



POLITICAL ADVOCACY IN FRANCE FOR PLANT-BASED AND VEGETARIAN DISHES IN COLLECTIVE CANTEENS



ASSIETTES VÉGÉTALES

- Non-profit organisation
- Mission: developing vegetarian and plant-based alternatives in collective catering
- Tools : political advocacy, highlighting exemplary canteens with our "Assiettes Vertes" label, event weeks, training for chefs, etc.

assiettesvegetales.org







PLAN FOR TODAY PRESENTATION

- Structure of the French collective catering sector
- What are the existing laws about PB and vegetarian meals in canteens
- How did these laws come to be ? (NGOs advocacy work)
- Challenges and obstacles at a political level
- Are the laws applied ?
- Conclusion : advices for advancing PB meals in canteens and next steps for France



ORGANISATION OF THE FRENCH COLLECTIVE CATERING SECTOR

Pre elementary and elementary school
(300 millions meals)



Cities

High school
(500 millions meals)



Departments & regions

Hospitals, prisons, universities,
public administrations, armies
(500 millions meals)

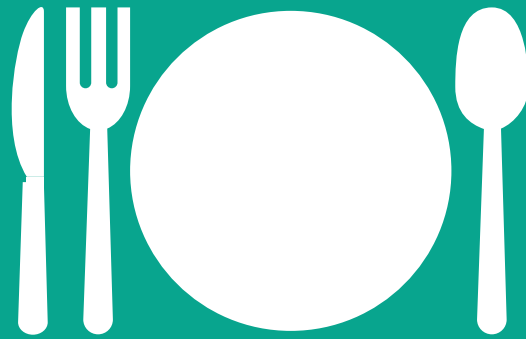


Ministries in
charge of
the sectors

Private sector
(300 millions meals)



Companies



3,6 billions meals a year



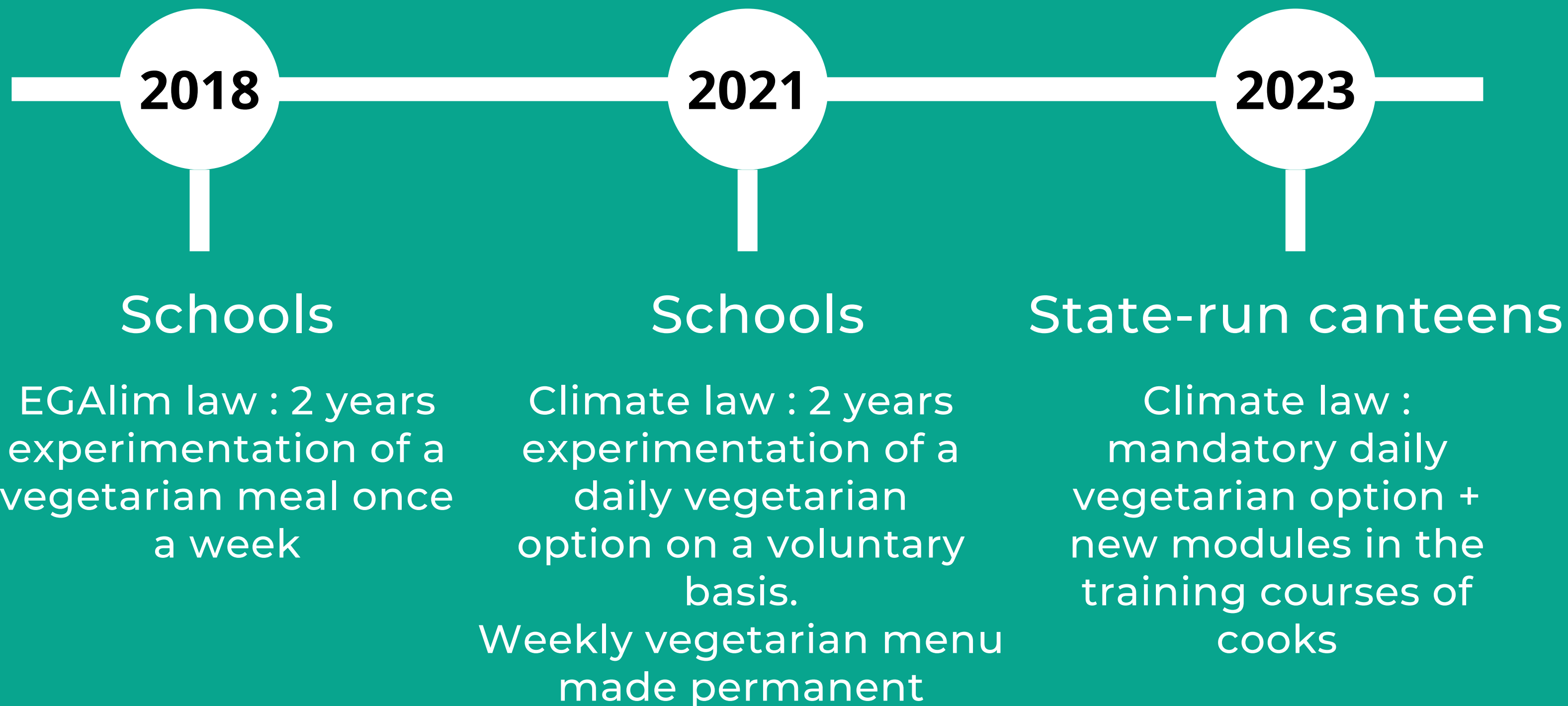
A clear hierarchical division of the canteens, which allows many to be reached in a simple way



