

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA



5 May 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned, join the global call for our governments to **end the world's biggest form of food waste by cutting the use of grain – such as wheat, barley and oats – to feed factory farmed animals**. This waste is not only costing the planet and causing animal suffering, but also wasting the public money used to subsidise the production of these crops. **We urge governments to prioritise food for people, not for factory farms.**

Scientific studies show that farmed animals convert grain very inefficiently into meat and milk. When we refer to grain being wasted we are not speaking of the total amount of grain fed to the animals but to the huge proportion that is lost due to several grain-derived calories or grams of protein being needed to produce one calorie or one gram of protein in meat, milk, and eggs.

Calculations based on Defra's report *Agriculture in the UK 2024* show that over 50% of UK grain – wheat, barley and oats – is used as animal feed. **The amount of grain lost per year in the UK as a result of being fed to animals is 8.3m tonnes** – far greater than the 6.4m tonnes of household food waste.

Globally, more food is lost this way than through any other form of food waste. Vast amounts of grain do not feed people at all. Land that could produce nourishing food is locked into growing crops for industrially farmed animals – propped up by taxpayer money. It's a system that fuels hunger, drives up prices, and pushes us beyond planetary limits.

Industrial animal agriculture is often viewed as efficient and necessary to tackle hunger and feed a growing world population. However, Compassion in World Farming's *FoodNotFeed - How to stop the world's biggest form of food waste* report shows **industrial animal agriculture is profoundly inefficient and is undermining global food security**.

The fact that a large proportion of global soy production is used as feed for farmed animals – and that this is a key driver of deforestation – is widely known. There is, however, much less awareness that globally each year over 1,000 million tons of grain is fed to farmed animals. **45% of the world's grain is used as animal feed and for the UK the figure is even more alarming with a staggering 52.8%.**

The poor conversion rate by animals of grain into meat and milk means that industrial animal production does not build food security, it undermines it. It does not provide protein – it squanders this vital nutrient. If the land used to produce grain for animal feed was instead used to grow crops for direct human consumption, **then it could feed an extra 16.5 million people in the UK annually** and an extra two billion people globally each year. Far more than the expected increase in world population between now and 2050.

Phasing out the use of grain as feed would release large amounts of arable land that could be used to grow crops for direct human consumption such as fruit, vegetables, legumes,

pulses, peas, beans, nuts and seeds – all of which contribute to a diverse, healthy, nutritious diet. Compassion's report estimates that **at least 790,000 hectares of land would be freed up in the UK as a result** which equates to more than all of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk combined.

In addition, industrial animal agriculture's huge demand for grain has been a key factor fuelling the intensification of crop production. This, with its use of monocultures and agro-chemicals, has led to soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and an overuse and pollution of water.

It is vital governments, public institutions, and financial leaders to commit to a fair and urgent shift away from the use of grain and soy as animal feed by means of:

1. Establishing a clear plan to reduce reliance on grain and soy as animal feed.
2. Ensuring that productive farmland is used to grow food for people, not feed for animals.
3. Phasing out public subsidies that support the production of feed crops.
4. Raising public awareness of how food is lost through industrial animal agriculture.
5. Reforming public food purchasing so that schools, hospitals and care institutions play a leading role in the shift toward sustainable, plant-rich diets and more responsible sourcing.
6. Encouraging the adoption of plant-rich, flexitarian diets by setting targets to reduce animal-sourced food consumption in high-consuming populations, aligned with climate, biodiversity, and sustainability goals.
7. Public and commercial banks, investment funds, and multilateral institutions should end financial support for industrial farming and the use of grain and soy as animal feed.

Sincerely,

Marc Abraham OBE BVM&S MRCVS, vet and animal welfare campaigner

Mike Beckingham, actor

James Bolam MBE, award-winning actor

Sharon Carpenter, journalist

Professor Joy Carter CBE DL Cgeol FGS, Emeritus Professor of Geochemistry and Health, University of Winchester

Peter Egan, award-winning actor and dedicated animal advocate

Kate Ford, award-winning actor

Professor John Fyfe C.B.E., International Strategic Development Specialist

Dave Goulson, Professor of Biology, University of Sussex, Founder of Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Sue Jameson, actor and animal welfare campaigner

Dr Amir Khan GP, NHS doctor and broadcaster

Dr Shireen Kassam, MD, PhD, DipIBLM, Consultant Haematologist, King's College Hospital and certified lifestyle medicine physician

Sir David Madden KCMG, author and former British Ambassador to Greece

Megan McCubbin, zoologist and wildlife television presenter

Deborah Meaden, businesswoman and entrepreneur

Nitin Mehta MBE, author and award-winning animal protection campaigner

Linda Newbery, award-winning author

Sir Jonathon Porritt CBE, eminent writer, campaigner and advisor on sustainable development

Charlotte Roy, plant-based chef, MasterChef 2024 quarter finalist

Isabella Tree, award-winning expert on sustainable land management

Dale Vince OBE, entrepreneur and United Nations Climate Champion

And over 22,000 UK citizens

In total, this initiative has been backed by more than 80,000 people globally, including:

Brian Cox, award winning actor

Kate Mara, actor and activist

Rooney Mara, actor and activist

Joaquin Phoenix, actor and activist