

Olympic medallists, conservationists, sustainability experts and animal academics call on Olympic Games organisers to remove foie gras from menu

July 2024 --- In a bid to remove foie gras from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games' hospitality menu, dozens of athletes, academics, and conservationists have [penned an open letter](#) to organisers of the Olympic Games expressing concerns over the foie gras industry's impact on animals, the environment, and human health. Signatories include high-profile conservationist, Chris Packham; New Zealand professional tennis player and Olympic bronze medallist, Marcus Daniell; and former American cyclist and Olympic silver medallist, Dotsie Bausch.

The action comes after recent reports that foie gras made by force-feeding will be served on-site to VIP guests that purchase hospitality packages – a discovery that has sparked public outcry and led to over 45,000 signatures on a [petition](#) calling for the dish to be struck from the menu.

Due to commence later this month, organisers of the Games have prioritised 'leaf over beef', with 60% of dishes on offer either vegetarian or vegan. With an emphasis on sustainability, the International Olympic Committee and the chefs responsible for crafting the final menus, have prioritised plants on plates for this year's event.

Olympic Games Chef, Charles Guillo, has publicly stated that he is not featuring foie gras on spectator menus since "animal well-being is on everyone's mind", causing many to question why it is being served in premium lounges.

The letter – coordinated by international animal protection organisation, [Animal Equality](#) – is supported by veterinarians, law scholars, animal advocates, as well as university researchers with expertise in infectious diseases, public health, animal behaviour, and food systems. The letter outlines their collective concerns centred around the impact of foie gras production on animal welfare, the environment, and human health. Those endorsing the action claim that the organising Committee is 'hypocritically signalling to the international community that it is willing to consciously condone and pay for undeniably wicked treatment towards animals'.

Ducks and geese used for foie gras are force-fed up to 63 times during their lifetime, a practice that causes extreme physical and psychological pain, with scientists observing 'panic and flight responses' as a result. Once the bird's liver becomes diseased, the animal is slaughtered. Ducks in this industry live 3-5% of their natural lifespan and geese 2-3% of theirs.

Condemned by many, force-feeding for foie gras has been widely criticised for decades and is a crime in many countries, including Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, and the UK. Urging the organisers to remove foie gras from the menu, those backing the letter believe that the International Olympic Committee 'must use its influential position to unite the world, not divide it' and 'not ignore the concerns of the global population'.

Supporters of the action also point to the resource-intensive operations involved in foie gras production which, they claim, requires 'copious amounts of corn for force-feeding practices'. The experts express alarm over the cultivation and transport of monoculture grains, water usage and synthetic fertilisers which contribute to reduced and depleted biodiversity, soil nutrients, water quality, and ecosystems, while increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Foie gras, translated as ‘fatty liver’ in French, is high in saturated fat and cholesterol, which can contribute to the development of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Foie gras farms in France have been ravaged by deadly avian flu outbreaks over recent years, leading to anxiety around the impact foie gras production can have on individual health and global public health. The authors write that: ‘The Olympic Games celebrate some of the healthiest and fittest individuals on the planet; to feature foie gras at such an event is, respectfully, an oxymoron’.

The majority of citizens across France also recognize the extreme distress that foie gras production entails and are turning their backs on it, with a 2024 poll conducted by 30 Millions d’Amis Foundation discovering that 74% of 1515 French believe that force-feeding of animals is unjustifiable.

Sharon Núñez, President of [Animal Equality](#), said: *“Foie gras made by force-feeding is criminal - quite literally in many countries. It causes unimaginable pain to ducks and geese, puts undue pressure on our precious planetary resources, and risks human health. We don’t want foie gras to feature at the Games, and nor do Olympic medalists, conservationists, and world-leading experts. The organisers of the Paris 2024 Olympics must listen to the experts and remove this dish from its menu at once”*.

Organisations supporting the action include Animal Save France & Plant-Based Treaty France & DifusionV Luxembourg, FOUR PAWS UK, RSPCA, DC Voters for Animals, Animalisti Italiani Onlus, Vege Zajednica, OneKind, LAV, Viva!, L214, Animal Aid, Law Scholars for Change, Eurogroup for Animals, PROVIEH e.V, World Animal Protection UK, Anima International, Open Cages, Deutsche Juristische Gesellschaft für Tierschutzrecht e.V, Progressive Veterinary Association, Essere Animali, Animal Rising, Love & Rage, OIPA, Animal Law Italia ETS, Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali, LNDC Animal Protection, Fórum Nacional de Defesa e Proteção Animal, and GAIA.

—ENDS—

Media contact

Abigail Penny, Executive Director of Animal Equality
abigailp@animalequality.org.uk

About Animal Equality

Known for its undercover investigations, legal advocacy, public awareness campaigns and corporate outreach, Animal Equality has been witnessing, documenting and exposing what takes place inside factory farms and slaughterhouses for over a decade and a half. The organisation has been leading the charge globally in calling for an end to foie gras made by force-feeding, securing an historic ban on the sale of foie gras in India in 2014. The organisation’s activities are regularly reported in The Times, the Guardian, the Independent, the BBC and the Grocer.

Resources

Images (credit to Animal Equality):

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/animalequalityuk/albums/72177720312888464/with/53349447233>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/animalequalityuk/albums/72157673404858147/with/44028466430>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/animalequalityuk/albums/72157630696419436/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/animalequalityuk/albums/72157630695796552/>