‘To meat up with peers’: investigating the role of social norms in meat consumption.

Reducing meat consumption is key to mitigate climate change and benefit human health. Despite the urgency of meat reduction, meat consumption is still increasing globally (including the Netherlands). Meat consumption is the norm for most people in western societies as the majority of the population consumes meat. Social norms are standards of what is appropriate behaviour for a social group in a given context and are considered strong drivers behind eating behaviour. The individual perception of social norms may constitute an important factor in driving meat consumption. Yet, to use the communication of social norms for effective meat reduction interventions, it is crucial that we first understand the current role of social norms in meat consumption. We currently lack a fundamental understanding of social meat consumption norm perceptions of meat consumers and how these norm perceptions predict meat consumption. Moreover, we lack insight into how social norm communications can be used effectively and sustainably for meat reduction. This project aims to understand the role of social norms in meat consumption and the effectiveness of social norm communication as a tool to reduce meat consumption. The corresponding objectives of this project are to: 1) examine the perception of social meat consumption norms among meat consumers, and 2) assess how they predict meat consumption (cross-sectional survey study); 3) study how the communication of social meat reduction norms can stimulate meat reduction across meat consumers (lab and field experiments)