

HUMAN QUALITY LIFE AND ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT - IN DISCREPANCY OR NOT

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Since the population of the world is increasing, it is necessary to increase the supplies of clean water, fresh air and food. Some calculations show that, to accomplish these needs, amount of food, we must produce in the next 50 years, equals the total production of the past 8000 years of agricultural history. On the other hand, land management practices, especially usage of agrochemicals and plant nutrients as prerequisite for intensive agricultural production cause a conflict between the needs of clean water, food supply and the environment. Agriculture is in the centre of this conflict.

In the last few years there was another important change. For the first time on the planet Earth urban population has become more numerous in relation to the rural population. That is the reason why, in the last decade, is increasingly talking about urban agriculture: more food products in urban and suburban areas. At the same time it is also increasingly talking about pressure of human population lifestyle on the planet Earth. Because of that the last two decades established few indicators of human pressure on environment. Some of them are: ecological footprint, citywide footprint, industrywide footprint, water footprint, carbon footprint, sustainable and unsustainable yields and “overshoot” use of fossil fuels. Actually common name of all those indicators is - over-consumption of natural resources. At the same time we are living in time of climate change. In this paper I will not talk about reasons of climate change, but how to mitigate climate change by usage of different indicators. These days one of the best indicators is carbon footprint – a measure of total amount of carbon dioxide emissions that is directly and indirectly caused by an activity or is accumulated over the life stages of a product. Primary goal of this paper is to give examples how to mitigate human pressure on the environment with usage of different ecological footprints, give solutions from which we can draw to build a workable future and to glimpse a vision of what that future might look like.

Key words: rural & urban population, food, human pressure, footprints