

BROKEN PROMISES. STOLEN LIVES.

OPEN LETTER TO STEVE ELLS, CHIPOTLE CEO



Dear Steve,

Chipotle is flying high. The press celebrated your recent “killer quarter.” You’ve grown an astonishing 1000% in the past five years. And NPR calls Chipotle the “new model” for fast food. But there’s something troubling under the glamorous marketing and mounds of profit: a broken promise.

“Food with Integrity” is our commitment to always look closer, dig deeper, and work harder to ensure that our actions are making things better, not worse. **It’s our promise to run our business in a way that doesn’t exploit animals...**

Steve, you personally made this promise to the public, to your customers, and to the animals. You told us that the animals you use are “responsibly raised,” “unconditionally loved,” and treated with “dignity” and “respect.” Indeed, your company spends millions of dollars every year on marketing that spreads this message. But the truth is that you have fallen violently short on your promise. Here’s why:

Standard practices at your “natural” farms involve brutal exploitation. Chickens are painfully debeaked with a searing blade. Baby calves are torn from their crying mothers and killed. And gentle pigs have as little as five square feet of space to live – a 300 pound individual stuffed into a space shorter than the length of a human arm.

Your company is engaged in consumer fraud about this exploitation. Your ads are filled with pictures of happy cows in grassy fields. Your videos show your employees freeing pigs from factory farms into sunlit forests. But it’s all “humane washing” – marketing that disguises the violent reality of animal agriculture. You take advantage of the fact that there are no regulatory standards for use of words such as “natural,” and you prey on your customers’ good intentions and trick them into paying a big premium for your “humane meat.”



Chipotle: Happy ads disguise a violent reality.

Chipotle is one of the world’s biggest killers – and you aggressively promote it.

Your company makes billions every year off the murder of animals. You finance pro-meat documentaries (such as *American Meat*), Orwellian festivals that celebrate animal agriculture as “cultivating a better world,” and bizarre billboards that say “MEAT MEAT MEAT.” But a frightened pig who shakes uncontrollably in the moments before she is killed *has* been exploited, regardless of the precise conditions of her confinement. Indeed, she has been exploited in the worst way possible – by having her very body taken.

Steve, we want to believe in your promise. And so does the country. America is a nation of animal lovers. Seventy percent of us have non-human animal family members. And there is a growing consensus that what we do to our fellow animals is not just wrong, but an outrage. The eminent biologist Dr. Richard Dawkins of Oxford directly compares animal agriculture to human slavery. Our nation’s flagship newspaper, The New York Times, asks whether our descendants might someday condemn our slaughter of animals as we today condemn hateful genocides by our ancestors.

But to keep your promise, you need to take a stand. You need to be honest. You need to live up to your motto: “Food with Integrity.” The costs are steep, we understand. You’ll lose many customers. But nothing great in life has ever come easy. And, if you redeem your broken promise, history will see that you stood bravely, not for what is popular, but for what is right.

Chipotle has taken so much from so many. It has caused so much pain, misery, and death. In this new year, it’s time for you to give back. It’s time for you to acknowledge that **it’s not food. It’s violence.** It’s time for you to take animals off the menu.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizen (with Direct Action Everywhere)