TOWARDS **PLANT-FORWARD** DIETS
A Toolkit for Local Policymakers

HIGHLIGHTS

The **policy brief** succinctly explains why it is desirable to reduce meat consumption, and identifies policies that some cities are already using to reduce meat consumption, and novel policies that cities generally could use to encourage people to eat less meat.

Why Cities Should Reduce Meat Consumption

Reducing the consumption of meat such as beef, pork, and poultry will:

Improve public health. Processed meats (such as hot dogs) are widely recognized to be a carcinogen, and there is evidence that red meat causes cancer. Factory farming of meat also increases the risks of pandemics and antibiotic resistance.

Protect the environment. Farmed animals (such as cows) raised for human consumption are a major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions causing climate change. Factory farming also leads to the conversion of land for grazing and water pollution from animal waste.

Reduce harms to animals. Over 74 billion animals are bred, raised, and killed each year for human consumption, typically in intensive, industrialized conditions.

Cities—and other forms of local government, such as counties—are well-placed to facilitate the transition toward plant-forward diets. They are fertile grounds for progressive policies in areas as diverse as civil rights and the environment, and some cities already have implemented innovative policies to reduce meat consumption.

Existing Policy Options

Cities have already adopted five categories of policies to reduce meat consumption:

1 **Procurement Policies.** Cities are seeking to reduce purchasing of meat for consumption in government-owned facilities, and to increase purchasing of plant-based foods.

2 **Strategic Planning.** Cities are including meat reduction targets in strategic plans, such as local plans to reduce GHG emissions.

3 **Informational Campaigns.** Cites are attempting to educate the public about the harms of eating meat and the benefits of plant-based foods, for example through newsletters.

4 **Subsidies.** Cities are subsidizing the purchase of fruits and vegetables, sometimes using federal funding.

5 **Bans.** A few cities have banned the sale of foie gras, and some cities have banned other products that harm public health, the environment, or animal welfare as well.

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New Policy Options

There are at least six categories of options that cities have not yet implemented, but could, to reduce meat consumption:

1 **Divest From Animal Agriculture.** Cities could divest from investments in animal agriculture that they control, and they could call on managers of investments that they do not control (such as pension funds) to do the same.

2 **Use Securities Law.** As investors, cities could seek to use securities laws to compel corporations involved in meat production and distribution to disclose the risks of meat production and consumption.

3 **Voluntary Restaurant Grading & Certification.** Cities could develop voluntary programs that would allow restaurants to choose to be certified if they satisfy environmental, health and animal welfare criteria.

4 **Require Vegan or Vegetarian Menu Offerings.** Cities potentially could require restaurants to offer vegan or vegetarian items on their menus.

5 **Labeling Menus.** Cities potentially could require restaurants to disclose the GHG impacts of different menu offerings, or to include generic information about the GHG impacts of certain categories of menu items.

6 **Tax Animal-Based Foods.** Cities potentially could adopt taxes on animal-based food products, similar to soda taxes.