

Open Letter: The Strategic and Ethical Case for a Phased Pilot of Default Oat Milk at Starbucks UK

To the Leadership Team at Starbucks UK,

We are urging you to take a bold and timely step forward: make oat milk the default option in all Starbucks stores nationwide, **beginning with a pilot in a single UK store to test this approach**. This ask is supported by over 11,500 signatories on our Udderly Kind **petition**, which is backed by sustainability experts, animal rights organisations, health professionals, business leaders, academics, celebrities, and thousands of your loyal customers who want to see meaningful change happen.

This initial pilot phase would enable customer feedback, operational refinement, and measurable impact assessment. We believe the positive and transformative potential of this simple change will be clear. Following the pilot, we urge Starbucks to expand the initiative regionally or onto university campuses - before a full national rollout. The pilot will showcase Starbucks' commitment to innovation and sustainability, while providing an opportunity to evaluate the commercial and logistical benefits of the transition. By starting small and scaling strategically, Starbucks can move forward with confidence and reaffirm its progressive leadership.

Starbucks has already demonstrated leadership in sustainability through the removal of plant milk surcharges and your **'Store of the Future'** in Shanghai, where oat milk is already the default and 50% of the menu is plant-based. These changes reflect your company being attuned to evolving consumer values and environmental responsibility; however, Starbucks can go further by testing this model in a UK store. Making oat milk the default aligns with customer preferences, your sustainability goals, and ethical responsibility as outlined below.

1. Environmental Impact: Dairy remains the single largest contributor to Starbucks' carbon footprint, accounting for 22% of total emissions. Oat milk, in contrast, generates **significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions** and requires less land and water to produce. Changing to oat milk would significantly accelerate your goals in halving carbon, water use and waste. With every store than changes, your emissions will reduce.

2. Consumer Expectations: The UK consumer landscape is evolving rapidly. **Blue Bottle Coffee Lab** reported a 21% increase in sales on plant-based milk after using oat as the default. Starbucks has a clear opportunity to gain financially with this switch and offset recent **loss in revenue** by making a positive change. Try it in one store first, and you will see the impact.

3. Risk Mitigation: With growing public scrutiny and mounting ethical arguments, dairy is in trouble. A recent **exposé** at Lowfields Farm, an Arla-contracted site, and a **new report** by Dr Helen Lambert have both highlighted systemic animal welfare concerns. These concerns cannot be solved through enforcement or audits; the only ethical solution is a plant-based future. This would reinforce your reputation as a transparent, ethical and forward-thinking brand every time a store uses oat as the default.

4. Supporting Agricultural Transition: This is not about abandoning farmers. It is about supporting their evolution. You can help farmers scale up oat production and create a more resilient, ethical and sustainable agricultural future in the UK, one that aligns with your broader policies and addresses the **well-documented** mental health strain in the animal farming sector.

Making oat milk the default across Starbucks' UK operations is a strategic business decision. Default oat milk would reduce environmental liabilities, future-proof the brand, meet customer expectations, and unlock new growth potential. Your decision to lead on sustainability has already been made. Now is the time to align your actions with your aspirations, and to become a true market leader by piloting this in one of your stores first and then expanding it.

We, as a collective, urge Starbucks to take this crucial next step and show what true leadership looks like in 2025 and beyond. By piloting default oat milk in a single UK store, you have the opportunity to lead the way toward a more ethical, sustainable, and forward-thinking future for food and drink.

The time to act is now - your customers are ready.

Sincerely,

Animal Justice Project.

The Vegan Society.

Animal Rising.

Animal Welfare Party.

Freedom For Animals.

PETA UK.

Animal Aid.

Viva! Campaigns.

Generation Vegan.

Animal Equality UK.

Animal Save Movement.

Plant Based Treaty.

Better Food Foundation.

Switch4Good.

Dale Vince, OBE, Founder of Ecotricity.

George Monbiot, Journalist and Environmental Activist.

Heather Mills, Activist, Philanthropist and Entrepreneur.

Peter Egan, Honorary Doctorate for Animal Welfare Work, Actor.

Alissa White-Gluz, Vocalist for Arch Enemy.

Wendy Turner Webster, Actress & Charity Patron.

Fiona Oakes, Ultra Runner, Four Guinness World Records Holder, Co-Founder, Vegan Runners.

Carol Royle, Actress & Charity Patron.

Professor Nicholas Royle, Emeritus Professor in English Literature, Author & Literary Critic.

Professor Alasdair Cochrane, Professor of Political Theory, Associate Editor: *Res Publica*.

Professor Michael Hassell, CBE FRS, Professor of Biological Sciences.

Associate Professor Steve Cook, PhD Politics, Lecturer at University of Leicester.

