

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
The Chancellor of the Exchequer

4 May 2020

Via e-mail: public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk

Dear Chancellor,

As the economic and public health toll of the COVID-19 crisis continues to mount, PETA urges the government to implement an excise duty on all meat and dairy foods immediately.

The consumption of meat and dairy is associated with an increased risk of suffering from preventable conditions such as heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and cancer. In contrast, a plant-based diet can protect against these illnesses and, in some cases, even reverse their effects. It is time for meat and dairy to take their place alongside tobacco, alcohol, sugar, and fuel, all of which are taxed because of their negative impact on human health or the environment. This would lighten the burden on the already overstretched NHS: modelling predicts that a UK tax on red and processed meats could result in 22% fewer deaths and save the health service £700 million a year.

A reduction in meat and dairy consumption is also essential to protect our planet from the worst effects of the climate crisis. Meat, milk, eggs, fish, and other animal-derived foods have a carbon footprint up to 40 times larger than that of their plant-based equivalents. We must heed the Committee on Climate Change's call for meat and dairy consumption to be cut down and act on the United Nations' recommendation that national governments introduce a tax on meat.

Pressure on the NHS, the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis are three of the most worrying problems facing the UK today. By levying a tax on meat and dairy, you'd be taking a significant step towards alleviating all of them. The resulting tax revenue could be used to help meat and dairy farmers make the transition into healthier, more sustainable crop farming at a time when the plant-based food market is booming.

Sincerely,

Dawn Carr
Director of Vegan Corporate Projects

PO Box 70315
London N1P 2RG
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 7837 6327
+44 (0) 20 7923 6242 (fax)

Info@peta.org.uk

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
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company limited by guarantee,
with its registered office at
Cannon Place, 78 Cannon Street,
London EC4N 6AF.
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