



EMERALD KEEPERS

EMERALDKEEPERS.ORG

For an Emerald Green, Ocean Blue Coronado

MILK MATTERS

Milk choices used to be as simple as regular, low fat, or nonfat. Now the selection includes many plant-based alternatives. Grocery aisles are stocked with milk made from almonds, oat, soy, rice and coconut, among others.

While your preference may be determined by taste, nutrition, calories and allergies, there are also environmental factors to consider.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

When it comes to which milk is better for the planet, any type of plant-based milk is the clear winner based on a number of environmental metrics.

Land use: Plant-based milks require significantly less land compared to dairy milk production, which requires land for the animals as well as feed.

Water use: Even the most water-intensive milk alternative — almond milk — uses around 40% less water

compared to dairy milk. California's prolonged drought makes water a vital issue for the Central Valley dairy farmers.

Studies show that about 144 gallons of water are needed to produce one gallon of dairy milk in the U.S. Most of that amount is used to grow cattle feed.

Greenhouse gas emissions:

The production of dairy milk is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly due to the methane produced by cows during digestion. A full-grown cow can emit around 220 pounds of methane a year, according to studies.

Milk alternatives generate about a third of greenhouse gasses of dairy milk.

Waste and pollution: Plant-based milks generally produce less waste and pollution as they do not involve manure (which also produces methane) and other animal waste.

NONDAIRY OPTIONS

While all plant-based milks are better than dairy milk for environmental impact, there are also differences between the plant types. Soy milk and oat milk have the lowest environmental impacts. Soy requires less water and land compared to other crops used for milk alternatives. Oats require less water and less energy for production.

TASTE TEST

Next time you are shopping for milk, opt for a plant-based alternative. You might need to sample different types to find your preferred flavor, sweetness, and consistency. Consider different plant milks for different uses, including coffee, baking, and drinking. According to the American Society of Nutrition most milk alternatives are lower in fat and calories than dairy milk.

You might find you prefer plant-based milks, which are good for you and the planet.



SUPPORT EMERALD KEEPERS

Emerald Keepers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

