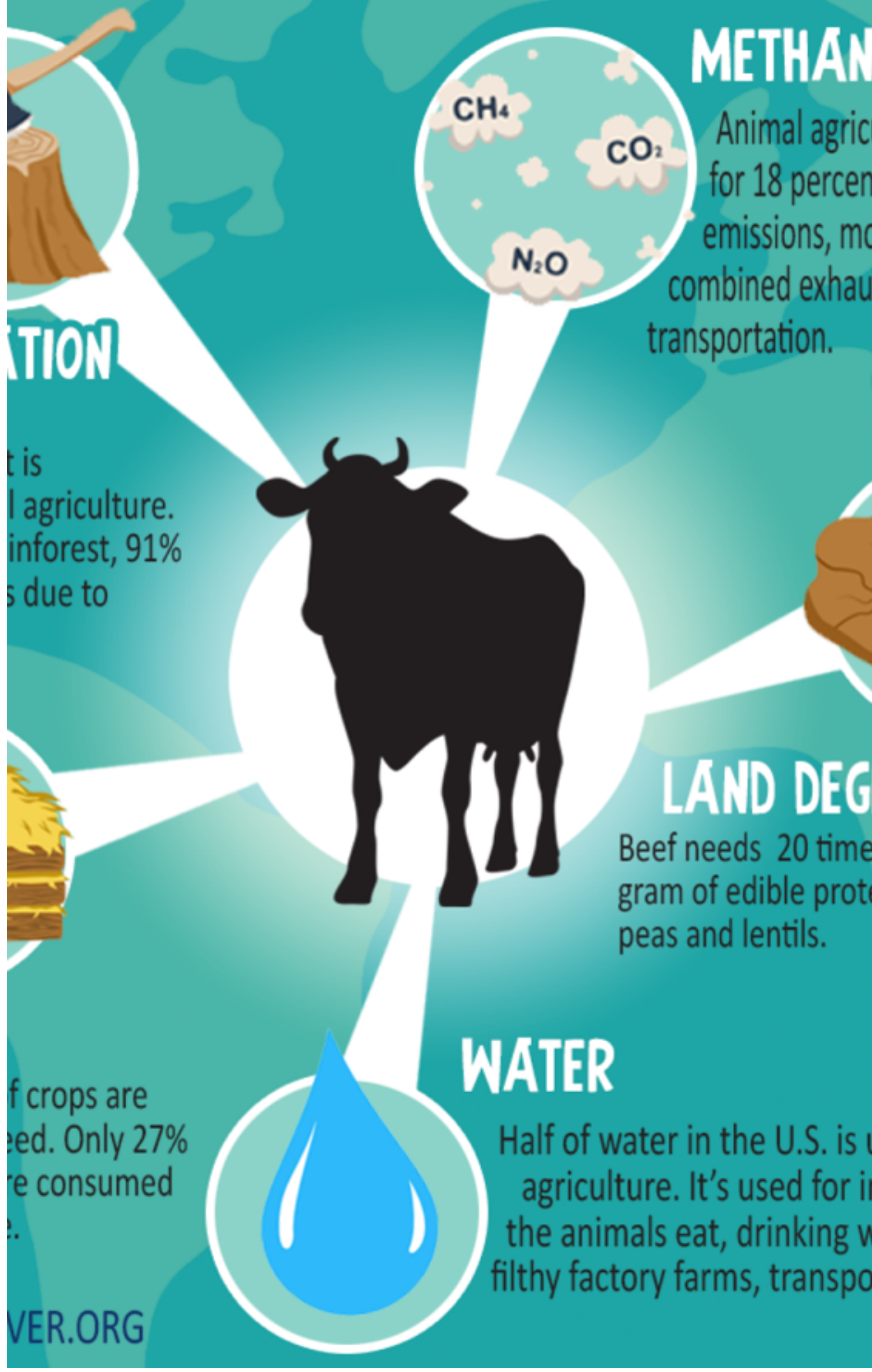




It May Be Uncomfortable, But We Need to Talk About It: The Animal Agriculture Industry and Zero Waste

March 15, 2022 · By [Karlie Conzachi](#)

The animal agriculture industry is the leading cause of most [environmental degradation that is currently occurring](#). These detrimental effects happen due to overgrazing, habitat loss, overfishing, and more. We are currently in the next mass extinction and animal agriculture is only fueling this catastrophe. [Waste in the meat industry](#), too, is a major problem in of itself.



