

## I. Interviews transcriptions

### 1. Interview with Mr. Wolf Gordon Clifton (Executive Director of Animal People)

27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2023

**Arno:** Hi Mr. Wolf Gordon and thanks for accepting this interview with me. Would you mind if I record the audio of the interview?

**Wolf Gordon Clifton:** Sure no problem.

**A:** Thanks. So first I'll begin by explaining a bit what my thesis is about. I'm writing on the current state of animal welfare considerations in the food industry. I began in my thesis by explaining a bit the origin of animal exploitation, definition of important terms and so on. Then I did kind of a global description of the current animal exploitation based on the 4 industries where animals are the most used, so medical research, fashion, entertainment and food. I'm now focusing on the food industry for the rest of this thesis. The goal now is to understand what's preventing the global food industry from changing, and if they're actively trying to change, what are the alternative, how to communicate efficiently on that, educate consumers, and so on. I'm trying to get every possible point of view and for that I reached out to associations like yours, to marketing agencies specialised in the food industry, to companies trying to develop alternatives ways of feeding people, and to big food companies (and none of them has accepted an interview with me of course).

I'll begin by asking you if you could, for the sake of having a clear context, introduce yourself and provide an overview of Animal People's missions/objectives/actions in promoting animal welfare within the food industry?

**W:** To introduce myself, I'm Wolf Gordon Clifton, executive director of Animal People. Animal People is an association that went through several different phases, starting in 1992 as a media association, publishing newspapers on animal welfare and rights based on current events around the world. In 2015 we switched to an online forum and magazine, and we haven't been actively publishing lately because we found that the media landscape in terms of animal welfare was already pretty saturated thanks to social media or even more major magazines covering animal welfare more frequently, like the Guardians or the Washington Post. So the

idea of having a niche magazine just for that, there was not as much need for that as before. So we've shifted the focus of most of our activities towards policy, and especially advocating United Nations processes of increasing people's attention to animal welfare. The processes we've been directly involved in are the high-level political form conferences which the UN hosts every summer in New York, the convention on biological diversity, and UN environment. We've especially been advocating for animal welfare as a component of sustainability and a component of biodiversity. Our biggest connections revolve around the emissions that are produced by animal exploitation, with animal agriculture being one of the top 2 causes to climate change. We've also focused on the pandemic of course because that's where farms are incubators for all kinds of diseases that can infect humans and we tried to raise the awareness around the importance of animal welfare in itself, because they're intelligent, they have the capacity to form a relation with another, to suffer. Thus we have an ethical obligation to treat them with compassion, and that's our ideal goal to have a food system and organisations in which people no longer exploit animals. Of course we're a long way from that so at this point, we're trying to plant the seeds of the idea of that and at least push for incremental changes.

**A:** Despite the growing awareness we observe around animal welfare nowadays, why do you think there's been a lack of substantial change in the industry's approach to animal welfare? Is it only economic or is there something else that could be preventing the UN from forcing changes?

**W:** To be honest, I think the private sector is more the source of the problem than it is part of the solution. Now there is the possibility of companies playing a proactive role, especially with the ones working in the alternative protein industry, but I think that they are so many corporate investments in animal agriculture (the livestock industry, the meat, dairy, eggs, ...) that industries have enormous political influences. And in many countries around the world, UN included, intensive animal agriculture is adopted because of companies trying to find a way to produce cheap proteins. So I think there are big investments on that side and the influence on politics is that many elected officials are relying on support and donations from these companies, which makes progress rather slow. In fact, the lobby has so much influence that they managed to get references to the climate pollution to be taken out of major reports. For example, the latest UNFCCC report on climate change does make some allusions to

agriculture as a leading source but the explicit references, including recommendations for people to reduce their meat consumption, were actually taken out of the final draft because of the influence of these companies. At UN events I've also seen major agriculture representant there, lobbying their activity as "family farming", but in reality they are huge companies and multinationals, and even if they're in fact family-owned, it's far from being "family farmed" in every other aspect, but they present it as being the solution for food systems. So companies are very active in protecting their assets, and pressing any kind of opposition, and I think that's number one obstacle!

**A:** Yes, it actually makes total sense and it definitely explains why it's so complicated to observe changes. Later we'll speak about the existing alternatives but for now, what alternative approaches or solutions does Animal People advocate for, which could significantly enhance animal welfare in the food supply chain?

**W:** Well yes, one of the consistent parts of our strategy is trying to identify what the UN's own work, own policies, own strategic findings already support. I would differentiate Animal Welfare in the narrow sense (referring to laws and policies that are specifically oriented towards decreasing animal suffering, which can sometimes be criticised as being too conservatives) from transition away from animal exploitation, and this one is more considered as ok as long as it meets a minimum standard of well-being. At Animal People we keep in mind that at the end of the day the goal is to reduce animal exploitation. We recognise that we're not going to end it overnight, so improving towards any reduction of it is a step in the right direction. But we also try not to alter our long term goal by endorsing bigger cages for example. There's a fine line between actually never endorsing any kind of animal exploitation and rather raising the issues that the exploitation of animals causes for them as well as for humans and for the environment. And I think we're more than advocating animal welfare in the strict sense, more of our efforts aim just towards transforming food systems and transforming industries. Concerning the strategies for doing that, I don't think that any associations active in the states have really found the right formula, because when it comes to laws and policies, there's also a fine line between going too big in ask with a non-realistic demand (in which case you tend to be ignored), and going too far in the other direction by asking for too little with something that's already a compromised position (then there's no force to what you're asking, cause they can say they're already doing that or they'll take the

idea as an inspiration). But still you need to be asking for more than you're expecting to get, it's like basic negotiation skills, if you're already asking for a compromised position, what you'll get is an even greater compromised position. So I think something that's really important is having multiple organisations with different approaches, some asking for big demand, so that the organisations asking for less seems realistic and are listened, while pushing things forward, cause if we never advocate for the ultimate goal and huge ask, we'll never get there. If you only have associations asking for a lot, they'll be considered as extreme and ignored, and no one will be considered as moderate enough to work with. But if you only have moderate associations asking for little, they'll have even smaller results from the food brands. So we need a balance of both, big ask giving credibility to moderate ones to be directly accepted, but still showing what's the ultimate goal and raising awareness. Associations like Compassion in Factory Farming for example are considered more conservatives and radical but are effective to raise conversation, where Animal People is probably more realistic, but both kinds of organisations are definitely needed in the current system. It's a diverse ecosystem, but at a deeper level, we're all aligned in our ideas of what we're working towards. However, I think the global solution can't only be non-profit organisation, because as mentioned before, we're up against massive corporate power and government. That's where I think the alternative protein industry can have a valuable impact, because with companies that made it possible to either produce plant-based products identical to meat products, or even better, to industrially cultivate meat and dairy that are biologically animal but grown from cell culture without animal suffering, we can find there an economic argument that is going to eventually shift the actual system.

