

# The Stories of the Meat and Dairy Industry

A report by Arran Stibbe, University of Gloucestershire, [astibbe@glos.ac.uk](mailto:astibbe@glos.ac.uk)

This study was commissioned by an environmental charity as background research to inform their forthcoming campaign. The aim of the campaign was to encourage people to reduce their consumption of industrially-produced meat and dairy products because of their damaging impact on the environment. It is reproduced here with permission of the charity, which asked not to be named. Images are reproduced under fair dealing legislation for the purpose of academic criticism, but remain copyright by their producers.



## Executive Summary

- **Overall conclusion:** The meat/dairy industry uses powerful linguistic and visual techniques to convey stories that animal products are *healthy, delicious, masculine, natural, and a path to love*, and that *farms are beneficial to animals*. The language and images of the industry also work to erase the reality of animals as sensitive, intelligent beings who suffer and die in the process of making the products. Building a more compassionate and environmentally beneficial society will require a) resisting these stories to convey a negative image of meat, b) conveying positive images of animals as beings deserving respect and consideration, and c) conveying positive images of plant-based foods.
- **Researcher:** This research is carried out by Arran Stibbe, a reader in ecological linguistics at the University of Gloucestershire, author of *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by* and producer of the free on-line course in ecolinguistics *The Stories We Live By* (<http://storiesweliveby.org.uk>).
- **Methodology:** The analysis is based on ecolinguistics (Stibbe 2015), an approach which a) uses linguistic analysis to reveal the stories that underlie texts, b) questions

those stories from an ecological perspective, c) resists destructive stories and d) searches for positive new stories to live by. A literature review was carried out, and used to locate a variety of meat/dairy texts to analyse using this framework, from agricultural handbooks to fast food advertisements.

- **Focus:** The research describes the stories that underlie the language and images of the meat/dairy industry, how they work to promote inhumane and environmentally destructive products, and how they can be resisted. The following are the main stories were revealed and described:
- **INTENSIVE ANIMAL UNITS ARE FARMS.** This framing exploits the images in children's books of small family farms with happy animals to misrepresent the way that modern meat is produced. Resistance: representing the reality of intensive farming, but not in a way which reduces animals only to confined and suffering objects. Images also need to show animals as conscious beings living their own lives for their own purposes and deserving of respect.
- **MEAT IS HEALTHY.** A great variety of clever linguistic and visual techniques are used to associate meat/dairy with all the positive qualities of leading a healthy and active life. Resistance: Similar techniques can be used to promote a plant-based diet, in addition to the overwhelming evidence that increasing plant-based foods improves health. The disease-inducing properties of meat can also be emphasised (with evidence), using imagery which equates meat-eating with smoking or binge drinking.
- **MEAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER INTO LOVING RELATIONSHIPS.** This is the most powerful ideology of all since love is the deepest of desires. The industry uses images of couples bonding over meat dinners, and families coming together over the Sunday roast. Resistance: either drawing attention to the death and suffering of the animal that the lovers are sharing (to take the gloss off the romantic occasion), or representing lovers and families bonding over plant-based meals.
- **MEAT IS NOT ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING.** The evidence for the environmental impact of intensive animal farming is overwhelming, but the industry uses a great variety of linguistic techniques to sow doubt about the evidence, or to represent meat/dairy as making a positive contribution to the environment. Resistance: Using evidence and figures that cannot easily be dismissed as biased (e.g., because they came from the meat industry itself). Scientific evidence is not enough, however, and needs to be backed up with direct images of the destruction caused by the meat industry and credible eye-witnesses.
- **MEAT IS MASCULINE.** Meat is associated with dominant (hegemonic) forms of masculinity through images of strength, muscles, power, cars, trucks, sports, attractive subservient women, weapons and violence. Resistance: There are two ways to resist, either associating plant-based foods with images of hegemonic masculinity (which can have the side effect of promoting this damaging form of

masculinity), or associating plant-based food with more positive new masculinities based on kindness, compassion and defence of the vulnerable.

- **ANIMALS ARE UNIMPORTANT OR UNWORTHY OF CONSIDERATION.** The meat/dairy industry would like consumers not to consider the suffering and death of living beings at the heart of the industry. There are three ways that they erase animals from consciousness: **a)** completely failing to represent them at all, e.g., an Instagram account with images only of meat/dairy and people enjoying them, and no mention or pictures of the animals. **b)** representing animals as unfeeling objects, resources, or machines that are part of an industrial process rather than individual beings with lives. **c)** distracting attention away from confined and suffering animals with distorted images of singing cows or dancing chickens. Resistance: representing animals in realistic ways that show very clearly who they are: individual, intelligent, feeling, sensitive beings actively leading their lives and not wanting to die.
- **Other stories include:** MEAT IS DELICIOUS, CONDITIONS ON FARMS ARE GOOD FOR ANIMALS, MEAT IS NATURAL, MILK IS PURE, MEAT FARMING IMPROVES THE LANDSCAPE and CONSUMERS ARE TO BLAME FOR INSISTING ON INTENSIVE FARMING.
- **Stories in the public imagination:** A brief study was also carried out of how the stories of the meat/dairy industry are picked up by members of the public in comments on online newspaper articles about plant-based diets. The study revealed some of the same stories as the industry being used, particularly MEAT IS HEALTHY, MASCULINE, DELICIOUS and NATURAL. However, there were a wider range of stories, including negative representations of followers of plant-based diets, the 'fact' that plants are alive and have feelings too, and concerns about cows becoming extinct. Stories included: PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE UNHEALTHY, VEGANS ARE WEAK AND LACK MUSCLES, EATING MEAT IS NATURAL AND NECESSARY, PLANTS ARE LIVING BEINGS WITH FEELINGS, MEAT IS DELICIOUS, VEGANS ARE BORING AND ARROGANT, FARM ANIMALS WILL BECOME EXTINCT, FARM ANIMALS ONLY EXIST BECAUSE OF FARMING, VEGAN MEN ARE UNATTRACTIVE, VEGANS ARE SMELLY, VEGANS ARE ABNORMAL, VEGANS ARE HIPPIES. Resistance: As well as meat/industry stories, it's necessary to resist the wider stereotypes (vegans are hippies) and absurdities (cows will become extinct) that circulate in social media, or at least to avoid reinforcing them through images which activate the stereotypes.

## The Researcher

Arran Stibbe is a Reader in Ecological Linguistics at the University of Gloucestershire. He is the founder and convenor of the International Ecolinguistics Association and author of the books *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by* (Routledge) and *Animals Erased: discourse, ecology and reconnection with nature* (Wesleyan University Press). He has published numerous book chapters and journal articles on the representation of animals

and the environment, and his teaching includes ecolinguistics, ecocriticism, ethics, and identity. He developed *The Stories We Live By: a free online course in ecolinguistics*.

