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Evaluating Willingness to Reduce Meat Consumption at CSB/SJU by Gender

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ENVR 395

Introduction: Meat production and consumption contribute significantly to the issue of climate change. The United States was ranked highest in meat production at 12.7 million tons and ranked second in most meat consumption with 224.2 pounds per capita in 2019. Vegetarian diets have both health and environmental benefits, but a challenge in changing habits and behaviors. Generally more women are vegetarian as reported by a research in 2012 show 7% female and 4% male considered themselves vegetarian. This research analyzes whether there is a gender difference in meat consumption at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University.

Method: I conducted a survey of students at College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. The goal of the survey was to analyze gender differences between the two campus. As many researchers mentioned before, women are more willing to reduce their meat and or commit to a vegetarian diets or vegan diets. The survey asked questions from their dietary preferences to their dietary habits. With the survey, I will look for reduction of meat consumption in the general public and the gender influence.

Survey Participants From CSBSJU

- 340 in total
- 244 women
- 91 men
- 5 described themselves as non-binary or bigendered.

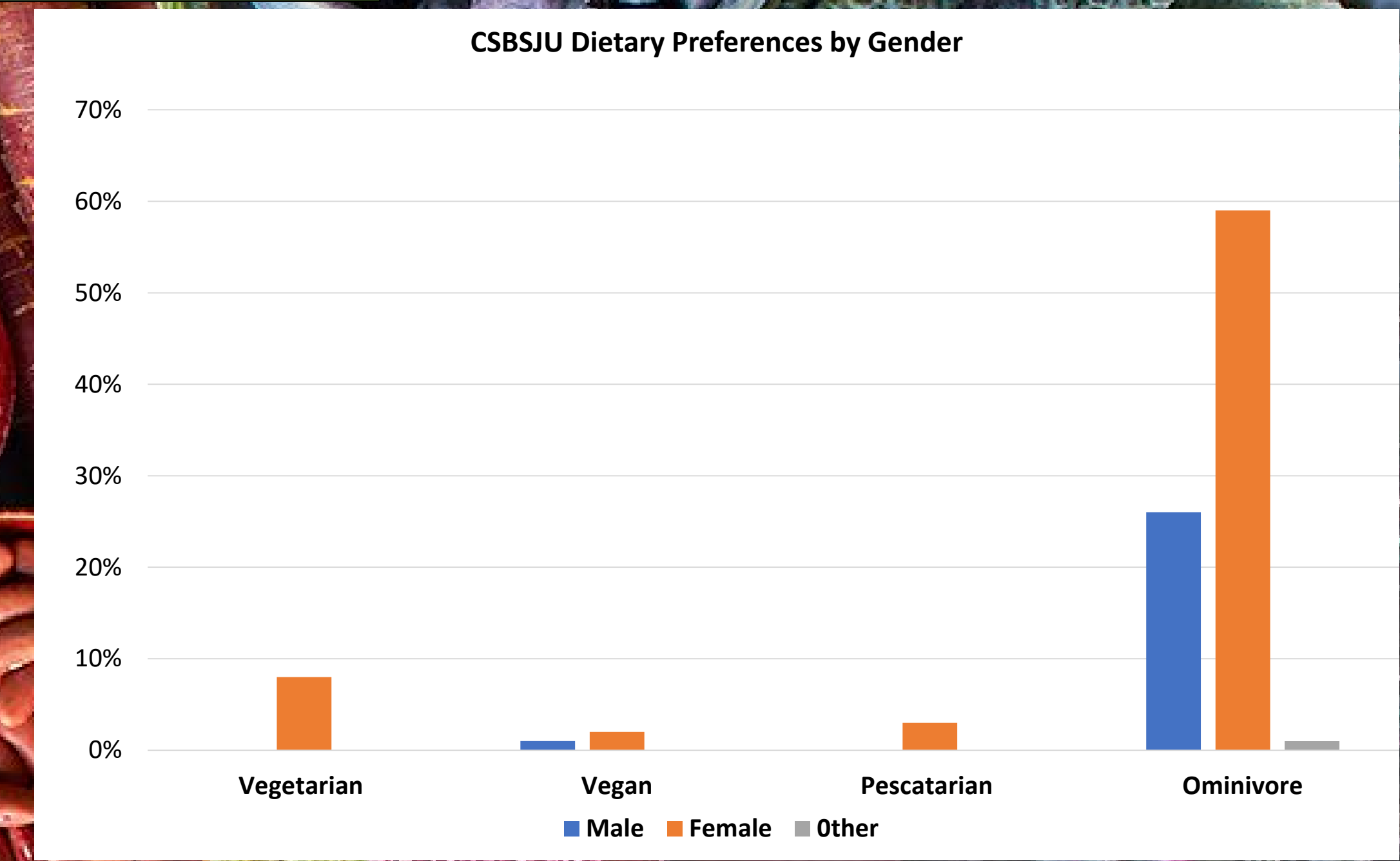


Figure: 2
Caption: Graph shows the CSBSJU dietary preferences by gender. Data was collected from the survey that was conducted at CSBSJU.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Product Category at Checkout
Kilograms (kg) per CO2 equivalent CO2e

