



**Joining Forces:
Collaborative Opportunities Between The Animal Protection
And Environmental Movements**

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Background

Climate change and environmental degradation have harmful effects on the lives of humans and non-human animals alike. Across the globe, we're seeing the extinction of countless species, destruction of habitats, more frequent and severe natural disasters, food and water insecurity, and more. One key driver of this worldwide destruction is the animal agriculture industry, which indirectly helps unify the causes of animal advocacy and environmental protection.

Agriculture is a large source of greenhouse gas emissions and has extensive environmental impacts throughout the world. [Over one-third](#) of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the food sector, and most of these emissions can be attributed to the [animal agriculture industry](#). Emissions from the food sector alone will take the world beyond the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold by 2100 ([Clark et al., 2020](#)), meaning serious societal, economic, and ecological [consequences](#) for the planet.

In addition to the emissions resulting from animal agriculture, the industry is responsible for deforestation, land degradation, air and water pollution, water stress, and biodiversity loss. Nearly half of the world's habitable land is used for agriculture, and of that land, it's estimated that 77% is used by the animal agriculture industry for maintaining livestock and for producing animal feed ([Ritchie et al., 2022](#)).

Aside from animal agriculture's impacts on the climate and environment, there are various other areas of overlap between environmental issues and animal advocacy. For instance, wild animal poaching causes immense harm to individual animals and entire species that may go extinct. This can result in [changes to ecosystems](#), as animals who play a particular role in their functioning are removed. The same is happening in the world's oceans and freshwater ecosystems as a result of [overfishing](#), further contributing to biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate change (especially when trawling is involved). Another example is the environmental impact that [free-roaming companion animals](#) like dogs and cats can have, contaminating ecosystems with their feces and greatly reducing biodiversity by hunting other animals.

Given the overlap that exists between animal advocacy and climate and environmental issues, as well as research indicating that environmental sympathizers are more likely to take pro-animal actions ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)), this study sought to evaluate the potential for collaboration between organizations working in the animal protection space and those in the environmental movement. Focusing particularly on Brazil, China, and the U.S. due to their high potential for environmental and animal advocacy efforts alike, we used a combination of desk research and interviews with environmental organizations to identify areas of overlap between the two movements and to consider environmentalists' perspectives about partnering with animal advocates. By doing so, this study complements recent research looking at



environmental organizations' willingness to incorporate animal agriculture messaging into their tactics ([Mercy for Animals, 2023](#)).

Key Findings

- 1. Many environmental organizations are open to collaborating with a wide variety of animal advocacy organizations.** Of the eight organizations we interviewed, four were open to collaborating and four are *already* collaborating with animal advocacy organizations. While they represent approximately a third of the organizations we contacted, this suggests that a sizable proportion of environmental organizations whose work aligns in some way with animal advocacy (e.g., conservation, sustainability, tackling deforestation) are receptive to the idea of working with animal advocates. Half of interviewees mentioned they would like to collaborate with organizations focused on wild animals, while some are open to partnering with organizations focused on dietary shifts. Others are open to partnering with advocates helping farmed animals, companion animals, or any animal advocacy organization as long as they share some commonalities. These can include sharing similar interests, tactics, values, and/or audience.
- 2. Environmentalists are especially interested in collaborating with animal advocates on legal advocacy, education, and promoting plant-based diets.** Multiple organizations would like to take legal action and develop and/or improve policies and regulations to protect the environment and animals, particularly when it comes to industrial animal agriculture. They're also open to collaborating on educating the public on the intersection of animal advocacy and environmental issues, as well as working with animal advocacy organizations to promote a reduction in animal products and a shift towards more sustainable diets. Although these were some of the most mentioned collaboration strategies, they are just a few of the many potential tactics described by interviewees.
- 3. The most common challenge animal advocates and environmentalists may encounter in a partnership is having differing views.** Six out of the eight organizations we interviewed recognized there may be differing views and approaches between the environmental and animal protection movements that could pose a challenge for collaboration. In particular, they brought up concerns about differences in opinion about certain topics, differences in the strategies generally implemented by each organization, and differences in what they consider to be the best messaging strategy to address a common audience (e.g., environmental vs. animal welfare messaging; promoting veganism vs. animal product reduction). Organizations also voiced concerns about society's (negative) perception of animal advocates, the power of the animal agriculture industry in government, the movement's marginalization of BIPOC and other historically disadvantaged groups, and more.

4. **By collaborating with animal advocacy organizations, environmental organizations hope to gain more support, resources, funding opportunities, and to add new perspectives to their efforts.** Nearly all interviewed organizations would benefit from sharing resources and support with an animal advocacy organization, such as sharing connections to each other's networks, knowledge of animal advocacy and environmental issues, and experiences with various advocacy tactics (e.g., diet campaigns). Partner organizations could also seek funding together, granting each other access to funding opportunities normally unavailable to them.
5. **Environmental organizations' willingness and ability to collaborate with animal advocates depends on a number of factors, but especially on there being some alignment between them.** It's important that potential partner organizations share similar values, interests, audience, and/or advocacy tactics (e.g., education or policy work). Other factors that can influence the potential for collaboration include the animal advocacy organization's reputation, whether the animal advocacy group has an inclusive approach (of historically disadvantaged groups and of people who lead non-vegan lifestyles), and the environmental organization's capacity to take on a collaboration given the time, money, and personnel involved.
6. **High-priority countries for farmed animal advocacy are also the world's top greenhouse gas emitters.** Our research found a strong relationship between countries' emissions rankings and their potential for effective farmed animal advocacy — China, the U.S., and Brazil are responsible for over one-third of global emissions (about 40%) and slaughter the highest numbers of farmed animals. The animal agriculture industry is responsible for serious environmental damages in each of these countries, and we see this especially play out as the Global North drives animal agriculture and associated environmental destruction and degradation in the Global South.

Recommendations

For Animal Advocacy Organizations Interested In Collaborating With Environmental Organizations

- **Don't hesitate to reach out to environmental organizations that you're interested in collaborating with.** While each organization has its criteria for determining who to collaborate with, you won't know what those are until you communicate with them. For some environmental organizations it can be as simple as sharing an interest in tackling a particular issue, while other organizations have more stringent criteria. Some environmental organizations already collaborate with animal advocates, are interested in continuing these collaborations, and are open to involving more animal advocacy organizations in their efforts. Even if the organization has never collaborated with animal advocates before, they may be open to the possibility following some discussions. So, when in doubt, just reach out.

- **Take the time to explain your advocacy work to environmental organizations, as they may not have a clear understanding of what it entails.** Before discussing collaboration opportunities, you might need to have a conversation about animal advocacy and your organization's role in the movement. While some environmentalists may already have some connection to animal advocacy, most will not have an in-depth understanding of it. Furthermore, environmentalists may focus on the concept of wild animal conservation, not considering other animal advocacy issues and their connection to environmental issues (e.g., animal agriculture). As a result, when reaching out to environmental organizations, you may need to clarify how the particular issues you wish to tackle together relate to the environmental issues that they are concerned about.
- **Communicate proactively and be open to compromise.** Environmental organizations may have a number of concerns about collaborating with animal advocacy organizations, and it's important to discuss these *prior* to beginning any sort of collaboration. Engaging in open and clear conversations early on will allow you to address these concerns and develop a plan to manage any expected challenges. Compromise may be necessary to ensure that both involved parties benefit from the collaboration despite differences in opinion. Past examples of successful compromises include using a One Health messaging framework instead of an animal rights framework, agreeing on a meat reduction message instead of an elimination message, and creating an anti-factory farming campaign instead of an anti-animal agriculture campaign.
- **Be open to intersection work, social justice causes, and helping historically disadvantaged human groups.** Particularly for organizations conducting environmental justice work, it's important that collaborators share their values and interest in helping historically disadvantaged groups. This may involve finding common ground on social justice issues related to the animal advocacy and environmental issues you wish to collaborate on ([Faunalytics, 2022](#)). It's also crucial to consider historical contexts when working with BIPOC communities or in a new country. Collaborating with local environmental organizations can ensure you have the necessary cultural and historical context. When possible, involve local communities and other historically disadvantaged stakeholders to ensure they are given a voice on matters that may affect them.
- **Keep the distinction between meat production and consumption in mind when collaborating on driving dietary change in the Global South.** If there are concerns about promoting plant-based diets in countries where meat consumption has not been [historically](#) high, such as China and Brazil, consider that collaboration efforts don't have to focus on reducing demand for meat. Instead, the focus can be on tackling factory farming, especially given the rapid industrialization of animal agriculture throughout the Global South.
- **Remember that "quiet collaboration" is also an option.** It isn't necessary to engage in a public collaboration with an environmental organization. This is especially the case if they have concerns about retaliation (e.g., by the animal agriculture industry or by their audience) for collaborating with animal advocates or are afraid of alienating their



audience. Quiet collaboration can involve sharing resources and expertise, such as helping each other implement a particular strategy or incorporating environmental/animal advocacy messaging without openly collaborating.

- **When possible, focus on the animal agriculture industry's impact on animals and the environment worldwide, especially in Brazil, China, and the United States.** Given how interconnected animal agriculture is across these three countries ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)), action needs to be taken in all three. This is where collaboration plays a crucial role, allowing for large-scale advocacy work in multiple countries. Animal advocates should consider partnering with environmental organizations and other animal advocacy organizations in each of these locations to provide necessary country-specific knowledge and to increase the number of groups working on the issues that unite our movements.
- **Sometimes collaboration may not be the best course of action, and that's okay.** After meeting with a potential collaborator you may realize that you're not a good match for each other — for instance, if your interests don't align or if the collaboration wouldn't logistically work. If it makes sense, consider referring each other to other organizations within your networks who may be a better fit, or share resources with each other without the need to collaborate.

For Environmental Organizations Interested In Collaborating With Animal Advocacy Organizations

- **Don't be afraid to incorporate animal advocacy messaging into your work.** Research has shown that animal advocacy can be a great motivator for shifting to a plant-based diet ([Faunalytics, 2021](#)). Additionally, environmental sympathizers are some of the people most likely to take pro-animal actions, such as removing beef and pork from their diets, attending protests/demonstrations focused on farmed animal welfare, voting for ballot measures and pro-animal politicians, and more ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)). As a result, using a combination of environmental and animal advocacy messaging can motivate a wider audience to take actions in support of the environment and animals.
- **Communicate your concerns about collaborating early on and be open to compromise.** When discussing the possibility of collaborating with an animal advocacy organization, it's important to not only discuss your shared goals and how you will accomplish them, but to also bring up any concerns you have about collaborating. No matter the hesitations — differences in opinion about messaging strategies, concerns about promoting veganism, or whatever is holding you back — addressing potential challenges before they arise will ensure a more successful collaboration. Keep in mind that some level of compromise may be necessary on both sides to ensure that everyone benefits.

- **Remember that “quiet collaboration” is also an option.** If you would like to collaborate with an animal advocacy organization but fear alienating your target audience or causing backlash from the animal agriculture industry or even the government (e.g., in China), consider collaborating in a less public way by sharing resources and expertise. This will allow you and your partner organization to help each other reach a common goal by providing the support you both need, without going public about your association.
- **Invest time into understanding the animal protection movement and how it ties to the work you do.** The animal protection movement is as diverse as the environmental movement when it comes to the various focus areas of organizations and the strategies they implement. While this report primarily focuses on the potential to collaborate at the intersection of animal agriculture and the environment, there are many other ways the two movements are related (e.g., human-wildlife conflicts putting wild animals at risk of extinction; environmental degradation caused by free-roaming domestic animals; and the [environmental consequences](#) of research using lab animals).

