

Rita Teotia  
Chairperson  
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India  
New Delhi 110 002

21 May 2020

**Subject: Re closure of slaughterhouses.**

Dear Ms Teotia,

I'm writing from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India to ask that you, as the regulatory authority vested with the responsibility of safeguarding the health and hygiene of workers in slaughterhouses – which must maintain adequate standards in order to be licensed – close down these facilities until workers have been tested for and vaccinated against COVID-19.

A copy of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, which mandate medical fitness certificates, personal hygiene practices, and the vaccination of meat workers in case of an epidemic, is attached for reference as **Annexure 1**.

Slaughterhouses around the world are hotbeds of COVID-19, since maintaining the recommended 2 metres of social distance among workers is nearly impossible inside them. In the US, 15,000 slaughterhouse and meat-processing plant employees have contracted COVID-19 and at least 60 of them have died. It was also recently reported that in Europe, more than 1,000 slaughterhouse workers have contracted COVID-19. The more the disease spreads through these facilities, the more workers will spread the disease to their families and communities.

To make matters worse, many slaughterhouses in India lack suitable basic facilities such as ample water, proper cleaning supplies, adequate drainage, and effective waste disposal. Staff perform physically demanding and emotionally stressful work – which can weaken immune systems – and they spend their days surrounded by blood, faeces, urine, and associated pathogens, often without wearing shoes or any protective gear, which puts them at risk of contracting zoonotic diseases (spread from other species) such as brucellosis, leptospirosis, and Q fever. Now, these workers also have to fear for their lives because of COVID-19 – which is believed to have first infected humans at a Chinese live-animal market.

Filthy slaughterhouses spread disease, and meat is not a necessity. In order to comply with statutory laws, for the sake of human health, and to protect farmed animals, PETA India urges you to require that slaughterhouses registered with you be closed down until their workers

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- PETA Asia
- PETA Australia
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are tested daily for COVID-19 and vaccinated against the disease, in order to maintain their registration with the FSSAI.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter of life and death.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kiran Ahuja (B.P.Th, DNHE)  
Vegan Outreach Coordinator  
PETA India

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