

# The Evolution of Diet

**BY ANN GIBBONS**  
*National Geographic*  
*Part 3:*

“There’s been a consistent story about hunting defining us and that meat made us human,” says Amanda Henry, a paleobiologist at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig. “Frankly, I think that misses half of the story. They want meat, sure. But what they actually live on is plant foods.” What’s more, she found starch granules from plants on fossil teeth and stone tools, which suggests humans may have been eating grains, as well as tubers, for at least 100,000 years—long enough to have evolved the ability to tolerate them.

The notion that we stopped evolving in the Paleolithic period simply isn’t true. Our teeth, jaws, and faces have gotten smaller, and our DNA has changed since the invention of agriculture. “Are humans still evolving? Yes!” says geneticist Sarah Tishkoff of the University of Pennsylvania.

One striking piece of evidence is lactose tolerance. All humans digest mother’s milk as infants, but until cattle began being domesticated 10,000 years ago, weaned children no longer needed to digest milk. As a result, they stopped making the enzyme lactase, which breaks down the lactose into simple sugars. After humans began herding cattle, it became tremendously advantageous to digest milk, and lactose tolerance evolved independently among cattle herders in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Groups not dependent on cattle, such as the Chinese and Thai, the Pima Indians of the American Southwest, and the Bantu of West Africa, remain lactose intolerant.

Humans also vary in their ability to extract sugars from starchy foods as they chew them, depending on how many copies of a certain gene they inherit. Populations that traditionally ate more starchy foods, such as the Hadza, have more copies of the gene than the Yakut meat-eaters of Siberia, and their saliva helps break down starches before the food reaches their stomachs.

These examples suggest a twist on “You are what you eat.” More accurately, you are what your ancestors ate. There is tremendous variation in what foods humans can thrive on, depending on genetic inheritance. Traditional diets today include the vegetarian regimen of India’s Jains, the meat-intensive fare of Inuit, and the fish-heavy diet of Malaysia’s Bajau people. The Nochmani of the Nicobar Islands off the coast of India get by on protein from insects. “What makes us human is our ability to find a meal in virtually any environment,” says the Tsimane study co-leader Leonard.

Studies suggest that indig-

enous groups get into trouble when they abandon their traditional diets and active lifestyles for Western living. Diabetes was virtually unknown, for instance, among the Maya of Central America until the 1950s. As they’ve switched to a Western diet high in sugars, the rate of diabetes has skyrocketed. Siberian nomads such as the Evenk reindeer herders and the Yakut ate diets heavy in meat, yet they had almost no heart disease until after the fall of the Soviet Union, when many settled in towns and began eating market foods. Today about half the Yakut living in villages are overweight, and almost a third have hypertension, says Leonard. And Tsimane people who eat market foods are more prone to diabetes than those who still rely on hunting and gathering.

For those of us whose ancestors were adapted to plant-based diets—and who have desk jobs—it might be best not to eat as much meat as the Yakut. Recent studies confirm older findings that although humans have eaten red meat for two million years, heavy consumption increases atherosclerosis and cancer in most populations—and the culprit isn’t just saturated fat or cholesterol. Our gut bacteria digest a nutrient in meat called L-carnitine. In one mouse study, digestion of L-carnitine boosted artery-clogging plaque. Research also has shown that the human immune system attacks a sugar in red meat that’s called Neu5Gc, causing inflammation that’s low level in the young but that eventually could cause cancer. “Red meat is great, if you want to live to 45,” says Ajit Varki of the University of California, San Diego, lead author of the Neu5Gc study.

Many paleoanthropologists say that although advocates of the modern Paleolithic diet urge us to stay away from unhealthy processed foods, the diet’s heavy focus on meat doesn’t replicate the diversity of foods that our ancestors ate—or take into account the active lifestyles that protected them from heart disease and diabetes. “What bothers a lot of paleoanthropologists is that we actually didn’t have just one caveman diet,” says Leslie Aiello, president of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research in New York City. “The human diet goes back at least two million years. We had a lot of cavemen out there.”

In other words, there is no ideal human diet. Aiello and Leonard say the real hallmark of being human isn’t our taste for meat but our ability to adapt to many habitats—and to be able to combine many different foods to create many healthy diets. Unfortunately, the modern Western diet does not appear to be one of them

## Goodrich City Council Minutes

May 5, 2025 - 5:30 p.m. - Goodrich City Hall

Present: Mayor Diane Bellecourt, Larry Zeeb, Pam Stewart (Auditor), Michael Piper and Steve Hochhalter  
Guests: Cleta McDonald

A motion was made by Steve to approve the April 7, 2025 and April 21, 2025 special meeting minutes, and to accept the financial reports for April 2025 as written. Larry seconded the motion which carried.

Sheridan County Park Board asked if the City of Goodrich would consider selling or donate the playground equipment located near the old Goodrich School building. After much discussion, the Council decided to keep the playground equipment since there are children who play there throughout the summer and it is considered a great asset to our local children.

