

In Changing the World ...

'Never underestimate the power of one puny share'

Many people contact **Compassion in World Farming (South Africa)** for advice as to where they should invest their money in order to support and promote ethical consumerism and the humane treatment of farmed animals. Compassion's **Regional Representative, Louise van der Merwe**, asked **Futuregrowth's Chief Investment Officer, Andrew Canter**, for a few pointers. This is what he said:

"Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) is something of a moving target. When I started out, SRI was all about anti-nuclear and free Nelson Mandela. Six months ago, investing in wheat farms would have been considered SRI. Now, just putting money into a bank is considered SRI and tomorrow....? Yes, perhaps tomorrow SRI will be all about animals.

"So, we need to understand that SRI is very opinion driven and very changeable. It is a moving target and is in the eye of the beholder. If we want to make SRI about better lives for hens and pigs then we have to work on changing opinions.

"First you have to influence consumers so that you can change the economic patterns behind their buying power. In other words, change their behaviour and try to impact the profit-seeking instincts of consumer suppliers.



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"Next, you need to reach the managers of companies that have on-the-ground impact. You can do that by identifying investment companies that specialise in ESG factors – i.e. Environmental, Social and Governance factors - and influence them to include the abolition of factory farming in their factor list. Also, your public relations strategy to affect corporate managers' behaviours -- who are, after all, human beings -- should keep the issues 'in their face'.

"Thirdly, never underestimate the power of one puny share. Identify the potential 'bad guys' and buy some shares in these companies. Then use your share – and your voice – to make a noise! The principles of corporate democracy allow all shareholders to have a voice -- although clearly the more shares you have, the more 'voice' you have. Attend the annual general meeting of these companies and ask questions about their policies relating to animals in our food chain."

- Get into the belly of the beast. The more profit and the bigger the bonuses of these companies, the more power you have.
- Shine a light on bad practices and you'll get people to pay attention.

Fourthly, don't be scared to be bold."

Futuregrowth's list of SRI Sectors. (SRI = Socially Responsible Investment).

- Infrastructure development and social services
- Black economic empowerment funding
- SMME/enterprise development
- Consumer and business access to finance
- Agricultural development/land reform
- Low income and affordable housing
- Environmental preservation
- Tourism
- Community development and re-development
- Shari'ah compliant investments

Note that nowhere does animal welfare and ethical consumerism feature. We need to make it happen.

What you can do:

If you are a member of a pension fund, or if you have personal investments in companies that produce or retail animal products to consumers, use your shareholding to raise questions at the companies' annual general meetings.

Compassion in World Farming can assist with formulation of questions.

Email us at:
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The biggest issue of animal cruelty on the planet is factory farming

Compassion in World Farming's Chief Executive Officer, **Mr Philip Lymbery**, says the challenge is to find a new food system.

Speaking at a conference on *Global Warming—the Impact of Meat Production and Consumption on Climate Change* in London in September 2008, he said: "Sixty billion farm animals are reared and slaughtered in this world of ours each year—the majority of them being kept in industrial systems of agriculture. Industrial farming of animals is the biggest issue of animal cruelty on the planet."

"Already the livestock industry accounts for the use of one-third of our planet. With the world's human population expected to increase from 6 billion to 9 billion people by 2050, livestock production—at the current rate of consumption—would explode to 120 billion farmed animals."

Mr Lymbery added: "We need to find a humane and sustainable way to satisfy the needs of more people and to achieve this, we need all sectors of society and all nations to work together to bring hope to what seems like a hopeless scenario."