Animal Agriculture's Impact

The following facts and astonishing numbers are from the documentary [Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret](#):

One pound of beef takes 2500 gallons of water, eggs 477 gallons of water, and cheese nearly 900 gallons. A really terrifying fact about burning too many fossil fuels as the leading cause of climate change is they all load up the atmosphere and the greenhouse effect makes the temperatures soar at a rate that has never existed in the entire history of the earth. 82% of the world's starving children live in countries where food is fed to animals in livestock and then sold to wealthier and developed countries. Animal agriculture produces 65% of the world's nitrous oxide emissions which has a global warming impact 296 times greater than carbon dioxide.

Raising livestock for human consumption generates [nearly 15% of total global greenhouse gas emissions](#), which is greater than all the transportation emissions combined. It also uses [nearly 70% of agricultural land](#) which leads to being the major contributor to deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water pollution.

Ending our meat and dairy production could pause the growth of greenhouse gas emissions for 30 years, [new study suggests](#). All we need to do is adapt to a plant-based food system!

Also, [this Forbes article](#) discusses if animal agriculture costs more in health damage than it contributes to the economy.

Zero Waste: Sustainable Farming

Agricultural Waste creates agricultural pollution and is the unwanted or unsalable materials that are produced in the growing of crops or raising of livestock. In reference to farming, this contamination of the environment due to agricultural pollution is worrisome, but taking a zero-waste approach, there are methods to sustainable farming.

Some negative effects of this pollution include [soil erosion](#), [pesticide-related health issues](#), and [even water contamination](#).

Zero waste agriculture means that the output of one process will be the input of another, such as composting with worms or using wastewater treatments solely.

[Agriculture and similar land-use generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all power generation!](#)

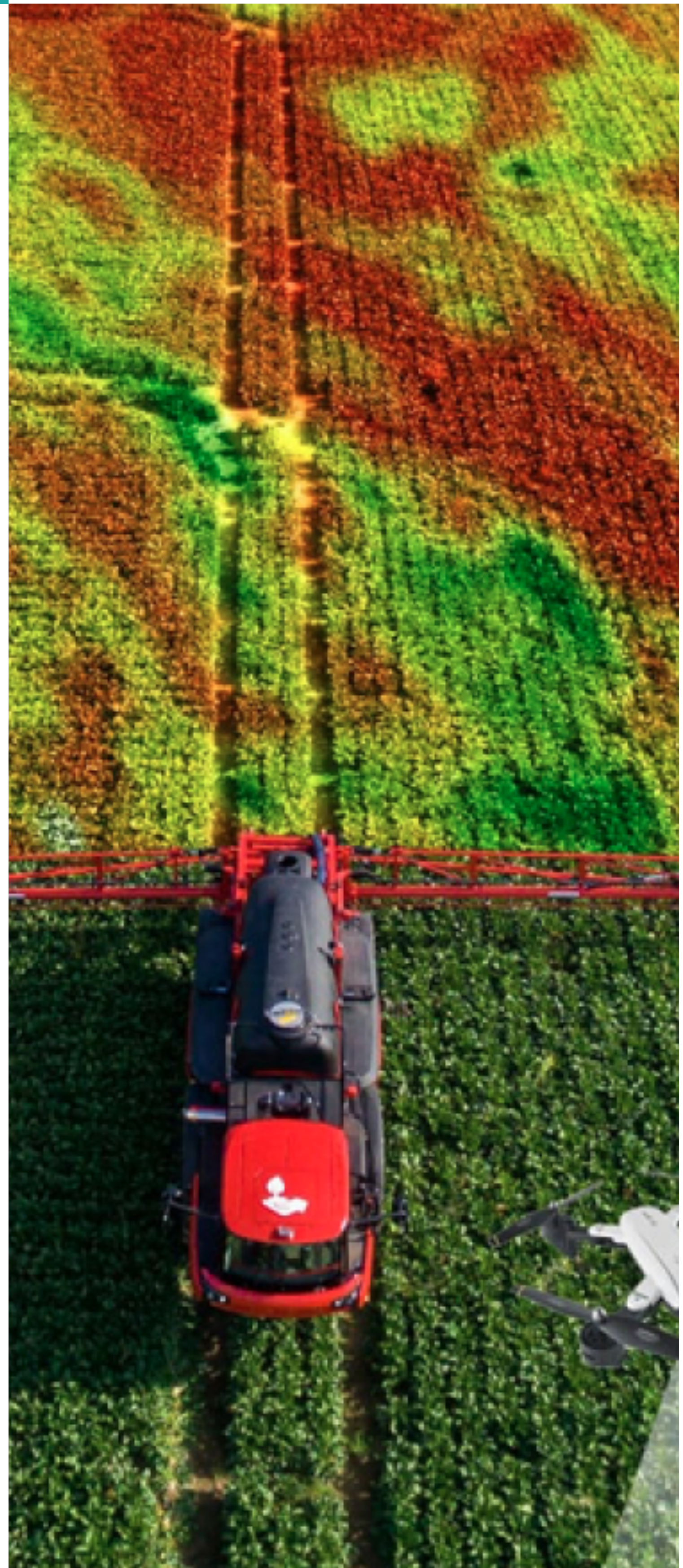
Transforming our food production systems and consumption habits are undeniable solutions that must be part of the changes when addressing climate change. Right now, it is not specifically being addressed as a key factor of climate change, which could not be further from the truth. Step one is recognizing that it is a contributor and then committing to developing and implementing solutions and strategies that will support a transition away from these animal-agricultural food systems and depend more heavily on the plant-centric food systems.

