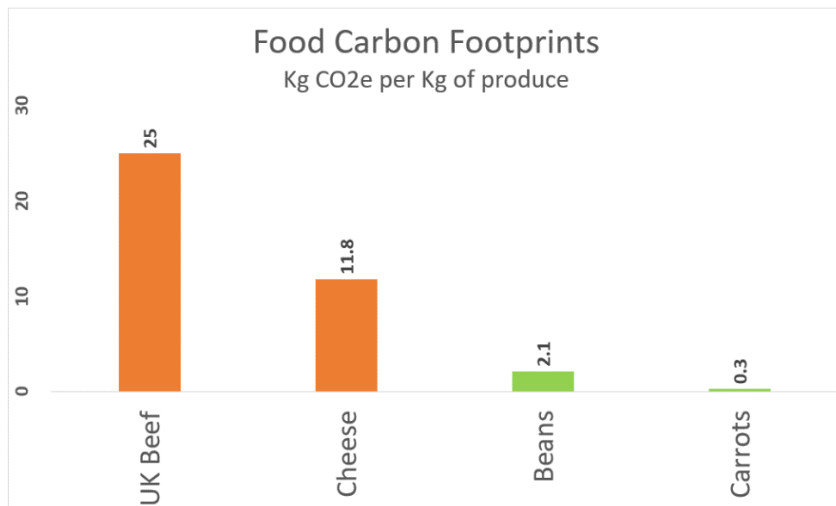


## Case Study: Lowering environmental impact by eating less cheese

The tenants of the Eco Lifestyle House are engaging in the Eco Lifestyle Project as they wish to reduce their environmental impact in affordable and achievable ways. This involves chatting with our Eco Lifestyle Co-Ordinator regularly to discuss eco-friendly lifestyle changes.

### Carbon Footprints

Everything has a carbon footprint. For food, this includes growing crops and animal feed, land and water use, storage, packaging, transport, and so on. Typically, animal products have a much higher carbon footprint than plant-based products and therefore a much bigger environmental impact. This is because growing crops to feed to animals is far less efficient than growing crops to directly feed people.



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*A **carbon footprint** is a measure of how much polluting greenhouse gas is produced by making, using, doing or disposing of something*

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### A change from cheese

During a conversation with the tenants, it was noted that they did not eat much red meat, which typically has the highest carbon footprint. However, they did eat a lot of cheese. Cheese has a fairly high carbon footprint as keeping cows uses a lot of resources and processing milk into cheese makes a relatively small amount of end product.

Prior to the conversation, a typical fortnightly shop for the tenants would include five packs of cheese. Following the conversation, they changed their buying habits to only buy two packs of cheese.

According to the Asda website, a typical pack of cheese weighs 250g. Each standard pack of cheese has a carbon footprint of around 2.95kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. Five packs per fortnight adds up to an annual carbon footprint of around 383.5kgCO<sub>2</sub>e for cheese.

The tenants have replaced some of their cheese consumption with salad and other plant-based foods, all of which have a lower carbon footprint than dairy cheese. Assuming an average 2kgCO<sub>2</sub>e per kilo, the replacement food in their diet has an annual footprint of around 39kgCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Replacing three fifths of their cheese consumption with plant-based foods has reduced the annual carbon footprint of the household by 190.1kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. This is more than using a whole tank full of petrol<sup>1</sup>, so quite significant from such a small change.

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*“How bad cheese is for the environment... that will stay with me.”*

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Since making the change, they have stuck to buying and eating less cheese without any issues. They have also investigated other swaps for plant-based foods. Although they have not enjoyed milk alternatives, they have discovered that they enjoy vegan versions of salad cream, plant butter and ice cream. They are incorporating more plant-based foods in their regular diet, which will reduce their carbon footprint further.

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<sup>1</sup> 173kgCO<sub>2</sub>e for a 50-litre tank, from *How Bad are Bananas?* by Mike Berners-Lee