



## Veterinary power

Chief Veterinary Officers and government advisers

National veterinary associations

International bodies

Advisory committees and expert panel

# What is the role of professional responsibility and influence?

## The case of animal welfare and meat consumption

Veterinarians hold significant influence over food systems, animal welfare policy and farming practices. Their expertise shapes and legitimises government regulation, welfare standards, and public understanding of how animals should be treated.

Tensions can arise when professional institutions become closely aligned with the industries they serve.

**Dr Steven McCulloch**, (Research Fellow in Veterinary Policy at the Jeremy Collier Centre for Animal Sentience and the Global School of Sustainability), calls for far greater scrutiny to protect animals, people and the planet.

Institutional support for intensive farming, severe confinement systems and widespread tail docking continues to shape veterinary policy and practice in the UK and USA.

If the policies of national veterinary institutions contradict scientific evidence or ethical responsibilities, those within the profession and outside of it should be willing and empowered to challenge them.

Photo: © Jo-Anne McArthur, Djerrattsalimsson, We Animals



Globally, over **80 billion land animals** are slaughtered each year, including around **1.5 billion pigs**.



Pork is the most widely consumed meat in the world.

## Reducing meat consumption

Veterinarians also have influence over our food systems – their duties extend beyond animal welfare to protecting public health and the environment.

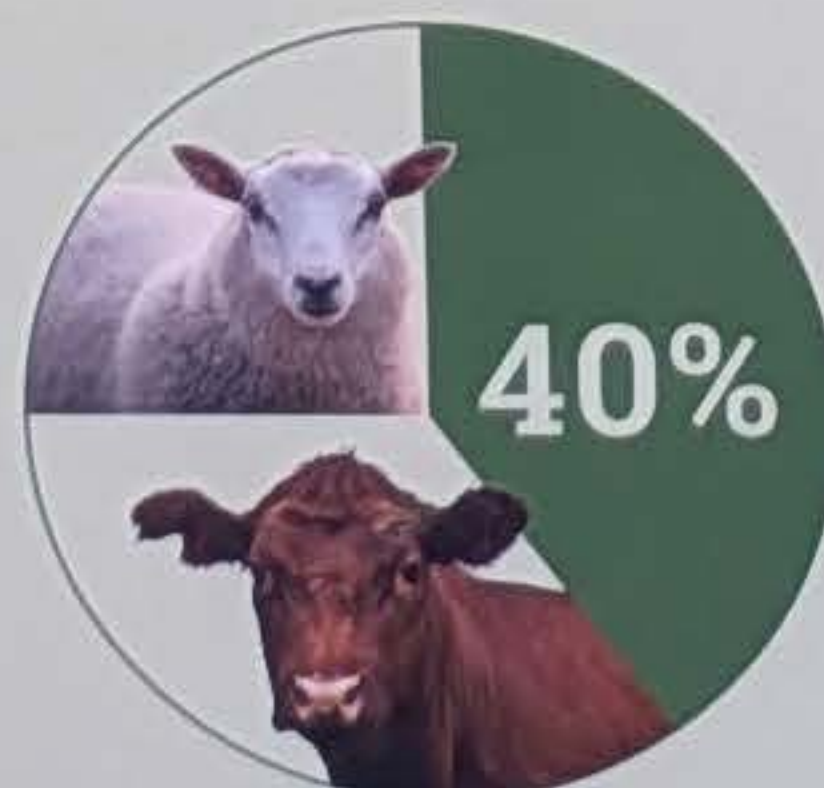
Intensive animal farming is a major driver of emissions, deforestation, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic pandemics and animal suffering. No national veterinary association across the world has adopted quantified meat-reduction targets.



The EAT – Lancet Commission recommends: 50% reduction in global red and processed meat consumption by 2050 in order to safeguard human and planetary health.

