Your submission to Action for healthy waterways – consultation

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Clause

Other comments on the proposed National Environmental Standards for Freshwater - please refer to questions 76-78 on page 81 of the discussion document

Notes

The Dunedin/Ōtepoti Vegan Society (DŌVeS) recognises that there are many complexities to the freshwater management issue. However, it is well known that one of the major culprits in the current water crisis is the dairy industry. It is our official position that it is not enough to merely attempt to reform or improve this industry, or indeed any other forms of animal agriculture. Instead, our government, in conjunction with these industries, needs to lead a serious and urgent transition from all forms of animal farming, (and commercial fishing), to cropping and horticulture. This is for 3 key reasons... 1) Animal Wellbeing: Animals are conscious, sentient, intelligent beings, with complex cognitive capacities and emotional experiences, as well as important and meaningful social relationships. They are not the same as plants. In all of the most important ways, they are very similar to us. And of course this should be obvious: we are animals ourselves. Because animals are complex beings and therefore have the capacity to experience both suffering and happiness, their interests must be given moral consideration. It follows logically that we must endeavour to eliminate ALL practices which are not strictly necessary for human survival, yet involve causing suffering to animals. It is now widely scientifically accepted that there is no biological need for humans to consume animal-derived foods in order to be healthy, or even to be happy. The world's largest mainstream body of experts in human diet and nutrition - the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics - make this very clear in their 2016 'Official Position Statement' on vegetarian and vegan diets, in which they state that these diets are nutritionally suitable for everyone through ALL stages of the life cycle. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in the USA is a group comprised of 175,000 members of which 12,000 are medical doctors. They also accept that humans do not need ‘animal products’ to be healthy, and promote plant-based diets. Many other credible and reputable science-based medical and nutritional focussed organisations around the world concur that humans do not require animal foods. (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics official position statement: https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(16)31192-3/pdf). (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine website: https://www.pcrm.org) When we choose to ignore these indisputable facts, and exploit animals for food regardless, we therefore cause suffering and death to innocent animals for no good reason other than taste preference, or habit, custom and tradition. Although historically our species didn't know any better, we know these facts now and therefore can no longer legitimately claim ignorance. Survival is an acceptable reason to cause harm. Trivial preferences and habits are not sufficiently strong reasons. Faced with these indisputable facts, the only logical conclusion we can draw is that in this day and age exploiting animals for food (and any other non-essential purpose) must now be considered morally and ethically unacceptable. In short: Suffering + Unnecessary = Unethical and Unacceptable 2) Environment: For environmental reasons, both the 2006 UNFAO report, "Livestock’s Long Shadow" and the 2018 report - the largest and most comprehensive of its kind ever - by J Poore and T Nemecek of Oxford University entitled “Reducing Food’s Environmental Impacts Through Producers and Consumers” published in the prestigious scientific journal, Science make it crystal clear that even the very best models of raising and killing animals for food, pale in comparison to some quite average models of horticulture and cropping. (Livestock's Long Shadow: http://www.fao.org/3/a0701e/a0701e00.htm) (Reducing Food’s Environmental Impacts Through Producers and Consumers: https://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6392/987) Even the NZ Ministry of Health supports the move to diets higher in plants, with fewer animal products, for environmental reasons. (https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/ministry-health-promotes-plant-based-diet-in-new-sustainability-report). 3) Human Health: The massive weight of scientific evidence that consuming animal products is detrimental overall to human health, and that a well balanced plant-based diet produces optimum health outcomes for people, can no longer be ignored. (We refer you again to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ official position statement: https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(16)31192-3/pdf). Our Recommendations: We are well past the point of talking about reforming the animal agriculture industries. Our government needs to lead a serious and urgent transition from all forms of animal agriculture, (and commercial fishing), to cropping and horticulture, for the benefit of animals, the environment, and human health outcomes.