

# The 'real' price of meat is high

**There are risks associated with eating meat. Eating too much red and processed meat causes illness. And meat production is harmful to the environment. So what does meat cost when you factor those costs into the retail price?**

A lot, according to study by WUR economists. The calculations were commissioned by the Vegetarian Union and the TAPP (True Animal Protein Price) Coalition. Annually, excessive meat consumption leads to 253,000 new diabetes patients, 100,000 cases of colon cancer

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**The medical costs of excessive meat consumption are 1.1 billion euros a year**

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and 20,000 patients with cardiovascular diseases. For the purposes of these calculations, excessive consumption means more than six kilos of red meat per year. For processed

meat, there is no safe lower limit. The medical costs associated with excessive consumption of processed meat come to 1.1 billion euros a year.

Twice the price

We all help cover these health costs through our health insurance. But what if those costs were factored into the meat price? Consumer organization True Price provided the methodology for calculating the health cost per kilo of meat. A kilo of beef would cost 7.50 euros more and would come to nearly 25 euros. Processed meat (sausages, salami, pâté) would be 4.30 euros more expensive, bringing it to nearly 13 euros per kilo.

According to the researchers, the calculations are on the conservative side. The research clients had previously asked the independent think tank CE Delft to calculate the environmental costs of meat consumption. For beef and processed meat, that yielded an additional 5.70 euros. That would bring the price of a kilo of beef that included both health and environmental costs to nearly 29 euros. That is two thirds more than the current price. The price of processed meat would go up to more than twice the current price at 18 euros. <sup>RK</sup>