

Together we can cool the planet!

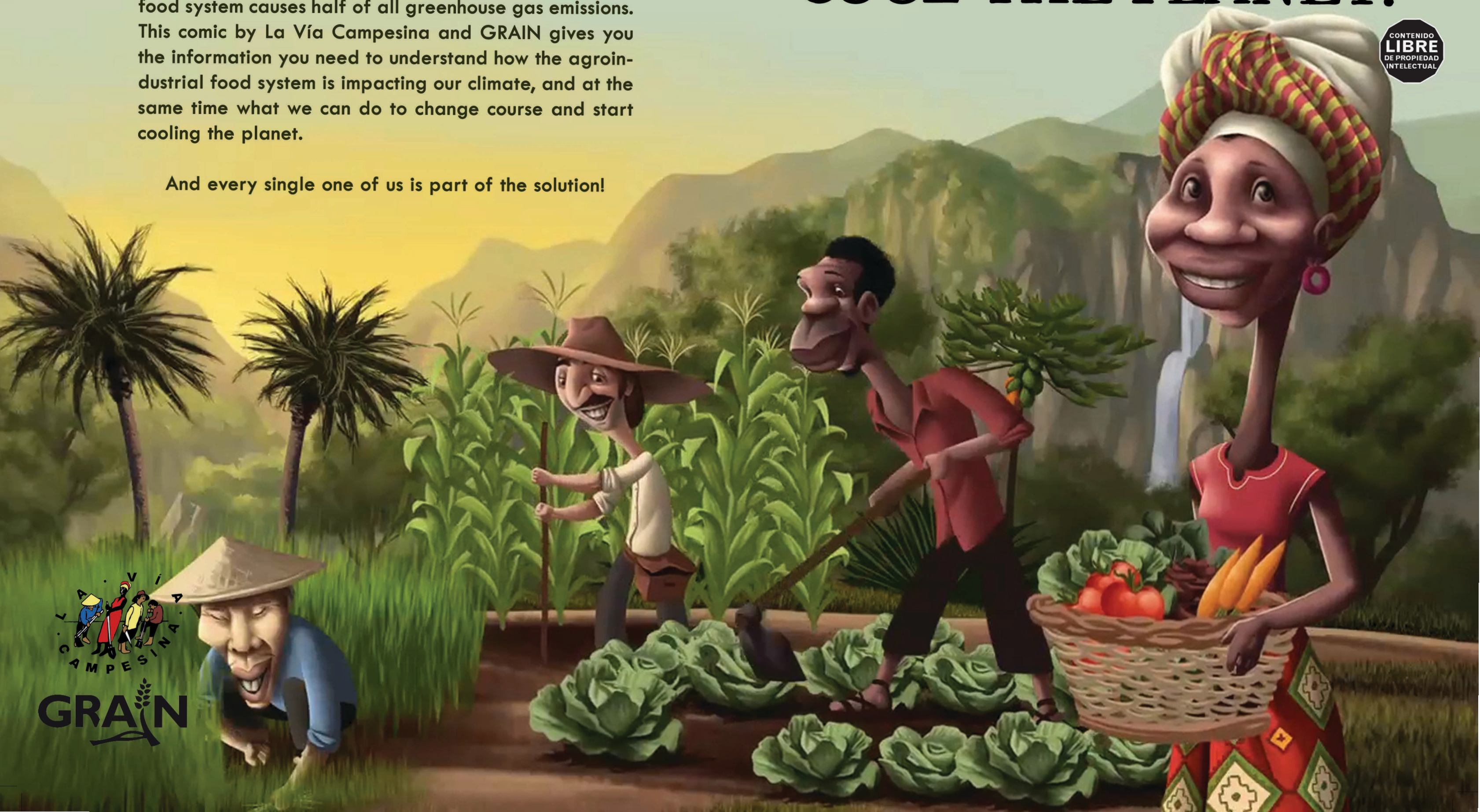
For many years, La Vía Campesina and GRAIN have been telling the world about how the agroindustrial food system causes half of all greenhouse gas emissions. This comic by La Vía Campesina and GRAIN gives you the information you need to understand how the agroindustrial food system is impacting our climate, and at the same time what we can do to change course and start cooling the planet.

And every single one of us is part of the solution!

11-2016

# TOGETHER WE CAN COOL THE PLANET!

CONTENIDO  
**LIBRE**  
DE PROPIEDAD  
INTELLECTUAL





This comic is based on the video  
"Together we can cool the Planet" directed by **Eugenia Izquierdo**.

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is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.

