

# What Is Sustainable Nutrition?

Sustainability is a buzzword in media reports and government policy, but what does it really mean? For farmers like Ed Facer at Star Rock Farms in Conestoga, Pa., it means carefully following agricultural practices that will support the needs of the farm *and* its community now and for generations to come.

## Part 1: Green Communities

Write your definition of sustainability in the following space. Give an example, such as solar energy, and explain what factors can make it sustainable.

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Now list three considerations that you think would make a farm or other food source sustainable:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List two local initiatives you've noticed in your community to increase sustainability, particularly in the food system. Use this example as a guide:

The local grocery store has a produce section identified as grown on nearby farms.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Food for Thought

When considering sustainable nutrition, the key is to strike a *balance* among environmental concerns, economics, and health needs. For example, almond beverage has been hailed as a greener alternative to cow's milk because it uses less water to produce. But did you know that it would take at least 32 ounces of almond beverage to get the same amount of protein as an 8-ounce glass of milk?\* And, unlike almond beverages and other alternatives, dairy milk is produced locally in all 50 states, reducing the need for long-distance transportation.



\*<https://www.americandairy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NDC-Alternate-Beverage-Flash-Cards.pdf>



Local milk is available 365 days a year.

## Part 2: Green Earth

The United Nations projects that global population will reach nearly 10 billion by the year 2050. What do you think it will take to feed that many people in a sustainable way? Here are some links to help you research the various aspects of this issue, in addition to sources you find:

- The Environmental and Nutritional Impact of Removing Dairy Cattle: <https://californiadairymagazine.com/2021/05/21/the-environmental-and-nutritional-impact-of-removing-dairy-cattle/>
- World Resources Report, Creating a Sustainable Food Future: [research.wri.org/wrr-food](https://research.wri.org/wrr-food)
- Nourishing people sustainably: [usdairy.com/news-articles/sustainable-diets-must-nourish-people-protect-planet](https://usdairy.com/news-articles/sustainable-diets-must-nourish-people-protect-planet)
- Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy: [usdairy.com/about-us/innovation-center](https://usdairy.com/about-us/innovation-center)



Ed Facer from Star Rock Dairy, Conestoga, Pa., shows recycled local ice cream, which is fed to cows as part of their daily food intake.

On a separate sheet of paper, list and analyze a few of the proposals you read about, as well as any of your own ideas. Use the example below as a guide.

Proposal	Pros	Cons
Create community gardens for people to grow their own produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to fresh fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• Tailored to regional diets and environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers must be willing to participate</li> <li>• Land required</li> <li>• Unpredictable environmental conditions</li> <li>• Limited nutrient profile for volume produced</li> </ul>

Now take a look at the nutritional profile of milk on the wall poster. Reflect on this information and your research findings to write a short position paper describing the role dairy could play in sustainable diets on a global scale. Think about the amount of food, and the different types of food, that would be required to replicate the nutrients found in milk. How would the environmental footprint and cost of all those varied resources compare to the cost and footprint of providing three servings of dairy, considering that a cow can produce up to eight gallons of milk per day?

