



The Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern  
Prime Minister of New Zealand

**16 December 2021**

Dear Prime Minister:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). I hope this letter finds you well. We applaud the phase-out of tobacco sales for the health of future New Zealanders, and we'd like to propose that a similar measure be considered for meat products, which take animal lives, contribute to the climate crisis, and harm human health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies processed meats (such as hot dogs, ham, bacon, sausages, corned beef, biltong, beef jerky, canned meat, and meat-based preparations and sauces) as IARC Group 1, "carcinogenic to humans" – the same category as tobacco. Red meats such as beef, veal, pork, lamb, mutton, and goat have been labelled IARC Group 2A, "probably carcinogenic to humans".

These evaluations are based on epidemiological studies showing the development of cancer in exposed humans. With regard to processed meat, they're based on sufficient evidence to demonstrate that eating processed meat causes colorectal cancer. When it comes to red meat, WHO indicates that the "strongest, but still limited, evidence for an association with eating red meat is for colorectal cancer" but notes that "[t]here is also evidence of links with pancreatic cancer and prostate cancer".

Of course, meat is a death sentence for some 22 million sensitive New Zealand animals annually, who – after enduring miserable lives much shorter than is natural – are crammed into trucks and taken to blood-soaked slaughterhouses where they will be shot with captive-bolt guns before their throats are slit and they are dismembered. In the ways that matter, these animals are no different from those with whom many of us share our homes, yet a sense of human supremacy allows people to pay to have them treated in ways that would be illegal were they cats or dogs.

Since the climate crisis is one of humanity's most pressing issues, we must also acknowledge that meat production is a cancer on the Earth. New Zealand's net emissions increased by 57% between 1990 and 2018, and methane emissions from farmed ruminant animals – such as sheep, who outnumber human New Zealanders five to one – make up almost three-quarters of New Zealand's agricultural emissions.

For us to enjoy healthy lives on a thriving planet, the future must be meat-free. As you move to ban tobacco, we urge you also to phase out the equally unnecessary and harmful products of animal exploitation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Emily Rice, PETA

PEOPLE FOR  
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