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NEWS RELEASE
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MSPs from various political parties have joined forces to support a charity's week-long vegan challenge by submitting a motion to the Scottish Parliament.

The motion, lodged yesterday by Mark Ruskell MSP from the Scottish Green Party, congratulates The Vegan Society on its successful Plate Up for the Planet campaign that encourages participants to eat vegan for a week.

Earlier this week the charity announced that the number of participants has reached a 10,000 milestone, saving enough carbon dioxide to fly to the moon and back [1].

The motion cites some astonishing facts and calls on the Scottish Government to accept "that emissions from animal agriculture is a major contributor to climate change" and to "take account of the carbon footprint of the food that is provided in the public sector".

It also references the upcoming climate change bill, urging ministers to "be more ambitious when setting their targets for the agriculture sector in the climate change bill, in particular with regard to addressing methane emissions from animal agriculture".

Mr Ruskell said: "Plate up for the Planet is a great initiative to get people thinking about how their diet contributes to climate change, and I'm looking forward to taking part myself. We make important decisions three times a day about the food that goes onto our plate, and consumers can have a big impact by cutting down even a small amount of animal products.

"We can't expect the public alone to tackle climate change, however, and Government has a vital role to play in helping people make better choices and decarbonising our farming system.

"The Scottish Parliament will be considering both a Climate Change and Food Policy bills before the end of this session, and the Scottish Greens will be pushing for measures in both to tackle emissions from animal agriculture and using public procurement to lead the way for healthier food that has a lower impact on the planet."

The motion has so far been supported by Ivan McKee, SNP; Alex Cole-Hamilton, Scottish Liberal Democrats; and Scottish Greens: Alison Johnstone, Andy Wightman, Patrick Harvie and John Finnie.

Louise Davies, Head of Campaigns and Policy at The Vegan Society, said: "As well as encouraging people to try a vegan diet, the Plate Up for the Planet campaign aims to get veganism on the political agenda, especially when it comes to tackling climate change.

"We're over the moon to have the support of MSPs from various parties, and are delighted to see Scottish politicians acknowledging the impact that meat and dairy has on our environment.

"Whilst we are seeing more and more individuals embrace veganism through their own education, it's crucial that politicians develop policy that will lead to a greener, more compassionate future, so huge congratulations to these MSPs for leading the way."

The Vegan Society research published last month found 1 in 5 respondents (19%) said they would consider becoming vegan while the UK's current vegan population is around 1%.

Going vegan can reduce your food-related emissions by up to 50% yet the charity found that only a fifth of Brits are aware that farming cows and sheep results in climate change.

Plate Up for the Planet encourages people to think differently about what they eat and how it impacts our

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planet - to try the seven day vegan challenge you can sign up for free at www.vegansociety.com/plateup.

The Motion has a number S5M-07787 and can be found in full here.

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Notes to editors

[1] 10,000 people eating a vegan diet for a week saves 147,000 kg CO2e which is equivalent to 767,143 km travelled by long haul flight – equivalent to flying to the moon and back.

Plate Up for the Planet is the single biggest campaign investment The Vegan Society has ever made. It focuses around a seven-day, planet-saving challenge which we are promoting through national advertising, high profile celebrity endorsements, social media, presence at summer festivals, and our nationwide team of supporters.

Our seven-day challenge encourages participants to consume a low greenhouse gas emissions meal plan. We are able to tell them what greenhouse gas savings they are making, compared to an omnivorous diet.

The Vegan Society encourages everyone to sign up to the challenge at www.vegansociety.com/plateup.

Data sources: www.gov.uk and www.carbonfootprint.com. Environmental impact of dietary change: a systematic review, E. Hallstrom, A. Carlsson-Kanyama, P. Borjesson.

The hashtag for the campaign is #PlateUpforthePlanet. It has been supported by celebrities including Lucy Watson, Martin Shaw, Caroline Lucas, Simon King, Dan Richardson, Alan Cumming, Jasmine Harman, Evanna Lynch, Mayim Bialik, Edward Norton, David Bez and WWE wrestlers.

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For more information

LOUISE DAVIES, HEAD OF CAMPAIGNS AT THE VEGAN SOCIETY, IS AVAILABLE FOR TV, RADIO, OR WRITTEN PRESS INTERVIEWS AT SHORT NOTICE. Vegan chef Day Radley is available to talk about the diet aspect of veganism, plant-based cooking and her own experience as a vegan.

Please contact Dominika Piasecka, Media and PR Officer at The Vegan Society. media@vegansociety.com / +44 (0)121 523 1738 (office) / +44 (0)7593 129599 (out of hours) to arrange interviews or for more information.

About

The Vegan Society is a registered educational charity (no. 279228) that provides information and guidance on various aspects of veganism, including to new and potential vegans, caterers, healthcare professionals, educators and the media. Visit www.vegansociety.com for more information.

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