### Objectives for the research

1. Gain a better understanding of how the meat/dairy industry communicates around meat and dairy
2. Understand what frames, messages, metaphors, visuals are used on traditional and social media, including: advertising, movies, magazines, Instagrams, culture and content in general.
3. Gauge if the industry narratives are reflected in people’s language around meat especially in social media. [these objectives were supplied by the environmental charity]

### Theoretical framework

The analysis is based on ecolinguistics (Stibbe 2015), an approach which a) uses linguistic analysis to reveal the stories that underlie texts, b) questions those stories from an ecological perspective, c) resists destructive stories, and d) searches for positive new stories to live by. The follow terminology is used in the report:

Stories	cognitive structures in people’s minds which influence how they think, talk and act
Stories we live by	prevalent stories across the minds of many individuals in society
Types of story	ideologies, metaphors, framings, evaluations, identities, convictions, erasure and salience (see Appendix A)
Framing	A story which uses a packet of knowledge about one area of life ( <b>the source frame</b> ) to structure how we think about another area of life ( <b>the target domain</b> )
Entailments	ways of thinking about the world that directly follow from using a particular story
Ecosophy	the analyst’s vision of a better world which includes consideration of humans, other species and the environment
Destructive stories	stories which contradict the ecosophy of the analyst
Resisting stories	raising awareness that a common way of thinking about the world is just a story, that the story has negative consequences, and that other stories are possible
Meat/dairy industry	This includes all social actors whose financial interests are served through the purchase of meat and dairy products, including producers, restaurants and retailers.

## Ecosophy

The ecosophy that this research is based on is described below, and is used in analysis to judge the stories that underlie texts. It was adapted from the research brief in ways that align with the ecosophy of the analyst.

Ecosophy for this research	The predominant way that meat and dairy products are produced and consumed not only harms animals but also has a direct, negative and heavy impact on the climate, environment, and human health. It is therefore necessary reduce the consumption of animal products as far as possible, and shift any remaining consumption towards less harmful and more sustainable sources.
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## The Research

Reducing the consumption of meat and dairy products will require resisting the dominant stories that are spread by the meat/dairy industry, and promoting positive stories that encourage respect for animals and a shift towards plant-based foods. This research aims to contribute to this important task by investigating what stories are told by the meat/dairy industry, what linguistic and visual devices are used to tell those stories, and how they can be resisted.

## Methodology

A literature review was carried out by starting with three scholarly articles which analyse the stories of the meat and dairy industries, and then finding similar articles, books and thesis through citation searches for newer material, and reference searches for older material. The data that the articles were based on was used as a starting point to search for similar data online, which was analysed using ecolinguistic techniques. This is a time constrained report, so the data collection is illustrative rather than systematic and comprehensive.

## Stories

The tables on the pages below describe a series of stories embedded in meat/dairy industry texts and images, with examples, notes and suggestions for resisting them:

Story 1	INTENSIVE ANIMAL UNITS ARE FARMS
Type of story	Framing
Source frame	The farm frame consists of a small family establishment where low numbers of animals are kept in good conditions, cared for by the farmer, in pleasant rural surroundings, producing wholesome food to help feed the nation. The frame has inherent positivity.
Target domain	Intense animal units, where thousands of animals are kept in cramped conditions.
Entailments	Animals are cared for; Animals have good lives; Countryside is enhanced; High quality food is produced; Overall, intensive animal units are good
Trigger words/images	Farm, barn, tractor, husbandry, field, shepherd, meadow, harvest, herd, pasture, cultivate, graze, countryside, farmhouse, barn, orchard, ranch, homestead, etc.
Notes	The trigger words/images for the farm frame have positive associations in themselves, as well as triggering the positive farm frame.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red <b>Tractor</b> food standards certificate. [this is certification scheme with low standards that triggers confidence and positivity in buyers through both certification and triggering the farm frame] (image 1) (3)</li> <li>• Richard Griffiths, chief executive of the British Poultry Council: “These [high intensity units] are high health and welfare <b>farms</b>. The <b>husbandry</b> of the birds is the crucial element here” (1)</li> <li>• Labelling of meat/dairy products that includes trigger words: <b>Country style, Farm fresh</b>, fictional farm names on labels which include words drawn from nature: <b>Willow Farm, Woodside Farm</b> (Tesco – image 2)</li> <li>• Image 4: Milk carton [Product label which includes the visual triggers of sunshine, hedgerow and small barn]</li> <li>• Image 3: <i>The Tale of City Sue</i>. [Children’s book with images of ideal farm sponsored by dairy manufacturer Kerrygold, see Monbiot 2017]</li> </ul>
Resistance	<p>Critical Language Awareness: making people aware that the stories triggered in their minds by words and images associated with farms are very different from the reality of where their food comes from.</p> <p>Reframing: Using words that trigger an industrial frame instead, e.g., <i>factory, assembly line, industry, unit, processing</i>. The potential side-effect of representing animals as products/objects could be countered with a focus on the individual trapped in this nightmarish world.</p>
References	Monbiot (2017), Coats and Fox (1989), Pollan (p.137) ‘supermarket pastoral’, Freeman (2014: p.28), Singer and Mason (2006), Rumble, Holt and Irani (2014)

Image 1: Red Tractor assurance



Image 2. Product labels with farm trigger words and images



Image 3. Kerrygold sponsored children's book.

