

Environmental Health

Information from MCE's 2014 St. Louis Regional Food Study



Industrialized farming practices in the St. Louis region have prioritized economic efficiency above human and environmental health, resulting in ecosystem losses and long-term damages to our air, water, and land.

- Over the last half-century, the use of chemical pesticides has skyrocketed in conjunction with the adoption of industrial agriculture methods and genetically modified crops.
- David Pimentel, a Cornell entomologist, estimates that roughly "0.1 % of applied pesticides reach the target pests, leaving the bulk of the pesticides (99.9%) to impact the environment."
- Pesticides harm our water supply through farmland runoff and contaminate our region's fresh waterways. Sprayed pesticides pose risks to our air and the quality of our environment.
- Pesticides in the environment have fueled the increase of pesticide-resistant weeds and insects, to which farmers often respond with more or different pesticides. These chemicals impact our plants, pollinators, animals, and our ecosystem as a whole.
- Over-application of manure and chemical fertilizers poses risks of water contamination when excess nutrients run off into drinking water.
- Industrialized livestock farming confines animals to small warehouse spaces called Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). These CAFOs generate particle pollution from methane, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide gas into our atmosphere.

Consult moenviron.org for citations and the complete STL Regional Food Study

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How Do We Improve?

Everything in Moderation

Responsible fertilizer application can help foster healthier land and water in the St. Louis region. By applying only as much manure or chemical fertilizer as can be absorbed by soil and vegetation, farms can reduce the excess nutrients runoff that pollutes our waterways.

Clear the Air

A more localized food system would reduce the transportation distance of food products from farm to store, thus preventing wasted fossil fuels from polluting our air.

Dishing Up Climate Change

By replacing one meal per day with a non-meat source of protein, we can ease the strain on our water resources and decrease our greenhouse gas emissions in the effort to combat climate change.