



TO: President-Elect Mr. Joseph R. Biden  
CC:  
Jen O'Malley Dillon, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Ted Kaufman, Transition Team Co-Chair  
RE: Recommendations on Priority Animal Welfare Issues

Dear President-Elect Biden

World Animal Protection, a global animal welfare non-profit organization with 50+ years of experience protecting animals worldwide and offices in 14 different countries, urges that the below recommendations be considered a high priority for your administration. World Animal Protection works through policy change at the national and intergovernmental levels, corporate engagement, and grassroots public mobilization to improve the lives of animals, wild and domestic, and ensure all animals are afforded lives worth living. We envision a world in which respect for animals and nature sits at the heart of our global systems.

We strongly encourage you to endorse and push forward animal-friendly policies during your presidency and offer the following priorities for your consideration:

### **1. Support Farmed Animal-Friendly Federal Policies**

Today, there are hardly any federal protections for farmed animals raised and killed in the United States. Big multinational corporations turn massive profits by cramming them into barren sheds and massive feedlots. As a result, billions of farmed animals suffer miserable lives, not to mention the detrimental environmental toll factory farming has on our planet.

The Farm System Reform Act would help put a moratorium on large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), helping to end one of the largest sources of cruelty to animals in the world. This critical piece of legislation was introduced by New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, is co-sponsored by Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, and has a companion bill in the House introduced by California Representative Ro Khanna. The proposed legislation would limit the most egregious farmed animal cruelties, such as extreme confinement, the overuse of antibiotics, and brutal mutilations. It also calls for uplifting independent family farmers, protecting frontline workers, rural communities, and public health, and overhauling our broken food system. World Animal Protection calls on the Biden-Harris administration to support the measures laid out in the Farm System Reform Act and help fix our broken food system.

The Safe Line Speeds During COVID-19 Act—introduced last session by Ohio representative Marcia Fudge with a companion bill introduced by Senator Booker—would prevent meat processing companies from operating slaughter lines at extreme speeds during the pandemic and directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review the U.S. Department of Agriculture's actions to date regarding increasing line speed caps and granting speed waivers to facilities. High-speed processing increases risks to animals, workers, and food safety. The animals are at higher risk of entering the processing line without being properly stunned, and inspectors cannot sufficiently monitor for signs of disease that would require animals to be condemned. Workers in the meat processing industry are at high risk of acute and chronic injuries. During the current pandemic, hazards to workers are further increased, as they are forced to stand shoulder-to-shoulder to manage the pace.

## **2. Strengthen Federal Regulations of Antibiotics for Farmed Animals**

Antibiotics are used routinely to prop up low-welfare practices on factory farms, and their overuse contributes to the rapid rise and spread of bacteria that are resistant to medicines used to fight infections. The United Nations considers resistant bacteria, or “superbugs,” one of the most pressing global public health concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Resistant organisms infect 2.8 million Americans each year, and 35,000 die from these infections.

Roughly three-quarters of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. each year are marketed for use in farmed animals rather than humans. Factory farms have relied on providing animals continuous doses via feed and water—as well as regular antibiotic injections at key production stages—to maintain the high densities, poor conditions, and low-welfare genetics in the intensive industry. The intense stress, crowding, and breeding for rapid growth naturally hinder the animals’ development and make them susceptible to disease and infection. When regularly exposed to low doses of antibiotics, bacteria on farms develop the ability to continue fighting not only the specific drugs but other drugs in the same class.

The problem of the irresponsible use of antibiotics in farmed animals is acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has taken steps to reduce the use of antibiotics for the purpose of growth promotion, it continues to sanction routine use of drugs in healthy animals for “disease prevention.” This use maintains the status quo and allows the use of important drugs for purposes other than treating or controlling disease in animals, and fails to achieve the reduction in use required to protect the health of Americans and the wellbeing of farmed animals. It is imperative to instruct the FDA to prohibit the use of antibiotics to prevent disease across groups.

## **3. Promote Climate- and Animal-Friendly Trade Agreements**

The United States has considerable influence via trade relationships and opportunities to make a positive impact on people, animals, and the planet. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and habitat loss are defining challenges of our time for which solutions must involve global cooperation. In addition to recommitting to the Paris Agreement, the U.S. should pursue an overall green trade agenda inclusive of addressing the environmental impacts of intensive farming systems.

Raising the more than 9 billion farmed animals each year in the U.S. requires massive quantities of commodity feed inputs. The intensive production and global trade of commodity crops such as soy and corn and feed ingredients such as fishmeal, oilseeds, and synthetic supplements, exacts a heavy toll on animal welfare and the planet. Roughly one-third of arable land is currently used for animal feed production, and one-third of all grain produced globally is fed to animals. This is an inefficient system, with more food, water, and land required to produce 1,000 calories of beef, for example, than 1,000 calories of grain.

