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To:
Alok Sharma, COP 26 President
George Eustice, Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Dear Mr Sharma and Mr Eustice

The IPCC report and food systems: time for meat and dairy reduction targets

Compassion in World Farming very much welcomes the seriousness which the Government is giving to the IPCC report.

In formulating the Government's response, it is crucial to include food system change, both within the UK and as the COP26 hosts. Many studies show that it will be very difficult to meet the Paris climate targets without reducing consumption of meat and dairy in the developed world and emerging economies.[i] [ii] Decreasing meat and dairy consumption leads to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. [iii] [iv] [v] A study published in the journal *Science* in 2020 concludes that even if fossil fuel emissions were immediately halted, current trends in global food systems would make it impossible to meet the 1.5°C target and difficult even to realise the 2°C target.[vi] A recent IMF working paper emphasises that reduced consumption of livestock products is needed if we are to meet our climate goals.[vii]

In light of the alarming situation detailed by the IPCC report, all areas that can reduce GHG emissions must be addressed. We cannot afford to ignore certain aspects and therefore cannot rely on ending fossil fuel use alone.

Reducing meat and dairy consumption can make a substantial contribution to lowering emissions. The *Science* paper referred to above shows that moving to plant-rich diets containing only moderate amounts of meat could reduce emissions from food systems by 47%.

The substantial investment costs associated with many other measures needed to tackle climate change would not be needed to the same extent in reducing meat and dairy consumption, although farmers would need support as they transition away from livestock to arable and horticulture.

As hosts to COP, Britain has a unique opportunity to lead on this; it would be transformative if participating governments were aware that Britain was preparing to announce a serious commitment in tackling the climate impact of meat and dairy consumption.

The Dimbleby report recommends a 30% reduction in meat consumption. Our calculations, based on the scientifically-based EAT-Lancet report, suggest that Britain's objective should be more ambitious and should aim for a 70% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2030, as part of a global effort to reduce by 50%.

To achieve this, we need urgent legislation to set a 70% target for 2030 with appropriate interim targets. Also, taxation should be placed on meat with **all** the revenue raised being used to lower the price of healthy food produced with low emissions. Food must not become more expensive; there should simply be a rebalancing of prices as between high and low emissions food.

Realistically, changes even approaching 70% will only be achieved by a shift in supermarket pricing to make non-meat alternatives more affordable and meat more expensive, and the role of government in both taxation and farming support will be crucial, with the "public money for public goods" initiative being developed by Defra offering a very helpful mechanism. We believe the public will support this type of approach in the face of the climate crisis, so long as it is clear that a wide range of healthy non-meat alternatives are available at a price that ordinary families can afford.

In this context, Britain can potentially be a world leader in the high-technology area of cultured meat and other alternative proteins. Supporting the **development of alternative proteins will help eliminate the risk of pandemics and antibiotic resistance associated with industrial animal agriculture. At the same time, their production uses much less cropland, water and energy than livestock. Governments should ensure that unnecessary regulatory barriers do not impede the market entry of such alternative proteins.**

In summary, we believe that addressing the contribution of food systems to climate change needs three elements:

1. A clear and measurable objective for reduction in meat consumption that the Government aims to reach by 2030.
2. A clear shift in taxation and subsidies to favour healthy non-meat options.
3. A detailed analysis of regulatory barriers to alternate proteins, including cell-based and plant-based, to ensure the best possible basis for a thriving, sustainable British food system.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further.

Kind regards

PHILIP LYMBERY
Global Chief Executive, Compassion in World Farming International

Copied to:

Prime Minister Boris Johnson
Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Climate Change Committee

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