

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Meat and dairy companies fuelling climate crisis with inaction on methane – new report

The world's biggest meat and dairy producing corporations and countries are doing little or nothing to cut methane emissions according to new research from Changing Markets Foundation and Feedback today.

The environmental groups say the report underlines the need for the Global Methane Pledge to take stronger action on agriculture. Livestock farming is responsible for almost a third (32%) of methane emissions but measures, such as dietary shifts, which offer the greatest potential for cuts are largely absent from the Pledge.

The report, *Blind Spot*, ranks the climate targets and actions of the 20 biggest meat and dairy corporations with a focus on methane. It reveals that they are failing to tackle methane emissions or address their wider climate impacts:

- **Low marks all round:** Only two dairy companies, Danone and Nestlé scored more than 20% and even top-ranking Nestlé, scored just 34.6%. France's Groupe Bigard, which owns brands such as Charal, ranked bottom with 0%. Six companies scored less than 5% including: America's OSI Group, which supplies fast food chains such as Subway and Pizza Hut; French dairy corporation Lactalis which makes President butter, Dutch meat producer Vion, Chinese dairy companies Yili and Mengniu, and Japan's Itoham.
- **Failing on methane:** None of the companies report on their methane emissions or have concrete targets or plans for cutting them. Nestlé's 'Net Zero Roadmap' comes closest however reductions are reliant on changes in animal feed which have yet to be shown to work on a commercial scale.
- **Slow on solutions:** 18 companies have invested in meat alternatives but this represents a fraction of their overall spending. For example, JBS, the world's largest meat processor, spent \$409 million buying the plant based food company Vivera in 2021 compared to \$1.4 billion acquiring meat and fish companies. Eleven companies have invested in methane abatement research, however none of the companies disclose how much they are investing.

The 20 companies are responsible for the vast majority of emissions in the livestock sector - emissions of New Zealand dairy giant, Fonterra, and Swiss multinational Nestlé, could outstrip the emissions of the countries where they are headquartered within a decade (if those nations meet their climate commitments).

Nusa Urbancic, Campaigns Director at the Changing Markets Foundation said:

*"Meat and dairy corporations have been given a free pass by governments and are doing next to nothing to curb their methane emissions as a result. The annual revenues of the top 20 meat and dairy corporations total more than half a trillion dollars a year – more than the national income of Sweden – yet they are investing a fraction of this wealth in cutting emissions and shifting to a more sustainable business model."*

The report also analysed the methane emissions and mitigation policies of the 18 biggest meat and dairy producing nations. It reveals that only New Zealand and Uruguay have targets or

plans to cut methane from their livestock sector and even these are weak – only 10% in the case of New Zealand. As a result, no country has made significant cuts in methane emissions over the last 5 years. Most countries also lack targets or plans for tackling greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture or the wider food system.

The UN's Global Methane Assessment found that a 45% cut in methane by 2030 is needed to keep warming below 1.5C. The Global Methane Pledge commits governments to collectively cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030, mainly through technical fixes on energy and waste. It is envisaged that the remaining 15% will be delivered as a by-product of measures to tackle other greenhouse gases which fall outside the scope of the pledge.

The UN estimates that behavioural changes such as shifting diets or tackling food waste could deliver up to 44% of the annual emissions reductions possible between now and 2030 while technical innovations such as animal feed supplements could deliver up to 17%.

Professor Robert Howarth, Earth systems scientist at Cornell University in the US said:

*"The Global Methane Pledge is a step in the right direction but falls short on ambition. The UN's Methane Assessment established that we can achieve a 45% cut in emissions in a cost-effective way, so why stop at two thirds of the way? Serious action to support a shift to healthier diets with less and better meat and dairy is an important policy in the toolbox of measures that governments must consider to avoid catastrophic climate change."*

Carina Millstone, Executive Director of Feedback said:

*"Governments must ensure that the big meat and dairy corporations responsible for the vast majority of emissions in the sector set, and deliver on, meaningful science-based targets for cutting methane and other greenhouse gases."*

### **Note to editor**

*Blindspot: How lack of action on livestock methane undermines climate targets,' is available here*

The publicly reported purchase prices of JBS's [2021 acquisitions](#) are: Vivera (plant based meat alternatives)- **\$409 million**. Kerry Consumer Foods' Meats and Meals Business (meat and dairy products) - **\$952 million**, Rivalea (pork) - **\$135 million**, and Huon Aquaculture Group (fish) - **\$314 million**.

The [UN Methane Assessment Report](#) estimates that it is possible to cut global methane emissions by 180 m/t a year by 2030. Technical innovations in agriculture could cut emissions by 30mt/year by 2030 (16.7% of possible reductions) and behavioural changes such as shifting diets or tackling food waste could cut emissions by 65 - 80mt/year by 2030 (up to 44.4%).

The [EU – US Methane Pledge](#) was launched at the Major Economies Summit in August. To date 35 countries have signed onto the pledge however major methane emitters such as China, India, Brazil, and Australia have yet to join.

[Changing Markets Foundation](#) was formed to accelerate and scale up solutions to sustainability challenges by leveraging the power of markets. Working in partnership with NGOs, other foundations and research organisations, we are working on effective solutions to our ongoing environmental crisis.

[Feedback](#) is an environmental campaign group that works to regenerate nature by transforming our food system. We believe that securing nutritious, delicious food for all can and should go hand in hand with regenerating our planet.

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