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MeatFree Movement Addresses Climate Change: Website Unites International Petitions

Los Angeles, California – August 20, 2009 – Taking action to halt climate change just got easier. The MeatFree movement has gone global with the help of a unique website. MeatFreePetition.com gathers and links various nations' petitions that urge governments to support at least one meat-free day a week. This allows individuals concerned about climate change to show their support by signing petitions and sharing with friends worldwide.

Greenhouse gas emissions from livestock are among the most serious and significant contributors to global warming. Animal agriculture is responsible for 14-18 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, more than all vehicle emissions and other forms of motorized transportation.¹

Other facts about the impact of meat production on climate change include:

- Meat production results in nitrous oxide and methane emissions -- more potent greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide.^{1,2}
- Global meat production more than doubled since 1970 and is projected to double again by 2050.¹
- Pasture and feed demands of large-scale meat production promote deforestation.²
- The livestock industry uses disproportionate amounts of land, fresh water, and energy, and is a major cause of water pollution worldwide.^{1,2}
- The livestock sector is one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.¹

Recently, the civic government in Ghent, Belgium set a precedent by declaring a vegetarian day one day *each* week to help reduce the city's carbon footprint. The Chair of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, has recommended a weekly meat free day as a simple yet effective way to prevent climate change: "If you eat less meat you would be healthier and so would the planet ... it would help the global community enormously because the entire meat cycle is very, very intensive in terms of carbon dioxide emissions." In 2007, Dr. Pachauri and the IPCC won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on environmental and climate change issues.

Other jurisdictions supporting vegetarianism or meat-free days to halt climate change include Sweden, Germany, Britain's National Health Service, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Similar initiatives are being developed in many other countries. In addition to government participation, organizations, businesses and individuals are getting involved. For example, Sir Paul McCartney is leading and promoting Meat-Free UK and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health endorses Meatless Monday USA. These initiatives raise awareness, encourage individual action and promote the many benefits of a plant-based diet for preserving the environment and protecting human health.

The creator of MeatFreePetition.com, Leron Rabinowiz, hopes many people will visit the website to sign petitions in advance of the next major international climate change meeting in Copenhagen (December 2009). "These petitions will help support decision makers to include meat free days as an effective policy tool to include in future climate change treaties. By uniting concerned individuals, we offer everyone a way to take responsibility and support government action to halt climate change."

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