Learn about the different kinds of issues that animal advocates work on in the [Faunalytics Library](#), stop by our [Office Hours](#) to chat about how your work relates to animal advocacy, or reach out to [animal advocacy organizations](#) whose work interests you to learn more about what they do and how you may be able to collaborate.

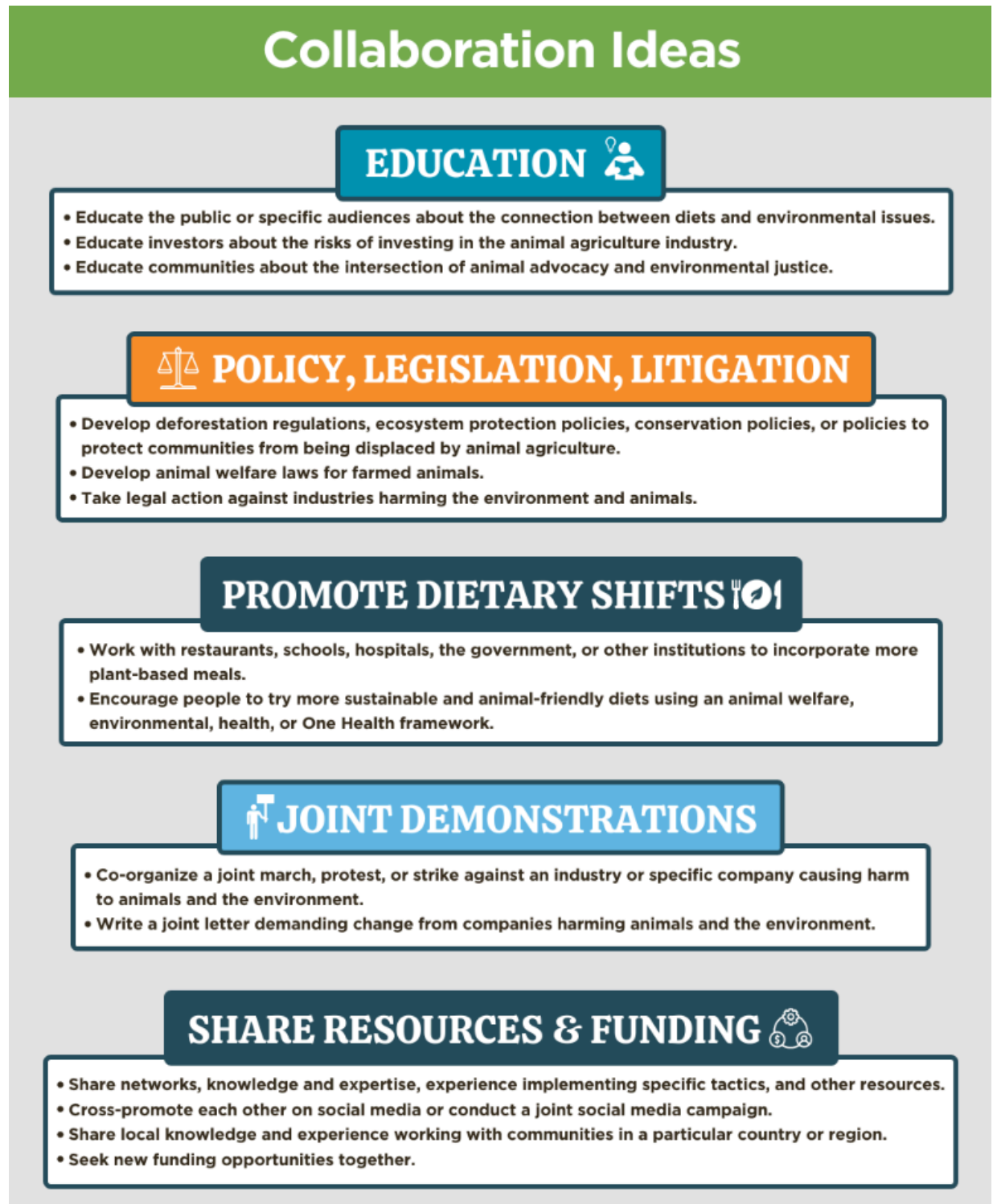
Applying These Findings

Some of the environmental organizations interviewed for this study that are open to collaborating with animal advocacy organizations include: [Black Girl Environmentalist](#) (U.S.), [Earthjustice](#) (U.S.), [Food For Climate League](#) (U.S.), [Fridays For Future U.S.](#), [Global Forest Coalition](#) (International), and [Mighty Earth](#) (International).

They are by no means the only environmental organizations out there. If you are interested in finding more, check out Charity Navigator’s [list of recommended environmental non-profits](#), the UNEP’s [list of accredited organizations](#), Carbon Brief’s [database of climate researchers in the Global South](#), or WANGO’s [general NGO directory](#). For environmental organizations looking to ally with animal groups, review ACE’s [list of recommended charities](#) and their [map of farmed animal advocacy organizations](#), IAA’s [list of animal conferences](#), or Charity Navigator’s [animal welfare non-profit list](#).

Envisioning collaboration can be tricky. To help, review Figure 1 below to see the most commonly-cited pathways to collaboration. This list was generated from examples given by our interviewees — use it as a starting point to spark ideas about new intersectional efforts to help animals and the environment!

Figure 1. Ideas for Collaboration Between Environmental and Animal Advocacy Groups



DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGNS

- Collaborate on a campaign to divest and defund the industrial animal agriculture industry.
- Pressure investors and meat companies to shift investments in the animal agriculture industry to the alternative proteins sector.

CORPORATE CAMPAIGNS

- Obtain commitments from large companies for more animal-friendly and sustainable practices.
- Work with supermarkets to stop them from purchasing animal products linked to deforestation and factory farms.

JOINT RESEARCH

- Research the impacts of animal agriculture on a particular ecosystem or community.
- Research the best ways to help shift diets to more sustainable and animal-friendly ones.
- Research the transmission of zoonotic diseases from factory farms to wild animals and people.

GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

- Mobilize communities to contact local representatives to support policies that benefit animals and the environment.
- Work with communities to pressure companies to adopt better animal welfare and environmental practices.
- Protest industries harming a local community, environment, and animals.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

- Participate in international coalitions, meetings, summits, conferences, etc.
- Co-present at conferences to get the spotlight on the connections between animal advocacy and environmental issues.

AND MORE!

Animal advocacy and environmental organizations are very diverse in their focus areas and the tactics they implement. As a result, collaboration could happen in a variety of ways beyond those described here.



We understand that reports like this one have a lot of information to consider, and that acting on research can be challenging. Faunalytics is happy to offer pro bono support to advocates and nonprofit organizations who would like guidance applying these findings to their own work. Please visit our [Office Hours](#) or [contact us](#) for support.

Behind The Project

Research Team

The project's lead author was Constanza Arévalo (Faunalytics). Dr. Andrea Polanco assisted with the interviews and analysis, and Dr. Jo Anderson (Faunalytics) reviewed and oversaw the work. Interview support was also provided by Zach Wulderk (Faunalytics).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the environmental organizations that took the time to interview for this study, as well as the organizations that provided valuable input to help us identify potential interviewees. We would also like to thank our funders for their generous support of this research.

Research Terminology

At Faunalytics, we strive to make research accessible to everyone. We avoid jargon and technical terminology as much as possible in our reports. If you do encounter an unfamiliar term or phrase, check out the [Faunalytics Glossary](#) for user-friendly definitions and examples.

Research Ethics Statement

As with all of Faunalytics' original research, this study was conducted according to the standards outlined in our [Research Ethics and Data Handling Policy](#).

Method

This study was conducted in two phases: desk research and interviews with climate and environmental organizations.

Priority Country Identification

We identified high priority countries for animal advocacy using [Mercy for Animals' Farmed Animal Opportunity Index \(FAOI\)](#), which ranks 60 countries on their potential for effective intervention. From there, we researched the major environmental concerns in each selected country using information from the [World Bank's climate risk country profiles](#), [Climate Watch](#) country profiles and global emissions rankings, the [ND-GAIN Country Index](#) (vulnerability to climate change rankings), and the [Climate Change Performance Index](#) (CCPI).

We obtained Spearman's correlation between countries' FAOI rankings and their global emissions rankings, which indicated a strong correlation ($\rho = 0.79$) between the two. As a result, it appears that high priority countries for farmed animal advocacy also tend to be the world's top emitters. For this reason, we decided to focus this study on Brazil, China, and the United States—countries that have the highest potential for animal advocacy efforts and require significant climate and environmental action as well.

For more information on the selection of our priority countries and for the full list of FAOI and emissions rankings, see the *Supplementary Materials*.

Interviews with Environmental Organizations

Following the desk research phase of the study, we conducted interviews with climate and environmental organizations that work in Brazil, China, and/or the U.S. This allowed us to gauge the level of interest from climate and environmental organizations in collaborating with animal advocacy organizations, and understand their views regarding the potential benefits and challenges of such partnerships.

The [interview guide](#) and [consent form](#) shared with interviewees prior to each interview may be found on the Open Science Framework, along with the study's [pre-registration](#).

Participants

We interviewed eight organizations working in the environmental sector in Brazil, China, and/or the U.S. Although we contacted 24 organizations to participate in the study, only a third responded. Some participants were recommended by stakeholders—organizations that already have an interest in the animal advocacy-environmental intersection and are knowledgeable about important players in the environmental space. Other participants were selected based on

their work in the environmental sector which could align with animal advocacy issues (e.g., organizations focused on fighting deforestation or environmental justice).

Five of the interviewed organizations work exclusively in the U.S., one exclusively in China, and the remaining two in all of the U.S., China, and Brazil. Seven interviews were conducted in English and one in Spanish, which was professionally transcribed and then translated to English for later analysis.

It should be noted that the 24 organizations we invited to participate in this study work in areas that can be more easily tied to issues the animal protection movement focuses on (versus issues like fossil fuels or transportation). Even of those 24 contacted organizations, only eight agreed to interview for this study. These organizations were generally sympathetic to animal advocacy to a degree we consider potentially nonrepresentative of other organizations, with half of interviewees mentioning that they lead a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle or have a personal connection to animal advocacy. As a result, there is evidence of selection bias in which organizations participated, meaning that the views described in this study do not necessarily represent those of the environmental movement overall. However, they do provide an idea of what collaborations can look like with the types of environmental organizations that animal advocacy organizations are more likely to reach out to given their connections to animal advocacy issues.

Coding And Analysis

We analyzed the interview transcripts as described in the *Thematic Analysis* section of the *Supplementary Materials*, looking for common themes and sub-themes.

Overview Of High-Priority Countries

China

Responsible for [26% of global emissions](#), China is the number one greenhouse gas emitter in the world. The energy sector is responsible for most emissions within the country, with the agricultural sector coming in third (accounting for 5% of China's emissions). Nonetheless, the country's animal agriculture sector has grown significantly in the last few decades, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution, particularly from industrial animal agriculture ([Zhaohai Bai et al., 2018](#)).

Regarding China's climate future, the country is expected to experience temperatures much higher than the global average, flooding, cyclones, drought, sea level rise, water scarcity, desertification, and more ([The World Bank Group & Asian Development Bank, 2021](#)). Despite the risks China faces from climate change, it is ranked as a [low-performing country](#) in terms of

its climate actions—its policies are not enough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve global climate goals and the country remains far too reliant on coal and other fossil fuels.

