

Press Release

6 May 2020

Compassion in World Farming launches report asking: 'Is the next pandemic on our plate?'

A new [report](#), released today (6th May) by leading farm animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming, explores the global food system through the lens of COVID-19, examining the effects of industrial animal agriculture on the emergence, transmission and amplification of pathogens. Following the release of the report, the charity is launching a [petition](#) calling on influential Global Institutions to end factory farming and safeguard our future.

The report, which highlights the need for humane farming systems that protect human health, the environment and animals, also stresses that we must resist arguments that wet markets should be replaced by factory farming, or that industrial farming is needed to provide cheap food to feed the growing world population. It provides arguments and presents evidence highlighting the need to move to farming systems that are healthy, socially just, environmentally regenerative, and respectful to animals.

"Maintaining a flawed global food system can and will lead to further pandemics," says Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Advisor at Compassion in World Farming and author of the document. "This report' explores why we need to move away from industrial livestock production to an alternative food system, one which is safe for human health, the planet and animals. The need has never been more relevant and urgent."

'Is the next pandemic on our plate?':

- points out that globally 70% of antibiotics are used in animal farming, mainly in the intensive sector. This drives antimicrobial resistance in animals, which in turn can be transmitted to people - undermining the efficacy of these crucial drugs in human medicine

- investigates how we can transition to keeping animals in ‘health-oriented’ systems in which the well-being of the animal is prioritised
- argues that farm animals should be viewed as sentient beings not as animal machines,
- examines the economic policies and fiscal measures needed to steer us towards regenerative agriculture and a nutritious, equitable food system
- explains the health, climate and environmental benefits of reducing meat consumption
- maintains that food should be regarded as a public good, not as a tradeable commodity

The accompanying petition encourages Global Institutions and Governments to take decisive action to minimise the risk of another zoonotic pandemic by ending factory farming.

Emma Slawinski, Director of Campaigns and Communications at Compassion in World Farming, says: *“Leading experts agree that intensive animal farming could trigger the next global pandemic.*

“We are at a turning point in history and we need an action plan that will be adopted and implemented by global institutions and national governments; a plan that ends factory farming and revolutionises the way we farm, changes the way we eat, protects the environment, restores biodiversity and respects animals.”

The petition urges the world’s most influential organisations, including The World Bank, the United Nations and the World Health Organisation, to protect human health, and the health of our planet by adopting a solid action plan that will replace factory farming with humane, regenerative agricultural systems that reduce the risk of future pandemics.

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For more information please email media.team@ciwf.org or call +44 (0)1483 521 615

Images and social media assets can be downloaded [here](#).

Notes to Editors

1. To read the full *Is the next pandemic on our plate?* policy report, visit: www.ciwf.org.uk/research/covid-19/is-the-next-pandemic-on-our-plate/
2. To find out more on the petition, visit: www.ciwf.org.uk/pandemic
3. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming, visit: www.ciwf.org