

Zurich, 12 October 2015

Is a healthy, organic diet also good for the Earth's climate?

The CO₂ calculator of the Zurich start-up Eaternity determines the ecological footprint of over 5000 Swiss meals. In future, its evaluation will also include the effect of an organic and healthy diet. A large-scale project financed by the Engagement Migros development fund that is backed by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) and other partners is making this expansion possible. It will provide a ground-breaking standard for especially healthy and sustainable meals.

Approximately one-third of global greenhouse gasses result from the production and consumption of food; in Western countries that amounts to over 2 tonnes of CO₂ per person annually. The production of beef, for example, strongly affects the climate, while potatoes barely have an impact. There is therefore potential for reduction through the way we eat: those who want to do so in a climate-friendly way should prefer vegetables over meat products and be on the lookout for seasonal and regional offerings. This can lead to savings of approximately 50% in CO₂ for every meal.

Healthy for both people and climate

Already since 2014, restaurants have been able to estimate the CO₂ footprint of the items on their menus with the CO₂ calculator of the Zurich start-up Eaternity and use it to label especially climate-friendly meals. This calculator will now be enhanced by the factors "organic" and "healthy", and turned into an app. This will allow restaurants not only to make a significant contribution to CO₂ reduction, but also to offer especially healthy meals while sensitising their guests to the issue of a sustainable diet. "Healthy, organic and climate-friendly food does not have to be a contradiction in terms. The Eaternity App will help spread this knowledge," says Judith Ellens, Co-Founder and COO of Eaternity. A version for the public is already planned for November 2015, which they can use to exchange climate-friendly recipes and set individual CO₂ targets.

Open Source for researchers and experts

The large-scale project is being financed by the Engagement Migros development fund. For the first time, a widely corroborated, scientific database will be used to determine the factors "organic" and "healthy", to be discussed and validated in collaboration with partners in research and practice, such as ZHAW. "This project especially benefits the scientific community by making the practical application of the research results available to all," says Prof. Jean-Bernard Bächtiger, Head of the Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources (IUNR) at ZHAW. The collected data will not only be used in the Eaternity App, they will also be made freely available to scientists once the project has been completed. The results of the project will be published and made available for the real-life, practical implementation of standards for sustainable and healthy meals.

Media contacts

Nina Pfenninger, Project Manager, Engagement Migros, Directorate Cultural and Social Affairs, Federation of Migros Cooperatives, Zurich, Phone + 41 44 277 22 60, nina.pfenninger@mgb.ch
Judith Ellens, Co-Founder and COO Eaternity, Zurich, Phone + 41 77 44 656 77, jellens@eaternity.ch

* * * * *

About Engagement Migros

The Engagement Migros development fund was launched in 2012 to enable the Migros Group to give voluntary support to projects in the fields of culture, sustainability, business and sport. The projects are funded by companies with commercial activities in retailing, financial services and travel. The funds made available represent ten percent of the dividends disbursed by the companies each year. The projects supported by Engagement Migros are chosen in a dedicated selection process according to promotion priorities. The development fund stems from the Migros Groups' commitment to corporate social responsibility, supplementing the supporting activities carried out by the Migros Cultural Percentage. For further information: www.engagement-migros.ch

About Eaternity

Eaternity is an innovative ETH spin-off and start-up that aims to make a climate-friendly diet available to all. In doing so, Eaternity acts as a liaison between the scientific community and the practical implementation of current research findings. As a consequence of Eaternity's selection of a revolutionary approach that offers insight into the entire supply chain, its work thus far has enabled automated CO₂ management to be used in restaurants. Thanks to the climate-friendly meal label, everyone has the option of choosing a healthy and sustainable diet. For more information see: www.eaternity.com