# Live music industry embraces sustainability with rise of plant-based options



A new report published by the non-profit organisation A Greener Future (AGF) highlights a significant shift towards sustainability within the live music industry, particularly through the adoption of meat-free food at festivals. Amidst the increasing awareness of climate change, many festival organisers are now recognising the environmental impact of their food and beverage offerings.

The report analysed data from 40 music festivals across 16 countries and found that the number of festivals fully adopting vegan or vegetarian options is set to rise dramatically in 2024, with one-fifth of them designated as such—up from just 8% in the previous year. On average, around 55% of the food served at these events is meat-free, with that figure remaining robust at 50% even when excluding festivals that are entirely meatless.

AGF's report points to the substantial difference in emissions related to food consumption. It noted that food consumption contributes over a quarter of the carbon emissions at festivals serving meat, in contrast to less than 10% at vegetarian events. This is particularly relevant considering that animal agriculture is responsible for approximately 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions—an impact that is significantly greater than that produced by plant-based food sources.

The AGF described the increasing integration of plant-based catering as a “promising sign,” emphasising the need for the live music industry to address the climate implications connected to industrial animal agriculture. The organisation highlighted that over half (54%) of the festivals surveyed actively collected data regarding the food they served, and 82% had formal sustainability policies related to food and drink.

In addition to dietary changes, the report revealed advancements in waste management at music events. The average waste generated per festival attendee decreased to 0.8kg, notably lower than the 1.4kg average per person reported in the EU for 2023. Recycling rates improved from 38% in 2022 to 49% in 2024, while 23% of festivals implemented strategies to donate surplus food to those in need.

Concerning energy consumption, one-quarter of the festivals ran entirely on mains electricity, and 20% operated on biofuel derived from hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO), a trend more common at larger festivals, particularly those attracting 50,000 or more attendees.

However, AGF highlighted audience travel as the largest contributor to emissions, accounting for anywhere between 34% to 90% depending on the festival's location and size. While some festival-goers opted for public transport, cycling, or walking, there was a noted increase in the use of private vehicles, although the prevalence of electric cars did see a slight rise. Claire O’Neill, AGF's CEO, commented on the potential for improvement in reducing fossil fuel use within festival settings and promoting low-carbon travel options.

The report coincides with a growing trend among artists and bands who aim to lessen their own carbon footprints. Massive Attack's Act 1.5 festival in August showcased a fully plant-based menu, an electric-powered stage, and generous public transport incentives, all while ensuring that no single-use plastics were used. Other artists, such as Coldplay, Billie Eilish, and Taylor Swift, have also made strides towards incorporating sustainable practices, from plant-based offerings to comprehensive sustainability strategies.

O’Neill expressed satisfaction with the increase in festivals adopting plant-based catering, citing it as a critical step towards safeguarding nature and addressing climate change concerns. The ongoing shift within the live music industry appears to be gaining momentum, with many stakeholders now prioritising sustainability alongside their artistic endeavours.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.winssolutions.org/festivals-go-greener-2024-agf-report-reveals> - This URL supports the claim that A Greener Future's report highlights a significant shift towards sustainability in the live music industry, including the adoption of meat-free food options and advancements in waste management.
* <https://musically.com/2024/01/12/a-greener-future-garlands-the-worlds-greenest-music-festivals> - This URL corroborates A Greener Future's efforts in helping festivals become more sustainable by highlighting their certification process and achievements in sustainability.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides context for the climate change awareness and its relevance to the live music industry's sustainability efforts.
* <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-020-00132-1> - This Nature Food article supports the claim that animal agriculture contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, emphasizing the environmental impact of food choices at festivals.
* <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/waste_generation_en.htm> - This EU page provides background information on waste management, which supports the discussion on reduced waste per person at festivals.