Council discussed revised sections of Chapter 10, 11 and 12 of the draft ordinances. More changes were suggested and will be moving forward with the process of finalizing those chapters.

A motion was made by Steve to elevate and gravel city streets within the city and grade them in order to improve drainage. The motion was seconded by Larry and carried.

Motion to adjourn by Larry and seconded by Steve carried.

Next Goodrich City Council will be held on June 2, 2025, 5:30 pm at City Hall.

Pam Stewart, Goodrich City Auditor  
(May 15, 2025)

## County Commissioners Meeting

April 1, 2025

The Board of Sheridan County Commissioners met at 9:30 a.m. County Commissioners present were Shannon Dieterle, Sandra Felchle and Roddy Schilling.

Chairman Dieterle called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting was sent by mail and email. It was moved by County Commissioner Felchle to approve the minutes as sent, seconded by County Commissioner Schilling. Upon roll call vote – Felchle – yes, Schilling – yes, Dieterle – yes Motion carried.

The statements of fees were collected and submitted to their appropriate funds:

County Recorder, fees, \$1,030.00  
Sheriff, fees, \$123.00

The miscellaneous receipts were collected from the following funds and were approved for the month of March, 2025:

General - \$42,489.40; Unorganized Rd. Dist. - \$109,918.81; Highway Dist. - \$13,635.03; 911 - \$1,856.68

In itemized listing of miscellaneous receipts are on file in the County Treasurer’s office.

The March payroll was approved from the following funds:

General - \$41,454.62; Highway Dist. - \$19,941.18; Veteran’s Service Officer - \$602.93; County Agent - \$1,881.60  
Weed Control - \$585.90; 911 - \$726.94; Civil Defense - \$719.34; Veteran’s Van Service - \$1,520.70

The following bills #188-223 were approved and ordered paid subject due to delinquent or any other indebtedness owing the County:

Atco International,175.25; Bentz Supply Store, 1,127.18; Butler Machinery Co., 63.60; Dust Pods, LLC., 1,596.00; Frontline Plus Fire and Rescue, 900.00; Lisa Heitzmann, 88.90; ITD, 3,868.95; Karen Konschak, 50.00; Lawson Products, Inc., 33.45; McClusky Gazette, 1,938.18; McLean County Jail, 385.00; McLean Family Resource Center, 150.00; Mechanics Plus, 124.62; Menards,16.99; ND Association Of Counties, 645.40; Newman Traffic Signs, 70.65; Nordak North Publications,146.25; NRG, 1,938.18; James Paulus, 50.00; RV Enterprises, 15,000.00; Steins Inc., 95.34; Stock Growers Public Finance, LLC.,12,528.12; Tyler Technologies, Inc., 13,175.00; Van

# Legals

Guard Appraisals, Inc., 9,805.00; Verizon, 500.36; Vestis, 247.71; Visa, 1,042.63; Western Frontier Ins Agency, 735.00

Delbert Hoffman, Emergency Manager/911 Coordinator, met with the board to report on the Denhoff siren update. MidStates Wireless, Fargo, sent a quote to provide an antenna, etc. to be placed on the Courthouse in the amount of \$3,458.95 that Midstate did test the Denhoff siren and it did work to set off the siren. It was moved by County Commissioner Felchle to approve moving the siren antenna to the roof of Courthouse from MidStates Wireless, seconded by County Commissioner Schilling. Upon roll call vote – Felchle – yes, Schilling – yes, Dieterle – yes Motion carried. Hoffman also presented the Fire Emergency & Burn Restrictions Declaration for Sheridan County. It was moved by County Commissioner Felchle to approve the following Fire Emergency & Burn Restriction Declaration, seconded by County Commissioner Schilling. Upon roll call vote – Felchle – yes Schilling – yes, Dieterle - yes Motion carried.

FIRE EMERGENCY & BURN RESTRICTIONS DECLARATION

FOR SHERIDAN COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA, APRIL 1, 2025

WHEREAS, Sheridan County North Dakota has and is expected to continue to endure periods of dry conditions with significant vegetative fuels available; and

WHEREAS, all available resources remain committed to protecting life and property; and

WHEREAS, Sheridan County has either sustained or been threatened with rural fires in the past and the local Emergency Management Office has been in consultation with local fire departments; and

WHEREAS, the impact of fires could threaten the health, well-being, and safety of the citizens in Sheridan County; and

WHEREAS, the cost of response, inordinate equipment wear/tear and fire damages may be beyond available Sheridan County resources; and

WHEREAS, the Sheridan County Commission wishes to regulate activities within Sheridan County which pose a potential hazard for such loss, should the present weather conditions continue.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Sheridan County Commissioners declare a Fire Emergency and Burn Restrictions effective when the North Dakota Rangeland Fire Danger Rating is in the Very High or Extreme Rating and/ or Red Flag Warning has been issued for Sheridan County, North Dakota, effective immediately until rescinded or through 12-31-2025.