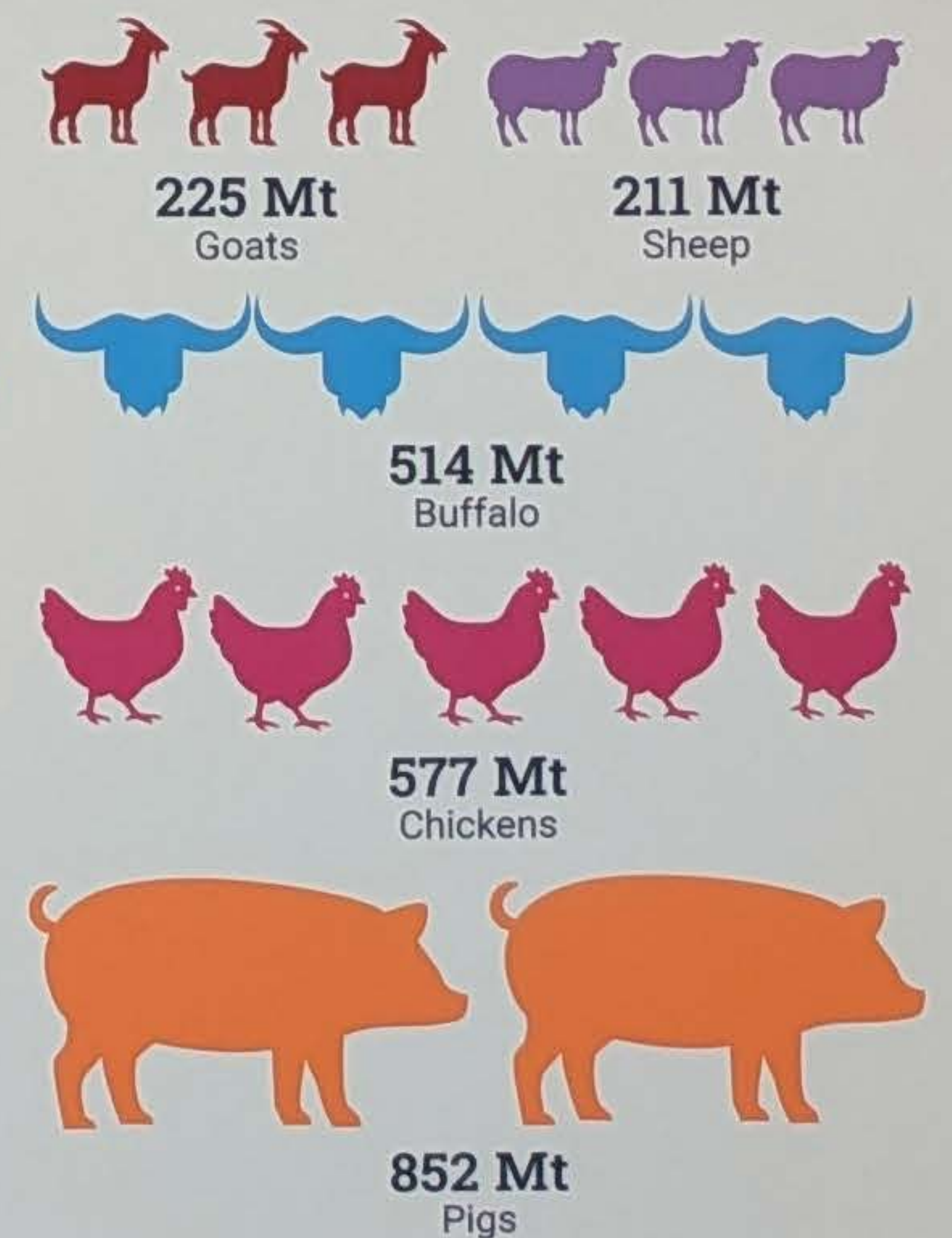
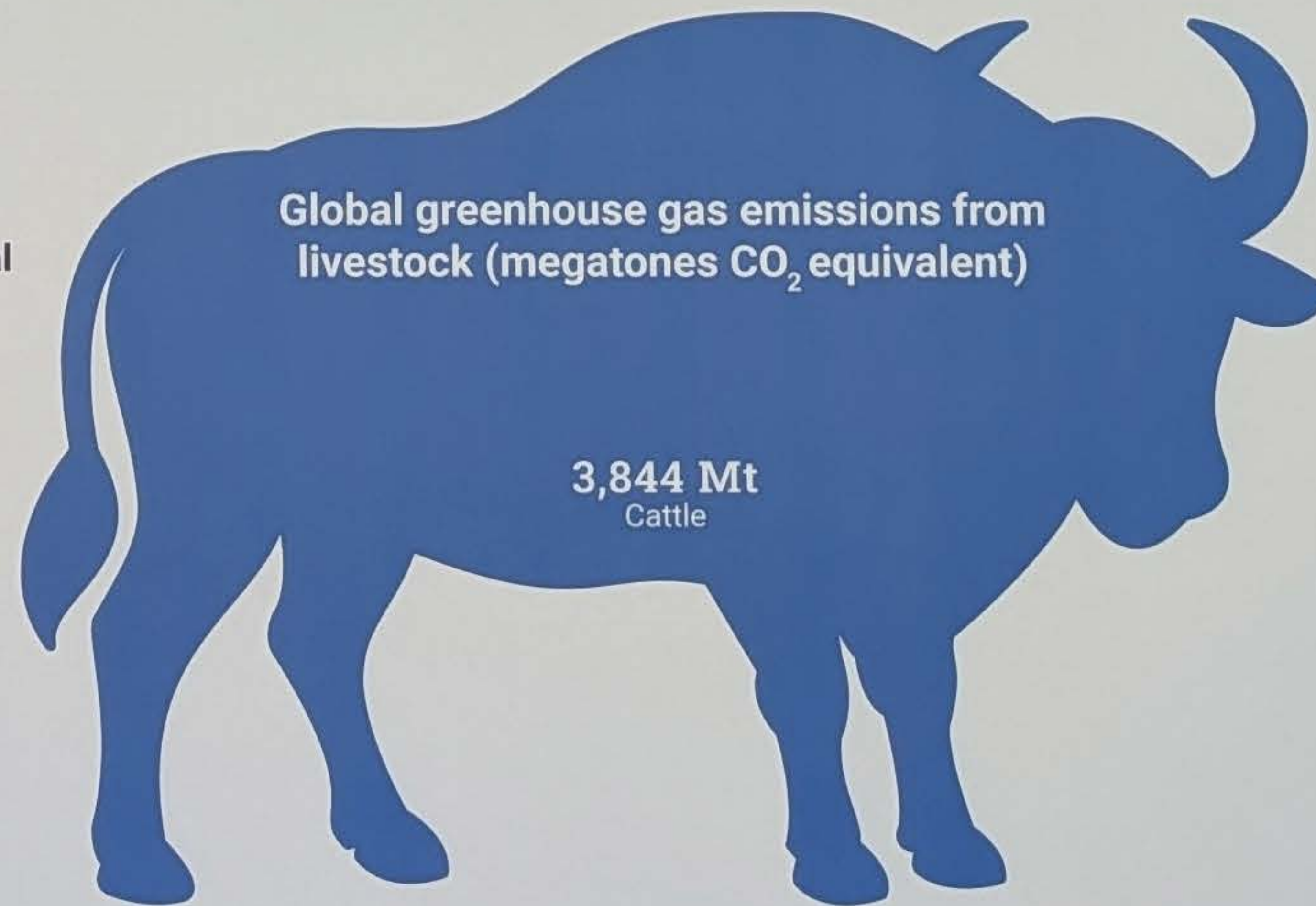


35% reduction in total meat consumption



40% reduction in beef and lamb

Climate Change Committee (UK) recommendations by 2050



### Agriculture is responsible for ...

14-15% of global emissions



>70% of antimicrobials in food-producing animals



60-80% of tropical deforestation



the top threat for 86% of species at risk of extinction

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, GLEAM 3 Dashboard 2022.