Companies such as Sodexo or Elicor are big actors of the sector, but the majority of meals are cooked directly by the administrations (70% in school canteens)



WHAT DO FRENCH LAWS SAY ABOUT PLANT-BASED DISHES IN COLLECTIVE CATERING





How did this Climate
Law come to be ?



GREENPEACE

réseau
action
climat france





Political opportunity with the climate law.
We can then propose our amendments.



Key allies among politicians, ready to
defend the amendments



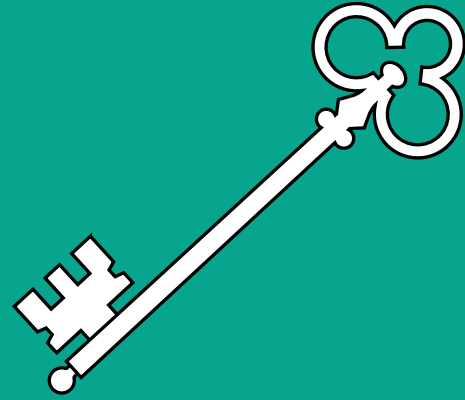
Political outreach



Production of theoretical and practical expertise about the feasibility and the benefits of a vegetarian option. Surveys of canteens already doing a lot of vegetarian meals, and calculation of environmental benefits. Both from the NGOs and the government



Petitions from scientists, the civil society and politicians



Key arguments in France :

- inclusiveness of vegetarian and PB meals : religious regimes, vegetarians and vegans, allergies
- environmental benefits
- health benefits. Showing that children (particularly from poor background) don't lack meat
- vegetarian and PB meals are cheaper : money savings can then be put back in better products, "better" meat for example
- providing examples of canteens already doing it, with stats on food waste, children appreciation, feasibility...



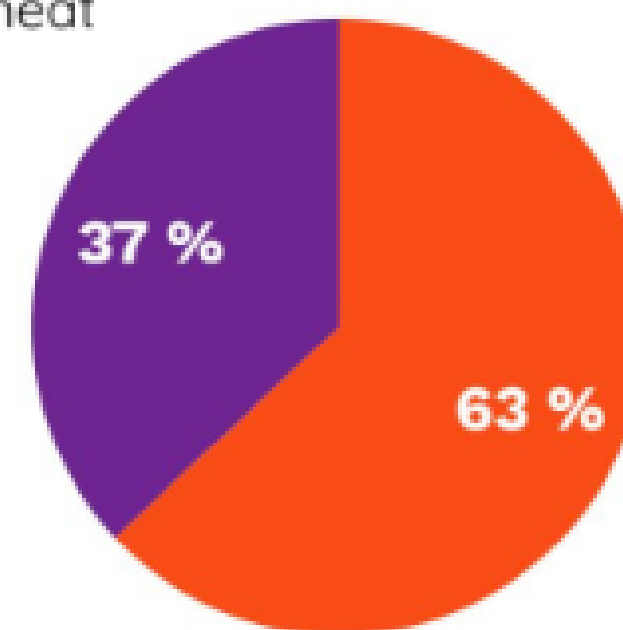
A daily veggie option or a weekly veggie meal
for all in school canteens



