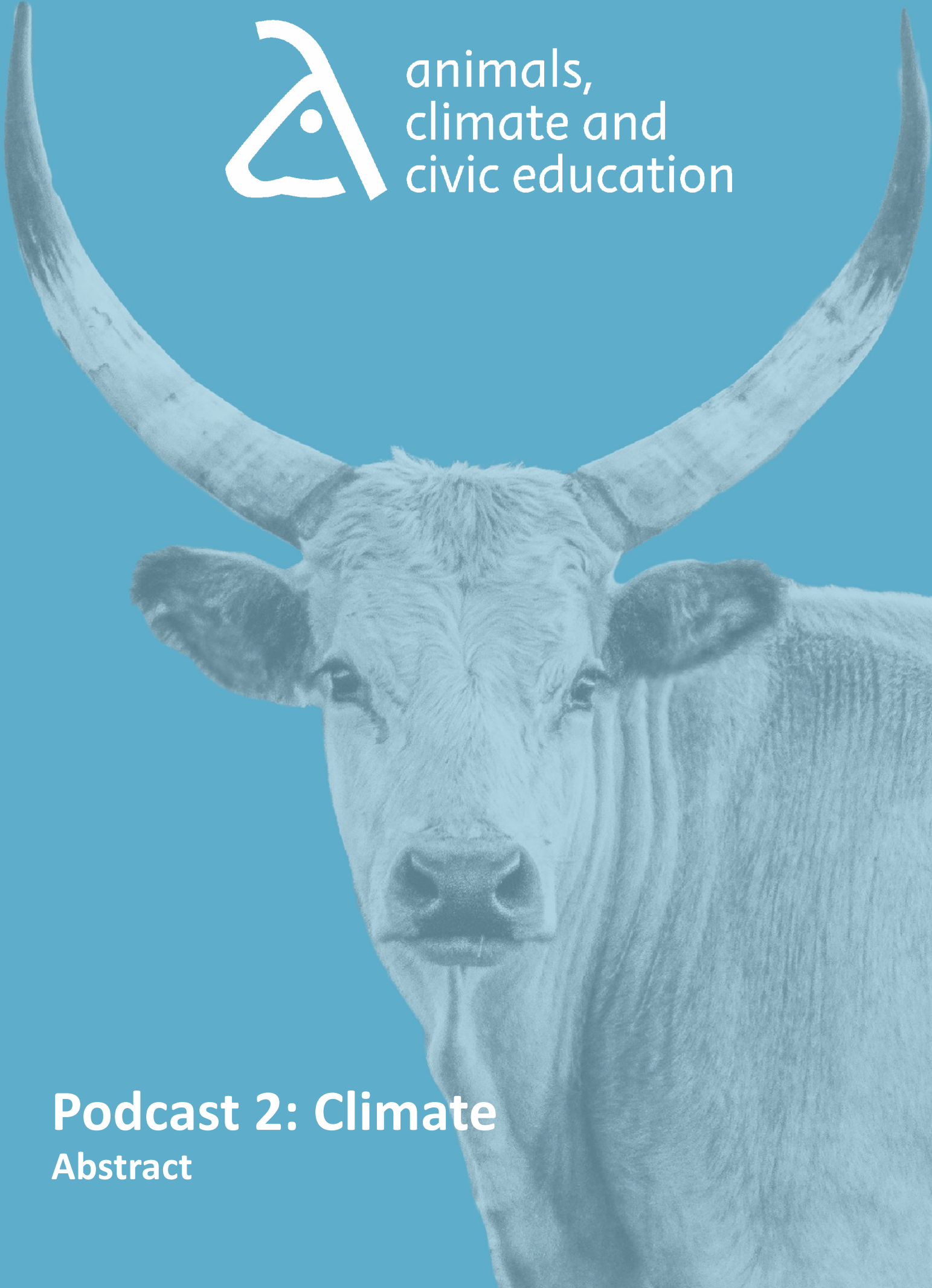




animals,  
climate and  
civic education

# Podcast 2: Climate

## Abstract



# Imprint

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# Abstract of the climate podcast:

## The impact of animal agriculture on the climate

The setting: Mica and Paul know each other from various climate related contexts and are meeting to talk about the link between animal agriculture and the climate crisis. Mica is very familiar with the issue, is vegan and is putting forward arguments for phasing out animal agriculture. Paul has been trying to live a climate-conscious life with his family for a long time and has just started to look closely at the contribution of our diets to the climate crisis.

Here are some of the key points from their conversation:

- Greenhouse gases from animal agriculture are a major contributor to human-made climate change, especially methane and nitrous oxide, both of which are far more damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide.
- In the EU, over 80 % of food-related greenhouse gas emissions come from the consumption of meat, milk and eggs alone.
- Over 80 % of the world's agricultural land is used to raise animals for human consumption, but animal products provide only 18 % of the calories produced globally.
- The farming of animals is a major contributor to the loss of biodiversity and is associated with a massive waste of resources. Around 60 % of the grain produced in Germany ends up as animal feed rather than on plates. Almost 80 % of the world's soya crop is fed to farmed animals.
- The Earth is set to become warmer by more than 1.5 °C, and probably more than 2 °C unless the global food system changes – even if emissions were eliminated in all other areas. Without a shift away from animal-based diets, the climate crisis cannot be tackled.
- The dietary recommendations of most countries are incompatible with the limits of our planet and the Paris Climate Agreement. This is where the Planetary Health Diet comes in, a science-based diet high in plants and low in animal products aiming to protect both human health and the planet.
- On an individual level, there is nothing more effective in the fight against climate change than switching to a purely plant-based diet.
- For animal products, “local and organic” is not the answer. On average, the transport of a food product accounts for only 5 % of its total emissions, and organic animal agriculture (because it is more resource-intensive) is often more damaging to the climate than the conventional animal agriculture.
- Butter is one of the most climate-damaging foods, even worse than beef. Many types of cheese also have a devastating carbon footprint. The rule is: the higher the fat content, the more animal milk is in it, the more damaging it is to the climate.
- If the entire world's population were to eat a plant-based diet, greenhouse gas emissions from the food system could be halved and total global emissions could be reduced by 28 %. We could cut 12

% of emissions directly plus a potential of 16 % resulting from freeing up land that could then be used as peatlands and forests to store carbon dioxide. Thus, the potential is huge.

- To transform diets and phase out the farming of animals we need changes at an individual and societal level. We also need to consider the needs of the farming community, because of course we will continue to need them for our food and for protecting the climate.