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AUENV 120 – Human Activities & The Natural Environment

Dr. Greg King

Assignment #2 - Tracking Food Consumption

For this assignment, my choice on what to study was impacted by how my diet affects my environment, which is why I wanted to keep track of what I was eating. Since I'm in quarantine and also since I am going through the season of Lent, it made sense to do something within the confines of my home and form a change of habit that can affect my diet in the long run. I was also curious to see what would happen in terms of a conclusion to my day in general. In addition, I wanted to see how what I consumed would make me feel. I used a spreadsheet to keep a track of my meal consumption, leaving space for notes about the origin of where my food came from.

In recording what I was doing, I believe that I have created biases for myself, including the possibility of the Hawthorne Effect. This is where an individual reaction may lead to a change in behaviour, simply because the subject is being observed. Another thing that was observed was that I ate more sustainably due to the underlying effect of the size of my ecological footprint, which was associated with me and my waste production. I found myself reducing as much waste as possible from each single meal. One of the days in which I had cooked a meal, I had made 'Korean-Fried Chicken', in making it I had used organic grass-fed chicken, which I had no idea my family had been purchasing this. After prep for dinner was over, I was left with a lot of chicken bones, sub-consciously without really having this assignment in the forefront of my mind I used the bones to make soup for lunch.

What I also had observed through this task, is how much both a sustainable and healthier diet had as an effect on not only my body but my day. Through the four days I felt more active and less tired. I was more engaged in my classes and more able to understand coursework; that would often go over my head. My family also observed that I came out of my room more often than before, as I would spend most of my time lazing in my bed. Eating a healthier and fuller meal, made me feel lighter yet full faster. This reduced my snack intake which also affected my waste.

My family during this process did have a bit of a problem with this assignment, being that eating healthy, sustainably and in season is relatively more expensive. So, it did raise costs temporarily which didn't go down very well in my household. But it was a good experience overall, because for a very long time I had not touched or modified my diet and this assignment showed me that my meals are crucial for my day.

In conclusion, my experiment was skewed because of unconscious decisions that were erratic and unusual. This assignment however has changed my point of view on my diet, causing me to move from a spreadsheet to a mobile app to track beyond this assignment and for the foreseeable future.