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Just five food commodities produce more greenhouse gases than any country except emissions giants China and the US

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Rice, soy beans, corn, wheat and palm oil together lead to more greenhouse gas emissions than any country's individual footprint, apart from China and the United States, according to new Oxfam research into the food industry and climate change.

In the report, [Feeding Climate Change \(http://oxf.am/ZBnA\)](http://oxf.am/ZBnA), Oxfam says companies cultivating these five foodstuffs, among others, need to make drastic emissions cuts. Otherwise, the [Paris Agreement's \(http://oxf.am/Z84R\)](http://oxf.am/Z84R) goals to reach "net-zero" emissions by the middle of the century and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will not be met.

Released ahead of the key [Business and Climate Summit \(http://www.businessclimatesummit.com/\)](http://www.businessclimatesummit.com/) in London, the report identifies emissions from farm soils as a major contributor to climate change. For example, methane produced by flooded rice paddies and nitrous oxide from the use of fertilizers are some of the "super-pollutants" produced by farm soils. Together, these soil emissions are as damaging to the environment as those produced by deforestation to create new farmland, which has rightly been the focus of the industry's climate policies in recent years.

Oxfam International's food and climate policy lead, Tim Gore said: "The Paris Agreement was a big step forward, but we can't meet its goals without further urgent action. Business and industry leaders gathering in London this week must show that Paris is a springboard for deeper emissions cuts and do more to help farmers on the front lines of climate change. The food and beverage sector should be leading the way."

The food industry is responsible for about 25% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, making it one of the biggest drivers of climate change. Millions of small-scale farmers, on whom the industry relies, are very vulnerable to extreme weather patterns. Oxfam estimates that the 10 biggest food and beverage companies depend on at least 100 million of these small-scale farmers around the world. When climate disasters strike, these farmers and their families are often forced to sell off their possessions, and are in danger of falling into poverty and hunger.

The risks for women farmers are even higher, as they have unequal access to land, credit, and other financial resources. Additionally, they are often excluded from joining farming cooperatives and other support systems to help them keep working when extreme weather ruins crops.

Alongside the report, Oxfam has launched an [online tool \(http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fccmap\)](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fccmap) that illustrates the scale of greenhouse gases produced by various food commodities around the world. The tool also includes first-hand accounts from small-scale farmers showing how climate change affects them.

Gore said: “Food companies not only need to outline science-based emissions cuts in their supply chain and work with small-scale farmers to implement them, but also help these farmers thrive in the face of the changing climate by guaranteeing them a living income. Doing so would be good for people and good for business. If food companies fail to act, it’ll be impossible to keep the promises of the Paris Agreement.”

Notes to editors

Download the report: [Feeding Climate Change: What the Paris Agreement means for food and beverage companies \(http://oxf.am/ZBnA\)](http://oxf.am/ZBnA)

In 2014, [Oxfam showed \(http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2014/05/big-ten-food-companies-emit-more-greenhouse-gases-than-scandinavia\)](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2014/05/big-ten-food-companies-emit-more-greenhouse-gases-than-scandinavia) how the top 10 food and beverage companies alone are responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than all five countries in Scandinavia combined, but as a sector were doing too little to tackle them. Following on from that report, as part of Oxfam’s Behind the Brands campaign, Kellogg and General Mills were the first in the industry to set science-based emissions cuts targets for their supply chains. In the wake of the Paris Agreement, Oxfam is calling on other food and beverage companies to follow suit.

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