify the more environmentally friendly options," said epidemiologist



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Allison Gaines, lead author of the study published in the journal *Nature Food*.

For their analysis, the researchers used the FoodSwitch database. More than 22,000 grocery products were classified into major, minor and sub-categories of foods to estimate emissions saved by switching both within and between groups.

For example, while 'bread and bakery' would be a major food, 'bread' would be a minor food and 'white bread' would be a sub-category, the

researchers explained.

"Switching higher-emission products for 'very similar' lower-emission products could reduce total emissions by 26 per cent. Switches to 'less similar' lower-emission products could lead to a 71 per cent reduction," the authors wrote.

"Dietary habits need to change significantly if we are to meet global emissions targets, particularly in high-income countries like Australia, the UK, and US.

"The results of our study show the potential to significantly reduce our environmental impact by switching like-for-like products," said Gaines.