**A:** Yes it makes sense that you'd need both associations advocating for animal welfare and on the other hand, companies providing actual solutions to shift to. So I totally agree with you on that diversity point you just made. Now when you were advocating at the UN over the last few years, have you noticed any notable changes in their responses or in their behaviour regarding better animal welfare practices?

**W:** I think, by speaking with people face to face, more and more people are familiar with the concept of animal welfare. It definitely evolved since what I remember in 2016 at the beginning when people were still saying "Oh I love animals but it has nothing to do with my work", they just didn't see the connection. Now I think more people, more policy makers, as

well as academics and all people involved, are more aware of the connections. The biggest substantive change I've seen was the NEXUS resolution, which was a resolution that the UN Environment passed in March 2022 and was the first UN resolution in any UN process, specifically dedicated to animal welfare as a subject (before that it was only references). What it does is recognising that there is a connection between animal welfare and sustainability and environmental protection, which means UN was recognising animal welfare as a strategic means of realising its mandate. It also calls for the UN environment to authorise a scientific report detailing all of the connections between animal welfare and sustainability issues, including food systems. Unfortunately this is yet to happen because there have been a lot of issues in terms of funding and support from the countries involved to get this report finished. I think this made a lot to normalise the idea of animal welfare within the United Nations, so that's something I would consider a milestone. And if there is eventually a report, as I hope there will be, that would then become a positive influence for future policy. That would be something, authored by a UN agency, that gathered common knowledge among officials throughout the United Nations, and that could be a turning point and a breakthrough for further changes.

**A:** Speaking of further changes, in the opinion of Animal People, what further steps should the UN take to increase consideration for animal welfare? I'm talking beyond token gestures or superficial changes, what should be the next steps? Would it be only laws and policies or are you thinking of something else?

**W:** Well I think a first step would be for the United Nations to be more honest about its own research findings. The UN came out with its report on livestock's long shadow, way back in 2004, which was the first report that really showed animal agriculture as a leading driver of climate change, and yet even in the last conference on climate change, the industry has kept the influence to keep the UN from advocating "Eating less meat" to people, and it shows how cooperative the UN is. I think there's a need to not be apologetic about the application of its own research findings. So just building on the resources that the UN has already produced, this recommendation would be one first step to take. Another important step would be that, in the current sustainable development agenda for the UN, runs until 2030, and after that, there will be a need to negotiate a new sustainable agenda. Right now it has 7 sustainable development goals (SDG's), and all of them of direct or indirect connection with animal

welfare, but none of them are specifically about it. You have life on land and life on water which focus on ecosystems and species, but not on animals as individuals. So actually having an SDG's specifically on animal welfare, and for animal protection, would be a great step. There's even an organisation recently launched called Beyond Animal, they are campaigning for a goal zero animal exploitation in 2030, and it's of course a bit radical framing of the idea, but if enough organisations really push for that, it should be possible to have a SDGs specifically for that after 2030, and it would open a lot of possibilities for changes. I think redirecting subsidies could also be really helpful, because one of the reasons why it's so difficult to have price equality between usual meat products and alternative meat-free products is that the meat agriculture industry is heavily subsidised, which makes it cheap. So if we could get a country to redirect harmful subsidies invested in animal agriculture toward more transformative technologies and food alternatives, that would make a huge difference. These are some steps that most countries, including the UN, should be able to take to make a substantial change.

**A:** Yes and having cheaper prices on meat products are just demotivating consumers to try an alternative way of eating. We spoke just before about hidden information from the UN in their report, how do you think people could discern these practices from genuine efforts, to act and behave accordingly?

**W:** The information is not really hidden, the reports are out there and available to the public. The problem is more that the UN is not emphasising the findings. I think something that organisations can do is to cite the UN's own work, and of course it's not only about the UN, we have to change public opinion, local and national governments, and so on. Anything that has been authored by the UN, even if it's neglected by the UN, still carries an authority to it that makes it as an outreach to all. So by simply citing these reports in whatever organisations can be useful, because the information is out there so we might as well use it.

**A:** Oh ok they're just not emphasising on it. And so you're, as a representative of Animal People, mainly advocating for animal welfare to the UN, but if you had any advice for people, and more specifically for consumers of meat and meat-free product, how could they contribute to Animal People's goals? Not by just shifting to meat-free products, but how could

they contribute to the missions of passing laws and policies, and to make a change in the global actions?

**W:** Ok so beyond simply lifestyle changes, there are always ways of supporting organisations that are active in these processes. One thing that I think anyone can do is to sign the plant-based treaty, which I mentioned that, at the last high-level political forum conference, we covered the attendance of someone from plant-based treaty. Anyone can sign it, as an individual, as a company, as an organisation, there's even a number of cities at this point that have sponsored it, and it can help that movement to take off, to become more visible and influential. The other thing people can do is simply showing up for Grassroots activism is important. There is rightfully a lot of public attention surrounding climate change, and every time there's a climate change conference there's a lot of activism, protest and demonstration outside the conference building, and it's a really important opportunity for public outreach, and I'm happy to see it. But I think we also need that outside of just climate change. I was disappointed at the biological diversity conference to see very little public involvement with almost not protests and demonstrations outside of the conference hall. It's probably simply because there's less public awareness around it, but it's equally important as they're so intertwined. Climate change drives the mass extinction, biodiversity helps to protect climate change, so they should go together. That would have been an opportunity for local organisations including local vegan and animal rights groups to come and demonstrate outside the conference venue. I think creating that sense of public accountability is really important and it makes officials more likely to do the right things, as they know people are paying more attention.

**A:** Yes definitely! People need to come together to show to the government and officials that it's an important topic that matters to them. With more and more people doing it, they will eventually see the importance of it to people and promote changes. And in the same time they can of course support organisations that are representing animal rights. Alright so I'm done with my questions, I've learned a lot of things throughout this interview and it will definitely be really helpful for my thesis so many thanks to you for allowing me some of your time!

**W:** Sure no problem it was a pleasure, and if you have any new questions or if you need some contact of other organisations to call and interview, don't hesitate to reach out to me again!

**A:** Thanks that might be helpful! If you want I can also send you a copy of my thesis once it's completed, if you're interested in reading it.

**W:** Sure I'd love that!

**A:** Alright I'll do that. Thanks again for your time and we'll keep in touch, have a great day.

**W:** Thanks and good luck to finish your thesis, goodbye.

## 2. Interview with Mr. Phil Brooke (Research and Education Manager at Compassion in World Farming)

6<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023

**Arno:** Hi Mr. Brooke and thanks for accepting this interview with me. Would you mind if I record the audio of the interview?

