

FAQ — the twelve most common objections

This list is not a shield. Four of the twelve objections are **valid**, and they are answered as such. Where the work disagrees, it gives the reason and the source.

1. “Humans are meat-eaters. That’s biology.”

No — humans are **omnivores with a choice**, and that is the whole point. Our digestive anatomy sits between carnivores and herbivores: salivary amylase, a long small intestine, no shearing fangs. The comparison in the digestion deep-dive makes it sharp: the **cat** is an *obligate* carnivore — it cannot synthesise enough taurine and *dies* without animal tissue. The **dog**, unlike the wolf, acquired extra copies of the starch gene *AMY2B* during domestication (Axelsson et al. 2013) — it became a starch digester. The **human** has no such shackle at all. Precisely *because* we can choose, the ethical question arises. For the cat it does not.

2. “But how do we feed the world?”

This is the strongest objection — and on close inspection it **flips**. 36 percent of the world’s crop calories go into animal feed, and only about 12 percent of those return as human food (Cassidy et al. 2013). Industrial grain feeding *withdraws* calories from global food supply; it does not add them. Redirected, those calories could in principle feed some four billion more people. Food security is therefore an argument **against** industrial feeding, not for it.

Important and fair: **not all feed competes**. Ruminants on non-arable grassland, and pigs and chickens in smallholder mixed systems, convert residues and cellulose humans could never eat. There the animal is a *net gain*. The critique hits grain feeding with full force, extensive grazing only partly, subsistence not at all.

3. “This is just ideology — the author is a marxist.”

He is, and he says so. The worldview is **disclosed** and methodologically controlled via a documented self-audit procedure (ETHOSLAB) — not hidden. That is more transparency than most studies offer. And the evidence stands independently: sources are open with DOI and PubMed ID; anyone who distrusts the political-economy layer (Layer 12) can **delete it** — the other thirteen layers still stand. That is exactly what the consilience construction is for.

4. “Meat is healthy. Nutrition science can’t agree.”

Partly valid: nutritional epidemiology *is* inconsistent, and the work says so openly (the 2019 NutriRECS controversy is treated separately). But the uncertainty is not uniform. Where **Mendelian randomisation** is available — the strongest causal instrument in observational research, because genetic random allocation bypasses confounding — the finding is robust: LDL cholesterol causally drives atherosclerosis (Ference et al. 2012, *JACC*, PMID 23083789). And the IARC classification of processed meat as a Group 1 carcinogen (Bouvard et al. 2015, *Lancet Oncology*, PMID 26514947) is not a fringe opinion. The work therefore grades its statements on a **six-tier evidence hierarchy** and marks the weak as weak.

5. “Vegan means malnutrition.”

No — but it is **not without conditions**. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics holds well-planned vegetarian and vegan diets appropriate for all life stages (Melina et al. 2016, PMID

27886704). “Well-planned” is the load-bearing condition: **vitamin B12 must be supplemented**, non-negotiably (Pawlak et al. 2013, PMID 23356638); iron, zinc, iodine, omega-3 (EPA/DHA) and vitamin D require attention. Denying this damages the cause. The work states it plainly.

6. “Regenerative grazing sequesters carbon — cattle are part of the solution.”

Partly valid, but overstretched. Grazing **can** sequester soil carbon — but boundedly, saturating after decades, reversible on land-use change, and generally smaller than the animals’ methane emissions. Extensive systems also need markedly **more** land per kilogram. As a niche practice on non-arable grassland it makes sense; as a scaling strategy for present meat consumption it does not hold.

7. “Crop farming kills animals too (mice in the combine harvester).”

The objection is serious and taken seriously — but it runs against itself. Because livestock are **fed plants** and lose most of the calories in the process, a kilogram of meat causes *more* crop farming — and thus more field mortality — than a kilogram of directly eaten plants. The objection strengthens the conclusion rather than refuting it.

8. “A meat tax hurts the poor.”

Valid. Full stop. Food consumption taxes are regressive — they burden poorer households proportionally more. The work therefore recommends **no** bare meat tax, but: redistribution of revenue, redirection of existing subsidies (often the better lever), and a just transition for dependent producers. Some 1.58 billion people cannot afford the EAT-Lancet reference diet as it is (Hirvonen et al. 2020). The addressee is the **structure of mispricing**, not the low-income buyer.

9. “What about Inuit, Maasai, smallholders?”

Exempt — and not out of politeness but on principle. Food sovereignty and cultural self-determination are *independent* claims of justice. An animal ethics that overrides them becomes unjust itself (colonial). The critique targets **industrial** animal production in societies with real freedom of choice. This caveat is not in the fine print; it is in every single deep-dive.

10. “Individual consumption changes nothing — this is a distraction.”

Largely **valid**, and the work says so itself (Layer 12): shifting responsibility onto the individual purchase is a known pattern of industrial communication. The primary addressee of the critique is the **structure** — subsidies, law, market power, lobbying — not a guilty conscience at the chiller cabinet. This does not devalue personal consequence; it merely puts it in its proper place.

11. “Six ethical schools agree? That sounds too convenient.”

In their **foundations** they precisely do *not* agree — they contradict each other fundamentally (utilitarianism vs. inviolable rights vs. the Kantian formula vs. capabilities vs. political membership vs. care ethics). That is exactly why their **convergence in the result** is informative rather than convenient. And the strongest counter-positions — Carl Cohen, Roger Scruton, contractualism, the predation problem — are spelled out in the ethics volume, not waved away.

12. “Why should I trust a work that isn’t peer-reviewed?”

You shouldn’t — **check it**. That is exactly why everything is open: every source with a DOI, the biomedical ones additionally with a PubMed ID (26 of them, doubly verified), a machine-readable claim dataset, the verification scripts, and a record of the **errors found in the work itself** together with their corrections — including a wrong journal attribution and an unverifiable author attribution, documented openly rather than quietly removed. Peer review is a trust procedure; disclosure is a checking procedure. Here both are possible — the second one immediately.

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