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Contact:

Dr. Jo Anderson, Research Director

Faunalytics

jo@faunalytics.org



**Is It Better To Ask People To Go Veg Or Reduce Their Meat Consumption?
Spoiler: Asking People To Reduce Can Generate More Meatless Meal Purchases**

New research shows that many people are willing to reduce or eliminate their meat consumption, if you ask them. In an experiment with over 800 participants, the nonprofit research organization Faunalytics tested two key strategies against one another: asking for meat reduction versus meat elimination (i.e. going vegetarian). The experiment used a common advocacy method, starting with a video that showed some mild factory farm footage, described the benefits of plant-based eating, and talked about how social norms around meat consumption are changing, with a growing trend in plant-based diets. This was followed by a pledge request, and Faunalytics measured the impact with real food order data from a nearby cafe. Many advocacy groups use similar messaging strategies and/or pledges in their outreach. This was the first rigorous test of the effectiveness of these strategies in a face-to-face advocacy context with actual dietary choices as the outcome.

The study found that **advocating for meat reduction led to more meatless meal purchases than advocating for vegetarianism**: 25.8% of participants who watched the reduction advocacy video ordered a meatless meal, versus 18.9% of participants who watched the vegetarian advocacy video. A key reason for this may be the difference in the willingness to pledge to change: **more than three times as many people were willing to pledge to reduce their meat consumption than those willing to pledge to cut out meat entirely**. 59.4% of participants were willing to take a meat-reduction pledge, while only 15.4% were willing to take the vegetarian pledge. The greater willingness to take the reduction pledge explained most of the difference in the success between the reduction and vegetarian advocacy videos.

“Our results show that advocates need to consider both pledge uptake *and* follow-through to determine their campaign’s effectiveness,” says Faunalytics’ Research Director Dr. Jo Anderson. “In this case, looking at just uptake would show us a 47.8% “success” rate for the vegetarian pledge and 31.7% “success” rate for the reduction pledge. But that wouldn’t capture the fact that there were three times as many people who participated in the reduction campaign, leading to more meatless meal orders overall. You can bring in three times as many people by asking for reduction instead of vegetarianism, but you may be able to scale up the pledge request for people who are more motivated or able to make a change.”

The complete research report, and additional analysis are available at faunalytics.org/social-norms/. You can also view and share a fact-sheet on effective pledges [here](#).

About Faunalytics

Faunalytics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that collects and conducts essential research on animal-related issues to help animal advocates increase their impact. Faunalytics manages the world's biggest collection of opinion and behavior research on this topic. The free library includes the organization's independent studies as well as research it collects and summarizes from others. Animal Charity Evaluators has rated Faunalytics a standout charity since 2015. Visit faunalytics.org to learn more.

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