UN: Don't Eat Hamburgers, They Hurt The Environment

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The head of the United Nations Environmental Program wants people to know about things they can do every day to help push the international body's environmental agenda.

So what's one way you can do your part for the environment? Why, not eating hamburgers, of course.

UNEP director Achim Steiner made these comments ahead of World Environment Day, which is apparently different than Earth Day. The U.N. has launched a social media campaign to educate people about how they can reduce their environmental footprint by changing their diets.

For years, the U.N. has been trying to get people to eat less meat from livestock and eat more vegetables (and even insects) because it's better for the climate — the theory is that reducing meat consumption could lower greenhouse gas emissions and fight global warming.

Oddly enough, the evidence is mixed that simply eschewing meat would do much to fight global warming. Cato Institute climate scientist Chip Knappenberger ran the numbers and found that even if every American became vegetarian, it would only avoid "[t]wo ten-thousandths of a degree" of warming.

"If we were to stick to this vegetarian diet between now and the end of the 21st century, we'd collectively help to keep global temperatures two-hundredths of a degree below where they'd otherwise be," Knappenberger wrote.

"Seems like even if I were worried about future climate change and wanted to 'do something' about it, ridding my table of steak wouldn't be high on the list," he added.