In addition to being the top greenhouse gas emitter, China is also responsible for the world's [top food emissions](#), is a top meat producer, and is ranked first on the [FAOI](#) for its potential for effective farmed animal advocacy. Demand for animal products is expected to increase in China by 45% by 2050 ([Zhao et al., 2021](#)). This could threaten its natural ecosystems, as millions of hectares of pasture will be required in the next few decades to accommodate this demand ([Zhao et al., 2021](#); [Global Forest Coalition, 2022](#)).

United States

The [United States](#) is the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter, accountable for about 11% of global emissions. Similar to China, most of the U.S.'s emissions come from the energy sector, followed by the agricultural sector (7% of the country's emissions). Within the agricultural sector, [methane and nitrous oxide](#) emissions are the most prevalent, both of which are associated with animal agriculture. Additionally, immense amounts of water are used to irrigate feed crops for the animal agriculture industry, making beef and dairy production the main drivers of water scarcity in the western U.S. ([Richter et al., 2020](#)).

Due to climate change, the U.S. is [already experiencing](#) more frequent heat waves, extreme precipitation, larger wildfires, and water scarcity. The U.S. is ranked as a [very low performer](#) in terms of its climate actions. This is mainly due to the country's high greenhouse gas emissions and its dependence on fossil fuels (and plans to increase gas and coal production). However, the U.S. has a medium ranking for its climate policies, such as the Inflation Reduction Act which seeks to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. While the U.S. is setting new targets and policies for climate action, stronger climate policy is made difficult by opposition from the Republican Party and some members of the Democratic Party.

From an animal advocacy standpoint, the U.S. is ranked second on the [FAOI](#) in terms of its potential for effective intervention for farmed animals.

Brazil

Responsible for 3% of global emissions, Brazil is the largest greenhouse gas emitter of the Latin American region and is the [seventh largest greenhouse gas emitter](#) in the world. The largest proportion of emissions in Brazil—over one-third of its emissions—come from the agricultural sector.

Deforestation, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss in Brazil can be largely attributed to intensive cattle grazing and ranching, along with soy farming ([The World Bank Group, 2021](#)), which is closely linked to animal agriculture—over [three-quarters of the world's soy](#) is used as animal feed. It's estimated that as much as [90% of deforested land](#) in the

Brazilian Amazon is used for pasture. From 2010 to 2014, beef production was responsible for [over 90%](#) of the country's annual CO₂ emissions from deforestation. The Brazilian Cerrado, which is the world's most biodiverse savannah, is also experiencing significant vegetation clearance for the purpose of soybean production, which is often linked to animal agriculture ([The Wilson Center, 2022](#)).

Due to climate change, the country faces rising temperatures, increased risk of flooding, drought, water scarcity, and food insecurity ([The World Bank Group, 2021](#)). This year, Brazil was rated as a [medium-performing country](#) when it comes to climate action, which is an improvement from its 2023 ranking. After a government that reversed environmental laws and regulations, with deforestation reaching a [record high in 2022](#), the new government of President Lula da Silva has greatly improved climate and environmental policies to protect Brazilian ecosystems. The country is doing rather well in terms of renewable energy and is improving its [climate policies](#) (e.g., policies to reduce deforestation), but is performing poorly when it comes to its greenhouse gas emissions. Although Brazil has made great progress in expanding renewable energy, it plans to increase gas and coal production, and could become one of the world's largest oil producers.

Brazil is ranked third in the world on the [FAOI](#) for its potential for effective farmed animal advocacy.

The Interconnectedness Of Priority Countries

In a study looking at the factors affecting the costs of production for chicken, egg, and fish products, [Faunalytics \(2023\)](#) found that the animal agriculture industries of Brazil, China, and the U.S. are intrinsically connected. These three countries are the leaders in production, imports, and exports of animal products, resulting in emissions and environmental harms within their countries and internationally. They are among the world's [top emitters of methane](#), a greenhouse gas that is largely associated with animal agriculture and that is particularly important given its high 'warming potential'—it is [28 times stronger than CO₂](#) at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The world is interconnected in such a way that we're seeing evidence of the Global North [driving deforestation](#) throughout the Global South as demand for goods from these regions increases. In fact, nearly all global deforestation is occurring in the tropics (half of it is happening in Brazil and Indonesia) and [three-quarters](#) of this deforestation is due to agriculture. Meat exportation is thus a large contributor to [deforestation in the Amazon](#), resulting in the loss of biodiversity and of a significant carbon sequestration source.

International demand for beef, [especially from China](#), is driving this industry in the Brazilian Amazon as domestic demand for beef has been rather low in recent years. In 2022, China was responsible for 64% of Brazilian beef exports and the U.S. was second with 7.6%. China is also Brazil's [largest buyer of pork](#). Due to the country's growing demand for animal products,



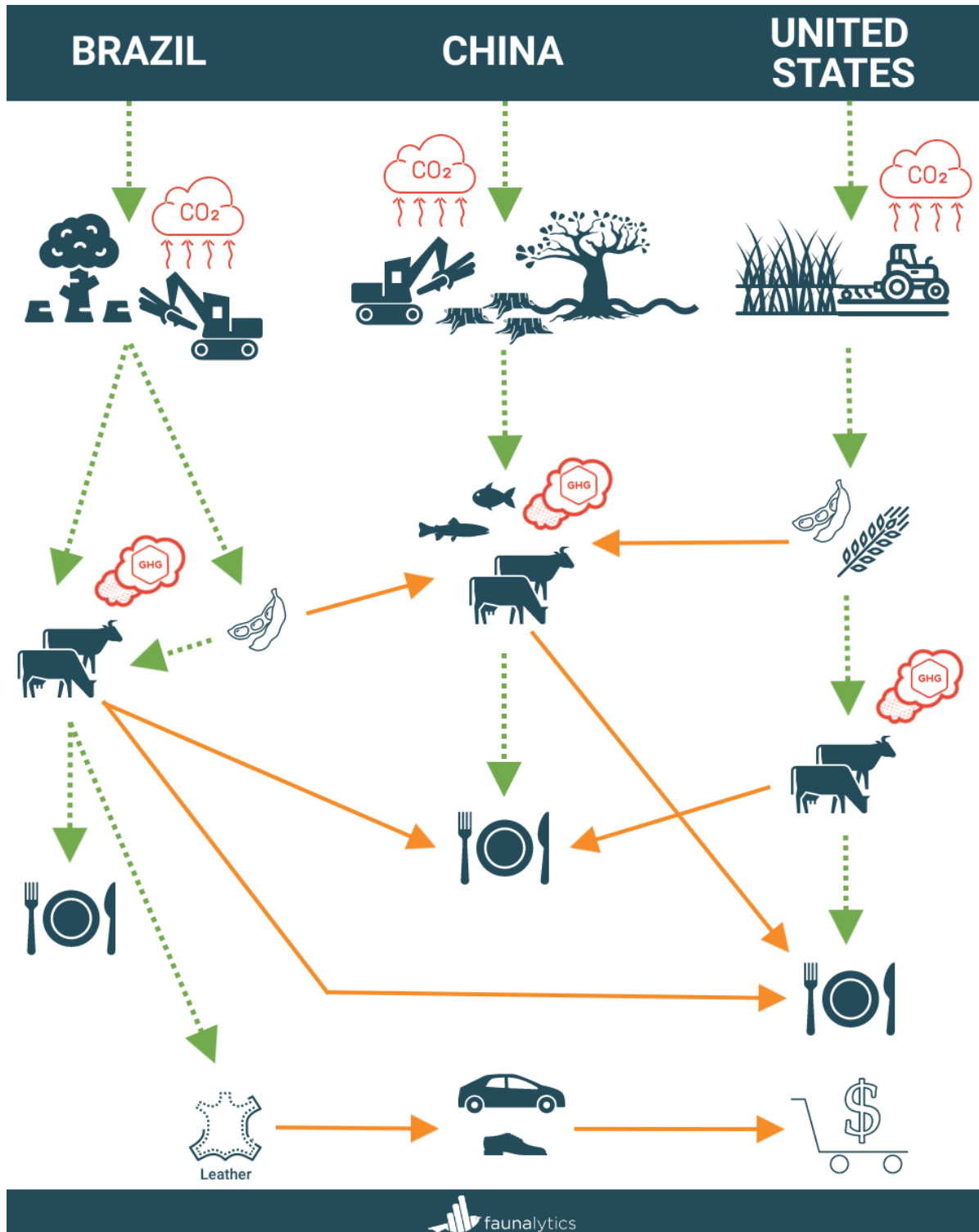
Chinese demand for imported animal products is expected to double by 2050 ([Zhao et al., 2021](#)), posing a serious threat to Brazil's already highly-threatened ecosystems.

The U.S. also plays an important role in feeding China's growing demand for meat and dairy. The U.S. not only [exports](#) cow, pig, and poultry products to China, but large quantities of soybeans, corn, sorghum, and alfalfa hay as well, which are used as feed for farmed animals. In 2022, soybeans made up nearly half of U.S. agricultural exports to China. These exports harm the Great Plains as they are [converted to cropland](#), resulting in greenhouse gas emissions, reduced habitat for wild animals, decreased water quality, and decreased carbon sequestration. China is also Brazil's [main buyer](#) of soybeans, which are largely used to feed aquacultured fishes, which are then exported for consumption in the U.S. ([Godfrey, 2021](#); [Faunalytics, 2023](#)). This has not only resulted in large areas of the [Brazilian Cerrado and Amazon rainforest](#) to be cleared for soy expansion, but has also historically resulted in the clearing of China's [mangroves](#) to make room for aquaculture ponds.

These countries' meat corporations are also intertwined. The U.S. is the [greatest buyer](#) from the Brazilian corporation JBS—the world's biggest meat packer. JBS is the largest purchaser of cows from the Amazon rainforest, including from [illegally deforested lands](#). Furthermore, a number of U.S. companies purchase leather products (e.g., shoes, car upholstery) produced in China from Brazilian cows raised on deforested land ([Global Canopy, 2019](#)). Despite the contributions of international trade to deforestation in the tropics, historically, most deforestation in Latin America that occurs for food production is driven by domestic demand ([USDA, 2023](#)). As a result, reducing deforestation requires reducing demand for meat and dairy products both locally and from major importer countries (i.e., China and the U.S.).

The further interconnectedness of the animal agriculture industry and its global environmental harms are demonstrated in the way the largest meat producing companies in the world have operations in multiple countries ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)). For instance, JBS has countless subsidiaries around the world, including in the U.S. (e.g., Pilgrim's Pride). Likewise, WH Group, a Chinese pork production company (and the largest in the world) is responsible for the production of pork in the U.S. Meanwhile, the U.S. corporation Tyson—a processor of chicken, beef, and pork—has facilities in 16 countries.

Figure 2. Interconnectedness of Animal Agriculture and Environmental Issues in High-Priority Countries



Interview Findings

The Environmental Movement In High-Priority Countries

Climate and environmental organizations work in a variety of cause areas, tackling issues from fossil fuels, to biodiversity loss, to pollution, to consumerism, and much more. Taking into consideration that climate and environmental concerns vary by country, the focus areas of organizations in each of our priority countries differ as well.

The environmental movement in the [United States](#) has historically focused on issues like pollution, biodiversity loss, clean energy, environmental justice, and generally combating the effects of climate change. In the case of Brazil, environmental organizations may also work in these areas, but tend to have a greater focus on protecting biodiversity and ecosystems, fighting deforestation, and environmental justice (e.g., Indigenous rights; [Horta Duarte, 2019](#)).

Because the energy sector is the largest contributor to emissions in China, Chinese climate and environmental organizations will often work in the renewable energy sector, as well as in conservation efforts and in addressing pollution. However, one important characteristic of the environmental movement in China is that environmental action is particularly dependent on [cooperation with the government](#). This means generally focusing on issues that form part of the environmental agenda set by the government.

