



OCT 14

Letter to the editor: UMD sustainability

Danielle Peterson

We are very lucky to have such a responsive and collaborative dining staff here at UMD. As a student who cares about the environment and sustainable practices, I appreciate the fact that dining makes it a priority to follow sustainable methods. In fact on UMD Dining’s webpage, you can find the ‘Dining Services Sustainable Practices.’ This page lists the practices dining has adopted to make our dining as ‘green’ as possible.

For example, UMD buys local whenever possible, composts all food waste, orders in bulk to reduce the excess amount of packaging and containers, and even went trayless in the dining center.

These are all excellent contributions for making a more eco-friendly campus! These policies have helped to cut down on both the amount of food wasted and water consumed, but I believe that more can always be done.

Have you ever thought about how the food we choose to put in the dining center is affecting the environment? Sure the procedures of the dining hall are sustainable, but are students being given the most eco-friendly food options?

Most people aren’t even aware that the food they eat has an impact on the environment. But it does! Raising animals for their meat and their by-products are enormous contributors to the destruction of the environment— in every fundamental way.

Students deserve to know where their food is coming from and how it affects the planet.

According to the documentary *Cowspiracy*, 660 gallons of water are used to make just one hamburger. This is equivalent to showering for two months straight. The meat industry alone makes up for 55% of the total water consumed in the U.S. Animal agriculture is responsible for 91% of the Amazon destruction. 51% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to livestock and their by-products. For every 1-pound of fish caught, 5-pounds of unintended marine species are caught and discarded as by-kill.

Animal agriculture is quite literally killing our planet more and more every day.

A direct way to not be apart of this is to not support these industries by not consuming the products. So choosing a plant-based meal over that hamburger does make a difference. If UMD dining offered more meat-free dishes, then as a campus we would be able to directly impact our planet. Let’s make UMD more vegan-friendly and more sustainable.



Danielle Peterson

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