

PROPOSED CONGREGATIONAL RESOLUTION ON CUTTING UUCF'S CARBON FOOTPRINT WITH OUR FORKS (A three-step resolution to alter our food choices to more fully honor our UU commitments and live our UU values)

— Whereas the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax and the Unitarian Universalist Association to which UUCF belongs have committed to take responsibility for caring for all beings and all Earth through personal and congregational actions, which include food choices that care for our environment and limit harm:

- UUCF Congregational [Resolution on Climate Change](#) 2013: “We commit to take personal and congregational responsibility for reducing our own carbon footprints through eating and serving energy-efficient food that is locally produced and low on the food chain.”
- Section C-2.2 - 24 [Values and Covenant of the Proposed Revisions to Article II](#) states: “We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation.”
- The [2011 UUA Statement of Conscience](#): (Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice) states: “Aware of our interdependence, we acknowledge that eating ethically requires us to be mindful of the miracle of life we share with all beings.... we strive to choose foods that minimize harm and are protective of the environment, consumers, farmers, and all those involved in food production and distribution.”

—Whereas animal agriculture causes irreparable harm to people, planet and all beings:

- Animal agriculture alone is responsible for more greenhouse-gas emissions than all transportation combined according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- Animal agriculture accounts for over 70% of agricultural land use, drives deforestation and habitat destruction, but produces only 18% of the world's calories (FAO). Dedicating so much land to feeding animals contributes to global food insecurity.

- A disproportionate number of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and slaughterhouses that contaminate air, water, and soil are located in proximity to BIPOC and low-income communities. These communities often experience a wide range of ailments such as breathing problems, heart conditions, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and leukemia, along with decline in quality of life and decreased property values. (Nat. Library of Medicine).
- Antibiotic use in animal agriculture increases the risk of zoonotic diseases/pandemics, which threaten global public health.
- Nonhuman animals are sentient beings who experience pleasure, pain, joy, distress, and fear, and have the will to live pain-free rather than as inefficient food machines in an efficient industrial process.

—Whereas the Cambridge Dictionary Online definition of “default” is: “The thing that exists or happens if you do not change it intentionally by performing an action.” It is a preselected option such as the ringtone on your phone, or the predominantly animal-based dishes served at an event.

- Defaults can have a powerful effect on individual and group behavior because people tend to go with the status quo rather than opting into a different choice, *so defaults encourage but do not mandate promoted choices.*
- Any number of subtle changes to the default can affect behavior in ways that advance the public good *without removing an individual’s autonomy, i.e., ability to make a choice that differs from the preselected/default option.*
- We live in a society where animal-based foods, i.e., foods containing meat, dairy, eggs and/or other animal parts make up the bulk of the menu at most social events in the general and faith populations, and at UUCF. That is, we live in a “hamburger default world.”
- For all the reasons stated above, we believe our UU Values and Principles call for a plant-based default policy, i.e., one in which menus would be primarily from plants, while still providing for individuals to choose to be served animal-based foods.

THEREFORE, UUCF HEREBY RESOLVES:

Step 1. To affirm our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and more fully live our UU Values by altering our food choices at UUCF toward more plant-based default food offerings.

Step 2. To engage with ACT! and the Social Justice Advisory Team (SJAT) over the next congregational year in working with event organizers to develop and experiment with plant-based default strategies and, with input from the congregation, to assess results and draft a plant-based food default policy that provides for individuals to choose animal-based foods, if desired.

Step 3. To vote on food policy guidelines at the 2025 Annual Meeting to implement a plant-based default food policy for congregational events that preserves an individual's ability to choose animal-based foods, if desired.