What’s included: No Burning When activity matches below. Burning is prohibited if the Fire Index is in Extreme Category as Issued by NWS (ND Administrative Code – Title 33.1 Article 15 Chapter 4 Very High: Campfires, the ignition of fireworks (Aerial and ground), controlled burns (i.e., wood piles, tumbleweeds, tree piles, etc.), cropland/agriculture, fireplaces and chimineas patio (organic material), and garbage/pit, Extreme: Campfires, the ignition of fireworks (aerial and ground), controlled burns, (i.e., wood piles, tumbleweeds, tree piles, etc.), cropland/agriculture, fireplaces and chimineas patio (organic material), and garbage pit,

THE PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF THIS BURN RESTRICTION IS A CLASS B MISDEMEANOR (NDCC 37.17-1-10.1: MAXIMUM SENTENCE OF 30 DAYS IN JAIL AND \$1,500 FINE).

This declaration is for all of Sheridan County. However, incorporated cities my have their own permanent burn restrictions based on local ordinances, so please check with the city that you live in before burning.

Anyone doing a control burn must call ND State Radio at 701-328-9921 and notify them of the burn. The daily

fire danger rating is available at the following website: <https://ndresponse.gov>

Dated at McClusky, North Dakota this 1st day of April, 2025

Shannon Dieterle, Chair  
Sheridan County Commission  
Shirley A. Murray  
Sheridan County Auditor

Sheriff, Trent Naser, met with the board to report that Deputy Ben Kothrade turned in his resignation two weeks ago. Advertising for another new Deputy has started at the State Law Enforcement website. The estimate from Arlan’s Carpentry for the Social Services office for resolving security issues was reviewed and more estimates will be gathered.

Lynnette Fox, County Treasurer, met with the board to report that the County CD’s are coming due again at Bravera Bank, McClusky and Dakota Heritage Bank, Harvey.

The time being 9:45 a.m. the interview with Connie Werth, McClusky, for the County Treasurer position was held. Questions were asked and answered.

The time being 10:00 a.m. the bid letting for reshaping, graveling, milling and paving 6.8 miles of the South Martin Road project FXS-4225 (063) was held. Contractors present were Knife River Materials, Mayo Construction Company, Inc., and Central Specialties, Inc. Others present were Mike Rivinius and Jon Martin Wold Engineering representatives. Bryon Belile, Road Foreman and Lynnette Fox, County Treasurer were present also. Bids were received as follows:

Knife River Materials, - \$1,548,844.98  
Mayo Construction Co., Inc. - \$1,764,783.84  
Central Specialties Inc. - \$1,706,190.25

It was moved by County Commissioner Felchle to award the low bid of Knife River Materials in the amount of \$1,548,844.98 to reshape, gravel, mill and pave 6.8 miles south of Martin Project # FXS-4225 (063) pending on the concurrence of NDDOT with the flexibility funding, seconded by County Commissioner Schilling. Upon roll call vote – Felchle – yes, Schilling – yes, Dieterle – yes Motion carried.

County Commissioner Dieterle reported it will cost \$15,000 - \$20,000 to cut trees down along the south Martin road project with Volk Excavating, Rugby before the road paving project starts. Bryon Belile, Road Foreman met with the board and reported the road crew started to tar the cracks in the pavement before the snow came and a few trees needs to be trimmed up on the north McClusky route. Letters will be sent to the landowners to trim or cut trees down. Blading has started also. The muskrat permit for the road crew needs to be requested again thru ND Game & Fish Dept. Sharing of the Bad Boy riding mower with the County Park grounds will be done to try it out and see how it goes. Attaching a packer to one the motor graders was discussed to try out. Allowing up to 10 more working hours per week to blade operators this spring was instructed to Belile to tell the blade operators if needed.

The time being 11:00 a.m. an interview with Laura Engle, Goodrich, for the County Treasurer position was held. Questions were asked and answered.

Melissa Lauer met with the board at this time to review the County Treasurer applications being the applicant may work in Lauer’s office part time also. Lynnette Fox, County Treasurer, met with the board to discuss upcoming CD’s that will be coming due mid-April. It was moved by County Commissioner Felchle to authorize the County Auditor, Shirley Murray and County Recorder, Melissa Lauer to sign and roll over new CD’s at the shortest length of time at the highest rate of interest at the Bravera Bank in McClusky and the Dakota Heritage Bank in Harvey, seconded by County Commissioner Schilling. Upon roll call vote – Felchle – yes, Schilling – yes, Dieterle – yes Motion carried.

The following applications for abatement of 2023 and 2024 tax years were reviewed. County Commissioner Felchle approved the following abatements of taxes as filed in the County Auditor’s office due to eligible



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