



# Ice Cream and Climate Action!

Ben Cohen, Ben & Jerry's Foundation  
Vermont

## ☀ Call to Action

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## ☀ Values

- Entrepreneurship
- Social Justice
- Sustainability
- Environmentalism
- Community

## ☀ Lessons Learned

**A truly successful business exists in harmony with the environment and with the principles of social justice.**

**Start small;** find people who support you; grow; and stay true to your noble goals.

**To be successful you must be willing to be unique and take a stand for your beliefs.**

**Social justice is built by building community.**

## **Ben Cohen founded Ben & Jerry's with his best friend, Jerry Greenfield.**

They invented the yummy ice cream with the extra-large chunks. As their company grew - from their garage, to a single homemade ice cream shop in Vermont, to a global operation - they did everything they could to minimize their carbon footprint, run a socially responsible company, and support environmental and social justice initiatives around the United States. "So many times, people don't start something because they feel like they don't have enough experience, or they don't know enough," Ben says. "I think it's important to just start really small: if what you're doing resonates with people, it will grow."

## ☀ Language Arts

**What does Ben mean when he says "He who is silent consents"?** In what context is he using these words? Do you agree or disagree with him? Write an argumentative essay in which you explain your position on this issue. Your essay must include a counter-argument, and secondary sources to support your opinion.

**What is the connection between making ice cream and climate change?** Create a video in which you explain how the ice cream industry contributes to climate change, and how Ben & Jerry's has managed to offset the negative consequences of their large-scale manufacturing, while also building an extremely successful business.

**How is Ben & Jerry's engaged in achieving change?** Working in groups of 3-5 people, create a presentation in which you explain three of the last campaigns Ben and Jerry's has been involved in. For each campaign, make sure you cover the following: What was the campaign about? Why was it important? How did Ben & Jerry's participate? What did they achieve?

## STEM Activities

**Select an ice cream brand or shop, and research the ingredients used in that ice cream, and find out what the company's sources are.** Calculate the carbon footprint of producing your favorite ice cream from the brand or shop you have chosen.

**Read the post [Flavors We Could Lose to Climate Change](#)<sup>1</sup> on Ben & Jerry's blog.** Select one of the flavors listed and research the impact climate change has on its production. What kind of environment is needed to produce the source of this flavor? Create a presentation on the effects of climate change on the crop's production using graphs, and include projections of future production.

**Research the number of carbon emissions being caused by palm oil-related deforestation.** Compare this to the effect of palm oil that is sustainably produced, or the use of palm oil alternatives. Resource: [Palm Oil: The Carbon Cost of Deforestation](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## Sustainability Innovations

**Ben and Jerry's provides a model for integrating the principles of sustainability into businesses.** Review this [article](#)<sup>3</sup>, which details their corporate sustainability concept, and the strategies they have used to combine concern for the public interest and sustainable, successful business practices.

**Ben and Jerry's website hosts this [page](#)<sup>4</sup>, which highlights their goals, and their impact on creating a sustainable future.** Research one of your favorite companies and review their website. Does this company have similar sustainability-focused goals or missions? Why would this be important to you as a consumer?

**In addition to climate-focused goals, Ben and Jerry's has taken a strong stance on prison reform and improvements in the justice system.** Review their [stance](#)<sup>5</sup> and explore how you, as a student, can get involved in making a difference!

## Sustainability Career Pathways

**Eco-Entrepreneur.** Ben is a champion for green companies and entrepreneurs. Think about a green company that you'd like to start or join. [Learn more about becoming an eco-entrepreneur here.](#)<sup>6</sup>

**Foundation Officer.** Ben & Jerry's Foundation is one of [119,000 foundations](#)<sup>7</sup> in the United States that give funding to millions of organizations working toward social change. They rely on program officers to research and vet organizations, to decide who is aligned with their mission and will use their precious funds effectively. [These jobs](#)<sup>8</sup> offer an important career path and lever for social change.

**Sustainable Product Development Manager.** Companies are constantly launching new products. They need managers to research, develop, and assess the market. Learn more about [product management here](#)<sup>9</sup>, and learn about a [career in product development here](#)<sup>10</sup>.

**Ice Cream Maker.** There are dozens of sustainable ice cream brands, brands that use better ingredients and packaging, give back to their communities, and through their choices are helping to improve farming methods. Learn about the most [sustainable ice cream brands](#)<sup>11</sup>; or sample jobs at Ben & Jerry's [here](#)<sup>12</sup>.

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- 1 <https://www.benjerry.com/home/whats-new/2016/endangered-pints>
  - 2 <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180619123018.htm>
  - 3 <https://www.performancemagazine.org/ben-jerrys-sustainability-business/>
  - 4 <https://www.benjerry.com/about-us/media-center/sustainable-agriculture-vision>
  - 5 <https://www.benjerry.com/values/issues-we-care-about/justice-remixd>
  - 6 <https://ecoally.co/becoming-an-eco-entrepreneur/>
  - 7 <https://www.issueclab.org/resources/36381/36381.pdf>
  - 8 <https://www.foundationlist.org/top-10-employment-websites-for-finding-foundation-jobs/>
  - 9 <https://online.stanford.edu/what-you-need-know-build-career-product-management>
  - 10 <https://www.marketing-schools.org/careers/product-development-manager/>
  - 11 <https://www.greenmatters.com/food/2017/06/30/23mw7w/ice-cream-recs>
  - 12 <https://www.benjerry.com/about-us/jobs>

