



Keeping Fresh Food on the Table in a Warming World



The food we eat is more than sustenance: It is often deeply tied to our families, health, culture, wellbeing, economy, and community. Everyone deserves to have easy access to healthy, affordable food. But climate change is making it more difficult to grow produce that is a critical part of a healthy nutrition and diet.

Climate change causes temperatures to rise and weather patterns to change, disrupting our ability to grow food. This leads to too much or too little rain and snow, resulting in extreme floods and droughts that impact the quantity and quality of the food that reaches our tables.

Food Scarcity's Unequal Impacts

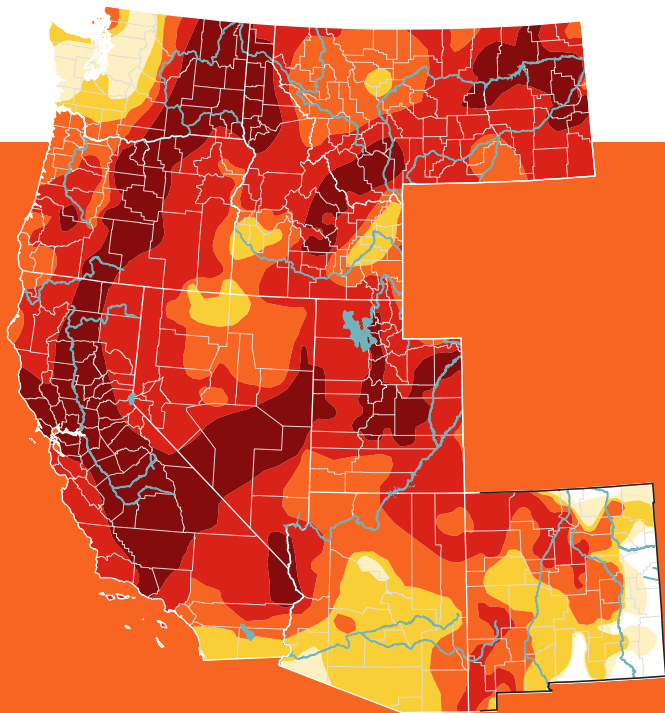
Decreased food production has many health impacts. Black and Latino households already experience [food insecurity rates at least double](#) those of non-Hispanic

White households. When food insecurity rises because of climate change, these households are hit first and hardest with rising food costs, making healthy food options like fruits, vegetables, and other produce even less accessible. Rural and Tribal communities that rely on limited water supplies are also at higher risk of food scarcity [when there are droughts](#).

Farm workers, [most of whom in California are Latino](#), face dangerous working conditions as temperatures rise. In addition to this, farm workers can experience job insecurity or a decrease in pay as the demand for labor falls, impacting the farmers' ability to feed themselves and their families. The stress of these experiences has been connected with [increased rates of depression and anxiety](#).

What We Can Do: Changing Our Food System to Improve Health Equity and Respond to Climate Change

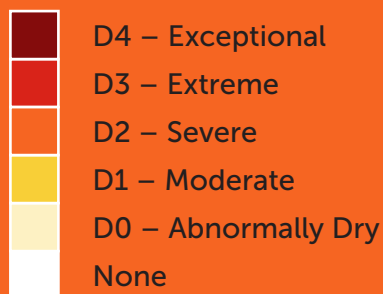
There are many ways we can improve how we grow, transport, and consume food to improve health and address climate change. Starting with how we grow food can have a substantial impact. Improving how we use and manage our soil can help protect crops from climate change, capture and store carbon to reduce future climate change, and [even make food more nutritious](#). Most of all, our soil is one of the best ways to trap carbon dioxide greenhouse gases; if more farms implemented regenerative agriculture, [we could begin to reverse the impacts of climate change](#).



Western U.S. Drought

as of August 31, 2021

Drought level



Source: National Drought Mitigation Center University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Promoting Policies that Reinforce Solutions

Year after year, California faces extreme drought, making water insecurity a major issue for residents and the systems that rely on water. For example, these [droughts have ravaged California's agricultural hub, Central Valley](#), where farms produce over [60% of fruits and nuts](#) and over [30% of vegetables](#) in the United States. Climate change is what's making it difficult for farmers to grow food that serves the local community and far beyond; this impacts health.

In 2019, the EAT-Lancet Commission acknowledged the link between human health and environmental sustainability. They proposed a diet rich in plant-based foods. In 2022, California followed suit and became the first state to support plant-based school meals with a \$100 million investment. By doing so, they're both reducing the carbon footprint and serving food that's healthy and sustainable.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation