



The Hon Steven Marshall
Premier of South Australia
GPO Box 2343,
ADELAIDE SA 5001

18 November 2020

Dear Premier,

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). I hope this letter finds you well. As Adelaide faces a sudden surge in COVID-19 cases, we wanted to rush you the enclosed masks, both to provide protection from the virus and to remind you (and others) that humankind's abhorrent treatment of our fellow animals has led to the outbreak of this and numerous other zoonotic diseases. **It's vital that leaders proactively oppose animal use and not merely react to its catastrophic outcomes.**

To say that 2020 has been "difficult" would be an understatement. The current pandemic, which is believed to have originated in a wildlife market, has claimed the lives of more than 900 Australians and has decimated the global economy – but zoonotic disease outbreaks are not new. As far back as 2016, the UN Environment Programme warned that the "Livestock Revolution" increases the likelihood of disease transmission, and experts are increasingly concerned about future outbreaks of swine and bird flu.

In 2009, the Department of Health recorded 191 deaths from 37,537 confirmed cases of H1N1 swine influenza, and this July and August, six Victorian farms reported three different strains of avian influenza, proving that Australia *is* at risk. In fact, according to a paper published in 2018 by Belgian spatial epidemiologist Marius Gilbert, Australia has generated more instances of historical "conversion events" (that is, when a not-very-pathogenic avian flu strain suddenly becomes dangerous to humans) than China.

Of course, human consumption of animal flesh also contributes to illnesses such as heart disease and colorectal cancer and contributes considerably to anthropogenic climate change. In addition, there's the horrible toll on nonhuman animals. Annually, some half a million animals are callously slaughtered in Australia to meet the demand for their flesh. Each was an individual, just like the cats and dogs with whom we share our homes. Sadly, unlike our animal companions, those bred for meat endure miserable lives in captivity before being killed.

The world faces a slew of problems because of the breeding, confinement, and slaughter of our fellow animals, and we urge leaders like you to champion an end to animal use and help shape a healthier, more sustainable future.

Yours faithfully,

PEOPLE FOR
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OF ANIMALS

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