[www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org)



is an international grassroots movement that defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. It brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, women farmers, landless people, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers and youth from around the world. It strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture and transnational companies that are marginalizing people and destroying nature. It counts 164 member organisations in 73 countries around the world.

[www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org) y [tv.viacampesina.org](http://tv.viacampesina.org)

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This comic is based on a poster made by LVC and GRAIN  
that can be downloaded from: <https://www.grain.org/e/5102> T  
he data presented comes from a GRAIN report  
that can be downloaded from: <https://www.grain.org/e/4357>

My name is Rosalia.

I live in Pernambuco in northern Brazil and I farm on a small piece of land that produces fruit, cacao, coffee and animals.



Like me, millions of peasant women and men around the world work the land...

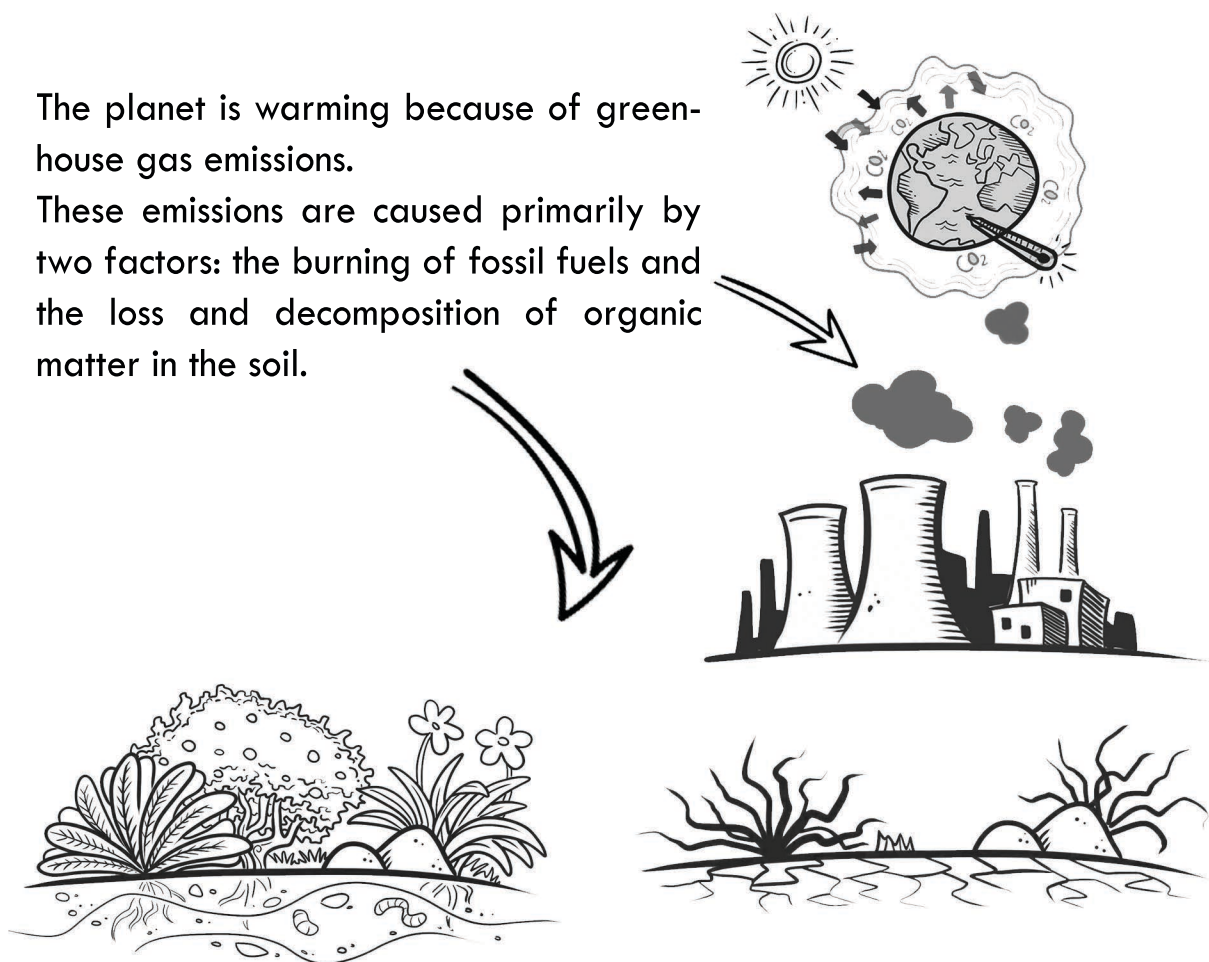
Jian in Asia, Sharick in Africa and Manuel in Mexico produce fruit, vegetables, eggs and meat on small farms.



