

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Dear Vice Chancellor,

I am writing to you in relation to the ban on beef and lamb, implemented by the University of Cambridge in 2016.

In practice, this decision meant replacing this meat with other meats and plant-based products in 14 outlets and at all events at the University. The rationale behind the decision was to cut down on carbon emissions. The University has said nothing about the economic and reputational impact of its decision on the rural communities we represent which are sustained by beef and sheep farming.

Since this decision was announced, the University has repeatedly highlighted the reduction in carbon emissions it has calculated arise from the ban on beef and lamb. More than that Professor Balmford, who advised on the changes, went as far as to say to the BBC in September 2019: "It is hard to imagine any other intervention that could yield such dramatic benefits in so short span of time". This was a very bold claim which we felt duty bound to investigate.

We therefore submitted an FOI request to the University and have learned that 17,545 airline flights have been booked and paid for by the University for its staff in just over 3.5 years; the time period since the meat ban was implemented. These flights have cost £13,431,166.66. The locations include, but are certainly not limited to, hundreds of flights to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Singapore and Beijing. As well as thousands of flights to London, from locations unknown.

If we assume that the international destinations listed abroad are return flights from London, the total Co2 emissions just to the top 50 destinations frequently flown to totals **18,077.28** metric tonnes of Co2. This figure is reached using the carbon footprint calculator that follows methodology outlined by the UK Government. The metric tonnage for a return flight to the destination was then multiplied by the number of visits.

Although it could well be that the figure is much higher.

You state in your report 'Our Sustainable Food Journey' that 500 tonnes of Co2 are cut annually because of the ban on cattle and sheep meat. In 3.5 years, that works out at 1,750 tonnes. If we just take the examples of flights to New York, Las Vegas and Sydney we can see that cutting out flights to these three locations, would result in a greater reduction in carbon emissions annually than banning red meat does. The saving would be 512 tonnes in Co2 emissions.

It is not for me to tell you what decisions the University of Cambridge makes in relation to its business affairs and I am not suggesting that some flights are not necessary. It is quite clear, however, that Professor Balmford's claim is completely unsustainable and that a review of the University's airline flight policy could deliver much more dramatic cuts in carbon emissions in a much shorter space of time than the ban on beef and lamb.

Your decision to ban meat sets a worrying precedent and risks damaging the countryside and the communities that sustain it. Especially when the recent IPPC report recognises the important role animal products play in a balanced diet.

We appreciate that it falls on all of us to do our part in tackling the very real problems relating to climate change. There is, however, a very valid argument that by sourcing grass fed, locally sourced beef and lamb, and reviewing your airline flight policy the University could have a far

greater impact on reducing carbon emissions, whilst supporting British livestock farmers across the country, who comply with some of the highest environmental standards in the world and have committed through the National Farmers Union to be part of net zero agriculture in the UK by 2040.

More than that the current situation clearly leaves the University open to the charge of hypocrisy as it implements and promotes what it clearly intended to be an 'eye-catching' policy whilst continuing to contribute massively to CO2 emissions created by the airline industry.

The co-signatories to this letter are British livestock farmers that would be happy to talk about the action they are taking to cut carbon emissions within their work. They would also be keen to discuss supplying high-quality beef and lamb to Cambridge University when it lifts the ban.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Bonner, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance  
Judith Jacobs - Proud Red Tractor Assured Livestock Farmer and Cambridgeshire's Lady in Beef  
Jilly Greed - Co-found Ladies in Beef  
Jacob Anthony - Cwm Risca Farm. 5th Generation Beef and Sheep farmer  
Gareth Wyn Jones - Fferm Tyn Llwyfan  
Robin Page - Chairman Countryside Restoration Trust and Livestock Farmer  
Andrew Loftus - Beef Farmer and Director Hectare Agritech  
Dann Luff - Beef Farmer TN Luff & Partners  
Abi Reader – Farmer  
Joe Stanley - Beef Farmer  
Peter Gott - Livestock Farmer  
Caryl Non Lewis - Tysia Sheep and Beef Farmer  
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Jessica Jacobs - Proud Red Tractor Assured Livestock Farmer  
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Pamela Jacobs - Proud Red Tractor Assured Livestock Farmer  
Margaret Eyre - Proud Red Tractor Assured and retired Dairy farmer  
Philip Eyre - Proud Red Tractor Assured Livestock and retired Dairy Farmer  
Rosie Jacobs - Proud Red Tractor Assured Livestock Farmer  
Gillian Barnett - Farmer  
Gywndaf Thomas - Dairy Farmer  
Paul Webster - Butcher