The climate and environmental goals of the organizations we interviewed for this study were varied, described in the following table in alphabetical order:

Table 1. Goals of Interviewed Environmental Organizations

Animal Welfare	Ensure animal welfare.
Biodiversity / Ecosystem Protection	Protect biodiversity and/or specific ecosystems, often with an emphasis on the protection of wild animals.
Climate Education	Educate the public about climate and environmental issues.
Fossil Fuels	Shift away from fossil fuels.
Goals depend on Consensus	For organizations that consist of a network of some sort, the organization's goals are dependent on reaching consensus among branches or members.
Policy	Influence climate/environmental policy, whether at a local, national, or international level.
Representation in the Movement	Increase representation of a particular group of people (e.g., BIPOC, youth, LGBTQIA+) within the climate/environmental movement.
Social Justice	Focus on social justice issues within the climate/environmental movement, including environmental justice, food justice, gender justice, racial justice, Indigenous rights.
Sustainability	Promote sustainable lifestyles (e.g., sustainable/climate-friendly diets, recycling), sustainable agriculture (e.g., tackling food emissions and deforestation), and/or sustainable development.
Tackle Climate Anxiety	Tackle climate/environmental anxiety and turn it into environmental action.
Transform Industries	Transform industries to make them more environmentally friendly/sustainable.
Other Goals	Other goals, including motivating people to join the environmental movement and bringing region-specific environmental issues to an international spotlight.

To accomplish these goals, the organizations implement equally varied strategies, such as community organizing, educating the public about environmental issues, reforming climate/environmental laws, taking legal action for the environment, using various media (e.g., social media, podcasts, mobile apps) to get their messages across, conducting investigations into environmentally harmful companies, leading scientific research, and more.

Most importantly for this study, all interviewed organizations mentioned collaboration as a key strategy to pursue their goals, and all organizations already collaborate with other organizations both within and outside the environmental movement. Furthermore, some also collaborate with



their local and/or national governments, grassroots groups, industries, institutions (e.g., universities, schools, hospitals), BIPOC communities, and others. As a result, there is already precedent for collaboration as a major strategy in the environmental movement, making future collaborations with animal advocacy organizations a possibility.

Our interviews with environmental organizations working in Brazil, China, and the U.S. provided abundant information about what collaborations between the animal protection and environmental movements may look like in these three countries. The following sections provide evidence of the interviewed organizations' perspectives.

Environmental Organizations' Willingness To Collaborate With Animal Advocates

All interviewed organizations use collaboration as one of their main strategies to achieve their climate and environmental goals, collaborating with other organizations, the government, grassroots groups, industries, institutions, and local communities. Given the emphasis on collaboration, each organization has conditions for determining who to collaborate with. Environmental organizations' conditions for collaborating with animal advocacy organizations are described in Figure 3, below.

Figure 3. Conditions for Collaboration



ALIGNMENT

Environmental organizations would be willing to collaborate with animal advocacy organizations whose approach, values, interests, and/or target audience align with their own.



REPUTATION

If the animal advocacy organization is generally viewed poorly by the public, the target audience, or by other organizations, environmental organizations may be hesitant to collaborate with them.



PERMISSIONS

Some larger environmental organizations require consensus among regional branches to take on a new collaboration, whether the organization as a whole wants to collaborate or just a branch of the organization.

Environmental organizations may have to consider conditions set by funders when deciding if they can collaborate with an animal advocacy organization.



INCLUSIVITY

There should be good representation of historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+) within potential partner animal advocacy organizations.

It's also important that animal advocacy organizations be inclusive of all people and their different lifestyles (e.g., not being judgmental of non-vegans).



CAPACITY

On the more practical side, being able to take on a collaboration can depend on the environmental organization's capacity, especially having the time and available personnel to work on the collaboration.

With these conditions in mind, all interviewed organizations either said they would be open to collaborating (responded “yes” or “maybe”; $n = 4$) or have already collaborated with an animal advocacy organization ($n = 4$). Those that have already collaborated with animal advocacy organizations have done so to tackle factory farming's impact on the environment via public

demonstrations, industry commitments, or by taking legal action, and have worked with animal advocates on shifting diets to become more plant-based.

All organizations with experience partnering with animal advocates mentioned very positive experiences and would continue to collaborate with them and other animal advocacy organizations in the future. Interviewees that described their experiences collaborating with animal advocacy groups brought up their welcoming nature, the value of having animal advocates as allies, and the strength of their connections to other organizations.

“In many ways, I wish the environmental movement was more like the animal protection movement. We want to collaborate more with them, actually. I, on a personal and professional level, feel very inspired by the people I’ve met in the animal protection movement and I really think that they’ve pioneered a lot of the strategies that we’ve applied.”

Who Are Environmental Organizations Open To Collaborating With?

The interviewed organizations described a variety of potential animal advocate collaborators, listed in the following figure in order of popularity.

Figure 4. Types of Animal Advocacy Organizations Environmentalists are Open to Collaborating With



1. **Wild animal protection organizations:** Most interviewed organizations named biodiversity and ecosystem protection as one of their main goals, so organizations focused on protecting wild animals from extinction would certainly coincide with that line of work. There was particular concern with biodiversity protection from environmental organizations conducting work in China and elsewhere in Asia. As a result, wild animal protection may be a particularly good avenue to explore for collaboration with environmental organizations in China and in Asia overall. While interviewees did not discuss wild animal welfare in particular, there is potential to include this perspective when collaborating on wild animal protection, especially if the focus is on issues like poaching, wild animal trafficking, or even saving wild animals affected by natural disasters like wildfires.
2. **Organizations promoting plant-based diets:** Considering the climate and environmental consequences of the animal agriculture industry, organizations focused on promoting a more sustainable lifestyle may be open to collaborating with organizations whose work involves promoting a shift to plant-based diets.
3. **Any animal advocacy organization:** Some organizations would be open to collaborating with any animal advocacy organization (no specific focus area) as long as there is some alignment between them. This alignment will most often mean having shared interests.
4. **Farmed animal protection organizations:** Some environmental organizations are already concerned about the effects of factory farming on the climate and environment. As a result, there's interest in collaborating with organizations that work to ensure the welfare of farmed animals, and especially with those tackling industrial animal agriculture. Environmental organizations that may be particularly open to collaborating on these issues include those whose work focuses on protecting specific ecosystems (e.g., rainforests, mangroves, grasslands), environmental justice organizations (e.g., they may be concerned about the effects of factory farms on nearby communities), and environmental law organizations (e.g., they could take legal action against factory farms or improve regulations to protect the climate, environment, communities, and animals).
5. **Organizations that incorporate social justice issues:** For organizations with an environmental justice focus, it's important that a potential collaborator understand and work on the connection between social justice issues and animal advocacy issues. These organizations work with historically disadvantaged communities facing disproportionate environmental issues, and as a result, require partners who have experience working with such communities or who at least understand how historically disadvantaged groups are affected to a far greater extent by environmental issues, including those resulting from factory farming.

6. **Companion animal protection organizations:** There is also interest in collaborating with organizations whose work is focused on protecting companion animals, including shelters. For example, environmental organizations that work with children may be interested in these types of collaborations to increase compassion for animals. Additionally, free-roaming domestic animals can have serious environmental consequences, for which reason collaborations between shelters and environmental organizations may also make sense. As mentioned by an interviewee, shelters are very community-focused and have contact with animal control officers called about domestic animal and wild animal issues. As a result, shelters are an ideal bridge between environmental and animal advocacy issues who can work with environmental organizations to reduce the environmental consequences of free-roaming domestic animals and human-wild animal conflicts.
7. **Alternative proteins:** Environmental organizations may also be open to collaborating with non-profit organizations working in the alternative proteins space. These collaborations can involve increasing funding and demand for alternative proteins to drive a shift to more sustainable diets that will help reduce the negative effects of animal agriculture on the climate and environment.

Goals And Benefits Of Collaborating With Animal Advocates

Given the diversity of environmental organizations, it should come as no surprise that the goals they have in the event of a collaboration with an animal advocacy organization are quite varied.

Working Toward Shared Goals

Interviewed organizations mentioned wanting to collaborate with animal advocacy organizations to achieve a variety of goals that would benefit the animal protection and environmental movements. These included educating the public about the connection between environmental and animal advocacy issues, improving regulations to benefit both the environment and animals, reducing meat consumption, tackling the industrial animal agriculture industry's impact on the environment, and collaborating on the intersection of animal advocacy and environmental justice issues (e.g., protecting communities impacted by factory farming). Some organizations also mentioned hoping to grow the alternative protein industry, increase representation of historically disadvantaged groups in both the environmental and animal protection movements, and improve animal welfare.

Collaboration Benefits

In addition to the main benefit of having more people working towards a shared goal, collaboration can present other advantages, as shown in Table 2 and the following sections.

Table 2. Collaboration Benefits

Support & Resources	Partner organizations can benefit from sharing support and resources with each other.
Funding Opportunities	Partner organizations could benefit from increased funding opportunities.
New Perspectives	Environmental organizations can benefit from the new perspective brought by animal advocates to environmental issues, and vice versa.

Sharing Resources And Support

Collaborating with environmental organizations presents a great opportunity to share resources and support that would otherwise not be available to either partner organization. Most of the interviewed organizations mentioned this as a benefit of collaborating with animal advocates and would be open to mutually sharing their support. This can include sharing network connections, tools, scientific knowledge, or even legal support. It can also mean sharing experiences with strategies that the partner organizations wish to implement as part of the collaboration, such as campaigning for meat reduction or for an end to factory farming, or obtaining industry commitments.

Some interviewees were particularly optimistic about the contributions an animal advocacy organization could bring to a partnership with them:

“I think in the United States the animal protection movement is quite sophisticated and has reached into policymakers on a bipartisan basis. The animal protection movement in the United States also has a great history of winning improvements from the industries that most impact animals. So, certainly in the United States they seem to bring an enormous amount to the table.”

Accessing More Funding Opportunities

Some organizations also mentioned the possibility of greater funding opportunities, which could improve the chances of partner organizations reaching their shared goals. This could involve either partner organization (or both) providing funding or the partner organizations seeking funding together. Collaborating could provide both animal advocacy and environmental organizations access to funds they haven’t been able to access before, such as funding available to organizations working on the connection between climate and food.

“I think together we could reach a bigger funding pool to achieve our goals.”

Gaining New Perspectives

Gaining new perspectives from partnering with an organization from another movement could also benefit both animal advocates and environmentalists. For instance, animal protection can be a great motivator for some people to follow more environmentally-friendly diets, which some environmental organizations have as one of their primary goals but likely aren't emphasizing in their campaigns. Interviewees also noted the benefit of combining animal protection and environmental perspectives when developing policies to reduce the harms of factory farms:

"I think it is helpful to have a variety of perspectives on [industrial animal agriculture]; community members who are harmed by it, humane or animal welfare organizations who come at it from a perspective of protecting the animal, environmental organizations who come at it from the perspective of protecting the environment, climate organizations who come at it from reducing climate harms."

Whether targeting the general public or working with lawmakers to create new policy or improve regulation, using combined animal and environmental protection arguments is likely to present a stronger case.

The Challenges Of Collaborating

Some interviewed organizations described very few potential challenges of collaborating with animal advocacy organizations, while others named a wide range. These challenges could apply to collaborations with any environmental organization, regardless of their line of work. As a result, animal advocates wishing to collaborate with environmentalists should consider the possibility of encountering the challenges described in this section and develop a plan to address these and any other challenges that come to mind. While these challenges, if encountered, are not necessarily deal breakers, partner organizations should discuss and address them if they believe they may become an issue at any point during the collaboration.