We're here to talk about global climate change...

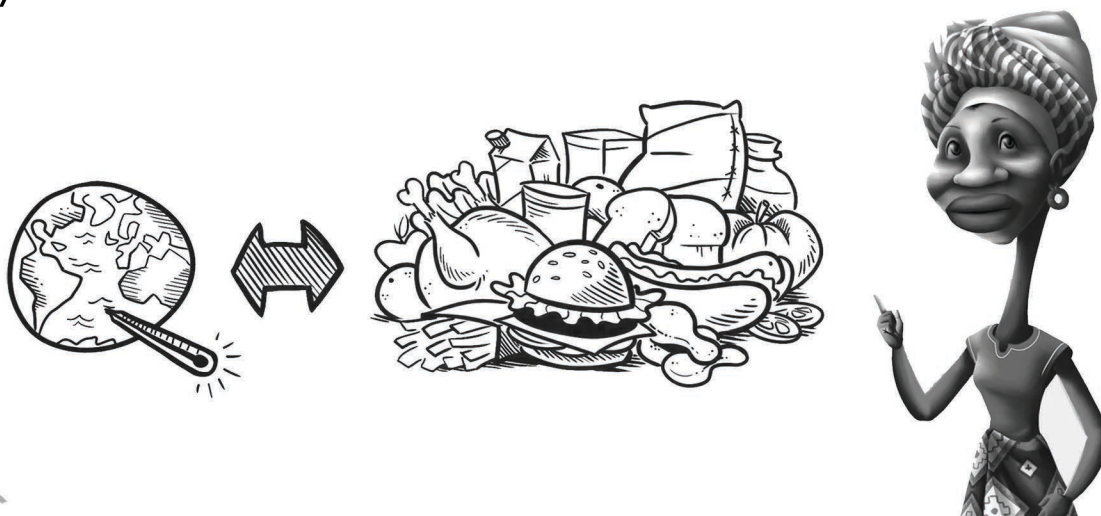
The planet is warming because of greenhouse gas emissions.

These emissions are caused primarily by two factors: the burning of fossil fuels and the loss and decomposition of organic matter in the soil.



I'm sure you've heard about this problem.

What you may not know is how climate change relates to the food system. That's what we're here to talk about.





# AGROINDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM





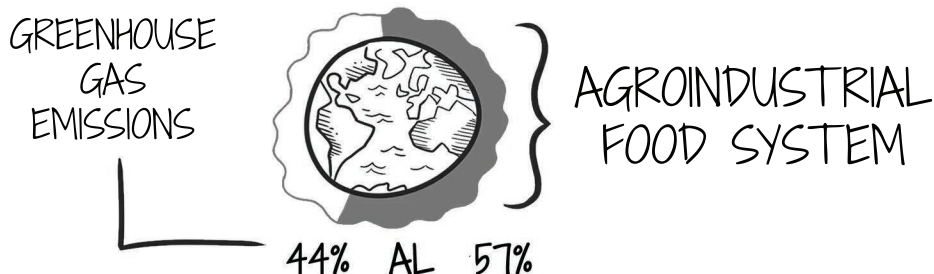


Global warming is causing a climate crisis with terrible consequences for all of the world's people.

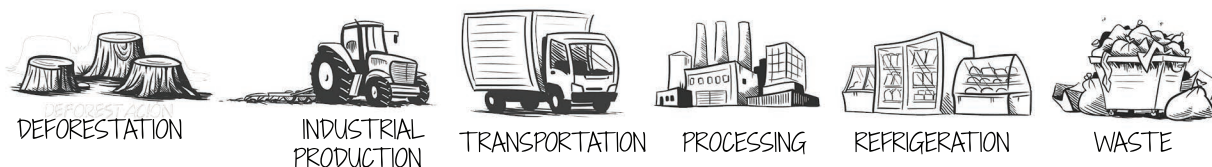
Floods, droughts and other disasters affect us all.



Almost half of all greenhouse gas emissions are generated by the industrial production of food.



This is due to six impacts of the agroindustrial food system:



Let's look at each one of these problems...