**Phil Brooke:** Sure, go on.

**A:** Thanks. So first I'll begin by explaining a bit what my thesis is about. I'm writing on the current state of animal welfare considerations in the food industry. I began in my thesis by explaining a bit the origin of animal exploitation, definition of important terms and so on. Then I did kind of a global description of the current animal exploitation based on the 4 industries where animals are the most used, so medical research, fashion, entertainment and food. I'm now focusing on the food industry for the rest of this thesis. The goal now is to understand what's preventing the global food industry from changing, and if they're actively trying to change, what are the alternative, how to communicate efficiently on that, educate consumers, and so on. I'm trying to get every possible point of view and for that I reached out to associations like yours, to marketing agencies specialised in the food industry, to companies trying to develop alternatives ways of feeding people, and to big food companies (and none of them has accepted an interview with me of course).

I'll begin by asking you if you could, for the sake of having a clear context, introduce yourself and provide an overview of Compassion in World Farming's missions/objectives/actions in promoting animal welfare within the food industry?

**P:** Okay so I'm Phil Brooke, I'm a research and education Manager at Compassion in World Farming, so I'm in the research part where we sort of pull the knowledge, and also do some direct campaigns at lobbying. At Compassion, our main goal is basically to get rid of factory farming, which could have benefits for both the environment and for the animals. Whether people choose to eat animals or not is a personal choice, and we are not advocating against that. The objective is more to advocate for people to eat less and better, rather than telling them not to eat meat, because people always tend to do what you tell them not to do. We also think better food systems are going to be regenerative ones, so animal welfare should be

at the centre of it. We particularly oppose to some of the cruellest systems, any form of cages, any kind of systems where animals are bred to grow faster to be more productive (like producing too much milk, etc) which effectively puts them in a cage of disability, with for example chickens that couldn't perform their normal behaviour even if they had the opportunity to because they're too heavy and have chronic heart diseases, which cause them fatigue. We think that animals should be provided with an environment that fulfill their needs for natural behaviour. To put it in simple terms, welfare is a mental state, and to achieve good welfare, you have to be in a good physical state (which means you get enough to eat, you're free from diseases and injuries, you're comfortable, etc.), and you have the opportunity to perform your natural behaviour (do whatever they want to do when they want to, and that they would do if they were free in the environment). That should give you some idea what our goals are. Away from factory farming, we're trying to promote regenerative systems that actually improve the soils, and improve the welfare of the environment instead of harming it.

**A:** And despite the growing awareness we observe around animal welfare nowadays, why do you think there's been a lack of substantial change in the industry's approach to animal welfare? Is it only economic or is there something else that could prevent changes?

**P:** Some of the systems are clearly not changing because of the economic aspect, sometimes it's because of familiarity, when you build a system you don't want to change it, sometimes it's because of the lack of requirements and legislation from the governments, because they need to lay down some minimum standards on animal conditions, or farmers that respect animal welfare won't be able to compete with the ones who don't. The food businesses also need to have at least some basic requirements for high welfare for the food, and finally the consumers need to choose wisely what they buy, because they have the power to change the whole industry with their purchasing behaviour. For example in Britain in the 70's-90's, to get free-range eggs I had to go to a health food store department, but now you can simply get it at the supermarket and each year, the percentage of eggs being free range is increasing (around 60%-70% now when it was 5% in the 70's). So it's a gradual change with consumers but you can get stuff done. Legislation gets results really quick when they succeed but it's rare, food businesses can get some stuff done sooner because they can make a decision in the short term and have more flexibility, and consumers' impact is slower but can be powerful.

**A:** You speak about the fact that we need more policies on animal welfare, why do you think governments or countries are so slow to take action and to put policies in place? Could it be because of the big food brands' pressure?

**P:** I don't know. Governments often give less priority than they should, and when they do it always takes time to pass legislation. For example, during a previous campaign, we got really good recommendations about stuff coming through, but after a few years, it looks like the industry put pressure on the commission to delay it. And if you take the EU, you get one commission per 4 years, then another for 4 years, but if all the previous ones are bad, it takes more than 4 years to get results. So you need more time and if the next commission doesn't give priority to it or get pressure from the farmers not to do what they should do, all the results can be lost. However, I want to make clear that we still believe it's possible to get changes, and changes have been made, I'm just answering your questions on why it's slow sometimes.

**A:** Of course, or you wouldn't be there working with Compassion in World Farming! As we know, fighting against intensive animal agriculture is quite hard, and especially when some people consider it as the only solution. The best way is still to come up with alternatives and solutions, because completely stopping without alternatives won't work either. What are the top alternative approaches or solutions that Compassion in World Farming is advocating for, which could significantly enhance animal welfare in the food supply chain?

**P:** The starting point is that we want people to eat fewer animal products, that makes everything easier, and that is also reducing the amount of factory farming, it's better for people's health and for the environment. That's not about people going vegan, we don't think they should, personally I am but some people in the organisation are not and that's completely fine. Next thing is to say that the minimum standards of assistance for animals, and that require slow growing (because that's one of the major problems especially with chickens, they grow too fast), it requires more space, a rich environment (with things to scratch on, to bath, and so forth), and finally a human slaughter system. Those are a key set of asks that are for businesses. It's something that has been put in place in the Netherlands already and they found out that a chicken growing in these circumstances requires 9 times less antibiotics. So there's massive and immediate effect of having healthier chicken, even for the farmers and food brands by decreasing cost of medication and animals problems, but also

for the consumers who will get a healthier chicken. There are forecasts speaking of 10 million people dying by 2050 if we don't solve the problem of antibiotic resistance, and one way of doing that is to make sure that our pigs, rabbits and chickens are kept in better systems with better breeds, to make sure they naturally stay well and are less likely to need treatment.

**A:** Does Compassion in World Farming have any strategies or campaigns in place at the moment to push for better animal welfare standards in the industry? And what are the campaigns that worked the best in the past, and why?

**P:** So, currently we have a campaign to end the cage age to get all animals out of cages and to get all the legislation approved, and campaigns to prevent human slaughter of fish. For the success in the past, we managed to get a ban on the barren battery cages for ants in Europe around 2000, we got a ban for crabs to be kept in groups at all time, and we got a partial ban on the gestation crates size (and we'd like a full ban). These are our 3 big successes in Europe, and in addition we had earlier successes in the UK. That's the campaign side, now on the food business side, we've been lobbying food businesses to improve their standards in many parts of Europe, and businesses are moving away from small cages for example.