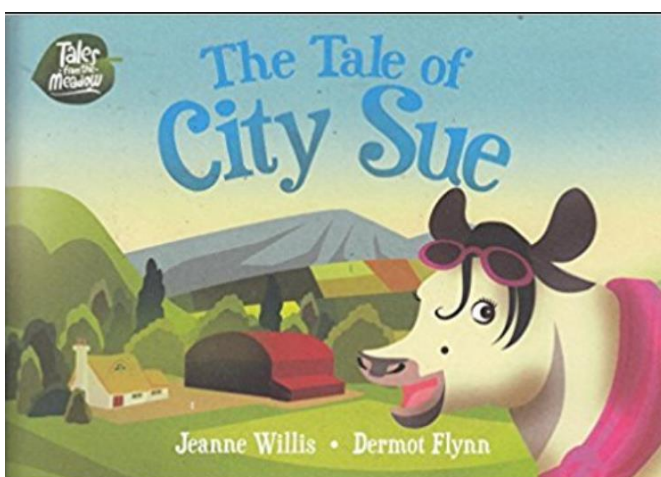


Image 4: Milk with farm images



Story 2	MEAT IS HEALTHY
Type of story	Evaluation
Positive appraising items	balanced diet, naturally, nutrient-rich, substantial, important, vital, rich source, strength, healing, essential, high value, nutritious, high protein content, healthy, beneficial, wellbeing
Notes	The meat/dairy industry makes explicit claims that meat is healthy. But more important than the content of the claims is the language used, which employs patterns of appraising items to give a positive image to the foods (e.g., unmarked words like <i>balanced/natural/important/strength</i> have inbuilt positivity compared to <i>unbalanced/unnatural/unimportant/weak</i> ).
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red meat, i.e. beef, lamb and pork, has a role to play in a <b>healthy, balanced</b> diet as it is a <b>natural</b> source of protein (4 – Quality Meat Scotland)</li> <li>• Red meat is <b>naturally nutrient-rich</b>, which means it provides a <b>substantial</b> amount of certain vitamins and minerals (4)</li> <li>• Sodium [in salt] is <b>essential</b> for human health and development, particularly in regulating the body’s electrolyte balance (5 – North American Meat Institute)</li> <li>• A <b>healthy balanced</b> diet is <b>vital</b> to our <b>wellbeing</b>. Meat contains a range of <b>beneficial</b> nutrients...a <b>nutrient</b> dense product that has been at the <b>heart</b> of the national diet for thousands of years (7 – industry sponsored educational material)</li> <li>• Image 5 (Balanced diet from Quality Meat Scotland): [Note that this is visual representation of the ‘balanced diet’, but with meat given salience by being central and on top. Also ‘Why is red meat good for you?’ presupposes that it is good for you, rather than questioning it ‘is red meat good for you?’]</li> <li>• Red meat is an <b>important</b> part of a <b>balanced</b> diet and contains many of the <b>nutrients essential</b> for <b>good health</b> and for young people’s <b>healthy growth</b>... (10 - industry sponsored educational material)</li> <li>• Image 6 (industry sponsored educational material): [uses expression ‘us young women’ to create bond between presenter and schoolchild, and then uses positive expressions to promote meat - <b>good, important, healthy, balanced</b>. The ‘four food groups’ is constructed so that meat is mentioned first]</li> </ul>
Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the same positive appraisal items to describe a plant based diet.</li> <li>• Reclaiming ‘balance’ by representing plant-based diets as balanced in themselves without requiring meat/dairy.</li> <li>• Agreeing protein, salt, vitamins etc are essential for human health but showing that plants are excellent sources of these</li> <li>• Using a negative appraisal pattern to associate meat/dairy with ill health.</li> </ul>
References	Rosenburg (2015), Delahoyde and Despenich (1994:141)



Image 5: Scottish Quality Meat

The image shows a screenshot of the QMS website. The header is blue with the QMS logo and navigation links: Market Prices, Assurance, Farming, Marketing, Health & Education, News & Events, and QMS. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Health & Education. The main content area features the headline "Why is red meat good for you?" above a photograph of a salad with sliced red meat, avocado, tomatoes, and other vegetables. Three blue callout boxes point to the headline and the meat in the image:

- Callout 1: "Presupposes that 'meat is good for you' rather than raising it as a question"
- Callout 2: "Meat given salience by being on top"
- Callout 3: "Positive appraising items *healthy, balanced, natural*"

Below the image, a paragraph states: "Red meat, i.e. beef, lamb and pork, has a role to play in a healthy, balanced diet as it is a natural source of protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins."

Image 6: stills from the meat industry sponsored schools film 'A healthy balanced diet'

This image is a collage of stills from a film. On the left, a blue speech bubble contains the text: "A healthy balanced diet means eating a variety of foods from the four food groups". To the right is a yellow and orange checkered graphic with the following text:

- Meat, fish and alternatives
- Fruit and vegetables
- Bread, other cereals and potatoes
- Milk and dairy products

Below this graphic, it says "Supported by" followed by logos for AHDB (Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board), AHDB (Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board), and LMC (Livestock Marketing Companies). At the bottom left is a video player showing two people, a man and a woman, with a "digibites" logo in the top right corner. A blue speech bubble points to the woman, containing the text: "red meat is a good source of iron which is especially important to us young women...".

Story 3	MEAT PROVIDES A PATH TO LOVE
Type of story	Framing (causal)
Source domain	a couple finding love, or a loving family bonding together
Target domain	a meaty meal
Entailments	Meat brings people together into loving relationships
Trigger words or images	home, family, mum, dad, love, hugging, kissing, gazing into each other's eyes
Notes	The juxtaposition of images of love with images of meat implies a causal relationship – that somehow meat causes people to bond with each other. This is irrational of course – it's perfectly possible to bond over a meal that doesn't require the suffering and death of a third party. However, the aim is to create a subliminal association between the emotions evoked by love on one hand and the meat product on the other, with the hope that people searching for love will be subconsciously drawn to meat.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image 7 (Knorr advert 1): [meat dish positioned in the centre of happy heterosexual soon-to-be-couples, then woman gazing with love and attraction at partner after he feeds her meat, then words “<b>Love</b> can happen at first taste”. This expression inserts the meat into the ‘love at first sight’ relationship through word play]</li> <li>• Image 8 (Knorr advert 2): It's really intense...all I want is a <b>home</b> cooked meal and I want to be with my <b>family</b>...the food I miss most from <b>home</b> is Sunday roast dinner, the roast meat...my <b>mum</b> will cook it in the kitchen...our <b>family</b> is definitely about food...even though I was hundreds of miles away it was like I was back at <b>home</b> again (12) [multiple triggers and overlexicalisation of <i>home</i>]</li> <li>• Image 8 (Knorr advert 2): [<b>family</b> around table with meat given salience by being in the centre, <b>mother</b> brings roast meat (symbol of family) to daughter in arctic, mother <b>hugging</b> daughter, ‘<i>Taste of home</i>’ slogan brings together meat and family in one expression]</li> <li>• Image 9 (MacDonald's Brazil): <i>Fugir da chuva com aquela companhia especial. Apaixone-se pelos #MomentosQueCustamPouco por só R\$8,00.</i> Escape from the rain with that special companion. Fall in love with #MomentsThatCostLittle for only R\$8,00 [implies that the R\$8 will purchase not just a meat product but also love]</li> <li>• Image 9 (MacDonald's Brazil): <i>Impossível resistir. Cheio de amor para dividir. #ExperimenteOAmor com o novo McShake</i> Impossible to resist. Full of love to share. #ExperienceLove with the new McShake [very clear causal juxtaposition of the dairy product as the path to love]</li> <li>• Image 9: (MacDonald's Brazil): [The general visual grammar of these images shows the source frame, a heterosexual couple in love (indicated by physical proximity, mutual eye-gaze, facial expression), juxtaposed with the target domain, i.e., the meat/dairy product, either symbolised by itself or the logo of the company]</li> <li>• Image 10: [Häagen-Dazs video about one of its advertising campaigns]</li> </ul>

	explains how love is used to expand ice-cream market to Taiwan. Warm hearted love story advertisement which ends with a giant pot of ice-cream is promoted on social media as a viral video and becomes so popular it is shown on TV etc.].
Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images which show vegan food leading to love</li> <li>• Images which show a loving couple bonding over meat/dairy but interjecting the pain and suffering of the animal and the destruction of the environment, because these things are not romantic at all.</li> <li>• Images which show the loving couple discovering for themselves the horrors behind the food that brought them together. An excellent example of this is the mock advert <i>A Cheesy Love Story</i> (13). In this advert a happy couple are brought together by sharing Doritos, but at the end of the advert discover the truth about palm oil and deforestation and are horrified. A similar approach could be even more effective for meat/dairy.</li> <li>• Many ethnic groups (including Chinese) have high levels of lactose intolerance. The deliberate targeting of these groups by Western countries could be framed as an aggressive imperialist act that undermines health and wellbeing of people in other cultures.</li> </ul>
References	Parkin (2006), Schally (2014)

