

Smt Nirmala Sitharaman
Hon'ble Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance
Government of India
134, North Block
New Delhi 110 001

24 January 2023

Subject: Substantially taxing meat, eggs, dairy and other animal-derived foods

Honorable Minister:

Since we reached out to your ministry regarding this issue in 2018, the animal welfare, environmental and health concerns associated with meat, egg, and dairy production continue to demand urgent attention. On behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India, I reiterate our call for the government to impose a significant tax to discourage the consumption of unhealthy, unsustainable, and cruelly produced animal-derived foods. The revenue earned from this could be used to encourage vegan eating and support Indian businesses that help animals – including humans – and the planet.

Taxing animal-derived foods and other steps to reduce citizens' intake of these foods is not unprecedented. Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, and Switzerland have all discussed or taken steps towards taxing meat, eggs, and/or dairy or considered financial initiatives to address emissions caused by their production. What's more, the New Zealand health ministry has recommended its public consume more vegan food, China has committed to reducing its meat consumption by 50%, and Germany's former environment minister banned meat from government meetings and events. Meanwhile, Canada removed dairy recommendations from its food guide.

India is already experiencing the damaging effects of the climate catastrophe in the form of extreme weather like scorching heat, droughts, wildfires, and unprecedented rainfall, and this is set to worsen if corrective steps are not taken now. Meat, egg, and dairy production is a major source of the greenhouse gas emissions that accelerate climate change.

In fact, their production is responsible for about 14.5% to 18% of global human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, which, by some estimates, is greater than all the world's transportation systems combined. Meanwhile, a study from the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and the Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology warns that India's livestock population, which is the world's largest, can significantly raise global temperatures.

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- PETA Australia
- PETA Foundation (UK)
- PETA France
- PETA Germany
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There are also other factors to consider: while 189 million people go hungry in India and fewer than half the country's citizens have access to safe drinking water, the production of animal-derived foods uses a third of the world's freshwater resources and cropland. This cropland could be used to grow food for humans directly instead of for animals who are deliberately bred and raised to be used and killed.

Vegan food is also better for human health. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals, says vegans are at reduced risk of dangerous health conditions, including heart disease, type-2 diabetes, hypertension, certain cancers, and obesity. A study published in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* found vegans live longer than meat-eaters, too.

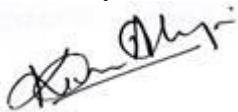
As such, University of Oxford researchers calculated that a global switch to vegan eating could save 8.1 million lives by 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70%, and lead to healthcare-related savings of up to US\$1,000 billion per year. It could also avoid US\$1.5 trillion of climate-related damage. Researchers also found that cutting out meat and dairy can reduce an individual's carbon footprint from food by up to 73%, making it conceivably the single biggest way to reduce a person's impact on the planet.

Taking decisive steps to promote sustainable, healthy food is not only the right thing to do for the planet and human health – it will also spare countless animals a miserable existence and a painful and terrifying death.

For all of these reasons and more, we urge you to impose a significant tax on meat and other animal-derived foods in India and use that revenue to encourage kind, healthy, green eating.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am hopeful for your action and response.

Sincerely,



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