**A:** And from the lobbying you've done, have you noticed any changes on the food brand's side?

**P:** In terms of lobbying, at the moment we have the cage campaign that the commission has put on the back burner, which is very disappointing and contrary to what people want, and we were lobbying hard for them to change that. But at least there are fewer and fewer animals in cages, a big reduction over time in the consumption of rabbits, and more and more of the ones remaining are in high welfare standards and not in cages anymore. Some of that is due to consumers wanting it, some of that is due to food business campaigning, some of that has to do with all the publicity that comes and all the campaigns that are done. So there's also positive change operating thanks to everything that is done and the range of actors that take part in this always growing. I'm here speaking for Europe because there's some part of the world where animal exploitation is steadily growing unfortunately, with lots of them never seeing the outside or being humanly killed.

**A:** And I know Compassion in World Farming is also educating consumers on these subjects through their campaigns, have you observed any notable changes in consumer behaviour or perception towards food brands implementing better animal welfare practices over the last few years?

**P:** Oh we haven't measured it as such, but the Europe Eurobarometer, that measure consumers' attitudes, has definitely moved in the positive direction. In addition, we said there are more people buying free-range eggs, that's also partly due to a change in consumer behaviour, and that has been happening since the 70's. In different places at different times and at different paces, but since the 70's. And you can see that change over time in most countries if you look at CII or CABC statistics about the number of animals in cages, you can see gradual improvement.

**A:** Which is great! In your opinion, what specific steps should be taken to increase consideration for animal welfare, and by whom? I guess the answer will be that everyone is responsible for it and everyone has to act, but who should do what ? I'm talking beyond token gestures or superficial changes? Laws? Policies? Else?

**P:** Yes everyone has their share to do. To summarise, politicians have to pass laws AND to enforce those laws (the second not happening enough right now), and they also need to provide a subsidy system that encourages better behaviour. Supermarkets need to have policies in practice to ensure that they encourage high welfare in the food system economy and ban cages and so forth. Some of them already have a cage-free policy, and some of them only for some products, but it's their responsibility to ensure high welfare in the products that they sell. Farmers of course also have a responsibility in the way they grow the animals and keep them. I haven't talked so much about the farmers because they are to some extent at the mercy of other players, so the good farmers and entrepreneurs can produce a really good system if they want, but they are dependent on supermarkets demanding good standards of others rather than them so that they can compete. Obviously supermarkets need to cut the farmers a sufficient price to enable them to keep up. And the consumer also has a responsibility to ensure that the animals they eat have a good life, because the choices that the average consumers make will make more changes to animal suffering in the world than any other choice most people ever make. Another thing that can be done is if a consumer is

paying less for a product, it's because there's a competition between supermarkets to promote their cheaper price. But if the supermarkets made the better choices more attractive, maybe they could also drive change in a positive way.

**A:** Yes! Also during another interview, we spoke about the fact that governments should be giving more subsidies to high-welfare farmers and alternatives trying to do the right thing, so they can have a price that can be competitive compared to big food brands' products.

**P:** Exactly, that's another great way the government can help, and another clear way would be if they provided the capital cost of moving to a better structure, to motivate actual food systems to shift, and that's not an unpopular idea with farmers. But at the moment, given that the government have a lot of money to give to farmers (in Britain), we think that money should be achieving public goods. You don't just give that money to help the farmers, you should at the same time be achieving better environment, better animal welfare, and so forth. The consumer pays the farmer for the basic living, and then it's the money from tax pay that should be achieving public goods, not just benefits the farmer.

**A:** Do you believe there's a prevalent issue of "greenwashing" and hidden actions among major food companies regarding claims of improved animal welfare? And if so, how can consumers discern genuine efforts from marketing tactics?

**P:** First thing they can do is to look out for proper labels or awards from a genuine high-level welfare system or from us, that is going to be beneficial. So most of the time, it's for the consumers to do that best in most circumstances, but it's also for the supermarkets to ensure that their standards meet something and for activists to check. We work mainly positively with supermarkets to ensure good results, we have a thing called egg track or the chicken track, where supermarkets saying they're going cage-free have to get reports on their process and what percentage of eggs are cage-free so far. So that kind of reporting can be helpful, but it's not always easy for the supermarket to do that due diligence and to select products with good labels and good reputations and to make sure that they are actually not bullshit. All of that is necessary but in the end, there's no easy answer as how consumers can detect greenwashing and hidden actions from major food companies.

**A:** Lastly, how can ordinary consumers contribute to this cause beyond just choosing meat-free products or products from brands that claim to prioritise animal welfare? Are there specific actions they can take to drive more substantial changes?

**P:** In addition to eating less and eating better, supporting campaigns of various kinds, writing to supermarkets or governments, sign online petitions, consumers or simply concerned citizens can always take part in activities to encourage better animal welfare and to push things forward. It's also helpful to write to politicians, to make sure that they do know that this is an issue that matters to people and that they need to act accordingly and with this in priority.

**A:** And is it also interesting for people to gather and protest in the streets?

**P:** Yes they can! But other things need to be done as well to have a meaningful impact. Writing to your politicians, writing to your supermarkets, joining coordinated campaigns, all of that is important to make sure they know the people care about it.

**A:** Ok so biggest emphasis on supermarket and their responsibility to pay farmers correctly, make sure that the products they're selling is respecting animal welfare. Well that's interesting, I never really had that point of view on supermarket's responsibility in the previous interviews.

**P:** Yes I believe you get quicker results and changes in the food system through supermarket changes.

**A:** True, and most of the time we only hear about policies and laws that can be passed by governments and countries, but rarely about what supermarkets can do.

**P:** Exactly, and the problem is that it takes longer to get results when you're waiting for governments. But we need to do both, because even if they're slower, laws and policies, when they are enforced, still have a bigger impact. On the other hand, supermarkets and consumers can have a smaller but quicker impact, thanks to their flexibility. When you look at the work we do, you have people going and talking to the media, you have people doing investigations and funding cruelty reports that get reported on the media, we have lobbied politicians, we

have campaigned with businesses, we have reports write based on our best research like the one against cages, we are working on many aspects and dimensions of the fight for animal welfare. All of these things help each other, that's why you need to have a coordinated approach. Lots of different organisations pushing different ways, some heavily campaigning, some mostly lobbying, and with people too playing their own part. You at least need all that to push towards progress.

**A:** Certainly, and it's something I had the opportunity to speak of in a previous interview, you need organisations asking for unrealistic goals so that smaller organisations asking for realistic goals can be taken seriously.

**P:** Exactly, as long as you as you bear in mind that there's always a risk of alienating people along the way. If you go around telling people to do things they seriously don't want to do, you run the risk of not persuading them, because some of them are not open to persuasion, but you can persuade them to eat animals that have a better life and more humane death at least, and that has got to be a better way forward.

