"the type of food you eat is the most critical factor in reducing your food footprint"

❦ *Latest in a series of posts on the environment* ❦

Alison Steele is a Liberty High School alum who traveled the world looking for adventure and purpose before finding it in Pittsburgh. She has made it her mission to help others make more informed decisions around how they interact with people and the planet.

Community Supported Agriculture, Part 3

Processing Food

Several weeks ago when I began researching this topic, I posted a comment on Facebook about how shocked I was to learn about the heavy greenhouse gas footprint of cheese. Judging by the nearly 100 shocked comments from friends in the following days, I was not alone in my ignorance. I have known for years that reducing meat intake is a great way to lower one's carbon footprint, and that going vegan is even better for the planet. However, I had always seen meat as the biggest factor, with dairy an incremental step.

In addition to learning that cheese was far worse for the environment than chicken or pork, I also learned that local sourcing of food and packaging – some of my biggest factors in ethical food shopping for years – play a relatively tiny role in lowering your carbon footprint. Last year in my meatless meat blog series, I even went so far as to wonder if locally-grown grass-fed beef would have a smaller impact on the environment than soybeans imported from South America. While I

noted that additional research would be necessary, my hypothesis could not have been more wrong.

There are definitely benefits to buying local and in-season, and we will look at those in the coming weeks, but it is important to reiterate that the type of food you eat is the most critical factor in reducing your food footprint: cutting out red meat and cheese one day a week will create more of a benefit on that front than buying only local food.

continue on Alison's blog

Community Supported Agriculture, Part 3

The Bethlehem Gadfly