



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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12 November 2021

His Holiness Pope Francis
Sua Santità Francesco
Casa Santa Marta
00120 Città del Vaticano

Your Holiness:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, and we applaud your recent call for everyone to do their part in fighting the climate crisis. We hope that you will set a powerful example for the more than 1 billion Catholics around the world – as well as countless others who look to you for leadership – by going vegan.

Going vegan is the single most effective action any individual can take to curb the climate crisis. Each person who goes vegan reduces their carbon footprint from food by up to 73% and spares 200 animals a year a miserable life and a painful death.

In *Laudato Si'*, you wrote, “Every act of cruelty towards any creature is ‘contrary to human dignity’.” I’m sure you’ll agree that the cruelty of the meat, dairy, and egg industries is unacceptable. For example, female cows exploited for milk are forcibly impregnated over and over. Their babies are torn away from them so that humans can steal the milk that God intended for their calves. When their bodies wear out, they are crammed onto crowded lorries for a terrifying trip to the slaughterhouse, where many are skinned and dismembered while still conscious.

PETA named you its Person of the Year in 2015 because you asked everyone to reject domination over God’s creation, treat animals with kindness, and respect our planet. And as you know, St Francis of Assisi exemplified compassion for animals, calling them our brothers and sisters under God. We hope you’ll now take the next step by rejecting the cruel practices of killing animals for their flesh and stealing their eggs and milk – and opting, instead, for nutritious vegan foods.

We are called upon to be the caretakers of Creation, yet every time we consume meat, eggs, and dairy, we contribute to the deadly climate crisis and directly harm animals. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, animal agriculture is responsible for about 14.5% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, which, by some estimates, is greater than all the world’s transportation systems combined. The UN also states that a global shift to vegan eating is needed to limit the catastrophic damage caused by climate change.

Cows and sheep release vast volumes of methane – a greenhouse gas 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide when it comes to trapping heat in

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the atmosphere. Producing fertiliser for crops to feed animals, petrol to shuttle them to slaughter, and electricity to freeze their carcasses requires colossal amounts of fossil fuels, releasing even more greenhouse gases. These inhumane industries also use vast quantities of land, food, energy, and water, while producing massive amounts of waste.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Will you please let us know your decision? We would be honoured to help you in any way.

Very truly yours,

Mimi Bekhechi
Vice President of International Programmes
PETA

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