**A:** Perfect! Thanks a lot for your time and for your answers, it definitely helped me and will help me a lot for the redaction of my thesis. I hope I didn't take too much of your time

**P:** Of course not don't worry, it was a pleasure honestly. Have a great day!

**A:** Thanks, have a wonderful afternoon as well!

### 3. Interview with Ms. Francine Luna (Executive Assistant at ChuckJoe)

15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023

**Arno:** Hi Ms. Francine Luna and thanks for accepting this interview with me. Do you mind if I record the audio of the interview?

**Francine Luna:** No problem at all, please do.

**A:** Thanks. So first I'll begin by explaining a bit what my thesis is about. I'm writing on the current state of animal welfare considerations in the food industry. I began in my thesis by explaining a bit the origin of animal exploitation, definition of important terms and so on. Then I did kind of a global description of the current animal exploitation based on the 4 industries where animals are the most used, so medical research, fashion, entertainment and food. I'm now focusing on the food industry for the rest of this thesis. The goal now is to understand what's preventing the global food industry from changing, and if they're actively trying to change, what are the alternatives, how to communicate efficiently on that, educate consumers, and so on. I'm trying to get every possible point of view and for that I reached out to associations like yours, to marketing agencies specialised in the food industry, to companies trying to develop alternative ways of feeding people, and to big food companies (and none of them has accepted an interview with me of course).

I'll begin by asking you if you could, for the sake of having a clear context, introduce yourself and provide an overview of ChuckJoe's missions/objectives/actions in promoting animal welfare within the food industry?

**F:** Of course! My name is Francine Luna and I'm an executive assistant with ChuckJoe. ChuckJoe is a company that helps food and beverage brands develop their marketing and communication plans, with the aim of improving sales and maximising revenue. To do this, we work with our clients to develop their strategy, social media management, data analysis, email marketing, relationships with influencers and the media, and so on. What makes ChuckJoe different from other companies in the same field is that we specialise in working only with brands whose image revolves around respect for animal welfare, locally sourced products, and so on.

**A :** How does your agency approach integrating animal welfare concerns into the marketing strategies of food brands? Could you provide examples of successful campaigns that emphasise ethical considerations in the supply chain?

**F:** We incorporate animal welfare into brand narratives, emphasising responsible sourcing, humane treatment, and ethical practices in the supply chain. For example, campaigns highlighting free-range practices, humane certifications, or showcasing suppliers with transparent and ethical standards are some of the many ways we emphasise ethical practices within this industry.

**A:** Do you observe significant differences in the marketing strategies devised for meat-free companies compared to those promoting meat-based products? If so, what are the primary distinctions, and why do these differences exist?

**F:** Yes, strategies differ significantly. Meat-free companies often focus on health, environmental impact, and animal welfare, while meat-based companies might highlight sustainable farming practices, reduced environmental footprint, and ethical treatment of livestock. Our agency is not focused on the meat industry, because it does not provide positive environmental impact, we stick to mostly plant-based and/or sustainable businesses that are making a clear difference for people and our planet.

**A:** Based on your experience, how do consumers typically respond to messaging that emphasises animal welfare in food products? Have you noticed any evolving trends or shifts in consumer behaviour regarding their consideration of animal welfare in recent years? How are food brands reacting to this change in the consumers' behaviour and perception? Have you noticed any changes?

**F:** There's a growing trend of consumers considering animal welfare, and brands are reacting by incorporating these concerns into their practices and marketing strategies. Most of our clientele focuses on sustainability and humane practices, and we've shifted our digital marketing practices and strategies to make the most impact we can as a small business. Consumer behavioural trends show us that younger generations are heavily focused on sustainability and animal welfare. We think this will continue to be a positive shift in the healthy food and beverage space.

**A:** In your view, which specific communication strategies or messaging approaches have proven to be more effective in conveying animal welfare concerns to consumers? Are there certain demographics that respond more positively to such messaging? Or some communication channels that are working better?

**F:** Transparency, storytelling, and visuals showcasing animal-friendly practices resonate well. Younger demographics tend to respond more positively, and social media platforms serve as effective channels for conveying these messages. We're noticing a big shift in visual video content being a source for younger generations to speak up about animal welfare and sustainability, and we collaborate with TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube influencers often who are passionate about protecting our environment, humans, and animals. This helps consumers become more aware and helps brands that are making a difference grow.

**A:** How do you assist food brands in positioning themselves in the market concerning animal welfare concerns? What strategies do you employ to differentiate brands in terms of their ethical practices? Do you believe that food brands that highlight animal welfare considerations have a competitive advantage in the market?

**F:** We help brands highlight their ethical practices through storytelling, emphasising their commitment to animal welfare in their brand messaging. Brands that authentically focus on animal welfare do often gain a competitive edge, yes, especially among consumers who prioritise ethical considerations.

**A:** What metrics or methods do you use to gauge the impact of marketing campaigns centred around animal welfare? How do you evaluate the success of these campaigns in terms of consumer perception and brand loyalty? And is there a significant difference in results between these and the one not centered around animal welfare or does it depend?

**F:** Metrics include regular consumer analysis, brand perception surveys, and tracking sales growth post-campaign. Comparatively, campaigns focusing on animal welfare often yield higher engagement and improved brand loyalty.

**A:** What are the primary challenges or obstacles you encounter when developing marketing strategies that highlight animal welfare? How do you overcome these challenges?

**F:** A major challenge is ensuring authenticity in brand claims. This is crucial, and often overlooked by agencies. Overcoming this involves thorough vetting of suppliers, advocating for certifications, and fostering transparency in the supply chain.

**A:** With the growing demand for ethically sourced and animal-friendly products, how do you anticipate the marketing strategies evolving in the near future? Are there any emerging trends or approaches you foresee gaining traction?

**F:** Anticipated trends in the healthy food and beverage space involve even greater emphasis on transparency, augmented reality for immersive experiences showcasing supply chains, and heightened consumer demand for verifiable ethical practices.

**A:** Could you share instances where collaboration with food brands on animal welfare concerns significantly impacted consumer perception and behaviour? What role did your agency play in facilitating such changes?

**F:** Collaborations emphasising animal welfare have significantly influenced consumer behaviour by fostering trust and loyalty. Our agency plays a vital role in aligning brand narratives with ethical initiatives. We do not partner with brands that do not align with our mission for sustainability, human health, and protecting our animals.

**A:** How do you incorporate educational aspects into marketing strategies aimed at raising awareness about animal welfare issues within the food supply chain? Have you found certain educational approaches to be particularly effective in influencing consumer behaviour? Does informing consumers about what on-package labels mean for animal welfare influence their purchase intentions?

