

HEALT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Green Feeding means healthy and sustainable Food. Green Feeding starts with Breastfeeding which has a positive impact on our climate and environment.

<https://www.gifa.org/international/green-feeding/>

Infant And Young Child Feeding – Health And Environmental Impacts

IBFAN emphasises that breastfeeding is the norm: it is the gold standard and protects the health of all infants everywhere, especially during this vulnerable stage of early child development. Artificial feeding using breastmilk substitutes and feeding bottles and teats (nipples) is a deviation from this norm. It can involve serious health risks and extra precautions should be taken when preparing, storing and handling feeds and selecting feeding utensils.

IBFAN works to provide information to mothers, parents and care givers so that they can make informed decisions in infant and young child feeding, and to inform parents and caregivers about potential risks in artificial feeding.

IBFAN does not provide individual advice and counselling about methods of artificial feeding, nor do we ever recommend products. Parents should ensure that they take impartial advice from health care providers who are independent of the baby food industry.

Climate Emergency – Green Feeding for Climate Action

Four advocacy documents were prepared for groups and policy makers in time for the World Health Assembly in May 2019, for the European elections, and for related events in Canada. They aim to provide information about Green Feeding to encourage all actors in the movement for climate action, the public, students, politicians, and decision-makers, to include Green Feeding in their priorities and integrate Green Feeding into their policies.

Green Feeding means feeding our children from birth in sustainable ways that safeguard human health, the environment and all of life on our planet, Mother Earth.

Green Feeding promotes, protects and supports exclusive breastfeeding from birth to six months of age and continued breastfeeding to two years and beyond. Breastfeeding contributes substantially to the reduction of Green House Gasses (GHG) and to water conservation; is a natural and renewable food, environmentally safe, produced and provided without pollution, unnecessary packaging and no waste.

Green Feeding is introducing complementary foods after six months of age that are safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, locally grown and produced in a sustainable way.

Yet breastfeeding and sustainably produced complementary foods are under threat from the aggressive marketing of formula and breastmilk substitutes and of commercial complementary food products.

Breastmilk substitutes and industrially produced complementary foods leave a major ecological footprint. These need energy to manufacture, materials for packaging, fuel for transport and retailing, fuel, water and cleaning agents for daily preparation and are fed from plastic bottles and containers. More than 4,000 litres of water are estimated to be needed along the production lines to produce just 1 kg of powdered BMS.

In the US alone, 550 million cans, 86 000 tons of metal and 364 000 tons of paper are used annually just to package the product, all this ends up in landfills.

Furthermore, dairy herds emit methane gas, a potent form of GHG, contribute to land degradation and reduce biodiversity.

These effects are all mitigated when women and babies are supported for optimal feeding.

Breastfeeding is especially important and protective with the increasing food insecurity and extreme weather conditions resulting from climate change and impact the world's most vulnerable – women and their children.

The United Kingdom and Ireland officially declared an [environment and climate emergency](#) in May 2019, followed by [Canada declaring a national climate emergency](#) in June 2019.

We are no longer talking about global warming but instead about global heating. We no longer refer to climate change, but instead to the climate emergency and the urgency to take action.

The following advocacy documents are increasingly relevant :

- **The 2-page document Key Messages indicates ten priority areas for action :** [Green Feeding Key messages 2019](#) and <https://www.gifa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2019-Green-Feeding-Key-Messages-June21.pdf>

The document Key Messages is also available in French : [Green Feeding Messages Clés 2019](#) at <https://www.gifa.org/international/environnement-et-climat/>

- **The document, References and Resources** provides details of the 75 publications consulted. The numbered citations in the European and Canadian documents refer to these sources.: <https://www.gifa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Green-Feeding-Trailer.pdf>

Two more detailed documents examine the specific contexts in Europe and Canada. According to the situation in each country, different issues can be selected for priority attention. Many of these issues are valid for countries all over the world.

- **For Europe**, the focus of the paper is on the ten key priorities for action of the Green movement : [Green Feeding Document 2019](#)
See also: https://www.gifa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-Green-Feeding-worldwide-FINAL_May21.pdf
- **For Canada**, the paper builds on the priorities of the federal Green party, and Green initiatives in Ontario. <https://www.gifa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Green-Feeding-Canada-June.pdf>
 1. [Importance of Breastfeeding](#)
 2. [Tragedies of Infant Formula and Sub-optimal Breastfeeding](#), M Q-K Talukder, Nazneen Akhter Banu, Khurshid Talukder
 3. Risks of contamination
 1. [Contaminants in baby foods](#)
 2. [Chemical contamination of infant feeding products](#)
 4. Environmental impacts
 1. [Climate Action](#)
 2. [Chemical Residues in Every Body](#)
- **For Asia** Green Feeding report cards on Carbon Footprints due to Breastmilk Substitutes (BMS) from 10 Asian countries
Breastfeeding is a sustainable and natural source of food and nutrition. On the other hand, industrially manufactured Breastmilk Substitutes are made from dairy and other agricultural products, which generate greenhouse gases (GHG) including methane and nitrous oxide during production, transport and use. Their use also generates a sizable volume of waste, which needs disposal. [GreenFeeding Report Card on Carbon Footprints due to Breastmilk Substitutes \(BMS\)](#) emphasize on making feeding decisions that have dual benefits i.e. practicing breastfeeding which is a natural and sustainable source of food and nutrition for infants and young children (and contributes to achieving global nutrition targets), as well as avoiding BMS and helping conserve the natural environment. These report-cards provide estimates of GHG emissions arising from BMS sale in ten Asian countries. This is set alongside assessment of the implementation of policies and programmes on infant and young child feeding in the country and some suggested actions to improve the situation. <https://www.bpni.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Green-Feeding-RC-Carbon-Footprint-10-Asian-Countries.pdf>
Also see the following:

Dadhich JP, Smith JP, Iellamo A, Suleiman A.
Climate change and infant nutrition: Estimates of greenhouse gas emissions from milk
formula sold in selected Asia Pacific Countries : Asia Pacific Journal of Human
Lactation 2012. May;37(2):314--22. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33586512/>