



Citizenship

The world of food

Do you always have bananas at home, but have never seen a banana tree around? This is due to the fact that a lot of the food we eat isn't grown in our region! Indeed, what we eat has much more impact on the world than just directly on us! Are you curious to see the big picture? Or, as you say in German, to "look over the edge of the plate"? Then let's start!

Discipline area	Civic Education, Health, Social Studies
Topic	Environment
Estimated time	2h 45'
Learning goals	<p>If you go through the whole unit, you will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn about food trade and food waste • learn where different foods come from • learn about regionality and seasonality of foods • learn about sustainable food production

Warm-up

What do you know about the global food industry? Answer these questions with your buddy.

1. How many types of bananas exist?

- a 1
- b 25
- c over 500

2. Big parts of the rainforest are chopped down to make space for soy fields. What is the main reason why there is a big need for soybeans?

- a more and more people eat vegetarian and vegan
- b it is used as animal food in meat production

3. Where do potatoes originate?

- a China
- b Germany
- c Peru and Bolivia

4. How many hectares (1 hectare has the size of 1 soccer field) in Costa Rica are used for the cultivation of pineapple?

- a no pineapple grows in Costa Rica
- b 540
- c 54.000

5. How much food is wasted worldwide per year?

- a 13 million ton per year
- b 130 million ton per year
- c 1.3 billion ton per year

6. How much of it is wasted at home? ?

- a 1/3
- b 1/10
- c 1/30

Learn

1

Step 1

What do you both think are the impacts of global food production on:

- a human beings?
- b biodiversity and nature?
- c climate?

Do a brainstorming on each of the three points: take a sheet and write down all ideas that come to your mind!

When you are done, compare your answers with this information:

Impacts of Global Food Production on Humans

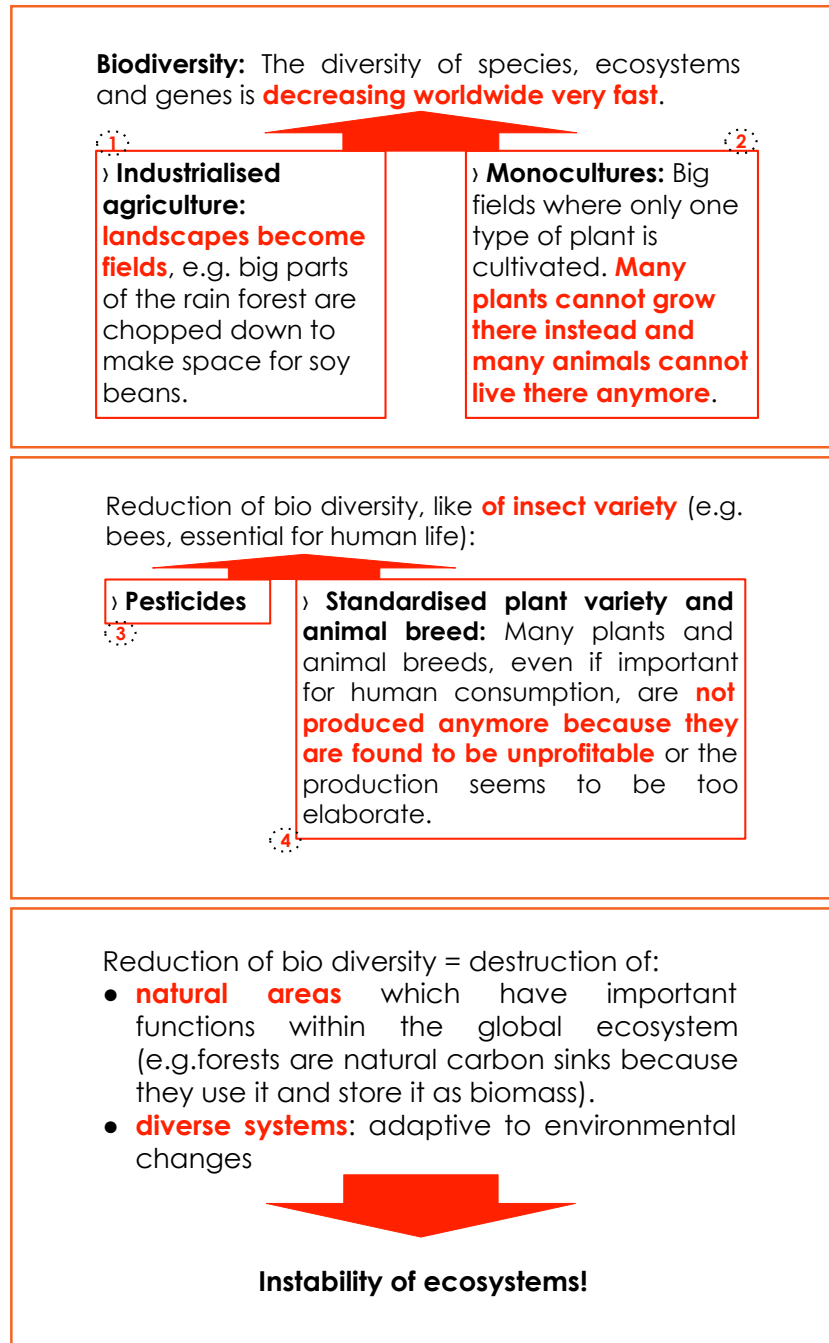
› **Land grabbing:** Foreign companies buy or lease land areas in the Global South e.g. to produce food. Small farmers are frequently **deprived of their lands and livelihoods.**