Feed crop production accounts for 17.2% of livestock’s emissions footprint globally, including from the burning of fossil fuels to produce mineral fertilizer, land-use change for increasing feed production, and fossil fuel use during the processing and trade of animal feed. Emissions reductions and climate mitigation goals cannot be achieved without addressing intensive farmed animal production. Intensive feed production systems and associated land-use changes also negatively impact wildlife, clearing habitats, and polluting ecosystems.

These impacts cannot be effectively addressed if the farmed animal industry continues to operate at its current scale, which is expected to increase in the coming years. Piecemeal improvements to the sustainability of soy and corn or efforts to enhance feed efficiencies of the animals themselves will not go far enough to mitigate the impacts of the full animal product supply chain. Reducing the number of animals raised for food and raising higher-welfare breeds are integral to creating a more sustainable, localized, and diversified animal feed industry.

#### **4. End the Wildlife Trade**

The impact of COVID-19 concerning the loss of human life, physical and mental health, the global economy, livelihoods, and quality of life has been utterly devastating and cannot be underestimated. COVID-19 has led to around 70 million confirmed cases and more than 1.5 million deaths across more than 200 countries and territories. The costs to the international community and governments of fighting a global pandemic are vastly higher than the costs of preventing it in the first place.

The demand for wild animals and wild animal products is a primary cause of the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases and represents a severe risk to global health. Millions of wild animals are captured, bred, and traded every year across the globe for food, traditional medicine, and pets. Zoonotic diseases can emerge or be spread at every stage of the trade. Global and national action to curb the wildlife trade is one of the most effective strategies to prevent future pandemics and is necessary to reduce animal suffering and protect biodiversity.

In the U.S., we support the bipartisan Preventing Future Pandemics Act, which would restrict the import of wild animals and wild animal products for human consumption.

The majority of Americans want to see their government do all that it can to prevent the next pandemic. The most effective pandemic prevention strategy is to address the root of this current crisis, which is the exploitation and trade in wild animals and the destruction of their habitat. We look forward to working with you on this critically important issue.

#### **5. Fund Healthful Plant-Based Foods in Nutrition Assistance and School Lunches**

Food insecurity is on the rise, with one in six Americans at risk of going hungry this year as the pandemic persists. It will be crucial that your administration not only supports increasing funding for school lunches and nutrition assistance programs but also works to ensure the foods being procured are sustainable, nutritious, and of high animal welfare.

World Animal Protection is calling on the administration to increase funding to the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh), increase funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and increase benefits for fruit and vegetable purchases through WIC.

By ensuring those who rely on nutrition assistance programs and school meals have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, the administration will help our nation's most vulnerable reduce their reliance on processed foods and animal-based products and increase their access to healthful plant-based foods.

#### **6. Build a more humane and sustainable tourism industry**

Tigers, elephants, and dolphins are just some of the wild animals suffering in the wildlife entertainment tourism industry—an industry that drives the cruel global wildlife trade. Captured from the wild or intensively bred in captivity, the conditions they are kept in can cause immense suffering and stress. World Animal Protection's campaign to build back a better tourism industry focuses on how our demand for a once in a lifetime holiday experience drives the commodification of wild animals and fuels the multi-billion-dollar global wildlife trade. The growth of international tourism has fueled the trade of hundreds of thousands of wild animals to be used for entertainment, where they are often beaten, chained, and abused. The industry profits from cruelty and endangers people by putting them in close contact with wild animals. But when the tourists stop coming, wild animals, who should never have been in captivity in the first place, suffer the most, left abandoned, neglected, and starving.

World Animal Protection helps move the travel industry to show its potential as a force for good, ending cruel captivity, stopping wildlife entertainment, and supporting the goal of making this the last generation of wild animals suffer for our entertainment. Because it's better for animals, people, the planet, and ultimately better for the resilience of the tourism industry itself.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of the above, and are available to answer any questions at your earliest convenience.

Thank You,

Ben Williamson

World Animal Protection  
U.S. Programs Director  
535 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
917-498-7495  
[benwilliamson@worldanimalprotection.us](mailto:benwilliamson@worldanimalprotection.us)

[www.worldanimalprotection.us](http://www.worldanimalprotection.us)

535 8th Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10018

T: 1.800.883.9772 F: 1.646.781.9224

E: [info@worldanimalprotection.us](mailto:info@worldanimalprotection.us)

 @WorldAnimalProtectionUS

 @MovetheWorldUS

 @WorldAnimalProtectionUS