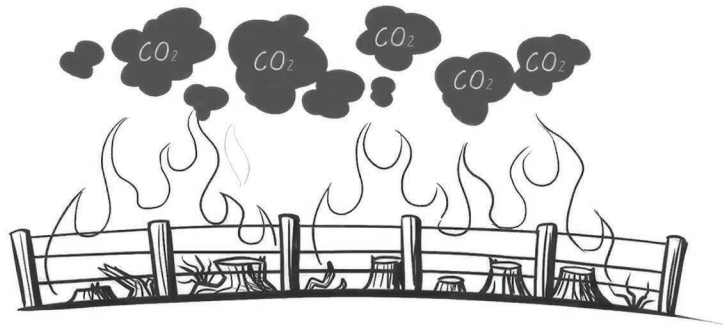
Industrial agriculture takes over fertile lands for its monocultures, grabbing millions of hectares.

In order to get these lands, huge areas of forests, prairies and wetlands are destroyed.



In the process, trees are burned and the organic matter that sustains them is lost.

The loss of organic matter releases carbon dioxide, one of the most important greenhouse gases, into the atmosphere.



This process produces between 15 and 18 per cent of global greenhouse gasses.

DEFORESTATION

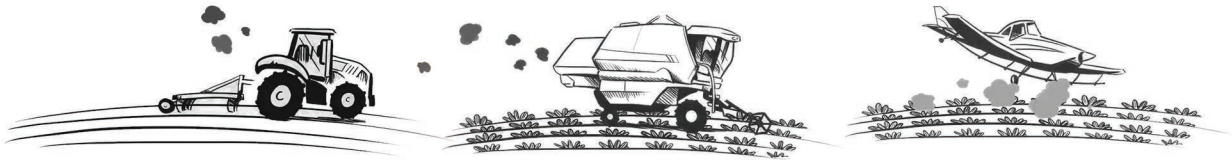
15-18%







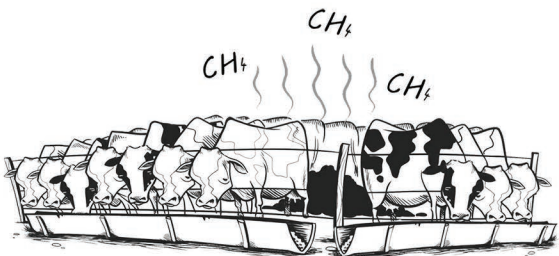
In order to produce in the fields that have been deforested, industrial agriculture uses tractors and other agricultural machinery that consume gasoline—in other words, that burn fossil fuels.



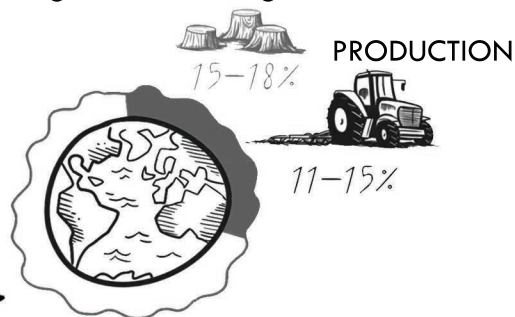
Monocultures require the use of fertilisers and other agrochemicals. The production of chemical fertilisers uses enormous quantities of fossil fuels. And the intensive use of these fertilisers spews nitrous oxide, another potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.



Since the land is taken up with monocultures, farm animals have to be raised in concentrated feeding operations known as CAFOs. This produces huge amounts of surplus manure that releases methane, another greenhouse gas.



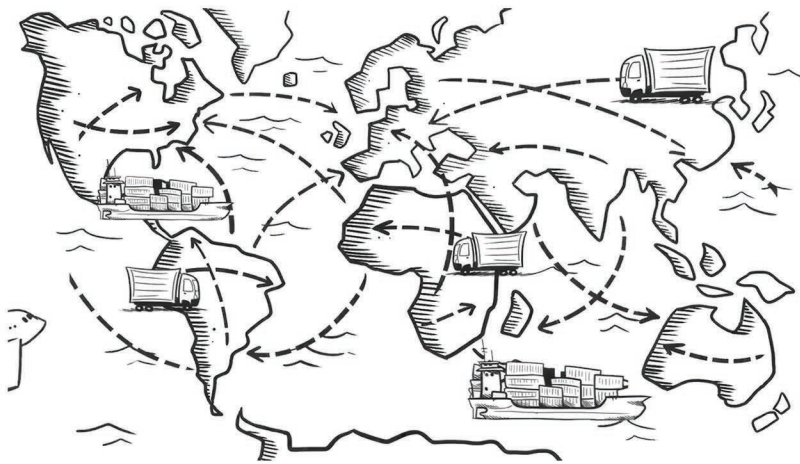
These three factors contribute between 11 and 15 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions.



