



Coronavirus: anagram of carnivorous

Dear Editor, The coronavirus is among us. Medical authorities are urgently seeking the people who travelled on the same planes as patients who have shown symptoms of the new deadly virus. The virus, an anagram of carnivorous, appears to have emerged from a fish market that was also selling wild animals such as beavers, porcupines and snakes in the city of Wuhan, in central China. The 2002-2003 SARS pandemic was similarly traced to civet cats. In these markets, urine, faeces and other bodily fluids from live, wild animals end up mixing with blood from butchered ones, providing ideal breeding grounds for viruses and bacteria. Overwhelmingly, human diseases start with the abuse of animals. Hunting and the appropriation of animals' habitats has led to diseases such as Hendra and Ebola. The 2009 H1N1 epidemic started in pigs. Measles originally came from cattle, and whooping cough from dogs. The Professor of communicable disease control at the University of Queensland said of the growth of pathogens that spill-over to humans "The most significant driver of emergence is food production." This is not a solitary event – such epidemics are becoming regular events, and diseases thought to be long vanquished are returning with the spread of superbugs, largely due to the use of massive doses of antibiotics in factory farms to promote faster growth and counter the diseases that spread in filthy conditions. Scientists have warned for years that filthy farms crammed with sick and suffering animals are breeding grounds for new, antibiotic-resistant bacteria. We create these problems from the violence we impose by torturing and slaughtering gentle animals who are trying to live their own lives. As the Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer said: "as long as human beings will go on shedding the blood of animals, there will never be any peace". Our best defence against disease is to go vegan. Desmond Bellamy Special Projects Coordinator PETA Australia PO Box 2352 Byron Bay NSW 2481 0411 577 416 DesmondB@PETA.org.au

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