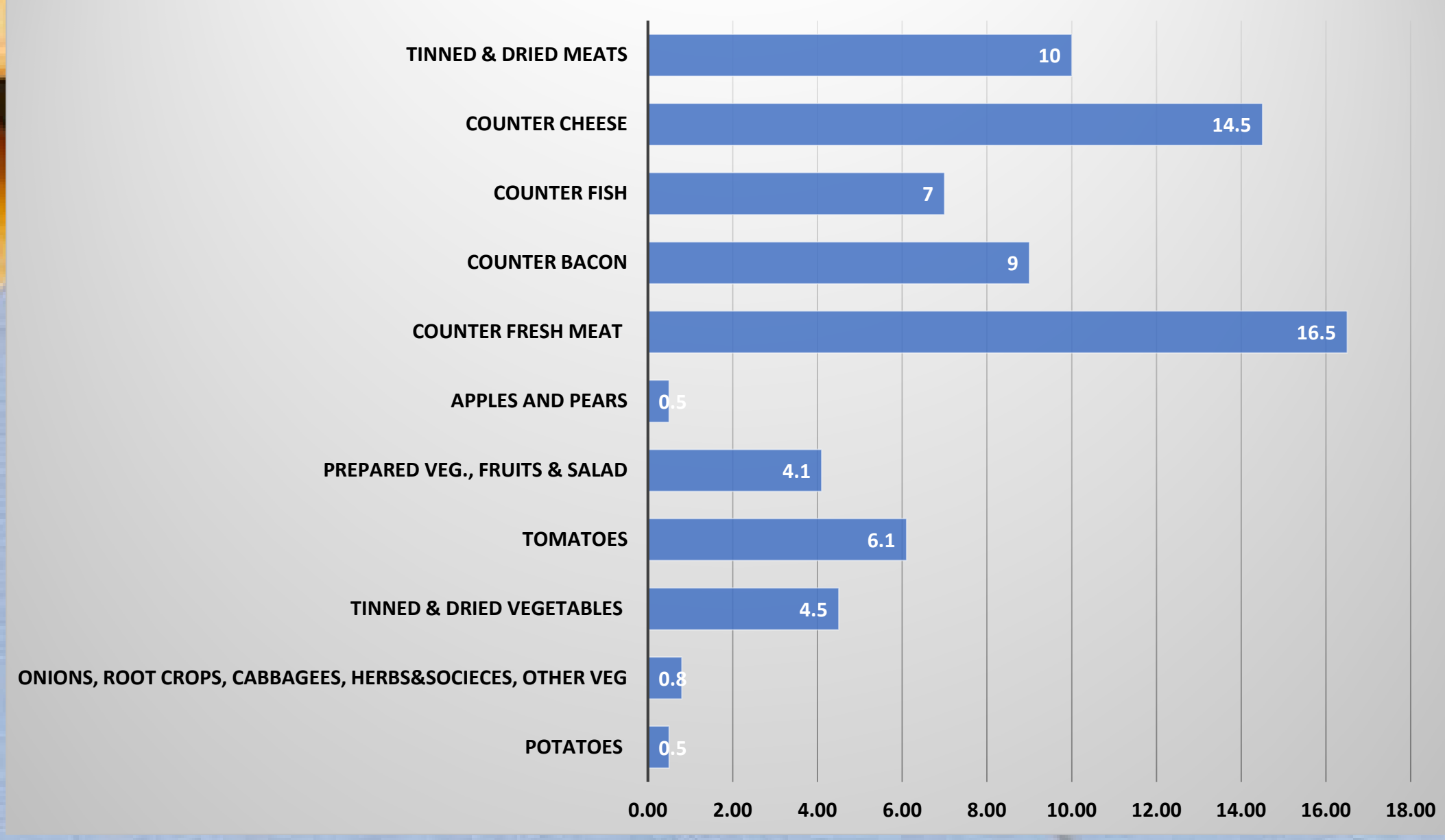
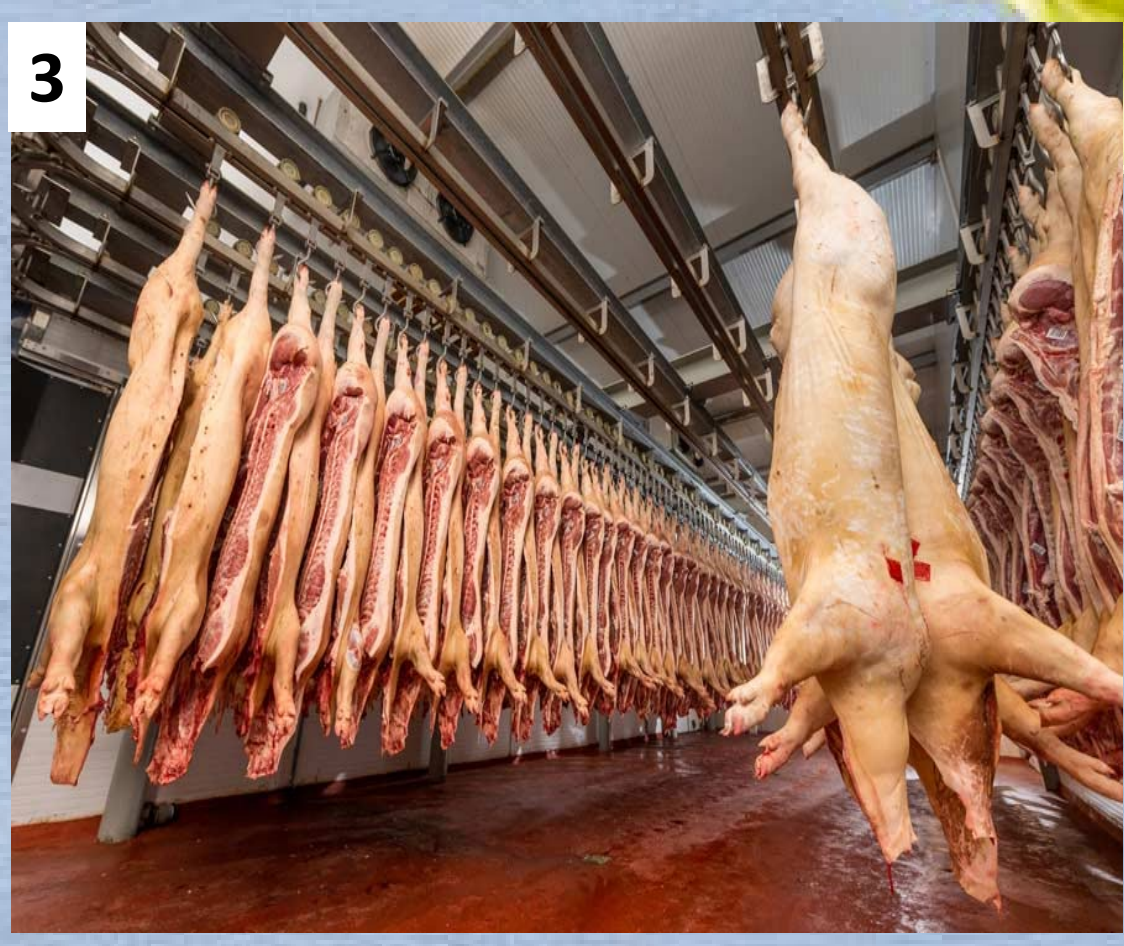