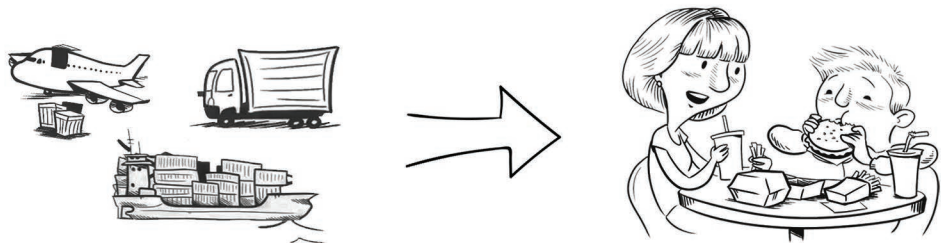


In the industrial food system, raw materials and products have to travel great distances.

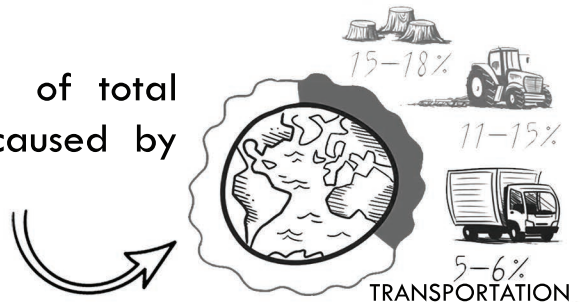
For example, soybeans grown in Argentina are used as feed for chickens in China, which produce eggs that are exported to Hong Kong or meat that is consumed in the United States.



Much of our food is produced industrially in far away places, traveling thousands of kilometres before arriving to our plates.



An estimated 5 to 6 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions are caused by food transportation.

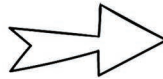




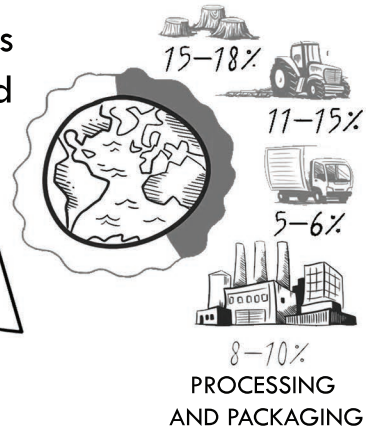


The food industry processes crops into consumer-ready food and drink products, which fill the supermarket shelves and are aggressively marketed.

Food processing and packaging burn an enormous amount of fossil fuel, which means more greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

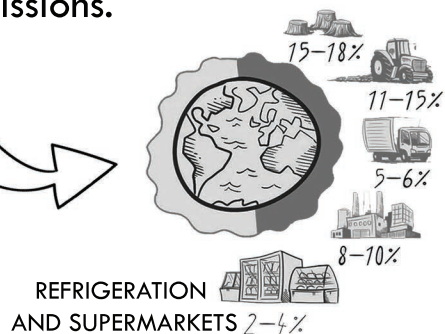
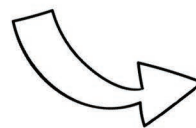


About 8 to 10 per cent of greenhouse gases come from industrial food processing and packaging.



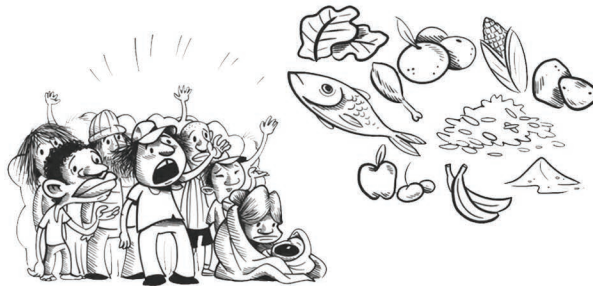
Once the food industry has processed foods into attractive, consumer-ready products, they have to be refrigerated so they can be sold in big supermarkets.

This adds up to 2 to 4 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.





You might not believe it, but the industrial food system throws away nearly half of the food it produces. Why? Because its goal is not to feed people: it's to maximize corporate profits.



A lot of food is left right in the fields, while more food is wasted on the long trip from the farm to intermediaries, between warehouses and processors, as well as in retail stores and restaurants.