**F:** There are many ways we incorporate educational aspects into our strategies. Both internally and for our clients. We write a weekly blog, and a monthly newsletter sharing the importance of marketing for healthy food and beverage brands, because we believe we can change the planet through more sustainable and ethical food practices. Therefore, we are constantly working hard to educate our readers and the general public about the importance of health for everyone. We also promote educational content, such as interactive online

modules, infographics explaining labels, and engaging social media campaigns for our clients, which have proven effective in raising awareness and influencing consumer behaviour.

**A:** Do you believe there's a prevalent issue of greenwashing » and hidden actions among major food companies regarding claims of improved animal welfare? How can consumers discern genuine efforts from marketing tactics?

**F:** Yes! Genuine efforts are discerned through verifiable certifications, transparent supply chain disclosures, and consistent actions aligning with claimed values. Consumers should always check company websites to verify who they say they are. I think it's also important to point out consumers should do their own research as well. For example, Ben and Jerry's talks about all of the environmental things they are doing for humanity and the planet, but they are currently being sued for lying about sustainable practices. They treat their cows for milking terribly and have them chained to machines to produce the milk for ice cream. It is important to do our own research to find hidden truths to these issues. From a marketing standpoint, it's crucial to choose clients based on the truth of their sustainability practices and have proof along with it.

**A:** Has your company ever had to deal with food brands that wanted a communication and marketing plan that emphasised animal welfare when in fact this was not the case? If yes, how did you react?

**F:** We prioritise honesty and transparency. If a brand's practices don't align with claimed values, we engage in a dialogue, advocating for genuine changes or, if necessary, discontinue our collaboration.

**A:** Do you pay attention to your customers' CSR or do you carry out a form of due diligence to make sure that the marketing you put in place is in line with your customers' actual practices? Is this the case for most marketing agencies at the moment, or are some turning a blind eye?

**F:** Our agency rigorously assesses and verifies our clients' CSR practices. It's essential to ensure alignment between marketing claims and actual practices. While some agencies may overlook this, integrity in messaging is crucial for us.

**A:** Well that was my last question, thanks a lot for all your clear answers, I have no doubt it will help me finish this thesis. I wish you a very good day, bye!

**F:** No worries, it was delightful to chat with you on this subject, I wish you all the best with your thesis! Bye.

#### 4. Interview with Mr. Cris Burello (Supporter Services Assistant at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals- PETA)

24<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023

**Arno:** Hi Mr. Burello and thanks for accepting this interview with me. Would you mind if I record the audio of the interview?

**Cris Burello:** No problem at all.

**A:** Thanks. So first I'll begin by explaining a bit what my thesis is about. I'm writing on the current state of animal welfare considerations in the food industry. I began in my thesis by explaining a bit the origin of animal exploitation, definition of important terms and so on. Then I did kind of a global description of the current animal exploitation based on the 4 industries where animals are the most used, so medical research, fashion, entertainment and food. I'm now focusing on the food industry for the rest of this thesis. The goal now is to understand what's preventing the global food industry from changing, and if they're actively trying to change, what are the alternatives, how to communicate efficiently on that, educate consumers, and so on. I'm trying to get every possible point of view and for that I reached out to associations like yours, to marketing agencies specialised in the food industry, to companies trying to develop alternative ways of feeding people, and to big food companies (and none of them has accepted an interview with me of course).

I'll begin by asking you if you could, for the sake of having a clear context, introduce yourself and provide an overview of PETA's missions/objectives/actions in promoting animal welfare within the food industry?

**C:** PETA believes in both animal rights and animal welfare. Of course, in the long term, we'd like to see animal rights adopted universally. But we're also pragmatic, and we realise that because billions of animals are suffering in the food, clothing, experimentation, and entertainment industries each year, we must take immediate action to try to alleviate some of their suffering. This is why we campaign against companies for improved animal welfare standards while also vigorously promoting a vegan diet as the best way to help animals. By waging campaigns that focus on improving the welfare of animals, we will be able to bring about animal liberation at a more rapid pace. When an abusive system is pervasive in society,

people always try to mitigate the victims' suffering before they are able to end the system entirely. For example, in the 1800s, people realised that all citizens—regardless of their skin colour—deserved rights, so slaves were freed. Despite this, blacks were still segregated from whites through the “separate but equal” rule, which was eventually recognised as unjust and ended. Animal rights will inevitably take the same course. By pushing people to recognise that animals at least deserve better treatment, we're awakening people to the idea that animals are not simply machines to be abused at will. More humane systems will be developed, and eventually, when people realise that “humane slaughter” is an oxymoron, animals will be liberated.

**A:** What alternative approaches or solutions does PETA advocate for, which could significantly enhance animal welfare in the food supply chain?

**C:** There is no such thing as “humane” meat. Killing animals to eat their body parts is patently cruel. “Humane slaughter” is an oxymoronic term used by industries that kill animals. Society is at a turning point. Many people—from movie and TV stars to politicians and athletes—are talking about how going vegan boosts their energy and keeps them trim, slim, and heart-healthy. Today, all supermarkets are packed with tasty vegan foods. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, nuts, and legumes, there are faux meats, including vegan chicken and ribs, that will satisfy any taste and dairy-free products such as almond milk, rice milk, vegan ice cream and vegan cheese. It's easy to find a vegan meal in restaurants, and there are now vegan options in many schools across the country.

**A:** So advocating for people to adopt a vegan diet is the main/only solution PETA is trying to promote? Is it enough? What about trying to regulate and advocate directly to factory farms?

**C:** No of course it's not everything, PETA has also pushed hard and will continue to do so in order to reduce the sum total of suffering caused by the meat, egg and dairy industries – because that makes a huge difference if you are a pig or a chicken on a factory farm. PETA and other animal advocacy groups continue to challenge regulations, and we have successfully mobilised the public in order to stop proposed new factory farms. While it's better to pay extra for an egg from a chicken who had a marginally less hideous life than one who suffered more, we must do better by animals. In fact, we have yet to find a “humane”

factory farm where animals don't have their tails cut off and their ears painfully notched; where they aren't debeaked, dehorned or castrated without anaesthesia; where they aren't kept in crowded conditions without sunlight or fresh air; where they don't have their beloved offspring taken away from them; where they aren't denied the companionship of others or where they are instantly killed without the trauma of capture, the horror of transport and the terror of seeing other animals slaughtered before experiencing the same fate. But as it's so complicated to implement in nowadays' ecosystem, PETA has pushed for vegan living since our inception. Our motto is "Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment or abuse in any other way". As such, we don't consider any animal products "ethical".

**A:** Could you share insights into the strategies or campaigns that PETA is employing to push for better animal welfare standards in the industry?