Table 3. Potential Challenges of Collaborating with Animal Advocates, According to Environmentalists

Differing Views	Differing views and approaches between the climate/environmental movement and animal advocates that could pose a challenge.
Society's Perception of Animal Advocacy	Concern that society's often negative or extreme view of animal advocates could pose a challenge.
Society's Priority Issues	Concern that the public perceives other issues (e.g. social justice issues) as more important than animal advocacy issues or that they would not want their priority issues to be overshadowed by animal advocacy issues.
Fear of Retaliation	Concern about targeted industries retaliating against their organization.
Marginalization & Colonialism	Concern about the animal protection movement's history of marginalizing people of color and its colonialist tendencies (e.g., pushing plant-based diets in the Global South).
Lack of Funding	The environmental organization lacks funding for the collaborative work they would conduct with a partner animal advocacy organization.
Finding Commonalities	Finding commonalities between animal protection issues and environmental issues can be difficult and takes time and effort.
Other Challenges	Other potential challenges, including lack of knowledge of animal advocacy issues, lack of resources, and fear of being judged by animal advocates for their dietary preferences.

Differing Views

The most commonly mentioned challenges had to do with differing views between environmental and animal advocacy organizations. This can include differences in opinion about a particular topic, differences in their preferred strategies (e.g., promoting dietary shifts vs obtaining industry commitments for better practices), or differences regarding what they perceive as the best messaging strategy to address their audience (e.g., using an animal welfare vs an environmental framework, or, promoting veganism vs reduction). These differing views could also come into play when deciding on a stance to take on issues like feral cats or regenerative agriculture (a loosely defined set of [sustainable farming methods](#) including reduced tillage, cover crops, and crop rotation, and holistic grazing which multiple environmental organizations said they are in favor of). Nearly all interviewed organizations (six out of the eight interviewees) expect to experience at least some differences with their partner organizations regarding the best approach to take to achieve their common goals.

The following is one interviewee's take on the difficulties these differing views could pose in the event of a collaboration, suggesting a fear of alienating their target audience if common ground cannot be found between the two involved parties:

"Can a conservation organization and animal welfare partner collaborate when their messages and philosophies are in opposition? That's where I think you're going to confuse someone. It's almost like trying to make a network connection when you have two different worldviews and to get them to merge when they don't really make sense. That's when I see it not working."

A previous study on U.S. environmental organizations' willingness to implement animal agriculture-related messaging ([Mercy For Animals, 2023](#)) encountered results that also point to this 'differing views' challenge. Specifically, they found that some environmental organizations believe that messaging about other environmental issues would be more effective at reaching their audiences, that other issues are more important, or that animal agriculture would detract from other more important issues. This provides further evidence of the differences between animal advocacy and environmental organizations' priorities, preferred methods, and views on the most effective strategies to implement, even when there is a shared goal.

To prevent differing views from getting in the way of successful collaborations between animal advocacy and environmental organizations, some interviewees suggested taking the time to have transparent conversations. This would involve discussing any differences in the views of the involved organizations *prior* to beginning the collaboration to find common ground and preemptively find solutions to disagreements that may arise later.

"Having these conversations openly, and transparency, I think is what we would prefer as a solution to overcome potential challenges and address them immediately."

To illustrate this, one interviewee mentioned an instance in which their organization collaborated with an animal advocacy organization on promoting diet change, but the views of the organizations differed with respect to recommending reduction versus veganism. By discussing these differences early on, they were able to reach a compromise and actually pursued a vegan messaging strategy in the end. However, in the event that this type of disagreement arises and the partner organizations reach a compromise to implement reduction messaging, animal advocates will need to have conversations early on with their environmental partners about what this messaging will entail.

It's important that reduction messaging involves recommending that people incorporate more plant-based foods into their diets rather than shifting their meat consumption to smaller-bodied animal products like chicken and fish, which are often recommended as being more 'sustainable' but result in the suffering of even more animals ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)). The reduction of all animal products and their substitution with plant-based alternatives is not only less harmful to animals, but much [better for the environment](#) as well.

Society's Perception Of Animal Advocates

Some organizations expressed concern about what they believe to be society's generally negative, and often extreme, perception of animal advocates. This would pose a challenge to their own image if they were to collaborate with an organization that is negatively viewed by their target audience. As one interviewee pointed out, newer environmental organizations may be especially hesitant to collaborate with animal advocates as they work on building their public image and may be concerned about the consequences such a collaboration could have on establishing their brand and their ability to reach their environmental or climate goals. For instance, the public may perceive a recommendation to reduce meat consumption differently depending on who is making the recommendation, potentially showing an environmental organization's tactics in a bad light if done in collaboration with animal advocates:

"[If an environmental organization] talks about Meatless Monday, there's no controversy. It's just awareness. It's teaching [people] a connection between animal use and CO₂, animals for food and CO₂, and waste production and efficiency of food. But if an animal group talks about it, there's clearly another agenda."

Environmental organizations have previously shown concern about alienating their audience or even causing backlash by incorporating messaging on animal agriculture ([Mercy For Animals, 2023](#)). As a result, animal advocates hoping to collaborate with an environmental organization should be aware that their potential partner organization may raise serious concerns about how this would affect their public image. This is an instance in which the animal advocacy organization's reputation may come into play, as the environmental organization considers how they are perceived by their target audience.

To avoid alienating audiences, a few organizations recommended framing animal advocacy issues in a way that their audience would support, such as using an environmental and/or health focus rather than emphasizing an animal advocacy perspective. For example, advocates can use a One Health messaging strategy—a framework that considers environmental, animal, and human health as being interconnected. By doing so, the focus is on maintaining ecosystem and human health, while also promoting the wellbeing of all animals. One interviewee has found success in using more careful messaging when discussing animal advocacy issues and the need to shift to environmentally-friendly diets:

"One thing I guess I hear from some colleagues in the conservation movement is they have a concern that talking about animal rights or shifting away from industrial meat will alienate Americans who might otherwise be sympathetic to conservation goals. I have not found that. I think, as on any issue, it's important to be thoughtful about how you frame your message. I have not found it difficult to talk about why we want to shift away from industrial meat entirely."

It should be noted that while some environmental organizations may fear alienating their audiences by incorporating animal advocacy messaging, others may welcome this perspective, as noted in the *Goals And Benefits Of Collaborating With Animal Advocates* section of this report. Animal advocates can point skeptical potential collaborators to research showing that animal protection can be a great motivator for some people to adopt more environmentally-friendly diets ([Faunalytics, 2021](#)) and that environmental sympathizers are more likely than others to reduce or eliminate animal products from their diets, attend animal advocacy protests, vote for pro-animal ballot measures, and take other pro-animal actions ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)).

A longer-term solution to these concerns would be to work with the media to increase awareness of the connection between animal agriculture and climate and environmental issues. The media plays a critical role in communicating scientific information to the public, yet recent studies have shown that animal agriculture's connection to the climate crisis are rarely discussed ([Faunalytics & Sentient, 2023](#); [Madre Brava, 2023](#)). Educating the public about climate issues would benefit both the environmental and animal protection movements, taking into consideration that people who believe climate change is a very serious issue are some of the people most likely to take pro-animal actions ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)). So, working with the media to educate the public on climate issues—including covering animal agriculture's connection to the climate crisis—could increase support for both environmental and animal advocacy causes, and reduce the risk of alienating the public when animal advocacy messaging is implemented.

Additionally, animal advocates may sometimes be perceived as judgemental by environmental groups, with some interviewees even mentioning that they fear being judged by animal advocates for not following a vegan lifestyle. It's important that animal advocates take the time to address these concerns if they come up—both through words and actions. For instance, avoiding a lecturing or demanding tone when discussing animal advocacy issues is important to not alienate potential collaborators nor their audiences.

Fear Of Retaliation

A particularly serious concern that a few organizations brought up was regarding a fear of aggression or retaliation by the animal agriculture industry as a result of associating with animal advocacy organizations. These concerns were expressed by organizations who already have an interest in tackling the animal agriculture industry's impact on the climate, environment, and animals. They especially recognized the power and influence that the industry has in politics, which can pose a serious threat when attempting to address issues that involve farmed animal welfare and animal agriculture's impact on the environment.

“The industry has big money, so they have a big say and they have representatives in the government. That is the major challenge.”



“I think there are a couple of concerns that I always have—concerns about backlash because it’s so interesting that you have members of Congress who are on your side for a lot of environmental issues, but for agriculture they might not be just based on their constituents. The Big Ag lobby is so powerful.”

In China, fear of retaliation can also extend to the government, as criticism of the government (e.g., for climate inaction) can be [dangerous](#), resulting in the harassment of employees or removal of operational licenses. Animal advocacy in particular can be perceived negatively as caring more about animal welfare than human welfare. Animal advocates who wish to collaborate with environmental organizations in China may want to consider engaging in a more “quiet” collaboration, in which both organizations share resources and expertise with each other, without the need to participate in a public collaboration as it may not be the best or safest approach. This can also be a solution for animal advocacy organizations that wish to collaborate with environmental organizations that fear retaliation from the animal agriculture industry or someone else.

Colonialism And Marginalization

Environmental organizations that work on environmental justice issues shared concerns about the marginalization of BIPOC people that the animal advocacy movement has perpetuated over time (e.g., [white veganism](#) disregarding the oppression of BIPOC and other historically disadvantaged peoples) and concerns about animal advocates bringing a colonialist perspective to a collaboration. The latter concern was brought up by environmentalists working in Brazil and elsewhere in the Global South, who worry about pushing a Global North animal advocacy agenda on historically marginalized groups of people who are not necessarily the main drivers of environmental and animal advocacy issues. Furthermore, working with marginalized communities will often mean understanding that these groups are dealing with serious social justice issues of their own. One interviewee explained:

“Sometimes it may be perceived as a bit colonialistic, particularly in Global South countries, when you say, “You have to stop eating meat,” as consumption has historically been much lower there and when in many cases there are fewer options there.”

Animal advocates wishing to collaborate with environmental organizations in Global South countries where meat consumption has not been historically high may encounter hesitation about being associated with meat reduction campaigns. When working in the Global South and/or with other historically disadvantaged groups, animal advocates and their environmental partners will need to find a balance between advocating for animals, the environment, and communities.

In practice, this can mean a few different things. For groups solely focused on animal protection, they will need to expand their moral concerns beyond animals to include human issues (e.g., Indigenous rights). It can also mean tackling animal advocacy issues from a social justice

perspective instead, such as considering how factory farms are harming communities of color or destroying the ancestral lands of an Indigenous group. Advocacy groups can also create a distinction between meat production and consumption—considering that some countries like Brazil produce more meat than they consume. Such campaigns may focus on reducing factory farms themselves, with less emphasis on reducing demand for meat.

When collaborating in a way that may affect historically disadvantaged groups, animal advocacy organizations and their environmental partners should ensure these groups are given a voice. If an organization is looking to conduct work in another country, particularly Global North organizations hoping to work in the Global South, it's important to choose a local partner organization, respect cultural norms, and consider the region's historical context. If possible and relevant, involve local communities and stakeholders, especially in any decision-making that would directly impact them. Consequently, any collaborative work with environmental organizations that may impact historically disadvantaged communities will require that animal advocates engage in clear communication with their partner organization as well as the local community. This should involve becoming familiar with the local culture, learning about the needs of the community and challenges they face, discussing how the collaboration may affect them, and establishing the best strategy to achieve the animal advocacy and environmental goals of the collaboration, while also respecting and supporting the community. Not only does this make the work more effective, but also more holistic and just.

