



Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance Peoples' Food Plan

Animal Welfare

Increasing public concern over animal welfare, climate change and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the calamity of industrial livestock, in which large numbers of animals kept in confined spaces are a breeding ground for emerging zoonotic diseases. Such precipitating crises have dramatically called into question whether industrial animal agriculture is able to adapt to and mitigate climate change and to address cruelty.

AFSA's role in this discourse has been to raise public awareness about **alternatives to industrial farming**. **These include agroecology and regenerative agriculture which work to enhance animal welfare and restore degraded agricultural land.** The Plan addresses demands from animal welfarists to abolish all animal agriculture, discussing how such calls not only disregard the vast difference in animal welfare outcomes for intensive vs. pastured livestock, but contradict food sovereignty principles, particularly with regard to ensuring peoples' right to culturally-appropriate food, and the importance of animals in agro-ecosystems. It also addresses the problematic promises of human and planetary health made by lab meat proponents.

Instead, the Plan advocates on behalf of ethical livestock farmers who respect the welfare and natural instincts of animals. These farmers recognise the critical role that all life plays in agroecological farming systems, in healing Country, and in nourishing communities through the provision of food that is grown and produced in a way that is ethical, socially-just and ecologically-sound.

As such, the Plan advocates for ways to **protect freedom of speech and animal welfare to reflect the change in social licence in this area.** It also supports better government regulation of animal industries that **requires adherence to the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare**, and that implements upstream elements of One Health approaches.

Systemically, it advocates for an end to intensive livestock production - a source of animal misery and significant public health and environmental risks. It also calls for **inclusion of democratically-elected representatives of smallholders and civil society in decision making bodies around animal welfare.**

Key peoples' policy recommendations*:

Local and State Governments:

- Include democratically-elected representatives of smallholders and civil society in stakeholder and advisory groups responsible for improving animal welfare.
- Enact legislation to ban open-pen salmon farming and enforce closed containment.

The Federal Government:

- Sign and adopt the Universal Declaration of Animal Welfare as a rights-based framework to underpin all policies that impact animals in Australia.
- Implement a One Health approach to agricultural policy, animal welfare standards and guidelines, and livestock.
- Set a clear target to phase out battery systems in all pig and poultry production models over the next 3 – 5 years and phase out all cage systems in the next 10 years.

**Please refer to the Right to Food section of AFSA's Peoples' Food Plan for a full list of policy recommendations for local, state and federal government.*

Case studies:

Tall Poppy Farm

Located in the Macedon Ranges of Victoria, Tall Poppy Farm operates a low-intensity pasture system in which the welfare of its grass-fed, grass-finished beef and pastured chickens is a priority. Its CSA subscription service for beef and eggs curates a face-to-face relationship between grower and eater to raise awareness about how they safeguard animal welfare through their commitment to agroecological and ethical production methods.

Sellar Farmhouse Creamery

This micro-dairy operation in Victoria processes fresh milk and yoghurt via a mobile milking parlour based on the needs and health of its 10 milking cows. By following the natural behaviour of the cattle, the milking trailer system respects the connection between mothers and their calves (including training, separating and weaning), follows the grazing patterns of the cattle through the paddocks, and ensures that the business can adapt to changing business situations.