Image 7: Knorr advert 1, love at first taste

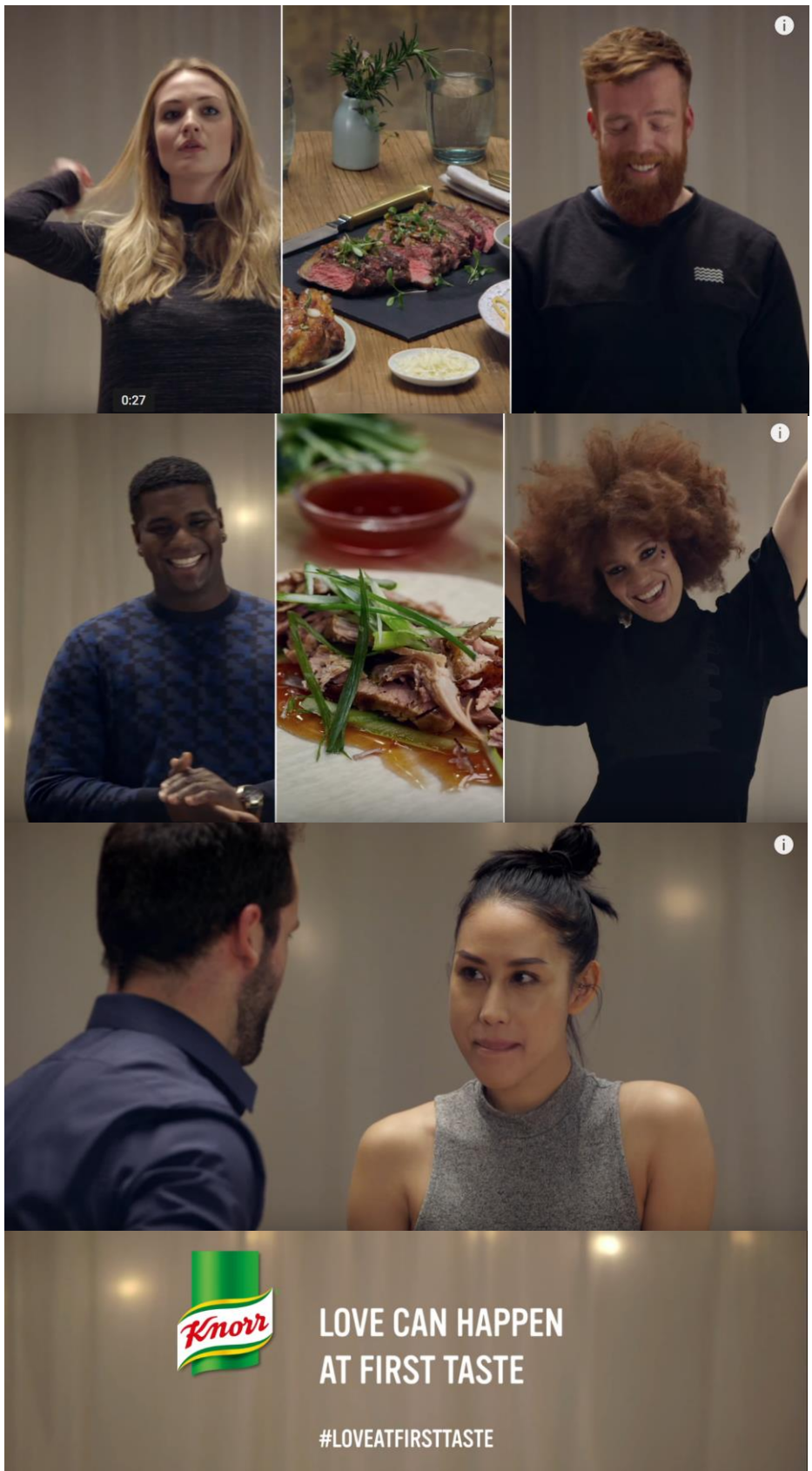


Image 8: Knorr advert 2: Arctic

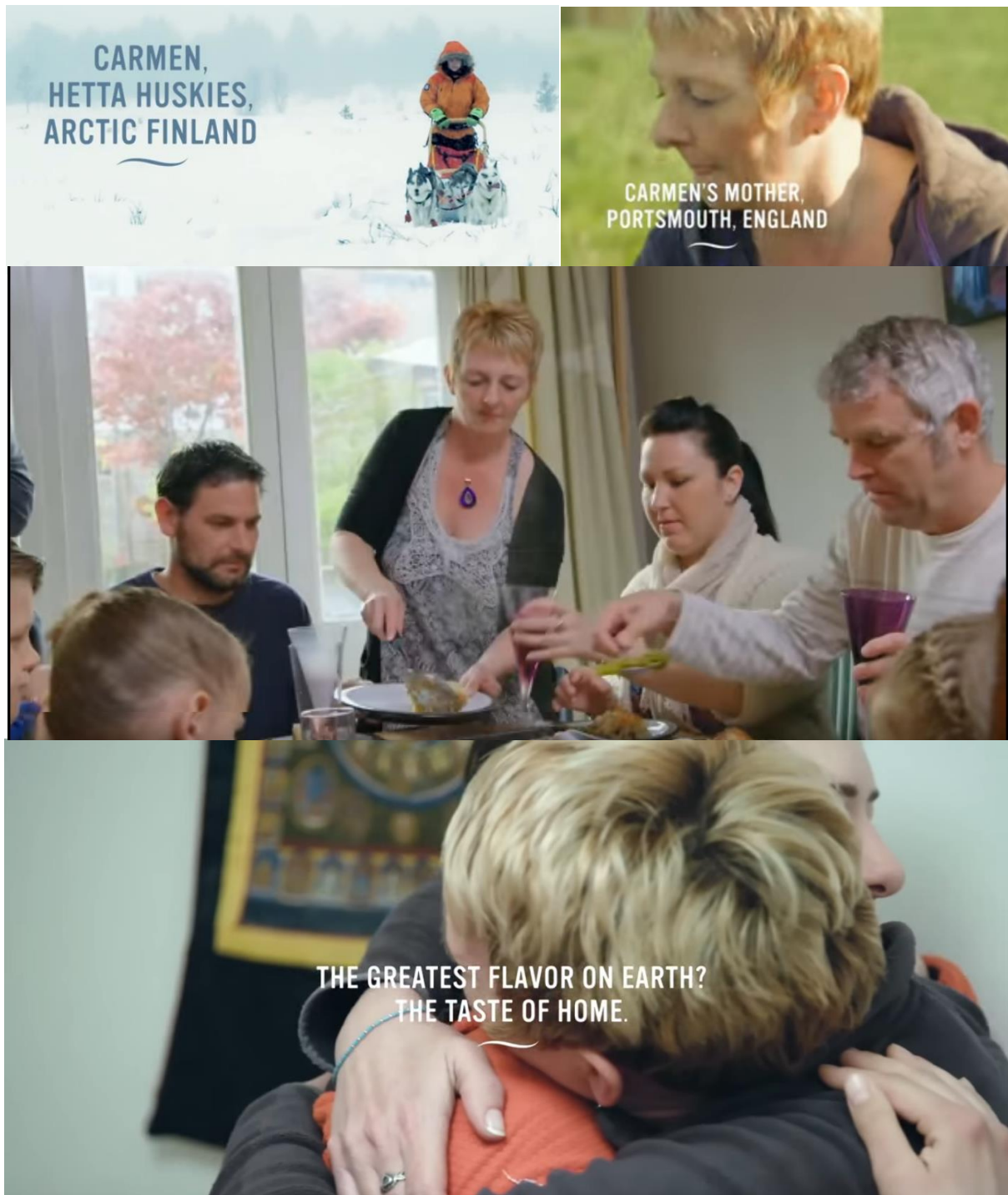


Image 9: Macdonald's Brazil images on Instagram

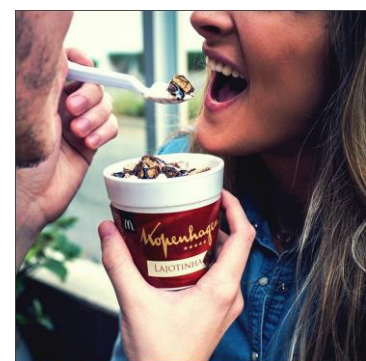
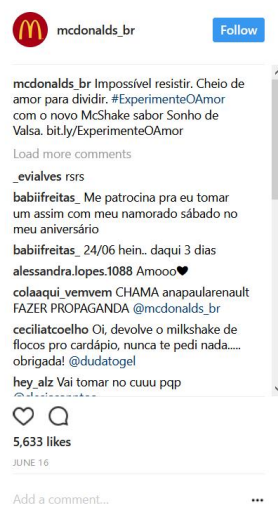


