

#CANCELANIMALAG

Stopping an existential threat to all life on Earth while we still can

ISSUES

Public Health

COVID-19, like SARS, the Spanish Flu, and many other outbreaks before it, is a [zoonotic pathogen](#) -- meaning it is transmitted between humans and animals.¹ Factory farms are Petri dishes for brewing pandemic disease, with animals crowded together by the tens of thousands, surrounded by feces and urine which makes them highly susceptible to viral and bacterial infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) further [warns](#) that "...3 out of every 4 new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals."²

Furthermore, scientists agree that the use of [antibiotics in livestock](#) -- accounting for over 60% of the total antibiotic use in this country -- contributes significantly to [the problem of drug resistance](#).³ This resistance, in turn, fuels the growth of antibiotic-resistant pathogens, a risk the World Health Organization says poses [one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today](#), which could kill *10 million people every year* by 2050.⁵

But our government has simply failed to respond. Not only are farms not required to disclose the amount of antibiotic drugs they use, federal inspectors are barred from making spot checks on farms to determine the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant diseases -- something DxE investigators have seen [firsthand](#).⁶ This means there is virtually no government oversight over industry practices that threaten the future of all life on Earth.

Animal Abuse

Animal agriculture kills over 10 billion land animals in the US every year. Over 99% of these animals are raised in factory farm settings, subjected to abuse which would lead to criminal prosecution if done to dogs or cats. These animals are routinely brutalized, including [intensive confinement](#) and untreated illnesses and injuries, which leads to starvation.⁷

Climate Crisis

While the fossil fuel industry has been the focus of public policy to combat climate change, animal agriculture has also been cited as a [major contributor](#), yet it remains widely overlooked.⁸

¹ Coronavirus and the karmic interconnectedness of humans, animals, The Hill,

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/486398-coronavirus-and-the-karmic-interconnectedness-of-humans-animals>.

² Zoonotic Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/zoonotic-diseases.html>.

³ Stop using antibiotics in healthy animals to prevent the spread of antibiotic resistance, The World Health Organization, www.who.int/news-room/detail/07-11-2017-stop-using-antibiotics-in-healthy-animals-to-prevent-the-spread-of-antibiotic-resistance.

⁴ U.N. Issues Urgent Warning on the Growing Peril of Drug-Resistant Infections, The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/health/un-drug-resistance-antibiotics.html>.

⁵ Antibiotic resistance, The World Health Organization, www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antibiotic-resistance.

⁶ Stealing Lauri, The New York Times, www.nytimes.com/2019/08/04/science/stealing-lauri.html.

⁷ Whole Foods Thanksgiving turkeys endure 'horrific conditions' at Calif. farm, activists say, Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/11/24/whole-foods-thanksgiving-turkeys-endure-horrific-conditions-at-california-farm-animal-rights-activists-say/.

⁸ Avoiding meat and dairy is 'single biggest way' to reduce your impact on Earth, The Guardian, www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth.

Whistleblower Repression

When private citizens or whistleblowers report misconduct by agricultural enterprises, they almost universally result in no enforcement action by the government -- except to prosecute [the whistleblowers themselves](#).⁹ And these prosecutions have actually escalated; since 2018, over 100 people have been charged in California following nonviolent protests exposing factory farm abuses and providing aid to suffering animals.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Americans are increasingly concerned about the impacts of animal ag, with [half supporting a ban on factory farming, and 32.5% supporting](#) an outright ban on animal farming.¹⁰ Yet far from being taxed or meaningfully regulated for its catastrophic impacts, animal agriculture is the beneficiary of tens of billions of dollars in government subsidies annually. We hereby call on public officials to end their support of animal agriculture, and to proactively seek to reverse negative impacts on animal welfare, public health, the environment, free speech and public trust.

1. **Acknowledge the link between animal agriculture and pandemics.** The science is clear and the threat is existential, yet prominent leaders like [California Governor Gavin Newsom](#) and [President Trump](#) are not even mentioning the emergency that is animal agriculture, much less taking action to stop it.^{11 12} Follow in the footsteps of the [U.N.](#) by publicly acknowledging the link between animal ag and the risk of future pandemic disease.¹³
2. **Disavow the prosecutions of nonviolent factory farm whistleblowers.** Protect whistleblowers and Good Samaritans who rescue distressed animals and expose industry abuses from unconstitutional prosecutions by making a statement disavowing the prosecution of peaceful whistleblowers, and in support of the "[Right to Rescue](#)."¹⁴
3. **Make a plan to transition to a 100% plant-based food system.** Animal agricultural corporations hold immense influence over our political process; this violent, unsustainable and unnecessary industry receives tens of billions of dollars in subsidies every year.

And ultimately, If we don't end the mass confinement, drugging and eating of animals, there WILL be an epidemic that permanently alters human life as we know it; it's just a matter of time. The Chinese government understood this very well when it [banned the country's \\$73 billion wildlife](#)

⁹ Meet the Animal Rights Activists Facing Prison Time for Rescuing Ducks, Piglets from Factory Farms, Democracy Now!, www.democracynow.org/2019/6/6/direct_action_everywhere_dxe_duck_farm.

¹⁰ Survey of US Attitudes Towards Animal Farming and Animal-Free Food October 2017, Sentience Institute, www.sentienceinstitute.org/animal-farming-attitudes-survey-2017.

¹¹ PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY, Executive Department of the State of California, www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.4.20-Coronavirus-SOE-Proclamation.pdf.

¹² Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak, WhiteHouse.gov, www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-declaring-national-emergency-concerning-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak/

¹³ U.N. Issues Urgent Warning on the Growing Peril of Drug-Resistant Infections, The New York Times, www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/health/un-drug-resistance-antibiotics.html.

¹⁴ Support the Right to Rescue, Direct Action Everywhere, www.righttorescue.com.

[trade](#) in response to the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁵ We must take similarly bold action in the U.S. to meet this moment. The recent [boom in plant-based alternatives](#) -- which are superior in terms of public health, the environment and animal welfare -- means we have every reason to evolve beyond this catastrophic industry.¹⁶

We call on government officials to chart a braver, kinder and more sustainable path forward.

- End animal ag subsidies, instead diverting these resources to support individuals most affected by the COVID-19 crisis, as well as farmers transitioning to a plant-based food system -- making both our society and our food system safer and more democratic.
- Introduce legislation to ban factory farms and slaughterhouses.
- Make a public statement supporting the campaign to #CancelAnimalAg, disavowing the dated, unsustainable and completely unnecessary practice of animal farming

ABOUT DIRECT ACTION EVERYWHERE (DXE)

DxE is a global grassroots network of animal rights activists devoted to rescuing animals and exposing animal abuse across the world. DxE's investigatory work has been featured in [The Intercept](#), [Washington Post](#) and [The New York Times](#).

¹⁵ China Reportedly Bans Wildlife Trade As Global Coronavirus Cases Surge, Forbes, www.forbes.com/sites/lisettevoytko/2020/02/24/china-permanently-bans-wildlife-trade-as-global-coronavirus-cases-surge/#6173040a3890

¹⁶ New Products, Growing Demand Fuel Growth Of Plant-Based Food Sales, Forbes, www.forbes.com/sites/janetforgrieve/2020/03/10/new-products-growing-demand-fuel-growth-of-plant-based-food-sales/#535128ab77cb