Check it out!

Climate Documentary: [Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret](#)

I would recommend watching this moving documentary to learn more about some of the truths behind why a lot of this knowledge seems to be hushed in a lot of climate knowledge and discussions. Since animal agriculture's impact on the climate is so large and catastrophic, it is important to discuss this difficult topic, that a lot of times society does not want to be told they are doing something wrong, or should be doing something so personal, like food and eating differently.

Instead, here are some things that everyone can begin to adhere to in their daily lives that can make all the difference in reducing your own personal greenhouse gas emissions!



What To Do To Do Your Part

- Plant-based diet! If there is apprehension, begin with Meatless Monday's then adapt to meatless meals as often as you can! Get creative with your meal-prepping, there are countless recipes using all sorts of plants in various different ways. Here are some of my favorite places I get inspiration from:

- [Pinterest](#)
- [Minimalist Baker](#)
- [Veganuary](#)

- Try non-dairy milk, spreads, cheeses, and more

- [Milk Alternatives](#)

- Stop supporting factory farming!
- Composting! (yourself and supporting farmers that do)
- Supporting farmers that prioritize composting practices, as it reduces climate change!!
- Highly nutritious for our soils!
- Composting:
 - Reduces greenhouse gas emissions in landfills
 - Promotes uptake of carbon dioxide by vegetation
 - Makes our gardens and farms more sustainable and resilient against other effects of climate change
 - Compost breaks down organic matter and puts it to good use, benefiting the environment
 - Promotes healthier plant growth
 - Compost plays a vital role in preventing erosion during extreme weather events and retains water when there are droughts.

Social Justice Acknowledgement

Zero waste farming is NOT a new idea, in fact, this concept is what farmers typically in developing new ideas have done for centuries! Farmers use their land and resources to their full potential or their incomes will diminish.

A lot of plant-based meat and dairy alternatives have political, corporate, and societal barriers that interfere with a lot of communities to adopt to this lifestyle. Lower prices and increasing access must be tackled and considered in influencing consumer decisions and protecting our environment.

Check out this [awesome article](#) about how Indigenous Communities are the creators of regenerative agriculture!



ZW Did you know?