



How Pollution Affects Climate Change and Food Prices By Jake Stivala

Climate change is one of the most urgent global issues today, and pollution is one of its main causes. Air pollution releases greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, which act as the “fuel” of climate change. These gases come from cars, factories, and the burning of fossil fuels.

This issue matters because it directly affects our daily lives, especially food prices. As climate change worsens, extreme weather conditions are becoming more common, making it harder for farmers to grow crops. This leads to less food being available and higher prices for everyone.

How climate change affects food production

Climate change causes extreme weather such as droughts and floods. Crops may not get enough water during dry periods, while heavy rainfall and storms can destroy entire fields. This reduces the amount of food that farmers can produce and sell.

As a result, farmers must increase prices to cover their costs, including bills, equipment, and salaries. Over time, this leads to higher food prices for consumers.

Research shows that climate change has already been affecting food prices for many years. It is estimated that by 2035, food prices could rise by between 0.9 and 3.2 percentage points.

Although this may seem small, it can have a significant impact on agriculture and household expenses.

Impact on food quality

Pollution and climate change do not only affect the quantity of food but also its quality. Increased carbon dioxide levels, the spread of harmful insects, and changing environmental conditions can damage crops. This results in lower-quality food being produced.

Local perspective: Interview with a farmer

To better understand the issue, I interviewed a local farmer who described several challenges he is currently facing.



Interview with Farmer

He explained that weather conditions have become more unpredictable. There are longer dry periods, followed by heavy rainfall. He said:

“It has not rained this much in Malta since 1989.”

He also mentioned that storms, such as Storm Harry, have damaged crops, especially potatoes. These unpredictable conditions reduce crop quality and yield. Additionally, the farmer said he now needs to use more pesticides to deal with insects, which increases his costs. Air pollution is also affecting production, forcing him to invest in new systems, such as hydroponics, to continue farming. All of these factors increase the cost of food production, which leads to higher prices for consumers.

Solutions

There are several actions that individuals can take to reduce pollution and help fight climate change:

- Saving electricity
- Using renewable energy sources
- Carpooling or using public transport
- Taking part in community clean-up activities
- Growing plants and supporting local agriculture

At the same time, governments also play an important role. They can address larger issues such as:

- Deforestation
- Burning of fossil fuels
- Over-construction
- Providing incentives for environmentally friendly practices

Pollution and climate change are closely connected, and their effects are already being felt through rising food prices and reduced crop quality. Both individuals and governments must take action to reduce pollution and protect the environment. If we act now, we can help create a more sustainable future, support farmers, and ensure that food remains accessible and affordable for everyone.

Sources

- NASA Global Climate Change
- IPCC
- World Food Programme
- Carbon Brief (Climate and Food Prices)