

Stop the South Korea-US Free Agreement

Prevent Animal Suffering and Environmental Destruction!

In 2007, the Bush administration negotiated the South Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), a NAFTA style free trade agreement with South Korea. The agreement was never sent to Congress to be ratified, due to strong opposition from labor unions, consumers concerned about food safety, farmers, and environmentalists, and rank and file Congressional Democrats. In December 2010, the Obama administration negotiated a revised form of the agreement and intends to bring it to a vote in Congress in early 2011. Unfortunately, the revised addressed none of the concerns about the devastating impact this agreement will have on animals and the environment.

Expanded Factory Farming, Meat Consumption, and Climate Change

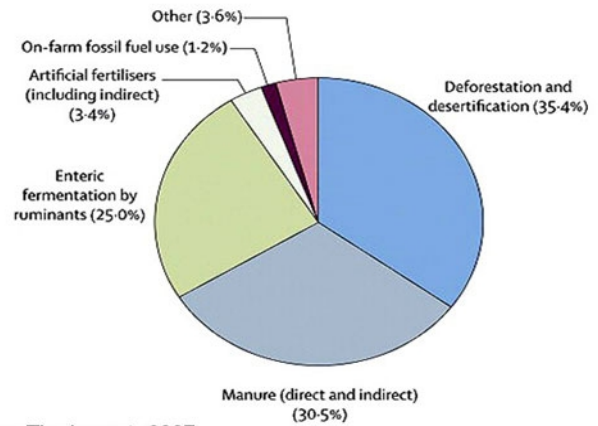
"[This] is the beef industry's stimulus package."

- Statement from National Cattlemen's Beef Association Chief Economist Gregg Doud on US, Korea Trade Deal

According to Henning Steinfeld, Chief of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Livestock Information and Policy Branch,

“Livestock are one of the most significant contributors to today's most serious environmental problems. Urgent action is required to remedy the situation.” A November/December 2010 article in the journal of the Worldwatch Institute, a leading environmental research authority states that, “[O]ur analysis shows that livestock and their byproducts actually account for at least 32,564 million tons of CO₂e per year, or 51 percent of annual worldwide [greenhouse gas] emissions.”

Proportion of GHG emissions from different parts of livestock production



Source: The Lancet 2007



Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994."

Given the Obama administration's stated commitment to addressing the global climate crisis, reducing global consumption of animal products should be an administration priority. Unfortunately, the KORUS will have the opposite effect:

According to Patrick Boyle, president and CEO of the American Meat Institute, "The U.S. Korean Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), if ratified, would be the biggest shot in the arm to the meat and poultry industry since the passage of the North American Free Trade

The KORUS will allow low-priced US industrial farm exports to flood the South Korean market, resulting in increased consumption of pork by 9%, chicken by 6.1%, cheese by 13.1, and butter by 14.1%. This will not only fuel climate change, but will also mean tens of millions of additional animals will be doomed every year to hellish lives on factory farms and painful and terrifying slaughterhouse deaths as a direct result.

South Korea has recently completed a culling effort designed to limit the spread of hoof and mouth disease and bird flu. Outrageously, over 9 million animals – pigs, birds, and cattle - have been killed with many buried alive, even though the problem can be addressed through vaccination.

To stay competitive with foreign exports to South Korea has increasingly shifted away from traditional family farm agriculture towards corporate agribusiness using intensive confinement factory farms. Factory farming and the related practice of long distance live animal transport are directly linked to the spread of infectious disease in livestock. Untariffed US agricultural exports to South Korea will likely hasten the shift towards intensification of agriculture, making more livestock disease and more inhumane culls inevitable.



South Korea's Animal Advocacy Groups Undermined

Organizations like Korean Animal Rights Advocates, International Aid for Korean Animals, Green Korea United, and the the Korean Animal Protection Society, speaking on behalf of the many South Koreans who care deeply about animal welfare and wildlife preservation, have called on the international community to support them in working to abolish a number of egregious forms of animal cruelty and unsustainable practices that persist in South Korea. By failing to address these concerns as a precondition for ratification of a free trade agreement the United States is squandering an opportunity to bring South Korea in line with international humane and conservation standards.