**C:** As said before, we campaign against companies like KFC for instance for improved animal welfare standards while also vigorously promoting a vegan diet as the best way to help animals. Regarding our tactics, PETA's purpose is to stop animal suffering, and we use all available opportunities to reach millions of people with powerful messages. We have found that people do pay more attention to our more provocative actions, and we consider the public's attention to be extremely important. Sometimes this requires tactics—like naked marches and colourful ad campaigns—that some people find outrageous or even "rude," but part of our job is to grab people's attention and even shock them in order to initiate discussion, debate, questioning of the status quo, and, of course, action. The current situation is critical for billions of animals, and our goal is to make the public think about the issues.

**A:** Why is it necessary to take shocking and sometimes even considered as rude actions?

**C:** Although PETA has been a leader in creating "buzz" to support our cause, we aren't alone in recognising its value. According to Brett Gosper, former CEO of Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper, an advertising firm which created a controversial anti-racism campaign, "If your communication is selling a cause, then shock tactics may not just be an option, they may be essential. Budgets on cause-related work are so low that it is imperative for the media to relay your communication and multiply its visibility. Media won't do this out of the goodness of their hearts. The more

controversial the advertising, the more space it will get.” We wish that that weren’t the case. We would much prefer to do things without the gimmicks—if only it worked. We’d like nothing better than to be able to show the media videos of factory farms, fur farms, and animals in laboratories and have them find it newsworthy enough to cover. But they don’t. However, when we attach a gimmick, that very same animal abuse ends up in newspapers and on television nationwide. Experience has taught us that provocative and controversial campaigns make the difference between keeping important yet depressing subjects invisible and having them widely seen. The alternative is to be ignored in the torrent of tabloid-style stories that dominate the popular press. However, PETA does make a point of having something for all tastes, from conservative to radical and from tasteless to refined, and this approach has proved amazingly successful—in the quarter-century since PETA was first founded, it has grown into the largest animal rights group in the world, with more than 1.8 million members and supporters worldwide.

**A:** And why do you need media’s attention so much? Aren’t there many other ways of communicating and managing to pass a message through?

**C:** Unfortunately, getting the animal rights message to the public is not always easy and straightforward. Unlike our opposition, which is mostly composed of wealthy industries and corporations, PETA must rely on getting free “advertising” through media coverage. We often do outrageous things to get the word out about animal abuse, because sadly, the media usually do not consider the facts alone “interesting” enough to cover. Colourful and controversial gimmicks, on the other hand—like activists’ stripping to “bare skin rather than wear skin”—consistently grab headlines, thereby bringing the animal rights message to audiences around the country and, often, the world. After PETA publicised our “State of the Union *Undress*,” for example, we were rated the number one “mover” on Yahoo’s search engine, meaning that PETA received the greatest percentage increase of terms searched that day.

**A:** Do you have examples where food brands have significantly improved their animal welfare standards due to advocacy efforts from PETA or consumer pressure?

**C:** PETA has exposed horrific cruelty in animal laboratories, leading to cancelled funding, closed facilities, and hundreds of charges filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; convinced

cosmetics companies to stop cruel product tests on animals; drawn international attention to what happens to animals in the food, fur, and entertainment industries; closed the largest horse-slaughtering operation in North America; convinced designers to stop using fur; cleaned up substandard animal shelters; helped schools find alternatives to dissection; provided information on vegetarianism, companion-animal care, and countless other issues to millions of people; and been responsible for the first successful prosecution of an animal experimenter under anti-cruelty laws. Some of the above feats were accomplished by months of undercover investigation, careful documentation, and a tireless pursuit of justice through the courts and others by colourful stunts and campaigns that drew international media coverage.

**A:** Lastly, how can ordinary consumers contribute to this cause beyond just choosing products from brands that claim to prioritise animal welfare? Are there specific actions they can take to drive more substantial change? I guess it's mostly by supporting associations like yours and militating?

**C:** Of course they can support, financially or otherwise, organisations like ours, sign petitions, take part in street marches like the ones we're organising and which we mentioned, take part in shock actions, campaigns, and so on. But it's clear that the most important thing to do and the one that works best, even though it sounds a bit radical, is simply to adopt a vegan diet.

**A:** Well thanks, that's all the questions I had, your answers have been more than helpful, I can't wait to include them in my thesis.

**C:** Glad to hear that, it was a pleasure to share them with you. Have a good day!

**A:** Thank you! Bye.

## 5. Interview with Mr. Philip Horemans (Managing Director at Green Seed Belgium)

8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2023

**Arno:** Hi Mr. Horemans and thanks for accepting this interview with me. Would you mind if I record the audio of the interview?

**Philip Horemans:** Of course!

**A:** Thanks. So first I'll begin by explaining a bit what my thesis is about. I'm writing on the current state of animal welfare considerations in the food industry. I began in my thesis by explaining a bit the origin of animal exploitation, definition of important terms and so on. Then I did kind of a global description of the current animal exploitation based on the 4 industries where animals are the most used, so medical research, fashion, entertainment and food. I'm now focusing on the food industry for the rest of this thesis. The goal now is to understand what's preventing the global food industry from changing, and if they're actively trying to change, what are the alternatives, how to communicate efficiently on that, educate consumers, and so on. I'm trying to get every possible point of view and for that I reached out to associations like yours, to marketing agencies specialised in the food industry, to companies trying to develop alternative ways of feeding people, and to big food companies (and none of them has accepted an interview with me of course).

I'll begin by asking you if you could, for the sake of having a clear context, introduce yourself and provide an overview of Green Seed's missions/objectives/actions in promoting animal welfare within the food industry?

**P:** Ok so, I'm Philip Horemans, Managing Director at Green Seed, I'm running the Belgian operations. Green Seed is an international network of officers who are operating only in food and drinks. What we do is assist companies in the development of their international businesses. Why international business, because business is for example the development of a difficult structure in the market, and our add of value is thus limited. We take companies by the hand in food and drinks, we develop their international business, meaning companies come to us with a product which of course they think is great. Our role is either to tell them that for this and this reason it won't work, sometimes that it's a super great product but that it won't work because people won't understand, because it's too early and so on. Or last think

