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IN YEAR OF THE PIG...

...Chinese told to eat less pork for planet's sake

REUTERS

Kuala Lumpur, February 4

As Chinese people celebrate the new Year of the Pig this week, environmental campaigners are urging them to eat less pork and help save the planet.

China consumes more meat than any other country and accounts for half the world's consumption of pork, which is used in everything from dumplings and stir-fries to hotpots.

That has made it the world's biggest emitter of climate-warming greenhouse gases, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); livestock are responsible for about 14.5 per cent of global emissions.

"Chinese emissions can be reduced by almost 10 per cent in the next decade if Chinese people just ate half as much meat," said Jen Leung, China Climate Director. "So just try eating a little less pork in honour of



China consumes more meat than any other country

a healthy Year of the Pig," she said.

Twelve animals make up the traditional Chinese zodiac and this week marks the transition from Year of the Dog to Year of the Pig.

The week-long holiday starts on Monday, the eve of the new year, and is the most important in the Chinese calendar, when millions of people travel home.

Dietary guidelines

Many restaurants have special menus to mark the festival, which is celebrated by Chinese communities around the world.

"Animal agriculture is re-

sponsible for more greenhouse gases than all the world's transportation systems combined," PETA Asia campaigner Jason Baker said.

China issued dietary guidelines in 2016 recommending people halve their meat consumption – a move lauded by environmentalists as a way to cut greenhouse gas emissions as well as boosting public health.

Experts said people were unlikely to give up on their pork dumplings any time soon in China, where meat is still associated with wealth and status.

"It's quite challenging because culturally there are quite a lot of values attached to being able to eat meat," said Beau Dammen, an expert on climate change.

"But one thing consumers do have to keep in mind is that choices about what we eat do have a direct impact on the environment," he warned.