Operating in a legal grey area, dog and cat meat markets persist in South Korea. Believing that no sentient being should be made to suffer and die for our food, Global Justice for Animals and the Environment does not consider eating dogs or cats as somehow worse than eating cattle, pigs, chickens, or fish. However, we are concerned about cruel killing and confinement methods associated with the dogmeat trade in South Korea, including beating, strangling, and boiling, methods barred for killing mammal for food in the United States under the Humane Slaughter Act. Korean American animal advocates working in conjunction with animal advocacy groups in South Korea, have reported that whereas the Bush White House previously supported enforcement of the dog meat ban, it later refused to touch the issue in the interest of avoiding any controversy that might slow passage of the free trade agreement.



Despite a ban on the slaughter of horses in every US state, the agreement will allow for the untariffed export of horses to a nation where horses are still slaughtered for food – and used in gruesome fights to the death. Shockingly, the agreement even allows the export of live bears to South Korea, undermining the effort of activists in South Korea to shut down the horrific bear bile trade. South Korea is one of only three countries where bear bile farming is still practiced. While only 20 bears remain in the wild, 1,600 bears live in cramped cages on unregulated farms until the age of 10, when they are slaughtered for their bile.

Current South Korean practices also endanger marine life. Whereas the US supports CITES listing for threatened bluefin tuna, South Korea's bluefin catch and exports to Japan are surging, undermining even CITES listing for Japan's effort to limit total bluefin catch. Flouting the international whaling moratorium, South Korea allows fishermen who "accidentally" catch whales to sell them at state-designated facilities.

Lower Emissions Standards

“[W]e are concerned that the agreement could have the impact of weakening South Korea's emissions standards.”

– *Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Brune*

Bloomberg.com reports that “The U.S. is asking South Korea to accept American automobile safety and emissions standards in an effort to advance a free-trade agreement, according to three people briefed on the talks. Under the proposal, if American-made automobiles meet U.S. regulatory standards, South Korea would have to permit the vehicles to be sold in that nation...” According to Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, “the U.S. is projected to have lower standards than Korea over the coming years, as Korea will have a 40 miles per gallon proposed standard by 2015, while the U.S. will still only have a 37.8 mpg proposed standard.

Foreign Corporations Can Undermine Environmental Laws

According to Friends of the Earth, “The Korea trade pact replicates some of the worst aspects of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), providing foreign investors the right to challenge U.S. public health and environmental regulations that could put a dent in their current or expected profits. Like NAFTA, the agreement would also allow South Korean companies to challenge U.S. environmental laws in secret, unaccountable trade tribunals that completely bypass the U.S. judicial system.. Such rules are a blank check for environmentally irresponsible corporations. Korean electronics giant Samsung, for example, is notorious for its flagrant environmental health abuses, resulting in cancer in 100 workers in South Korea – 30 of whom have died. When the Obama administration renegotiated the KORUS, President Obama squandered the opportunity to pressure the Korean government to intervene on behalf of the Samsung Accountability Campaigns demands for justice and reform by this killer company.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

GJAE and our allies are committed to stopping Congress from passing these agreements, but time is short, with both nations intending to begin ratification proceedings in January, with some Congressional Republicans pushing for a vote on all three agreements in September 2011.

- Call, email, fax, and send letters to your Senators and Representative and urge them to publicly express their opposition to the South Korea, Panama, and Colombia Free Trade Agreements and to vote against them if they come to a vote in Congress. You can find their names and contact info at <http://gjae.org/lookup> or by calling Global Justice for Animals and the Environment at (718) 218-4523.
- Volunteer with Global Justice for Animals and the Environment and help us spread the word about how free trade agreements endanger animals and the planet. To find out how you can help, call (718) 218-4523 or email info@gjae.org
- Make a donation to support our efforts. Run entirely by volunteers, GJAE operating on a minute fraction of the budget of most animal and environmental groups. Founded as an uncompromising voice for animals and the environment, GJAE refuses to be co-opted and has never taken a dime in corporate or government grants. That's why we are entirely dependent on the donations of caring people like you to cover basic expenses like office rent, internet service, phones, office equipment, printing, protest supplies, registration fees for exhibiting at events, and web hosting. Please contribute today at <http://gjae.org/donate>. Also consider supporting Korean animal and environmental groups including those listed above, all of whom can be found on the worldwide web.

Global Justice for Animals and the Environment

Phone: (718) 218-4523

Fax: (501) 633-3476

Email: info@gjae.org

Web: <http://gjae.org>