Because the animal protection movement has historically focused on the Global North, animal advocates' strategies may be less effective in the Global South due to cultural, economic, societal, and/or political differences. Animal advocates looking to collaborate with environmental groups in the Global South will need to develop strategies tailored to the country or region the collaboration will focus on. Furthermore, this indicates the need for more animal advocacy research in the Global South to understand how advocates can be most effective in the region given the differences with Global North countries.

Other Challenges

Other potential collaboration challenges were described by some environmental organizations, including a lack of knowledge of animal advocacy issues, needing to take the time to identify commonalities between animal protection and environmental issues, lack of resources to share, and a lack of funding to conduct collaborative work. It is therefore imperative that animal advocates take the time to explain animal advocacy to their environmental collaborators, ensuring that they understand what the animal protection movement does and why, along with going through the ties that exist between the two movements. If there is concern about a lack of resources or funding, it may be worthwhile to consider implementing a collaboration strategy that would require less of an investment in time, money, staff, or other resources, or, apply for funding together to meet the financial needs of the collaboration.



Some interviewees brought up challenges that could exist when attempting to collaborate with other organizations in the environmental movement, though not necessarily their own organization. These involved concerns about alienating environmental sympathizers, overshadowing the issues the environmental movement normally focuses on, and concerns about animal advocates lacking interest in human issues. Additionally, some interviewees recognized that animal advocates are not generally viewed positively by the environmental movement, though they themselves did not feel this way.

Collaboration Strategies

Environmental organizations are very diverse in the scope of their work and the strategies they implement to achieve their goals. As a result, we can expect collaborations with these organizations to be equally diverse. The following sections describe the tactics that the interviewed organizations would be willing to or already collaborate on with animal advocates (in order of most to least identified by interviewees).

Table 4. Potential Collaboration Strategies between Animal Advocates and Environmentalists

Education	Educate people on issues relevant to both the environmental movement and the animal protection movement.
Policy & Legislation	Propose new policies or reform existing ones to benefit the environment, climate, and animals.
Litigation	Take legal action against meat producers causing environmental damage.
Dietary Shifts	Promote shift to plant-based diets.
Joint Demonstrations	Collaborate on conducting a joint protest, march, strike, etc.
Public Criticism	Publicly criticize a common target of the two movements.
Share Resources	Share resources, including knowledge and experience.
Social Media	Promote each other on social media.
Funding	Provide funding to partner organization or seek funding together.
Divestment	Collaborate on divestment efforts against factory farming.
Industry Commitments	Collaborate on attaining industry commitments for more environmentally and animal friendly practices.
Joint Research	Collaborate on scientific research and/or writing a scientific report.
Grassroots Activism	Collaborate on grassroots mobilization.
International Participation	Participate in international coalitions, meetings, summits, conferences, etc.

Education

Some organizations would like to collaborate on educating people on issues affecting animals, the climate, and the environment—a strategy already implemented by some animal advocacy organizations. Education can be applied to all levels of society, with interviewees showing interest in collaborating with animal advocates on educating children, communities, and decision makers.

One organization has already collaborated with animal advocates to educate elite stakeholders and investors about the risks of investing in the expansion of the animal agriculture industry—a

concept that could be applied in various countries. Meanwhile, environmental organizations interested in educating the younger members of society suggested collaborating with animal advocacy organizations on humane education programs in schools. Specifically, they mentioned giving children the opportunity to learn about all animals that they have contact with and that interest them, from the animals they see in their everyday lives (e.g., companion animals, squirrels, pigeons), to farmed animals, to wild animals they find interesting. They also showed interest in teaching children about where their food comes from and how it impacts the environment, allowing them to make informed decisions about what to consume.

Organizations that mentioned collaborating with animal advocates on educating communities had a different focus and emphasized working together with communities of color or other historically disadvantaged communities. For one interviewee, this collaboration could look like hosting joint community events to educate people about the intersection of animal rights and environmental justice to get them involved in fighting these issues. For example, the impact of factory farms on nearby communities, the environment, climate, and animals.

Given the environmental concerns in Brazil, China, and the U.S., collaborating on education will likely look different in each of these countries. Most of the suggestions provided by interviewees for collaborating on education were for the U.S., but they could certainly be adapted to the other two countries as well. For example, animal advocates in Brazil could collaborate with environmentalists to teach children about where their food comes from and how it impacts the Amazon and the wild animals that live there. Meanwhile, education in China requires more of a [bottom-up approach](#). The general Chinese public does not have a good understanding of climate issues and how they affect them, nor about the connections between animal advocacy and environmental issues. As a result, animal advocates and environmentalists who wish to collaborate will need to educate at the community level, teaching community leaders about these issues so that this knowledge is filtered up, until it hopefully reaches the government.

A potential challenge to keep in mind when it comes to collaborating on education is alienating the target audience. For example, one interviewee expressed concern about using a lecturing tone when educating the public, recommending that in the event of such a collaboration, animal advocates and environmentalists be informative and allow people to make decisions for themselves. Having conversations early on is important to ensure that there is agreement between collaborators about the language that will be used.

Policy, Legislation, And Litigation

There is potential to collaborate on improving policies and developing legislation to benefit the environment, climate, and animals—particularly wild animals and farmed animals. Interviewed organizations showed interest in collaborating with animal advocates to legally combat the consequences of animal agriculture on the climate and environment by developing deforestation regulations, ecosystem protection policies, and policies to protect communities from being displaced for animal agriculture in the Global South. There was also interest in developing

animal welfare laws, filing litigations against industries harming the environment and animals, and wild animal conservation policies. Although it was not mentioned by interviewees, another potential avenue for collaboration in the political space is working with animal advocates on ballot initiatives, which can be done from the city level to the state level in the U.S. to reform existing laws to benefit animals and the environment.

The desire to collaborate on policies, legislation, and litigation with animal advocacy organizations was mentioned by environmental organizations working in all three priority countries. The proposal of legislation at the national level to protect animals and the environment was suggested by environmental organizations in Brazil, China, and the U.S., while litigation was discussed as a potential collaboration strategy for organizations in China and the U.S. There especially were concerns about the destruction of ecosystems in the Global South for meat consumption in the Global North, mentioned by multiple interviewees. For instance, one interviewee discussed the expansion of animal agriculture in the Brazilian Amazon and the organization's desire to collaborate on establishing regulations:

"I think first we have to denounce that they are destroying the jungle. There are also animals living in terrible conditions. Due to those facts, there is an exciting possibility for collaboration. And since this expansion is happening due to Chinese consumption of livestock products, I think there is also an interesting argument for regulation, as we can say, "China is asking for meat no matter the consequences, and it doesn't care about regulations."

Collaborating on such an issue would mean legally tackling the animal agriculture industry's impact on wild animals, the environment, and affected communities not only in Brazil, but internationally, given the global scope of the industry. Enforcing regulations in one country will have implications for the animal agriculture industry in another country, making these types of collaborations particularly important to consider. For example, regulations in China banning the importation of meat involving deforestation in its supply chain (legal and illegal deforestation) are crucial for the protection of the Brazilian Amazon and Cerrado, as well as for tackling large meatpackers like JBS and Marfrig who rely greatly on the deforestation of Brazil's ecosystems ([Global Witness, 2024](#)).

There are already some examples of organizations from the two movements successfully working together to conduct this type of work (e.g., [improving water pollution standards for slaughterhouses](#)), though legal collaborations will hopefully increase with time as this can lead to changes in the law to benefit animals and the environment, and even motivate shifts in society's attitudes toward animal welfare ([Animal Charity Evaluators, 2022](#)). It should be noted that plant-based advancements made in various U.S. municipalities and states have generally used an environmental framework, such as the Green Food Purchasing Amendment Act to reduce Washington D.C.'s food carbon footprint and the Good Food Purchasing Program in Illinois, California, Texas, Massachusetts, and Ohio to encourage institutions to purchase environmentally sustainable and high animal welfare food ([Faunalytics, 2022](#)).

When planning to collaborate on policy work, an important consideration to keep in mind is the [inclusion of historically marginalized groups](#). This could mean considering how certain groups or communities may be put at risk of being harmed by a proposed policy or how policies can better support disadvantaged groups or communities in addition to animals and the environment. Another consideration is the potential fear that may exist of the animal agriculture industry's power and influence in government, which is the case in multiple countries. In such instances, the best strategy may be to tackle the industry from as many angles as possible, involving a variety of voices—animal advocates, environmentalists, and local communities.

Promoting Dietary Shifts

“Food is a big contributor to climate change. [...] This is where we were really coming from: we all make several food choices every day and it’s an entry to climate action.”

Some environmental organizations are focused on promoting sustainable lifestyles and are well aware of the climate and environmental impacts that our diets have, particularly when it comes to the consumption of animal products. As a result, a potential avenue for collaboration between these organizations and animal advocacy organizations is promoting a shift to plant-based diets at an individual level to an institutional one.

Animal advocates collaborating with environmentalists on this type of work could target the general public to reduce their meat consumption or work with restaurants, schools, hospitals, the government, or other institutions to incorporate more plant-based meals. For example, one interviewee has already been working with restaurants and culinary professionals to make environmentally- and animal-friendly menu changes, presenting a great opportunity for collaboration with animal advocates. Other organizations have experience promoting sustainable lifestyles (e.g., encouraging recycling, water conservation, public transportation) through various forms of media (i.e., social media, podcasts, mobile apps), school programs, and other forms of outreach. The inclusion of sustainable diets would be a natural and important addition to sustainability campaigns like these if they're not already included in some way (some organizations already promote Meatless Mondays or meat reduction). Given the expertise and experience of animal advocates driving dietary shifts, there is much opportunity for animal advocates and environmentalists to develop sustainable diet campaigns together, to incorporate a diet component to environmental organizations' existing sustainability campaigns, or to incorporate an environmental framework into animal advocacy organizations' diet campaigns. Interviewees from China and the U.S. were particularly interested in collaboration involving this dietary perspective.

The messaging strategies that could be used in such collaborations may differ, with some interviewees interested in incorporating animal advocacy as a motivator for people to reduce their meat consumption, while others mentioned using a health framework, or One Health to tie environmental, health, and animal welfare motivations into one concept. One Health was especially brought up as a useful messaging strategy to use in China as it promotes individual

health, while also incorporating environmental health and animal welfare without alienating the public. This is supported by research showing that Chinese consumers that limit their meat consumption most often do so for their personal health and to avoid food safety issues normally associated with the meat industry ([Grimmelt et al., 2023](#)), rather than concerns about animal welfare or the environment.

The main challenge to keep in mind with a collaboration encouraging people to change their lifestyles is the potential for alienating the very audiences one is trying to convince to try a dietary shift. This will involve thoughtful messaging strategies and ample discussion with the partner organization to ensure that the most appropriate framework is applied to reach the target audience, taking into consideration any cultural or political factors that could play a role. When it comes to determining the right framework to use to address a target audience, animal advocates may encounter differing views from their environmental collaborators with regard to whether to incorporate animal protection as a motivator, and if so, in what way. For example:

“I think we’ve learned that showing extreme images of how animals are treated in factory farms is more appalling and people don’t want to see this bad news. But there’s an opportunity to reframe things in the positive and maybe think about it more in a positive way.”

As a result, animal advocates may need to compromise with environmental organizations. Even if animal advocacy is not incorporated into the messaging strategy, the main goal of driving dietary change can be achieved by using other motivators. Nevertheless, regardless of the motivator that is implemented, it is imperative that environmental organizations understand that when promoting dietary shifts, people should not be encouraged to substitute one animal product for another, given the animal suffering and environmental consequences involved (even if it’s a more ‘sustainable’ meat, the [environmental impact](#) is greater than it is for plant-based products).