Image 10: stills from Häagen-Dazs video describing a marketing campaign in Taiwan



Story 4	“MEAT IS ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING” IS UNCERTAIN OR FALSE
Type of story	Conviction
Facticity expressions	<p><i>Expressions which undermine “MEAT IS ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING”</i>: complex, different definitions and numbers used, challenged, confusion, overestimates, not supported by data, outdated, myth, uncertain</p> <p><i>Expressions which reinforce the meat/dairy industry position</i>: accurate, facts, research has found that, to put that in context, evidence has shown that, experts, scientists</p>
Notes	The meat/dairy industry use a great variety of linguistic techniques to undermine the description “MEAT IS ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING”, while reinforcing their own position as certainly true. Like climate change denial, the goal is raising doubt.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image 11 (NAMI, North American Meat Institute fact sheet): Media <b>Mythcrusher</b>: Meat’s sustainability and environmental impact [represents media criticism of the environmental impact of meat as ‘myth’ to reduce its facticity]</li> <li>• "Livestock's Long Shadow" says that livestock contribute 18 percent of GHGs worldwide, a greater percentage than transportation. This number has been <b>widely challenged by scientists</b> (6 – NAMI fact sheet) [reduces facticity to sow doubt]</li> <li>• Today research has found it takes 441 gallons of water to produce one pound of boneless beef. <b>To put that number in context</b>, it takes 713 gallons of water to make one cotton t-shirt, 39,090 to manufacture a car (6) [attempt to downplay impact by irrelevant comparison – Tshirts and cars can be used multiple times]</li> <li>• Sustainability...encompasses environmental impact as well as social responsibility and <b>economic viability</b>. (6) [a reframing from environmental impact to sustainability in order to include profit making as a measure of performance].</li> <li>• Achieving sustainable development requires a balance between expanding economic opportunity, reducing hunger and poverty, whilst preserving the planet (7 – industry sponsored education materials) [profit comes first and preserving the planet last in this choice of ordering]</li> <li>• <b>removing</b> by-products from landfills has about the same effect on GHG emissions as <b>removing</b> over 12.25 million cars from the road (6) [makes industry appear to be an active participant in reducing landfill and taking cars off the road, rather than profiting by selling non-meat products which will eventually end up in landfill]</li> <li>• The ‘greenhouse’ effect is <b>essential</b> to life on Earth. Greenhouse gasses <b>naturally</b> make up 1% of the earth’s atmosphere and <b>help</b> to regulate</li> </ul>



	<p>our climate....There is evidence that the climate is changing but <b>the big question</b> is whether this is a natural event or driven by human behaviour. The impact of changing climate is <b>complex</b> with <b>variability</b> in different regions...It is <b>thought</b> that the long term effects of climate change are <b>likely</b> to be... (7) [this is meat industry information for school children, discussing the impact of meat on the climate, but in a way which reduces the facticity of climate change]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image 12 (meat industry sponsored quiz for schools): [focuses on benefits of grazing for locking in green-house gasses rather than the carbon footprint of intensive agriculture]</li> <li>• Carbon dioxide – is a colourless, odourless, incombustible gas... It is used in refrigeration, carbonated beverages, fire extinguishers and aerosols. (8 – industry sponsored glossary ‘Meat in a green world’) [mentions CO2’s role in fizzy drinks and fire extinguishers but fails to mention its role in climate change. It therefore erases climate change as an issue of importance]</li> </ul>
Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting “MEAT IS ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING” IS TRUE with a high facticity pattern to create convictions in people’s minds. There are many techniques for this (see Stibbe 2015, Potter 1996)</li> <li>• Using meat industry figures even if they are lower in order to counter charges of bias. For example, running with “441 gallons of water to produce one pound of boneless beef” and showing it is a lot rather than challenging the number itself.</li> <li>• Undermining the meat industry position through pointing out ‘stake’ (Potter 1996), i.e., the influence of their financial interest, labelling their arguments as myths, propaganda, and using scientific discourse.</li> <li>• Using direct images of the destruction caused by the meat industry and credible eye-witnesses to employ the high facticity of direct experience (which can be more resonant than indirect facts and statistics).</li> </ul>
References	<p>Schally (2014), Coombes (2011) “The discursive practices of the [meat industry advocates] functioned to ultimately undermine and delegitimize the role of the public and individuals and groups opposed to animal agriculture, as well as position the industry and its constituents as the only authoritative and credible voices in the animal agriculture conversation.”</p>

