



An open letter from AHDB, QMS and HCC in response to CBBC Blue Peter's Green Badge campaign

The iconic BBC children's TV show Blue Peter has asked viewers to become part of a 'green army' to tackle carbon emissions and climate change. Recommendations to earn a Green Badge include encouraging children to take the 'Supersize Plants Pledge' and replacing red meat dishes with "climate friendly" plant-based alternatives.

Citing phrases including "reducing the amount of meat you eat, especially beef and lamb, is known to be even better for the climate than reducing the amount you travel in a car"¹ is incorrect, misleading and based on widely-debunked data. This unbalanced reporting risks compromising the integrity of the red meat produced in the UK to the consumers of the future.

It is essential that young people learn and understand where their food comes from and its impact on the planet, and the Green Badge campaign presents an opportunity to share the fantastic credentials of the British red meat industry, which is amongst the most sustainable in the world and supports the livelihoods of thousands of people.

As a public service broadcaster, the BBC has a responsibility to provide an impartial argument. This is all the more important when communicating to children

Blue Peter also promotes the Carbon Calculator, a simplistic tool that cites global data not representative of the UK's red meat industry.

Some of the fantastic initiatives happening right now in farms across the country include conducting regular carbon audits to manage and offset emissions; avoiding ploughing, drainage and over grazing; creating wildlife corridors along water margins, field margins and headlands, taking action to control soil and achieving net zero across the industry in England and Wales by 2040 and by 2045 in Scotland

The highest volume of CO₂ is produced by the fossil fuel industries, with livestock farming contributing just 6% of the UK's CO₂ emissions². Given this statistic, cutting your individual meat consumption would in fact not reduce the UK's overall CO₂ emissions nearly as significantly as structural changes in the energy and transport sectors such as encouraging families to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Furthermore, the minerals and vitamins found in red meat should form an important part of a growing young person's diet. Iron from meat sources is more readily absorbed by the human body compared with iron found in other non-meat sources. A lack of iron may result in a deficiency, increasing the risk of anaemia. Severe iron

¹ The pitfalls of simplification when looking at greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, Thomson Reuters Foundation News, 2018 <https://news.trust.org/item/20180918083629-d2wf0>

² CIEL, Integrated Report, 2020 - <http://annual-report.cielgroup.com/>

deficiency may also increase the risk of developing complications to the heart and lungs.

As it stands, 42% of teenage girls fail to achieve the minimum iron intake and 22% of teenage girls don't get enough zinc³, which is essential in supporting a healthy immune system.

We would welcome the opportunity to share the positive messages from the red meat industry. Sharing information with young people about the techniques and processes in place to make sure farming in the UK is not at the detriment to the wider environment is also essential in helping them form their own opinions and consumption habits. A good place to start is [Farming Foodsteps](#), an online resource developed by professionals specifically for school-aged children which explores the red meat journey and includes sustainability and health messaging.

These stories must be shared, and we ask that the BBC and Blue Peter to reconsider their one-sided messaging and provide an opportunity for the heads of the UK's red meat industry bodies to meet with the head of children's programming to shed light on the positive messages.

Yours faithfully,

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³ Iron and Health, Scientific Commission on Nutrition, 2010
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/339309/SACN_Iron_and_Health_Report.pdf