Joint Demonstrations

Certain environmental organizations are known to participate in public demonstrations like marches, protests, and strikes, presenting an opportunity for collaboration with animal advocacy groups that also engage in these tactics. Interviewed organizations that conduct these types of demonstrations collaborate with other organizations to make these events possible, creating flyers and promotional materials together to gain support for their initiatives.

While research has shown that both disruptive and non-disruptive animal rights protests are not the most effective methods for diet change in particular ([Faunalytics, 2022](#)), there is evidence that climate protests (i.e., peaceful marches and civil disobedience) are effective at shifting public opinion in favor of climate action ([Bugden, 2020](#)), and may even influence elections and policy ([Social Change Lab, 2022](#)). For this reason, animal advocates may benefit from protesting alongside environmental organizations about issues impacting both animals and the

environment, as an environmental framework could resonate more with the public and result in a pro-animal shift. Or, at least result in the public taking interest in environmental issues that also impact animals, thereby increasing the likelihood of action benefiting animals.

Publicly criticizing a common target of the two movements was also proposed as a potential opportunity for collaboration with animal advocates. For example, partner organizations could write a joint letter criticizing and demanding change from meat companies whose practices are harmful to the environment and animals, or to development banks [financing](#) industrial animal agriculture. One interviewee has already implemented this strategy, which they combined with protesting to increase awareness of the issue.

Sharing Resources And Funding

Some environmental organizations would be happy to share resources with animal advocates. Specifically, interviewees discussed sharing their networks, knowledge and expertise, experience (e.g., with a specific tactic, conducting policy work), and other resources. Organizations that use social media for their own work may also be willing to cross-promote animal advocacy organizations and their campaigns on social media or conduct joint social media campaigns.

Animal advocacy organizations wishing to adopt a new advocacy tactic may find collaboration to be particularly beneficial by bringing in an environmental team that has the expertise that they require. In cases where both partner organizations already have experience with a given tactic, each involved party may still contribute unique perspectives and experiences that could help make the strategy all the more effective. For example, as previously described, multiple interviewees mentioned an interest in collaborating with animal advocates on developing policies, improving regulations, and taking legal action to benefit the environment and animals. These types of collaborations could present good opportunities to share unique expertise in animal law and environmental law, and to generally combine environmental and animal advocacy perspectives to strengthen legal cases.

Likewise, animal advocacy organizations trying to work in a new country or region would benefit from collaborating with environmental organizations that have local knowledge and experience that they can bring to the partnership. This is particularly important for work involving historically marginalized communities.

A couple of organizations also discussed the possibility of providing funding to animal advocacy organizations and their campaigns, or helping them to raise funds.

“If we really believe in the project, sometimes we will help [...] not always, I don’t want to give you the wrong idea, but sometimes we have been known to donate a little bit of our funds to these campaigns.”

While the possibility exists of some environmental organizations being able to provide some level of funding to their partner animal advocacy organizations, the more likely scenario is that both organizations would benefit from increased funding opportunities, as previously noted. Consequently, animal advocates and their environmental collaborators should consider seeking funding together to support a project or campaign that will benefit both movements. By sharing their knowledge of granting bodies and co-submitting to them, they can increase the funding opportunities accessible to each other. In other words, environmental organizations can open up environmental funding opportunities that animal advocates would otherwise be rejected from, and animal advocacy organizations can open up funding opportunities not normally available to environmental organizations.

Divestment Campaigns

Running joint divestment campaigns was proposed as a potential collaboration strategy between environmentalists and animal advocates. While some environmental organizations work on divestment campaigns with a focus on fossil fuels (e.g., encouraging academic institutions to divest from fossil fuels), there are some that are already involved in campaigns to divest and defund the industrial animal agriculture industry. For example, environmental organizations concerned about the role of industrial animal agriculture in driving the climate crisis and biodiversity loss collaborate with animal advocacy organizations through the [Stop Financing Factory Farming](#) coalition—a group of organizations around the world that are working to stop development banks from investing in factory farming. One interviewee who is a member of this coalition mentioned this as an especially promising area of collaboration in Brazil and the U.S., and the particular need for legal support for the divestment campaigns in these countries.

Relatedly, another interviewee proposed collaborating with animal advocacy organizations on shifting investments in the animal agriculture industry to alternative proteins instead. Specifically, they mentioned working with animal advocates to prevent large meatpackers like JBS from raising more funds to expand the industrial animal agriculture industry. Instead, they see corporations like this as having the ability to play a role in expanding the alternative proteins space by shifting their investments, which they hope to accomplish by placing financial pressure on them. As a result, animal advocacy organizations interested in divestment efforts may have collaborators in the environmental movement ready to go, with experience already under their belt and with the desire to do more.

Corporate Campaigns

Corporate campaigning can benefit both the animal protection and environmental movements, and organizations in both spaces already have considerable experience with this tactic. While animal advocacy organizations around the world have been campaigning to improve animal welfare standards for farmed animals (e.g., cage-free campaigns), environmental organizations have also been working with companies to make their practices more environmentally friendly.

For instance, one interviewee has worked with the decision-makers of large companies to obtain commitments for more sustainable practices, which they can then use to motivate their competitors to also implement better practices. Obtaining industry commitments can open the door to further change, as explained by the interviewee:

“One of the things we do is we ask companies to support environmental policies. Companies can bring a lot of significant new political leverage to the table. At the very least this strategy is often successful in getting them to not oppose better environmental policy because they want to avoid being critiqued for undermining their own commitments.”

This same strategy can apply to the goals of animal advocacy organizations, allowing for less resistance to animal welfare policies. In an animal advocacy-environmental collaboration scenario, this can look like two organizations jointly putting pressure on supermarkets to stop purchasing from companies that are linked to deforestation (e.g., JBS, Marfrig). This is a tactic that is already being implemented by an interviewee and their partner animal advocacy organization.

Joint Research

For animal advocacy organizations that are science-driven, there is potential to collaborate on joint research projects with environmental organizations interested in this line of work. This could involve a range of topics, from researching the climate/environmental impacts of the animal agriculture industry on a particular ecosystem or a community, to conducting social science research to understand the best ways to help shift people’s diets to more sustainable and animal-friendly ones—the latter has already been well-researched in the U.S. but more research is needed in other countries. Joint research could even be as complex as looking into the transmission of zoonotic diseases from factory farms to wild animals and people, as one interviewee suggested as an opportunity for collaboration.

Some environmental organizations described having already successfully collaborated with animal advocacy organizations on different research areas. For instance, one interviewee researched the impact of default plant-based options on menus, while another collaborated with animal advocates on secondary research to develop a series of reports on the connections between animal agriculture and the environment.

Animal advocacy organizations that don’t have experience conducting research but that are interested in this line of work may still be able to collaborate with environmental organizations that have this skill set. This could be done in such a way that the research organization conducts the research while the animal advocacy organization acts in more of a consultant role to provide expertise on animal advocacy issues.

Grassroots Initiatives

Grassroots mobilization plays an [important role](#) in the environmental movement, driving sustainability from the bottom-up. A few environmental organizations that implement grassroots actions as part of their strategies expressed interest in collaborating with animal advocacy organizations to drive this bottom-up change.

While there are many possibilities for what this type of activism can look like, it could involve mobilizing communities to contact local representatives to support policies that benefit animals and the environment, pressure companies to adopt better animal welfare and environmental practices, or perhaps to protest an industry harming the local environment and animals (e.g., factory farms, pipelines). This was proposed as a collaboration strategy in Brazil, China, and the U.S., with an interviewee conducting work in China stating, *“We can provide [...] the grassroots organizations who work closely with us already nationwide.”*

International Participation

There was some interest in collaborating with animal advocacy organizations through participation in international coalitions, meetings, summits, conferences, etc. This could present a great opportunity for animal advocates to interact with the environmental movement in a meaningful way, ensuring that animal protection issues are heard by other movements and given greater priority. One interviewee mentioned the possibility of sharing their *“spaces for dialogue,”* thus creating space for animal advocacy issues in environmental discussions.

Given the negative perception that the environmental movement may sometimes have of animal advocates, such interactions could be a way to change the narrative surrounding the animal protection movement and to increase opportunities for collaboration with environmentalists. Co-presenting with environmental organizations at major environmental conferences could help to not only express the urgency of animal advocacy issues like industrial animal agriculture, but could also help improve the image of animal advocates and give the animal protection movement greater visibility and legitimacy in the environmental movement and beyond.

Conclusions

With this study, we set out to determine whether there is potential for collaboration between the animal protection movement and the environmental/climate movement in Brazil, China, and the U.S. As our results indicate, the short answer is ‘yes’—interviewed environmental organizations made it evident that there is indeed interest in such collaborations, with some organizations already partnering with animal advocates. The long answer is more complicated, though still promising, and it involves a combination of environmental organizations’ understanding of what animal advocacy is, the perception that exists of animal advocates both within the environmental movement and by the general public, and potential challenges that should be addressed before an official collaboration is set in motion.

Collaboration With Animal Advocates Brings Unique Challenges To Environmentalists

Collaborations don't come without their challenges, especially when it's between two movements that have not always seen eye to eye. The potential for these challenges to occur can be enough to deter an environmental organization from wanting to collaborate with an animal advocacy organization, but there are ways to address challenges before they occur so that they do not get in the way of a successful partnership.

A number of potential collaboration challenges were described during interviews, but the most prevalent was the possibility of there being 'differing views' between the animal protection and environmental movements. These concerns about differences in opinion mostly had to do with deciding on the most effective strategies to implement together, particularly the best messaging strategies to use. This, along with the perception of other issues as being more important, fear of overshadowing environmental issues, and fear of alienating audiences or causing backlash have previously been named as concerns of U.S. environmental organizations in relation to incorporating messaging on animal agriculture ([Mercy For Animals, 2023](#)). As a result, these issues are likely to come up when discussing the possibility of collaboration with environmental organizations, so animal advocates should be prepared to address these concerns and have strategies already in mind to mitigate them should they arise.

The various collaboration challenges described by the interviewed organizations are in some ways related to one another, so addressing a specific challenge early on could also help reduce other obstacles later. For example, an environmental organization concerned about the public's views on animal advocacy might be hesitant to collaborate to avoid "tainting" their reputation. Or, they may be afraid of alienating people who sympathize with their environmental cause by incorporating animal advocacy messaging. Because of the differences in perspectives between the two movements, compromise is essential to ensure that both involved parties benefit from the collaboration. This means engaging in open and transparent communication to have a clear understanding of what each party hopes to achieve and what concerns may already exist, thus giving each other the opportunity to work together to prevent and manage foreseen challenges and better handle unforeseen ones.

There are some potential challenges that may not be so easily managed as they involve bigger picture changes to be made both to individual animal advocacy organizations and to the movement as a whole. Namely, concerns expressed by environmental organizations regarding the lack of inclusivity in the animal protection movement, animal advocates' apparent lack of interest in human issues, and the sometimes colonialist approach of animal advocates towards BIPOC communities. There is increasing awareness within the animal protection movement of the need to include human issues (e.g., racial justice, gender justice) alongside animal issues ([Jenkins & Rudd, 2022](#)), but there is still much work to be done. Environmental, animal advocacy, and social justice issues are often connected, as we see in the environmental racism



that affects BIPOC communities living near factory farms in the U.S. ([Faunalytics, 2022](#)). It's important that animal advocacy organizations—whether collaborating with environmental organizations or not—actively include more historically disadvantaged groups in the movement and work directly with these groups if animal advocacy work will implicate them in any way.