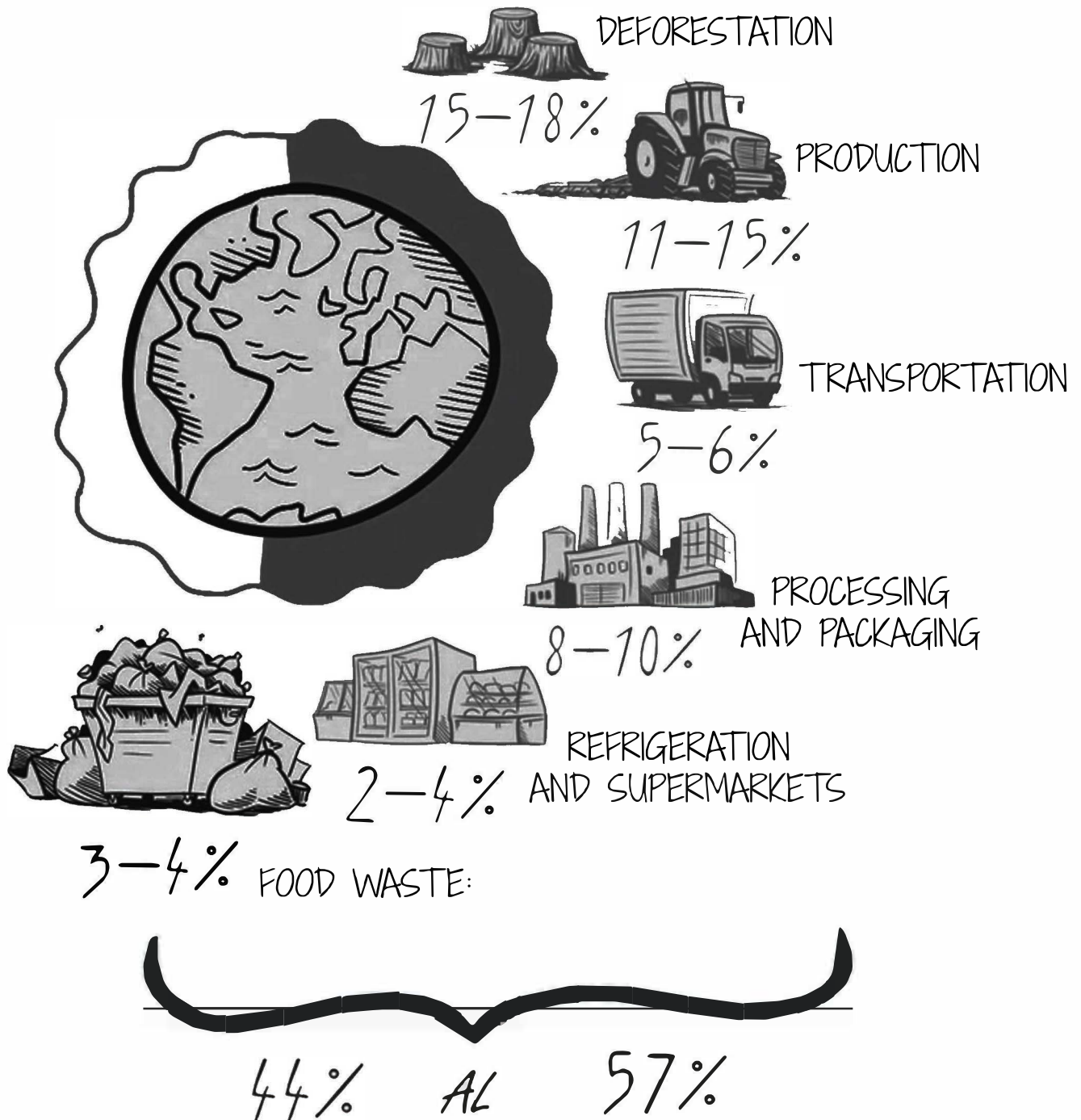
A lot of this waste rots in garbage heaps and landfills, producing large quantities of greenhouse gases.

Most of the organic waste produced by humans comes from the food system. It's responsible for 3 to 4 per cent of global emissions.





Summary of how the agro-industrial food system contributes to the climate crisis:



# OUR SOLUTIONS





But the good news is we have **solutions!**

**Food Sovereignty:** five steps to cool the planet and feed its people:

Nourish the soil.

Abandon the use of agrochemicals and promote agroecology.

Reduce the kilometres traveled by our food and promote local production.

Return the land to peasant women and men

Reject false solutions.