Figure: 1
Caption: Illustrate the amount of carbon emission emitted by each kg of product to the scale of carbon emission released by kg. Greenhouse gas emissions (kg CO2e kg⁻¹) embodied the 11 out of 61 products collected from "The relative greenhouse gas impacts of realistic dietary choices" by M. Berners-Lee.



Results: After conducting my survey I saw some interesting trends. The majority of the participants are omnivores, meaning they eat everything including meat and plant-based foods. As illustrated in Figure 2, in addition, the graph also show that some participants are vegetarian or vegan. The majority of these are women, at about 8 percent vegetarian, and 2 percent vegan. As discussed before, a small percentage of Americans consider themselves vegetarian or vegan. This survey is a correlation of that but also illustrating the gender differences. This data did not include the entire CSB/SJU community and more women participated than men which could skew my data. In that case this data and graph was not complete, but it did demonstrate a minor difference in men's and women's food consumption.

Research Question: The question I would like to answer by the end of my research is, is there a difference in willingness to commit to vegetarian diets between genders? Why? How can this be overcome?

Thesis: Commitment to a vegetarian or a vegan diet poses much more difficulties to students' habits and behaviors at CSB/SJU, therefore, reducing meat consumption is a more viable alternative for students.

Conclusion: From the data collected by the survey, more women considered themselves vegetarian and vegan. Although, not all but many participants limit their meat consumption for environmental reasons, animal rights, health, and some are simply just cost. One suggestion to continue to limit their meat consumption is by trying the Mediterranean diet, which contains more fish, fruits and vegetables, but is lower in meat and other forms of fat intake. In the Survey, the majority of the participants consume fish about 1 – 2 times per week and meat more than 5 - 6 times per week. Reducing meat consumption and increasing fish, fruits, and vegetables would provide healthier options and be more environmentally friendly.

<https://thetechnoskeptic.com/problems-industrial-meat/> (Images; 1,2,3)
<https://www.thehansindia.com/business/marine-fish-production-falls-9-546155> (image 4)
<https://www.olivemagazine.com/recipes/vegetarian/high-protein-vegetarian-meals/> (image 5)
<https://www.cleaneatingmag.com/recipes/vegetarian> (image 6)
<https://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/difference-between-fruits-vegetables/> (background)