Image 11: NAMI's mythbuster

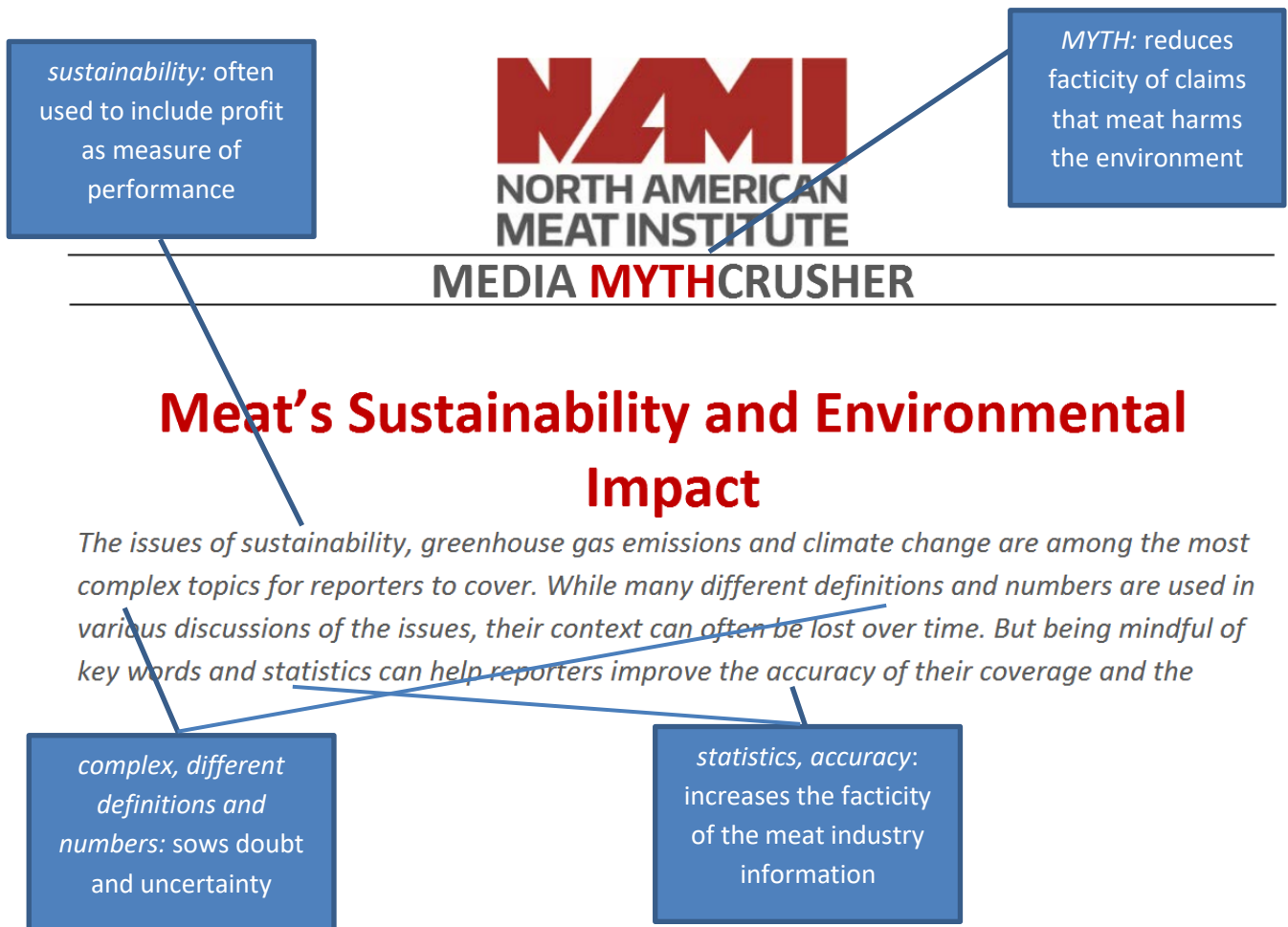


Image 12: Meat industry sponsored question for school children

**Question 5**

Which of the following is locked-up in plant material as a result of rough grazing?

1. Methane
2. Carbon dioxide
3. Nitrogen
4. Nitrous oxide

meatandeducation.com 2011

Story 5	Eating meat is masculine
Type of story	Framing (associative)
Source frame	performance of hegemonic masculinity (the dominant form of masculinity in society consisting of muscles, strength, sports, violence etc...)
Target domain	meat eating
Trigger words/ images	power, pickup truck, SUV, muscles, man, guy, strength, aggression, violence, weapons, sexualised and submissive women, cowboys, sports, and bulls, lions and other powerful animals
Notes	Meat is already associated with hegemonic masculinity in society (the steak-eating cowboy) and the meat industry reinforces this story through associating meat with other symbols of hegemonic masculinity such as cars, sports, muscles etc. As the dominant form of masculinity, it is aspirational and therefore highly prized.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image 13 (various Carl Jr advertisements): <b>Man up</b> for 2x the Bacon. What's more American than a cheese burger... loaded with a hot dog...in the hands of all American <b>model</b> Samantha...in a <b>pickup truck</b> driven by an American <b>bullrider</b> on an <b>aircraft carrier</b> [visual triggers include cowboy hat, sexualised submissive women, huge pickup trucks, hot dog as phallic symbol, aircraft carrier]</li> <li>• I am <b>man</b>, hear me <b>roar</b>...I'm going on the <b>prowl</b> for a Texas double whopper...yes I'm a guy, I'll admit I've been fed quiche...Texas double whopper, eat like <b>a man</b>. (25 – Burger King advertisement) [uses the metaphor of MAN IS LION to trigger the source frame of masculinity, and the quoting verb 'admit' to represent eating a stereotypical feminine food (quiche) as a negative behaviour]</li> <li>• <b>Guys</b> love bacon (Taco Bell advertisement)</li> <li>• Image 13a: (Men's Health Magazine): although not sponsored by the meat industry, this magazine is highly significant for its images of extreme masculinity, the promotion of meat as a masculine symbol, and cultural hegemony as editions are produced in cultures around the world (Stibbe 2004).</li> <li>• Image 14 (KFC advertisement of a rapping chicken): [this is an unusual metaphor of CHICKEN IS RAPPER where the food animal is represented as masculine through a low camera angle, a tough rap sound track, and movements which appear to be dancing and rapping]</li> </ul>
Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of plant-based foods with images of hegemonic masculinity (sports, muscles, powerful machines etc). However, this has the side effect of normalising and promoting hegemonic masculinity.</li> <li>• Promotion of new masculinities based on kindness and compassion, visually and linguistically associated with plant-based food.</li> </ul>
References	Stibbe (2004), Freeman and Merskin (2008), Roth (2016), Rogers (2008), Heinz and Lee (1998), Croney (2014)

Image 13: Stills from various Carl Jr adverts

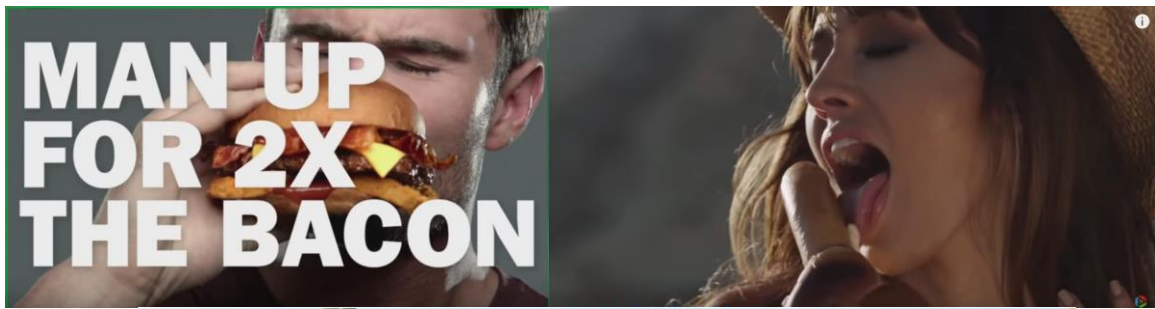


Image 13a: Men's health cover (montage from google images)