**This is how peasants cool the planet.**



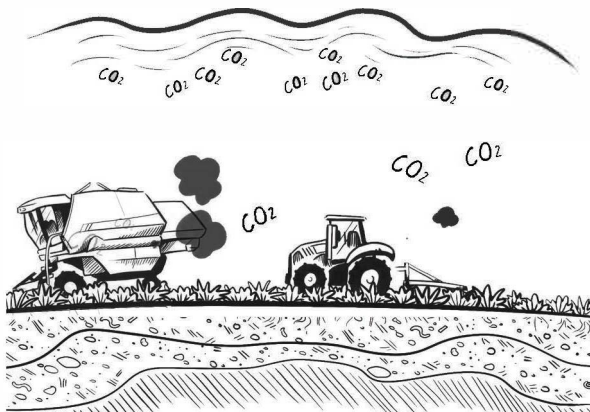
The first thing we need to do is return organic matter to the soil that's been extracted by industrial agriculture throughout the twentieth century.

The relationship between food production and the climate depends on the management of our soils.



Unsustainable agriculture has destroyed organic matter in the soil.

This process has generated 25 to 40 per cent of the excess carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.



We can return this carbon dioxide to the soil by building up organic matter using generations-old farming practices: cover cropping, crop rotation, fallowing and integrated animal production.



Organic matter gives life to the land: it creates fertility and turns the land into a sponge that can absorb water and conserve it for times of drought.







**The second solution is to stop using agrotoxins and chemicals. Instead, we need to promote small-scale, mixed farms based on peasant agriculture and agroecology.**

Industrial agriculture depletes the soil, and it also causes pests and weeds to become resistant to chemicals. So, more fertiliser has to be added, and more toxins are needed to kill pests.

Small farmers around the world can produce food without chemicals, based on our extensive knowledge and the wide variety of seeds, crops and animals we have preserved.



You won't find any bare soils on our farms. The manure gets turned into fertiliser, which we use to feed the soil. For us, there's no such thing as a weed: wild plants are sources of food, medicine, textiles and wood. Everything is connected, and it all makes the system work.

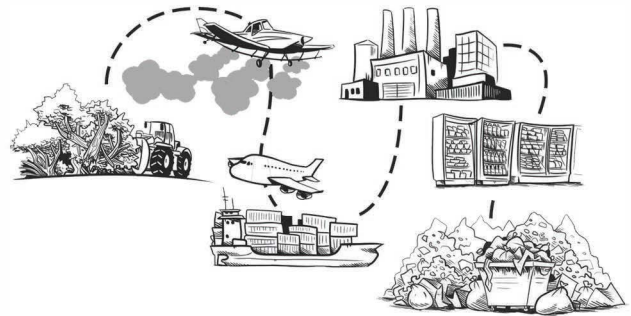


We need an agriculture that integrates animal and plant production again.



The third solution for cooling the planet is to reduce the distance travelled by our food. We need to promote local consumption of fresh food.

The corporate logic of shipping food around the world just **doesn't make any sense.**



To reduce emissions, we have to redirect food production towards local markets and healthy, fresh foods. We have to get away from processed food.



This is the fight of our lives.

After all, corporations and governments have a lot invested in growing the international trade in food and beverages.







**The fourth solution for cooling the planet is to give land back to peasants so they can produce food locally, based on the principles of agroecology. That means putting a stop to land concentration and mega-farms.**

Over the last 50 years, 140 million hectares of fertile land have been taken over by four big industrial monocultures: soybeans, oil palm, canola and sugarcane.

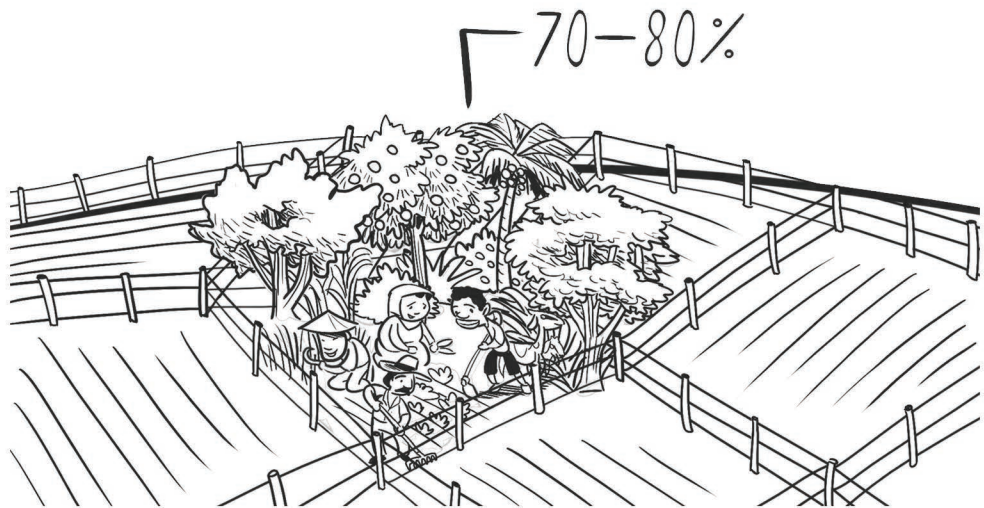
140.000.000 HAs



These monocultures go hand in hand with corporate and state land grabbing, which is expelling us from our territories and worsening conditions in our communities.