Everyone Can Benefit Through Collaboration

Collaboration between animal advocacy and environmental organizations means a larger and more unified front to combat the issues at the intersection of these two movements. Both movements have much to gain by collaborating, though interviewed organizations were particularly interested in sharing resources, seeking new funding opportunities, and adding new perspectives to their work, likely resulting in a wider audience for them and their partner animal advocacy organizations.

As nonprofit organizations, new funding opportunities would be an especially important potential benefit of collaborating. By co-submitting to funding opportunities, animal advocacy and environmental organizations have the ability to grant each other access to funding pools that would otherwise be inaccessible to organizations working outside of the animal protection or environmental movements. In addition, we will hopefully see an increase in funding opportunities for organizations working at the intersection of animal advocacy, climate and the environment, and social justice. There have been recent calls for [philanthropists in the environmental space](#) to particularly focus on increasing funding for food system transformation and tackling industrial animal agriculture.

There are also ample opportunities for both movements to benefit from each other's knowledge, experiences, and resources like connections to each other's networks. Organizations in the environmental movement work on a diversity of issues and implement a wide range of strategies, meaning that there is potential for animal advocacy organizations to collaborate with them in equally diverse ways. Our interviews with just eight organizations yielded over a dozen different collaboration strategies that environmental organizations would be willing to collaborate on with animal advocates. Therefore, there are likely more collaboration strategies that were simply not mentioned by our interviewees. We recommend that any animal advocacy organizations interested in partnering with an environmental organization take the time to discuss the goals of the collaboration and the ways these goals may be accomplished, as organizational strategies are often unique.

Openness To Collaboration Is Not A Simple 'Yes' Or 'No'

Collaboration is already an important strategy implemented by all interviewed organizations—for example, with other organizations, communities, institutions, and the government. These collaborations serve as a way for environmental organizations to involve groups affected by environmental issues (e.g., pollution, deforestation), stakeholders (e.g., government, companies), or other organizations interested in tackling a particular environmental or climate

problem. When it comes to collaboration, organizations have certain criteria that need to be met. For most interviewed organizations, this is having some alignment with the potential collaborator, such as sharing similar interests, audience, or values. This also applies to collaborations with animal advocates, though other criteria specific to animal advocacy organizations may also come into play. For instance, environmental organizations may take the animal advocacy organization's reputation into consideration when deciding whether or not to collaborate with them. Some organizations may be hesitant to collaborate if the potential partnership could harm their own reputation.

According to research, environmental organizations would be much more likely to message on animal agriculture if the public were more aware of its harms ([Mercy For Animals, 2023](#); [Madre Brava, 2023](#)), which could also mean greater openness to collaborating with animal advocacy groups. As a result, increasing awareness of the connections between animal advocacy and environmentalism, especially working with the media to get this information to the public ([Faunalytics & Sentient, 2023](#)), could be an important step in increasing collaborations.

Environmental organizations' understanding of animal advocacy can also be an important factor to consider. Most of the interviews conducted were with members of the environmental movement that already had some experience with animal advocacy, whether on a personal level or through their organization's work. As a result, most of the interviewees had at least some understanding of animal advocacy. However, organizations that had not had experience with animal advocacy—and we can assume that many environmental organizations do not—were not as familiar with the type of work that is conducted by animal advocates. This lack of understanding can play an important role when it comes to environmental organizations' willingness to even discuss the possibility of a collaboration. In fact, it should be noted that a major challenge of this study was receiving responses from the environmental organizations that were contacted about interviewing. This may be the result of pre-conceived notions about the animal protection movement and/or a lack of understanding of the intersection of the two movements. Other instances of this lack of response from the environmental movement to animal advocates have been registered ([Mercy For Animals, 2023](#)). Consequently, taking the time to explain animal advocacy and the role of one's organization in the movement is critical before any discussion of a collaboration can take place.

Although our interviews with environmental organizations point to there being great interest in collaborating with animal advocacy organizations, those that agreed to interview were already engaged in some form of collaboration and largely had interests that aligned with animal advocacy issues. It should be considered that [Mercy For Animals \(2023\)](#) found that staff of U.S. environmental organizations believe that messaging on animal agriculture is important to tackle the climate crisis despite their organizations not considering it a high priority. We also found this to be the case, as some interviewees discussed the importance of addressing the implications of animal agriculture and diet on the environment, even if this was not a major focus of their organizations. Given this and the factors that go into a collaboration decision, environmental

organizations' openness to collaborating with animal advocates is not a clear 'yes' or 'no', but rather, an 'it depends.'

Use The Interconnectedness Of Brazil, China, And The U.S. To Our Advantage

It's critical that collaborations tackling the intersection of animal advocacy and environmentalism address these issues in Brazil, China, and the U.S. without losing sight of how these three countries are connected. They are responsible for slaughtering the highest numbers of farmed animals on the one hand ([Faunalytics, 2022](#)), and on the other, are responsible for about [40%](#) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. The animal agriculture industries of these three countries are closely linked and tied to environmental consequences that deeply impact one another ([Faunalytics, 2023](#)). In other words, farmed animal advocacy and environmental action in these countries can help save countless animals from suffering and benefit the planet as a whole given their role in the climate crisis. The animal advocacy and environmental issues of Brazil, China, and the U.S. are not independent of one another, so there is no reason for these two movements to work independently either. And, any attempts to tackle animal agriculture's impact on animals and the environment should involve action in all three countries, when possible. While this is a large task to take on, it can be made more manageable and effective through collaborations between animal advocacy and environmental organizations. In particular, we recommend partnering with local organizations that can provide crucial country-specific knowledge. As our interviews indicated, environmental organizations would be interested in collaborating with animal advocacy groups to tackle issues together.

Future Research

Taking into consideration the global extent of the environmental movement and the importance of the food sector in driving the climate and environmental issues of the world ([Clark et al., 2020](#)), there may be potential for collaboration between the animal protection and environmental movements in many countries and regions beyond those covered in this study. As a result, future research could look into the potential for such collaborations in other parts of the world where environmental action and animal advocacy are most necessary. For instance, India, the European Union, Japan, Indonesia, Canada, Mexico, and more.

Research on the public's perception of animal advocates in various countries could also be beneficial, as this was named by some organizations as an obstacle to collaborating with animal advocates. Many environmental organizations believe that people generally have a negative opinion of the animal protection movement, so having a better understanding of how true this is in various countries could help improve the potential for collaboration by either working to change the narrative about animal advocates to improve public perception (in the event that the public's perception of animal advocates is indeed bad) or by clarifying that this is not the case (in the event that the public's perception of animal advocates is generally not bad).

Finally, while this study discussed a variety of ways in which collaboration can take place between animal advocacy and environmental organizations, more research is needed on funding opportunities. This was named by multiple interviewed organizations as a benefit they would hope to gain from collaborating with animal advocates and there is no doubt that this would also be helpful to animal advocacy organizations. As a result, future research on the topic of collaboration between the two movements should look at the funding opportunities available for organizations working at the intersection of animal advocacy and environmental issues and how these may differ by country. Obtaining a better understanding of which collaboration areas (e.g., tackling the effects of factory farms on the environment; ecosystem and wild animal protection; tackling the ecological impacts of free roaming domestic animals) may have more funding opportunities available would be beneficial.

Caveats & Limitations

As with all reports, this one has some important caveats and limitations to bear in mind.

The first of these, already discussed in the *Method* section of this report, is that there is evidence of selection bias when we take into consideration the organizations that agreed to participate in the study. Therefore, the views described in this report do not necessarily represent those of the general environmental movement, but rather, of organizations more sympathetic to animal advocacy causes.

Additionally, because this study focused on the potential for collaboration with environmental organizations in Brazil, China, and the U.S., results cannot necessarily be generalized and applied elsewhere. However, there are two things that should be taken into consideration. First, that most of the interviewed organizations are U.S.-based, with only one organization based in China, and none based in Brazil—though two international organizations that conduct work in all three countries were included. As a result, there may be other factors influencing the potential for collaboration with environmental organizations in China and Brazil that were not covered in this study due to a lack of participants from those countries. Second, because some of the interviewed organizations work in multiple countries beyond those described in this study, it is possible that some of the benefits and challenges of collaborating with environmental organizations could apply elsewhere.

Supplementary Materials

Selection Of Key Regions

The process of selecting the countries this study would focus on involved a series of steps, starting with identifying high priority regions for animal advocacy using [Mercy for Animals' Farmed Animal Opportunity Index \(FAOI\)](#). This index ranks 60 countries on their potential for effective intervention for farmed animals. We considered up to five countries per region in Anglo-America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, Northern Asia, Oceania, and the Middle East.

We then researched the major environmental concerns in each selected country using information from the [World Bank's climate risk country profiles](#), [Climate Watch](#) country profiles and global emissions rankings, the [ND-GAIN Country Index](#) (vulnerability to climate change rankings), and the [Climate Change Performance Index \(CCPI\)](#).

Finally, we obtained Spearman's correlation between countries' FAOI rankings and their global emissions rankings (from [Climate Watch](#)). We found a strong correlation ($\rho = 0.79$) between the two rankings, indicating that high priority countries for farmed animal advocacy also tend to be the world's top emitters. As a result, we decided to focus on the top-ranked countries as they have the highest potential for animal advocacy efforts and require much climate and environmental action as well.

Table 5. Countries Considered during the Priority Country Selection Process and their Rankings

	Global FAOI Rank	Global Emissions Rank
China	1	1
United States	2	2
Brazil	3	7
Germany	4	13
United Kingdom	5	22
Netherlands	6	45
India	7	3
Japan	8	8
France	9	28
Poland	10	27
Canada	11	10
Indonesia	12	6

Russian Federation	13	5
Mexico	14	15
Spain	15	34
South Korea	16	14
Australia	17	16
Thailand	18	20
Italy	19	26
Turkey	20	18
Belgium	21	57
Vietnam	22	19
Malaysia	23	25
Ukraine	24	39
Philippines	25	38
Chile	26	93
Argentina	27	23
South Africa	28	17
Hungary	29	77
Denmark	30	98
Romania	31	70
Colombia	32	31
New Zealand	33	71
Taiwan	34	NA
Czech Republic	35	56
Portugal	36	80
Norway	37	109
Ireland	38	75
Austria	39	79
Belarus	40	64
Greece	41	73
Sweden	42	106
Bangladesh	43	40
Peru	44	44

Singapore	45	74
Switzerland	46	99
Finland	47	78
Myanmar	48	36
Bulgaria	49	141
Hong Kong	50	NA
Paraguay	51	58
Ecuador	52	60
Lithuania	53	122
Croatia	54	126
Uruguay	55	105
Slovenia	56	130
Bolivia	57	48
Latvia	58	146
Cambodia	59	68
Slovak Republic	60	107
Spearman's		0.786

Thematic Analysis

We used thematic analysis to analyze the transcribed interviews with environmental organizations. The coding team (the principal investigator and a reviewer) used inductive coding to generate code categories after reading and interpreting the transcribed interviews.

The coding scheme implemented involved the following:

1. The members of the coding team began with a quick read of all the interview transcripts to get an initial impression of the data, without creating any inductive codes.
2. The principal investigator coded three of the transcripts, generating an initial set of inductive code categories.
3. The reviewer reviewed the principal investigator's inductive codes, taking into consideration how they defined the categories, which categories they used for each interview, and where. Based on discussion, the coding team made revisions to the codes, the code names, and their meanings.

4. Once the foundational coding scheme was generated, the principal investigator coded an additional three interviews at a time, checking in with the reviewer about any changes to the coding scheme after each set.
5. Once all interviews were coded, the principal investigator reread all of the transcripts and made corrections to the codes, as needed.

The codes used during analysis can be found on the [Open Science Framework](#).