Image 14: KFC chicken as rapper



Story 6	Animals are unimportant or unworthy of consideration
Type of story	Erasure
Notes	An uncomfortable fact of the meat industry is that a living, breathing, conscious being has been kept in confinement and been killed in the making of the product. There are three main ways that the industry deals with this: <b>1)</b> Images of the ideal family farm with happy animals normalise it through the familiar and benign cultural setting [see story 1], <b>2)</b> Animals are erased simply by not being represented at all - <i>the void</i> <b>3)</b> Animals are erased as living beings by being represented as objects, resources or machines - <i>the 'trace'</i> <b>4)</b> Animals are erased as victims of captivity and slaughter through anthropomorphic metaphors where they are represented as human beings singing, dancing or playing football – <i>the mask</i> .
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MacDonald's UK Instagram [contains 494 images, but animals appear only in the dead form of meat, never as living animals – an example of <i>the void</i>] (17)</li> <li>• Pork Industry Handbook (PIH): In large continuous flow operations . . . death loss and the number of chronically ill poor-doing pigs that result may be quite high. ['death loss' erases the pigs who died – an example of <i>the trace</i>. In Stibbe 2012:44.]</li> <li>• PIH: "nursery pig," "grower pig," "farrowing pig," "market hog", "carry-over sow", "cull sow" and "slaughter hog" [<i>the trace</i> - terms for describing pigs in terms of their function. In Stibbe 2012:42]</li> <li>• PIH: As long as boars remain <i>structurally sound</i> and are aggressive breeders, fertility is generally maintained...<i>Sow durability</i> and temperament are very important considerations. [<i>the trace</i> - frames pigs as objects, erasing them as living beings]</li> <li>• Slaughterhouse worker: There's not enough power to stun the <i>beef</i> . . . you'd end up cutting its head off while the <i>beef</i> was still alive. [<i>the trace</i>: slaughterhouse worker refers to live animals in terms of meat. Discussed in Stibbe 2012:29]</li> <li>• Walls Meat Company Manager: The breeding sow should be thought of as, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery whose function is to pump out baby pigs like a sausage machine [<i>the mask</i> - Classic example of metaphor of PIGS ARE MACHINES to erase pigs as living beings. Discussed in Stibbe 2012: 31]</li> <li>• Images 14 (above), 15 and 16 (below). [<i>the mask</i> - KFC chicken is anthropomorphised into a rap singer, Anchor cows play football and sing about their milk products, and a bull sings with happiness because his meat is to be served with HP sauce.]</li> </ul>
Resistance	Representing animals saliently as individuals who are living their own lives for their own purposes, wanting to live freely and not wanting to die. An example of this is given in image 17 where bacon is connected with a cute piglet.
References	Mitchel (2017) finds a strong discourse of production where the nonhuman animals are linguistically constructed as raw materials, production machines and products in farming and lifestyle magazines.

Glenn (2004) Representations in advertising of “speaking animals” who are selling the end “products” of the brutal processes they endure in the factory farm system serve a dual discursive purpose. The first purpose is to sell products, and the second role is to make the animal victims disappear.

Adams (2010) writes that within the discourse of the meat industry “someone who has a very particular, situated life, a unique being, is converted into something that has no distinctiveness, no uniqueness, no individuality.”

Kunst and Holie (2016) “Many people enjoy eating meat but dislike causing pain to animals. Dissociating meat from its animal origins may be a powerful way to avoid cognitive dissonance resulting from this ‘meat paradox’”

Heinz and Lee (1998), Morgan and Cole (2011), Mitchel (2006)

Image 15: Stills from Anchor advert



Image 16: Stills from HP sauce advert



Image 17: an internet meme which gives salience to animals





Story	Conditions on farms are good for animals
Type of story	Ideology
Vocabulary choice	healthy, clean, comfortable, welfare, warm, well-lit, protects, well ventilated
Notes	This appears to be a secondary tactic of the meat industry. The first tactic is to erase the animals, hide them from consciousness, or distract us with happy dancing cows. It's only when the terrible conditions are brought to light that it's necessary to defend the conditions that animals are kept in.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern animal housing is <b>well ventilated, warm, well-lit, clean</b> and scientifically designed... Housing <b>protects</b> animals from predators, disease and bad weather. (Animal Industry Foundation in Stibbe 2012)</li> <li>• All of our Original Recipe Chicken on the Bone is Red Tractor <b>Assured</b>. That means it comes from <b>trusted</b> suppliers which have passed independent inspections on almost 150 checks, guaranteeing that the chickens have <b>safe, comfortable</b> and <b>clean</b> living conditions, a <b>healthy</b> daily diet, and regular health and <b>welfare</b> checks. (KFC website 24)</li> <li>• Image 18: KFC website [Surprisingly, and honestly, this video shows the inside of an intensive farming shed with thousands of chickens. But less honestly it chooses camera angles, shot size, framings and actions which represent the chickens as having space, agency and their material needs met, with captions like 'safe, comfortable, clean'. It also superimposes child-like graphics to give a sense of innocence].</li> </ul>
Resistance	Showing the reality of the appalling conditions that animals face in intensive farms. A side effect of this, however, is that animals are represented <i>only</i> as suffering, passive victims. It's also important to represent animals positively, as agents of their own lives with purposes and goals and as beings of inner as well as outer beauty. It would be possible, for example, to show both shots of the suffering victims interspersed with animals who have been rescued and are enjoying their lives.
References	Schally (2014), Stibbe (2012: 20): One of the classic senses of ideology is a mode of thought and practice "developed by dominant groups in order to reproduce and legitimate their domination" (Van Dijk). The primary way that this is accomplished is to present domination as "God-given, natural, <b>benign</b> [or] inevitable" (Van Dijk).

Image 18: Stills from video on KFC website



Story	Meat farming improves the landscape
Type of story	Ideology
Notes	There's a deep story at play about the role of farming in creating valued landscapes, i.e., a pastoral sensibility.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock farming plays an important role in landscape management. The traditional small hedge-bounded field structure that characterises English hills and uplands is maintained by grazing livestock. (7)</li> <li>• Without livestock farming the landscape could look very different (7)</li> </ul>
Resistance	Highlight the barren landscapes created by intensive indoor farming and the monocultures that are required to produce animal feed.
References	Roth (2016)

Story	Consumers are to blame for intensive farming
Type of story	Ideology
Notes	This argument is based on the economic story that only consumers know best what they want, so the aim of an economic system is to supply them with it. The story is based on assumption of perfect knowledge, i.e., the consumer knows what it is they are buying. It's a false story, however, since the industry does everything it can to hide the reality of where food comes from and what its health implications are. After advertising and propaganda campaigns to increase consumer demand the industry then blames that demand for intensification of farming.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The big farms say they are <b>led by consumers</b> - people want to buy cheap meat, and intensive farming is the only way to efficiently satisfy that demand. (2)</li> <li>• There aren't as many producers that farm pigs outdoors because there's not a <b>huge demand</b>. (1)</li> <li>• It's a balancing act, and it's <b>demand-driven</b>. I don't think we'll see a change in systems without consumer demand. At the moment, that demand isn't there. (1)</li> </ul>
Resistance	Increase consumer knowledge of health and impact on animals to drive down demand.
References	

### People's language around meat

The final part of this research concerns whether the stories of the meat and dairy industry are reflected in the language used by members of the public. This is a very broad issue indeed, so was narrowed down to focus on the public comments on five vegan related articles in the Daily Mail newspaper. The Daily Mail is a right-wing UK newspaper which is in general antagonistic towards veganism, so was considered to be a good place to search for pro-meat messages from the general public. The stories in the table below were revealed.

