



## **Pesticides, Fertilizer, and Methane: Three More Reasons to Go Meatless**

By Jenny Abel

In my day job I happen to work in close proximity to the Master Gardener volunteers. If you're not familiar with them, part of their job is to teach people how to grow beautiful flowers and big tasty vegetables with minimal inputs of synthetic chemicals. As the growing season is quickly approaching, they are teaching lots of classes on sustainable landscaping and organic vegetable gardening. All of these class announcements got me thinking about the volume of fertilizers and pesticides used in livestock farming. They aren't used directly to raise the animals, of course, but rather to grow the corn and soybeans consumed by the livestock.

It turns out that the quantities of synthetic chemicals used in livestock farming are considerable. According to a [recent Scientific American article](#), "growing livestock feed in the U.S. alone requires 167 million pounds of pesticides and 17 billion pounds of nitrogen fertilizer each year across some 149 million acres of cropland. The process generates copious amounts of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide, while the output of methane—another potent greenhouse gas—from cattle is estimated to generate some 20 percent of overall U.S. methane emissions."



*Image courtesy of NRDC.*

The fruits and vegetables that we buy in the grocery store are treated with pesticides and fertilizers too, of course, but we can choose to purchase organic varieties of those. So while you're patting yourself on the back for the good impact that reducing or eliminating your meat consumption is having on our soil, water, and air, why not whip up this easy and very tasty weeknight curry recipe? It features lots of kale, a leafy green that, along with its other cruciferous cousins like broccoli, mustard greens, and brussels sprouts, has been shown to decrease one's risk of getting breast cancer.

## Curry with Chickpeas and Greens

*Adapted from Appetite for Reduction by Isa Chandra Moskowitz*

### Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons olive or canola oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 1 small onion, diced small
- 4 cloves garlic (or more—I often use 6), minced
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 12-oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 2 pounds kale, coarse stems removed, chopped finely
- 2 15-oz. Cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Preheat a 4 quart pot over medium heat. Pour 1 teaspoon of the oil into the pot and spread to coat the bottom. Add the mustard seeds. Cover the pot and let the seeds pop for about a minute, or until the popping slows down, mixing once. If the seeds don't pop, turn up the heat a bit until they do. Add the other teaspoon of oil and sauté the onion for 4-7 minutes, until translucent. Add the garlic, ginger, and red pepper flakes, and sauté another minute. Add the tomatoes and mix to deglaze the pot. Let cook for about 3 minutes, then add the curry, cumin, coriander, garam masala, and salt, and mix well.

Add the kale in batches, mixing well after each addition. It may seem like way too much, but it will cook down. Cover the pot, let simmer for a minute, lift the lid, and stir. After doing this three times or so, the kale should be well cooked down. Simmer and cook covered for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. The greens should be very tender.

Add the chickpeas and cook for another 5 minutes or so. Taste for salt and serve over brown rice.

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