Today, peasants and small-scale farmers are squeezed onto less than a quarter of all farmland, but we continue to produce most of the world's food: 70 to 80 per cent of the food consumed in non-industrialised countries.



Peasants produce healthy food more efficiently than industrial monocultures, using practices that are far friendlier to the planet.



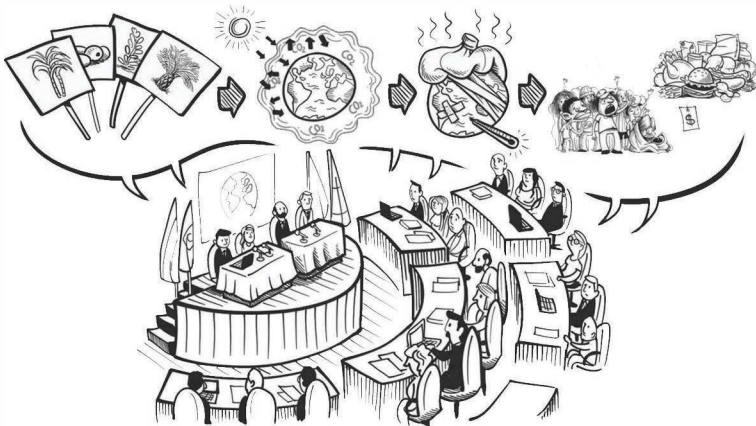
So there must be a global redistribution of land, through integral and popular agrarian reform, to benefit small-scale farmers and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.





**The fifth solution is to reject and debunk false solutions to global warming, and to promote solutions that really work.**

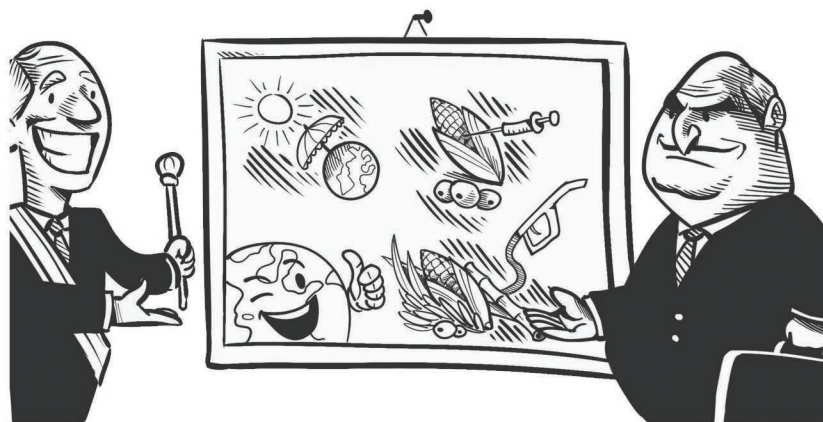
International climate negotiators agree that the industrial food system is a major contributor to greenhouse gases, and that climate change poses huge challenges for our capacity to feed a growing population.



But there's little political will to challenge "Big Food". Instead, governments and corporations promote fake solutions masquerading as "green" technologies.



Some of these are actually quite dangerous, such as large-scale geo-engineering, drought-resistant GMOs and agrofuels.



They try to brand these dangerous ideas as “climate-smart agriculture”. But these technologies don’t get at the root of the climate crisis. If you ask us, they’re not “climate-smart” at all—in fact, they’re as dumb as they come!



None of these false solutions can work. The only real solution is to abandon the industrial food system ruled by corporations, recover local food systems controlled by peasant communities, and implement policies that support local production and consumption.

Like we said before: **we can cool the planet.** But to do it, we need your commitment. That's why we're asking you and everyone on the planet to get involved. This is not just a peasant struggle.

This is also the struggle of urban residents, consumers and citizens the world over. We're building alliances between social movements. We're refusing to consume industrial food and we're pressuring governments to dismantle the industrial food system. Maybe most importantly, we're all working together to find solutions and to strengthen the solutions we already have.



## TOGETHER WE CAN COOL THE PLANET!