Professor Andrew Knight BSc./BVMS, PhD (Griff.), PhD (Winch.), MANZCVS, DipECAWBM (AWSEL), DipACAW, FRCVS, PFHEA, Veterinary Professor of Animal Welfare.

Dr Alice Brough, BVM&S MRCVS, Former Industry Vet.

Dr Guy Sandelowsky MBA, BVMBVS Veterinary Medicine, Founder, Omni Pet Care.

Dr Alan Desmond, Medical Doctor and NHS Consultant Gastroenterologist.

Dr Mini Patel, MRCGP MBBS BSc PGCert, Medical Doctor and General Practitioner.

Dr Laila Kassam, PhD Development Economics, Executive Director, Project Phoenix.

Dr Alex Lockwood, PhD Creative Writing, Narrative Strategist, Absurd Intelligence.

Dr Jeanette Rowley, PhD Law, Vegan Rights Consultant and Advocate.

Dr Ken Walker, PhD Media Psychology, Founder, Vegan Rise.

Dr Josh Milburn, PhD Political Philosophy, Senior Lecturer.

Dr Rod Bennison, PhD Animal Ethics, Founder, Minding Animals.

Dr Alina Mia Udall, PhD Environmental Behaviour, Academic Lecturer.

Dr Iris Marie Bergmann, PhD Sustainability Science, PhD EnvEducation, Independent Scholar, Animal Advocate, Founder Interspecies World.

Dr William Gildea, PhD Animal Ethics, Postdoctoral Researcher, McGill University and the Centre of Research in Ethics.

Dr Dominic O'Key, PhD English Literature, Teaching Associate & Author, Cambridge University.

Dr Faraz Harsini, PhD Biomedical Sciences, Founder & CEO, Allied Scholars for Animal Protection.

Dr Michael Daw, PhD Parapsychology, Environmental Activist & Public Speaker.

Dr Lorenzo Fruscella, PhD Biotechnology, Career Advisor, Animal Advocacy Careers.

Stuart Evans, PhD Researcher in Philosophy Politics and Ethics, Ambassador, Etherea.

Björn Jóhann Ólafsson, Research Communicator, Writer & Animal Advocate.

Bel Jacobs, Writer & Campaigner, Founder, The Empathy Project.

Robbie Lockie, CEO & Founder of The Freedom Food Alliance.

Matthew Glover, Founder & Director, Veg Capital.

James Morgan, Executive Director, Vegan Haktivists.
Robert Pownall, Founder & CEO, Protect the Wild.
Liz Fynn, Founder & Director, Vegan Animal Rights Conference.
Alistair Stewart, MSc Global Governance & Ethics, Lead Organiser of AI, Animals & Digital Minds Conference.
Lauren Mee, Founder & Director, Animal Advocacy Careers.
Sofia Balderson, Founder & Co-Director, Hive.
Andy Shovel, Co-Founder, THIS.
Joe Hill, Co-Founder, One-Planet Pizza.
Sasha Jolliffe Yasawi, MSc Psychology, Political Candidate, Founder, Etlin (Ethical Leadership Initiative).
Jane Tredgett, BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences, Director, Humane Being and Scrap Factory Farming lead.
Jordi Casamitjana, Zoologist, Ethologist & Author.
Kim Stallwood, Scholar, Author, Animal Rights Consultant.
Michelle St John, Barrister at Law, Founder, Veganism in Education.
Emma Hakansson, Writer, Founder, Collective Fashion Justice.
Thomas Pickering, Film Director, Founder, Running On Plants.
Paul Youd, 87 Year Old Ultra Runner, Ambassador, Running on Plants.
Mellissa Ferret, Activist & Influencer.
Steve Ferret, Activist & Influencer.
Todd Sinclair, Writer, Activist & Former Dairy Farmer.
Danny Sheppard, Actor & Former Slaughterhouse Worker.
Doug Maw, Former Slaughterhouse Worker turned Activist.
Stella Paris, Singer & Actress.
Vikki Lenola, Producer & Director, The Vegan Fashion Show.
Liza with a Zed, Fashion Model & Influencer.
Surge Sanctuary.
Ananda Animal Sanctuary.
Willows Animal Sanctuary.
The Retreat Animal Rescue.
Hopefield Animal Sanctuary.
The Farm Animal Sanctuary.
Whitegate Animal Sanctuary.
Brook Farm Animal Sanctuary.
Friend Farm Animal Sanctuary.
Noo Beginnings Animal Sanctuary.
Goodheart Animal Sanctuaries.
Pear Tree Farm Animal Sanctuary.

Tower Hills Stables Animal Sanctuary.
Millingtons Magical Barn Animal Sanctuary.
The Base Vegan Retreat Animal Sanctuary.
Brinsley Animal Rescue.
Charlie's Place Animal Sanctuary.