Story	Examples
PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE UNHEALTHY  VEGANS ARE WEAK AND LACK MUSCLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And it's also why when you go to 'health food stores' that cater to 'organic vegetarians and vegans' - almost all the people there look gaunt, sallow, pale, and weakly. (18)</li> <li>• Ever take a look at Moby? He's pale with an ashen tint. He looks frail like you could knock him over with a feather. (19)</li> <li>• I shop at a health food store that has a large vegan section consisting of a bunch of fake dairy and meat processed garbage. The folks buying this stuff look weak and pale with no muscles. (19)</li> <li>• But before Ms Jenner adopts the revolting, nutrition free Vegan diet and abandons her career with scurvy, protein deficiency and night blindness, shouldn't she worry about how thin she is already? (22)</li> </ul>
EATING MEAT IS NATURAL AND NECESSARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are meat eaters naturally. (20)</li> <li>• Humans have evolved to get much of our vitamins, essential amino acids and essential fatty acids from meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. (20)</li> <li>• Simple scientific fact is that we need meat. Any idea what the two teeth in our heads called 'canines' are for? Ripping flesh, you imbeciles. (21)</li> <li>• The only fact for humans is they need a balanced diet of meat and veggies. (19)</li> <li>• Humans are omnivores and need the protein than comes from meat. (19)</li> <li>• Vegan should be banned, it is going against what our country and our God founded, if you are a Vegan I think you should have to have a fine or have to go in a jail (22)</li> </ul>
PLANTS ARE LIVING BEINGS WITH FEELINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plants are living, breathing things. Mister sensitive doesn't mind slaughtering them (20)</li> <li>• at the end of the day, flowers, trees and vegetation have feelings. It's a proven scientific fact. So should we start showing your kids pictures of dismembered carrots and cut up potatoes (23)</li> <li>• Vegetables feel pain (23)</li> </ul>
MEAT IS DELICIOUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would try going vegan but I love meat too god damn much. Why did god make it taste soooo good? (22)</li> <li>• When will vegans understand there are people that actually enjoy eating meat. (21)</li> <li>• Fish is so good for you and delicious as is meat. (21)</li> </ul>
VEGANS ARE BORING AND ARROGANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am yet to meet a vegan who has also been described as "the life of the party" - Instead it's the usual distain and disgust to anyone and anything that doesn't meet their standards! (22)</li> </ul>
FARM ANIMALS WILL BECOME EXTINCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it acceptable to put cows, chickens and pigs in zoos or shall we just make them extinct? (22)</li> </ul>
FARM ANIMALS ONLY EXIST BECAUSE OF FARMING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's very noble wishing for all animals to be free. Is it better to be free or to not exist? If all humans were vegan then there would be no farmed animals at all. (22)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if it wasn't for the meat eaters out there, then these animals would never have had a life to begin with (21)</li> </ul>
VEGAN MEN ARE UNATTRACTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sorry, but for me, no man who faffs around with his food is ever going to be 'hot'. Vegan or not, picky eaters are knobs (22)</li> </ul>
VEGANS ARE SMELLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blimey. The flatulence of two of them together must be appalling. (22)</li> <li>• My veggie friend dies the most room filling farts ever. (22)</li> <li>• We have a vegan in our office.... her breath stinks! (22)</li> </ul>
VEGANS AND ABNORMAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [veganism] makes them an outcast and a laughing stock among normal folk (23)</li> </ul>
VEGANS ARE HIPPIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm a vegetarian but dread lock vegans are one of the worst and most annoying and deluded creatures on the planet, cannot stand them. (23)</li> <li>• These tree hugging sandal wearing smelly vegan hippies are only too happy to see an unborn human baby killed in the womb but condone killing animals for food. (23)</li> </ul>
Notes	Some of the comments conveyed stories that were similar those of the meat industry, that MEAT IS HEALTHY, MASCULINE, DELICIOUS and NATURAL. However, there was a wider range of stories, including many ways of insulting vegans which the meat industry is unlikely to use openly, though they may sponsor people to add offensive comments to the newspaper comments, i.e., skills. A key issue is whether to target a campaign at resisting the mainstream media stories of the meat industry, or the wider range of stories in the public online domain.
Resistance	It's clearly important <b>not</b> to reinforce the vegan stereotypes that are used to attack the whole idea of being compassionate to other animals and the earth (i.e., that vegans are holier-than-thou, religious, fussy, smelly, weak, ill, sandal wearing hippies etc). Note that frames are brought to mind even when they are denied – “Vegans are not smelly” (see Lakoff 2004, Don't think of an elephant). Best to avoid stereotypes all together and just represent people following plant-based diets positively.

## Overall conclusion

This was a small-scale study, with illustrative rather than systematic data collection and analysis. However, it did reveal that the meat/dairy industry uses powerful linguistic and visual techniques to convey stories that animal products are *healthy, delicious, masculine, natural, and a path to love*, and that *farms are beneficial to animals*. The language and images of the industry also work to erase the reality of animals as sensitive, intelligent beings who suffer and die in the process of making the products. Building a more compassionate and environmentally beneficial society will require a) resisting these stories to convey a negative image of meat, b) conveying positive images of animals as beings deserving respect and consideration, and c) conveying positive images of plant-based foods.

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5. Quality Meat Scotland website: <http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/healthy-eating/why-red-meat-good-you>
6. Meat and dairy industry sponsored educational site:  
<http://meatandeducation.redmeatinfo.com/resources/digibites/suite-1-eat-right/healthy-balanced-diet>
7. Knorr *love at first taste* advert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwx7NnPQ44U>
8. Knorr artic advert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i6mdorVezE>
9. Macdonald's Brazil: [https://www.instagram.com/mcdonalds\\_br/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/mcdonalds_br/?hl=en)

10. Häagen-Dazs campaign information video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBA7VBRdLE>
11. Meat Institute:  
<https://www.meatinstitute.org/index.php?ht=a/GetDocumentAction/i/117575>
12. Meat and Education  
<http://meatandeducation.redmeatinfo.com/resources/interactives/meat-green-world>
13. Carls Jr. advertisement review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2teY0ApvG6A>  
Carls Jr. adverts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Wk5kFX5vtU>
14. KFC advertisement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KykM1kwdaOA>
15. Stills from Anchor advert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrWIJxt3ViY>
16. HP Sauce advertisement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2A6YPowfwk>
17. Internet meme from veganblogger.com
18. KFC website <https://www.kfc.co.uk/about-us/our-chicken/the-reality-of-our-chicken>

## Appendix A: Types of story

<b>Form of story</b> (cognitive, i.e., in people's minds)		<b>Manifestation</b> (in language)
ideology	a story of how the world is and should be which is shared by members of a group	discourses, i.e., clusters of linguistic features characteristically used by the group
framing	a story that uses a frame (a packet of knowledge about an area of life) to structure another area of life	trigger words which bring a frame to mind
metaphor (a type of framing)	a story that uses a frame to structure a distinct and clearly different area of life	trigger words which bring a specific and distinct frame to mind
evaluation	a story about whether an area of life is good or bad	appraisal patterns, i.e., patterns of language which represent an area of life positively or negatively
identity	a story about what it means to be a particular kind of person	forms of language which define the characteristics of certain kinds of people
conviction	a story about whether a particular description of the world is true, uncertain or false	facticity patterns, i.e., patterns of linguistic features which represent descriptions of the world as true, uncertain or false
erasure	a story that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration	patterns of language which fail to represent a particular area of life at all, or which background or distort it
salience	a story that an area of life is important and worthy of consideration	patterns of language which give prominence to an area of life

Adapted from Stibbe (2015)