

Vegan Education in Schools

Case study of speciesism

Questioning meat - ethics, justice and the future

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 5: The economic power and political influence of the meat industry in Australia

Overview: This lesson examines how the meat industry in Australia exerts financial and political control to sustain its dominance. Students will explore government subsidies, corporate lobbying, misinformation campaigns and regulatory loopholes that enable the industry to continue operating despite its environmental and ethical consequences. Through case studies, discussions and research activities, students will critically assess how the industry manipulates public perception and influences policy decisions.

Objective: Examine how the meat industry manipulates policies, influences public perception and maintains governmental support to sustain its operations.

Outcomes:

- Students will understand the extent of government subsidies and financial incentives that support the meat industry.
- Students will analyse how lobbying efforts influence policies and prevent legislative action against animal agriculture.
- Students will evaluate how the industry funds misinformation campaigns to protect its interests.
- Students will propose solutions for reducing the meat industry's political and economic influence.

Materials:

- Videos:
 - [How the meat industry influences policy and politics](#) - The Green Note
 - [The hidden subsidies behind animal agriculture](#) - Mic the Vegan
- Articles:
 - [Australian live export industry](#) - Wikipedia article
 - [Government subsidies for animal agriculture](#) - Surge
 - [Australian meat industry lobbying efforts](#) - Animal Liberation

- Case studies:
 - The role of Meat & Livestock Australia in shaping public perception
 - The Australian government's financial support for animal agriculture vs vegan industries
 - The impact of lobbying on live export policies
- Handouts:
 - Infographic on government subsidies for animal agriculture
 - Examples of political donations from the meat industry

Lesson steps:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Ask students: "Who do you think benefits the most from the meat industry?"
- Discuss the concept of corporate lobbying and government influence.
- Introduce the focus of the lesson: how the meat industry sustains itself through political and economic power.

2. Government subsidies and financial incentives (20 minutes):

- Show video explaining subsidies for animal agriculture ([The hidden subsidies behind animal agriculture](#)).
- Discuss how public funds are used to support animal agriculture.
- Case study: The Australian government's financial support for the meat industry vs vegan alternatives.

3. Corporate lobbying and political influence (20 minutes):

- Present examples of how the meat industry lobbies politicians to prevent stricter animal welfare laws.
- Show infographic on political donations from the meat industry.
- Case study: The impact of lobbying efforts on live export regulations.

4. Misinformation campaigns and media control (20 minutes):

- Show video explaining how the industry manipulates public perception ([How the meat industry influences policy and politics](#)).

- Discuss industry-funded research and deceptive marketing strategies.
- Case study: Meat & Livestock Australia's advertising campaigns.

5. Regulatory loopholes and weak enforcement (15 minutes):

- Explain how the industry exploits legal loopholes to continue harmful practices.
- Discuss the lack of enforcement of existing regulations.
- Case study: The failure of self-regulation in Australia's live export industry.

6. Proposing solutions (15 minutes):

- Brainstorm how vegan industries can receive more government support.
- Discuss policies that could reduce corporate influence over food and agriculture policies.
- Debate whether the government should fund research into vegan alternatives instead of subsidising animal farming.

7. Class discussion and reflection (10 minutes):

- Ask students: "What can be done to reduce the power of the meat industry?"
- Discuss the role of activism, public awareness and individual action, such as refusing to support industries that exploit animals.
- Encourage students to think about how policies could be changed to promote vegan solutions.

Homework:

- Write a 500-word essay on how government policies shape the future of food production and what reforms are needed to shift away from animal agriculture.
- Research a government program or subsidy that supports the meat industry and propose an alternative that would fund vegan agriculture instead.
- Find an example of a lobbying effort by the meat industry and explain how it influenced legislation.

Differentiation:

- Provide simplified explanations of lobbying and subsidies for students who need extra support.
- Allow students to create a policy proposal instead of writing an essay.

- Encourage advanced students to research global examples of governments transitioning away from animal agriculture.
- Facilitate small group discussions for students who prefer verbal expression over written assignments.

Assessment criteria:

- Participation in discussions and ability to explain how the meat industry influences policy.
- Depth of research and analysis in homework assignments.
- Engagement with policy proposals and economic solutions.
- Critical thinking demonstrated in class debates and presentations.