› **Exploitation of human beings:** By focus on maximising their profit, many large companies take advantage of the complex and intransparent trade chains and do **not offer healthy and fair working conditions and fair payment to their workers.**

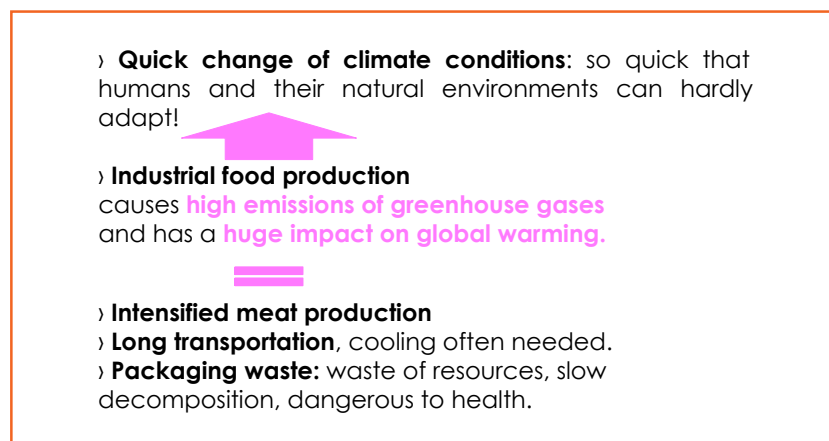
› **Price rises for local population:** When products become popular in richer countries, e.g. Quinoa, the producers earn more, if they sell them abroad. The product **at the local market becomes more expensive.** Locals lose access to core parts of their traditional nutrition.

› **Boredom in taste:** As **only a few crops and livestock** are resistant to pests or generate large outputs they **make up a high percentage of what is produced.** This leads to monotony in the shelves and on our plates.

Impacts of Global Food Production on Biodiversity and Nature



Impacts of Global Food Production on the Climate



The industrial food production focuses on **cheap** but **high quantity** production.

Food loss: in early stages of the production such as harvest, storage and transportation.

Food waste: items thrown away by supermarkets and consumers.

The industrial food production causes **crop losses: climate changes affects small farmers the most**, in particular in Sub-Saharan-Africa and Southeast Asia.

Step 2

Guess **a)** the origin and **b)** the biggest cultivation nowadays of **1)** almond, **2)** cocoa and **3)** apple. Write them down **1a), 1b), 2a), 2b), 3a), 3b)**.

When you are done, check if they are correct and go to the next question:

Where do those products in your local supermarket come from?

Guess now and check next time you go there!

Step 3

In order to counteract the impact of global food trade, some people try to buy as much as possible "regional products", that means products which grow in their area.

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is becoming more and more popular: the farmers receive a fixed amount of money* every month from the members of the group and they share with them their harvest. This allows the farmer to share the risk of the harvest, while the people in the city get tasty regional food and also the possibility to **be a farmer for a day**, going to help out in the countryside.

Imagine now that you are a member of a CSA: what products would you get at this time of the year?

Try to guess and then verify, asking people who might know or have a seasonal calendar specific for your area!

* Usually it is organised in a spirit of solidarity: how much members pay depends on the money that each member has at disposal. The total sum must match what the farmers need for paying their costs and their salary.

Correct answers

Warm-up

1c; 2b; 3c; 4c; 5b; 6a

Learn

1a) Western Middle Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria)

1b) USA, Spain, Germany, Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Australia

2a) Central and West Asia, later ancient Greece and Rome

2b) China, the USA, Poland, Turkey and India

3a) Central and South America

3b) Ecuador, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon

2

Let's focus on food waste:

What do you think that supermarkets do, when their products are reaching their expiry date?

Most of them throw it away. As a form of protest, some people have started "skipping": going to the supermarket trash and retrieving food which is still good! They eat fresh food and save money!

But it is usually not a legal way of preventing food waste.

The good news: some supermarkets are starting to allow their food waste a second life, donating officially to people or organisations.

How do grocery shops and supermarkets in your area deal with the problem of food waste?

Go together to interview them!

If they are still wasting food, develop ideas about what you could do to change the situation (e.g. letter for the director, strategy meeting with a local association which supports poor people, a theatre performance to raise public awareness on the topic...) and do it!

Remember: **behind all changes there was someone fighting for them!**

And now let's move on to global food production!

Create

Time to get active!

1

Pick together one fruit or vegetable that you like, which is not regional.

2

Now draw the routes on a world map that your product travels from its origin, to the cultivation spot and in your local grocery store.

3

Are you done?

Now it's time to write some keywords related to the different impact factors (humans, biosphere & nature and climate) connected with their production and trade.

When you are done, hang it somewhere where you are allowed to and where other people can see it!

Reflect

Concluding, what has impressed you most on global food production? What was new for you, what did you already know?

What do you think, how will this knowledge affect your future consumption?

Share with your buddy your thoughts and make a postcard on the topic to show to your parents and friends and raise their awareness!