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Growing BRIC Countries Clamoring for Farm Animal Welfare

Data just released show that majorities of people in Brazil, Russia, India, and China would support a law requiring the humane treatment of animals used for food. After surveying more than 1,000 people in each country -- plus the United States -- the nonprofit research organization Faunalytics also found that most "BRIC" country residents favor animal welfare over low meat prices. Following are a few highlights from the study (partial results only):

	Brazil	Russia	India	China	U.S.
Would support a law that would require animals used for food to be treated more humanely	70%	53%	52%	51%	62%
Agree that low meat prices are more important than the well-being of animals used for food	15%	18%	22%	20%	15%
Agree that it is important that animals used for food are well cared for	89%	80%	64%	46%	73%
Have eaten less meat than usual in the past three months	28%	20%	25%	29%	22%

In Brazil, where approximately 6 billion land animals (not including fish and aquatic animals) were slaughtered in 2014¹, 89% agree that animals used for food should be well cared for and only 15% believe that low meat prices are more important than animal welfare. More than a fourth of Brazilians (28%) have been eating less meat compared to three months ago and more than two-thirds (70%) would support a law requiring the humane treatment of farm animals.

In Russia, 80% agree that animals used for food should be well cared for and only 18% think low meat prices are more important than animal welfare. However, about a third of Russians (32%) disagree that eating meat directly contributes to animal suffering. One in five Russians (20%) are eating less meat than three months ago, the lowest among BRIC countries. A slight majority (53%) of Russians would support a law requiring the humane treatment of farm animals. Russia slaughtered less than half the number of land animals as Brazil in 2014, about 2.5 billion.

In India, where vegetarians and vegans make up 31% of the population, about two-thirds (64%) agree that animals used for food should be well cared for and 20% think low meat prices are more important

¹ The latest year for which data are available. All slaughter data provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, via Faunalytics: <https://faunalytics.org/fundamentals-farmed-animals/>

than animal welfare. A fourth of Indians (25%) have been eating less meat compared to three months ago. A small majority (52%) of Indians would support a law requiring the humane treatment of farm animals, while 18% would oppose it (the highest opposition among BRIC countries). India slaughtered about 2 billion land animals in 2014.

In China, a nation where more land animals are killed for food than all other BRIC countries combined (13 billion in 2014), opinions are mixed and ambivalence is high. Nearly half (43%) of Chinese people neither agree nor disagree that animals for food should be well cared for. More than half (56%) neither agree nor disagree that low meat prices are more important than the well-being of animals used for food. While 41% of Chinese people say they would neither support nor oppose a law requiring more humane treatment of farm animals, 51% say they would support it. More than a fourth of Chinese people (29%) are eating less meat compared to three months ago, the most of any BRIC country.

Attitudes and behavior toward animals vary by country and by culture. In this Faunalytics original study, Brazilians had the most pro-animal attitudes for most questions. Respondents from Brazil were the most likely to say that the well-being of farmed animals is important, followed by those from Russia. The U.S. fell in the middle of the range, followed by India and China. Respondents from all five countries surveyed showed a desire for better farm animal welfare.

“People in the rapidly growing BRIC countries clearly want improved treatment for farm animals,” said Dr. Jo Anderson, the Faunalytics Research Director and author of the study. “And most of them want it in writing, through better laws. Local politicians and corporations should probably take notice, especially those in Brazil and Russia.”

“It is clear from these findings that many citizens in BRIC countries would support laws that improve animal welfare and that price seems to be a secondary concern. People are willing to engage on the impacts of their consumption and the industrial animal production model,” added Shefali Sharma, director of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy’s European office that has produced several publications on the global meat industry.

The complete research report, additional analysis, country-specific reports, and infographics are available at no charge at <http://faunalytics.org/attitudes-towards-farmed-animals-bric-countries>.

Faunalytics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that conducts rigorous scientific research on animal-related issues. Faunalytics also manages the world’s biggest collection of opinion and behavior research on this topic. The library includes reports and full datasets from the organization’s independent studies as well as open-access summaries of high-quality academic and organizational research. Animal Charity Evaluators has rated Faunalytics a standout charity since 2015. Faunalytics partnered with YouGov for data collection for this study.