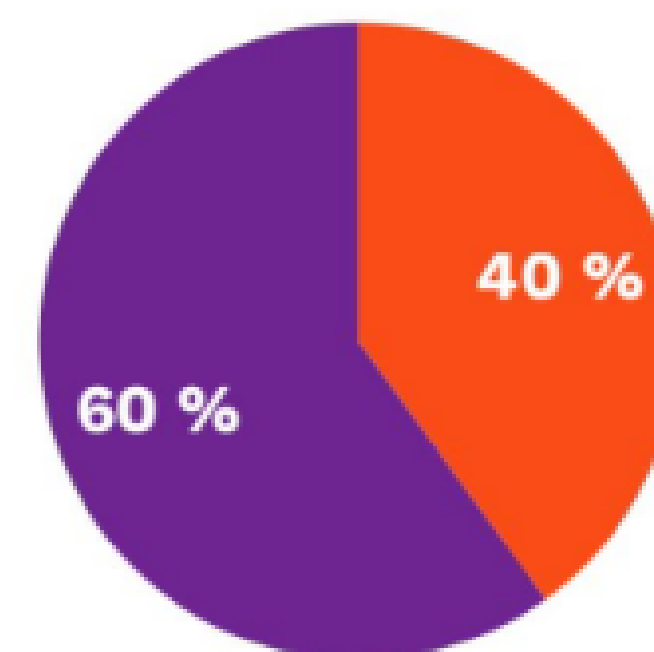
→ reduction in greenhouse gas
emissions from **14%** to **19%**

Savings from the vegetarian menu are used to
introduce quality meat

orange organic meat
purple no organic meat



Daily veggie
menu



No veggie
menu



Starting with an experimentation of the daily/weekly option which is then made permanent within another law or after a public evaluation.



Luck



Challenges and obstacles



Cultural cognitive biases among
politicians and the population



Weight of livestock and
production agriculture in
France



Health and nutrition concerns about plant based and vegetarian meals : a big issue.

The existing guidelines require that meat or fish be served at least 8/20 meals, and that a dairy product is present in every school menu...



which led to a big backlash when the town of Lyon suppressed meat meals in its canteens during the pandemic (for logistical simplicity)





Are the laws applied ?



Hard to say :



- in school canteens for the weekly menu, estimates vary : from 50% in middle and high to 90% in primary schools



- in state run canteens (hospitals, universities, national administrations, army, prisons), we don't have data



- in universities in particular, we estimate that at least 70% propose a daily vegetarian option, with some universities we work with being already far ahead



The french government doesn't have a will to ensure that the laws are applied, and no penalties are planned for outlawed canteens, so NGOs may have a good impact by raising the issue :

- launching petitions to ask that the laws are respected
- working with ministries so that they inform canteens under their jurisdiction that they have to respect the law



Conclusion : advices for
advancing PB meals in canteens
and next steps for France



Make a map of the collective catering / school canteens sector in your country :

- how many children/adults eat in a collective canteen ?
- are the canteens independant or under the authority of a central administration such as towns, local collectivities or the state ?
- are collective companies such as Sodexo or Elior preparing a lot of meals in your country ?



Then assess what the potential most effective ways of making progress

- political advocacy ? Asking directly for a daily PB option, or beginning with an experimentation of a weekly menu ? If there is no political support for such measures, it may be better to first highlight good examples of canteens already doing it and collect data.
- Field work ? Training chiefs and managers for example ? May be effective locally to create some first good examples but would take a ton of time to train every chief in the country.
- Working only with collective catering companies to make them commit to plant based % objectives in their menus (see the Human Society recent review of such companies' pledges for plant based) ?



Next steps for France for plant based in canteens :

- we tried to make a new law pass about a vegetarian daily option in school canteens, but failed
- the support from the collective catering sector, the local collectivities and the government seem not strong enough for the moment to have new laws on this topic



We think that there is a need for highlighting good examples, making more local collectivities try daily vegetarian options, demonstrating the benefits of vegetarian meals and showing this to the lawmakers



Thanks for listening !

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