Column: Why the extreme weather?

By Richard Alley

Did humans contribute to the record heat of March and the strength of April’s tornadoes across much of the U.S. ? Science still says “maybe, maybe not.” But we’re rolling the dice in a serious game where the “judged” cost of our lives?

There’s very strong confidence that our fossil fuel burning and industrial activities, which add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, are already warming the planet. We expect more record highs and heat waves; food production will be put at risk; dry weather will become more common; more intense hurricanes will be more frequent, and the air between them and rain will decrease, even if the number of storms increases.

But what we can’t acknowledge is the ongoing changes without our help. Fire has played a key role in shaping the climate. When you’re done, you’re dead. But the carbon footprint of the world’s food system is also a significant source of carbon dioxide emissions. It’s a major reason why the world’s food system is a major source of climate change.

The Net Carbon Footprint of the World’s Food System

Net Carbon Footprint

1.785 Billion metric tons of CO2 equivalent

On the other hand, the food system is a major source of greenhouse gases. It’s a major reason why the world’s food system is a major source of climate change.

In conclusion, our actions in the food system are a major factor in the climate crisis. We need to make significant changes to reduce our carbon footprint and help address the climate crisis.

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