



Sin tax on meat

Dear Editor, Pacific Leaders are appealing to Australia to do something about greenhouse emissions. Our own children are striking to protest inaction. But what can we do? A new research report suggests that meat could be targeted for higher taxes, given the industry's role in climate change, deforestation and animal cruelty. Fitch Solutions said "the global rise of sugar taxes makes it easy to envisage a similar wave of regulatory measures targeting the meat industry". The idea is taking off in Europe, where German politicians are voting to remove the VAT discount on meat. A report in the scientific journal The Lancet estimated that reducing meat consumption would result in the prevention of more than 11 million premature deaths each year, cutting of greenhouse gas emissions and preservation of land, water and biodiversity. The report added that unhealthy diets currently cause more death and disease worldwide than unsafe sex, alcohol, drug and tobacco use combined. We tax sugar, tobacco and alcohol based on the damages they cause to people's health, and we should tax meat accordingly. But reducing meat consumption will also lessen the appalling cruelty of the meat industry, where many cows are branded with hot irons, their horns are cut or burned off, and males' testicles are ripped out of their scrotums – all without pain relief. It's time – to tax meat or better still, ban it altogether. Mimi Bekhechi Campaigns Strategist People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Australia) PO Box 20308 World Square Sydney, NSW, 2002. (08) 8556-5828

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