is that we tell them that instead of doing it like this, do it like that, so we advise them on how to best tackle the market. At the end of the day, companies come to us with these 3 questions; is a market for my product, which one, and what's the best route to market, do I go direct with a trade or do I work with an import, do I go retail, and so on. What we need to know is that when you go to the trade and you won't sell a product, the first reaction they all have (whether it's Carrefour, Colruyt, Delhaize, whatever) is not to buy. Either they have that already, it won't work, and so on, so it's not an easy one knowing that they might have space for only 6000 products and there are many other competitors. So you need to build your case on why they should give space for your product. Secondly, the companies with whom we work, when we do the plan, we will advise them what to do, how we see it, and in 99% of the cases they follow our advice and logic. Now if we say you can go to Delhaize, then they will ask us to put them in contact with Delhaize, to engage with them and to open the door for them, that's the second part. On the third part of what we do, is to help them sell. Once you're on the shelf, then it's all about how to get products back of the shelf to consumers, so you need to do all the marketing and promotion in order for the consumers to pick it up, you need to make the case of why they should buy it. Usually their first reaction will be that they won't buy because that's work for them, they have to create a new supply, so they're trying to find excuses of not doing it. So you as a supplier, are forced to find solutions on why they should buy it, you need to take all their arguments and face them, and one of their argument can be your marketing support. If you're coming with a product where you support and finance for example a 1+1 promotion, or if you say that you'll invest that amount of money into advertising for that product, it will convince them because they have less to do for the product to sell itself, the marketing part need to be included in the sales pitch. So that's what we do, it's a process of different steps, we do that in Belgium and we assist Belgian companies going abroad too. An overall message in marketing would be "focus on your strengths, and don't put energy on the weaknesses of other", don't talk about how bad that product is, talk about how good your product is.

**A:** Thanks, it's a really good summary! Have you seen any growing trends of brands trying to emphasise more and more on their ethical practices?

**P:** Companies do try to profile themselves in one way or another, unfortunately a lot of companies are profiling themselves in regards of ethical practices because it's expected to be

done, but the question is to which extent is it real and tangible. But if you ask me what trends I saw and in which area they are very much active, it's sustainability and environmental issues, which are far more highlighted than animal welfare, as a marketing tool. Yes animal welfare does come into play, but it's not used that much in the communication or in the marketing. What you see in that area is mostly vegetarian and vegan, and they are still a very small group of people, but they do make a lot of noise, they are very exposed and very active. However, the main drivers behind marketing are rather the sustainability, the environment, the CO<sub>2</sub> and so on, because animal welfare is a concern of a smaller percentage of people, and is thus less used for communication. We have been working for 30 years, and it might not be relevant but, with Quorn, which is a meat-free brand. Over those 30 years, the motivation or the baseline of the communication varied; in the early days, they really tried to avoid being seen as a vegetarian option, but more as a kind of alternative protein intake, so they were not pushing people to be vegetarian but just to push them to vary their diet. Then, sometimes, animal welfare came into play. After that, they were very much focused on health, more fibre, and so on. For the last five years, the marketing main topic has moved to sustainability, and the other subjects are still valid, but they now want to highlight the fact that they use less land, less water, less energy, and that it is a contribution to the climate cause, they make sustainability report, they work with universities, all that. Just to show you the shift of how they use communication on the same product. And animal welfare, in all fairness, is a tiny part of it, because there is an evolution too, and more and more things become actually banned, so it feels for me like the common sense has already come into play.

**A:** Yeah that's something that is also coming out of my thesis so far, sustainability has a way bigger voice and can move people more than animal welfare, which is fine too because sustainability is also a really important topic, but yes in the last years, there's a trend where you can see that sustainability has grown more than animal welfare consideration.

**P:** There are some small companies axing their communication around animal welfare, but they're only small companies, the big and more mature ones know that it's more effective to emphasise sustainability and protecting the environment on mainstream marketing. They will probably make statements on it on their website, but they won't fly the animal welfare consideration flag.

**A:** When you have companies of food brands coming to you, do you advise them different marketing strategies based on if they want to emphasise ethical practices or not? Is there a difference if they're a meat-free brand or not?

**P:** There are 2 steps on the marketing side. The first step to get the trade, to get listed and to be on the shelf, that's the first message that needs to come across. After that sustainability comes in the debate, because big companies (Delhaize, Colruyt, ...) have policies that force them to bring more sustainability on the shelf. An example of what we did in the food service industry, with a company called Compass, they have in their policy a sustainability part, and we develop for them a concept of meat-free week, where the restaurant served additional sweet quorn during a week, and we calculated based on the numbers of meals they served, how much litres of water were saved, how much CO<sub>2</sub> was prevented from going in the air, and they would put that on poster and display it in the restaurant as an advertisement for meat-free product or in this case, for sweet quorn. That happened and it was for example a marketing strategy we used for meat-free products that couldn't be used the other way around. Now on the consumer side, we also tell sustainability stories and we emphasise on them, but in the end it's not the reason why you're going to buy that product, you buy the product because it's good, it's tasty and so on. Now it's true that we now have the eco score that can have an impact on the consumers' choices and that reflects sustainability, but that's more of an add-on. The consumers are more interested in emotional values, they buy because of an emotional reflex more than a concrete choice, they're used to it. Some consumers don't even consider food as good or fun or something you like, they buy it as a source of energy.

**A:** So we can say that food supermarket chains like Carrefour, Delhaize or Colruyt are paying more and more attention to including food and beverage respectful of sustainability and operating ethical practices, both because they have demand and want to respond to a growing trend, and because they have sustainability policies in place?

**P:** Exactly, they do that and they all have their own philosophy on the side. Colruyt is about eco score (which is more about sustainability), Delhaize has the nutriscore (which is more health driven), and so on. They have from the headquarters top-down kind of sustainability missions, and they need to find ways to implement that in one way or another, and every

supplier who comes with a product in line with that has an advantage in being on shelf, because it contributes to the sustainability issue of the retail.

**A:** And on the consumer's part, are there communication channels that are proven to be working better for consumers in conveying sustainability of ethical practices?

**P:** Well first of all it depends who's your target group, but what you globally see is a peak on social media. Most of the marketing budget nowadays has shifted towards social media and will be found there, next to traditional media from time to time, but there's still far more active on social media. Because it's closer to the consumers to use Instagram, TikTok, and so on. And the companies wanting to story tell will also often do it on LinkedIn, especially if you're looking to reach a B2B audience, rather than a B2C one.

**A:** Ok, and we know there's a growing demand for ethically sourced and animal-friendly products, how do you anticipate the marketing strategies or the food industry evolving in the near future? Are there any emerging trends or approaches you foresee gaining traction?

**P:** Well it's a bit of a personal opinion here, I don't think it will go away, and might definitely increase a bit, especially sustainability, for animal welfare it will mainly depend from one country to another, as all the countries are far from being on the same level in terms of animal welfare nowadays. The challenge that businesses or brands have is that you can't communicate on too many topics at the same time, so you need to choose your battles. It's like Quorn, it's meat-free, it's healthy, it's sustainable, but you don't want to communicate on all that at the same time or it would lose the consumers, it would be inefficient. Big companies will need to take sufficient actions in that area and afterwards the other will follow, so we need a reactive approach. Now they have to pay attention not to fall into greenwashing, lots of companies are speaking about sustainability, hardly knowing what they're talking about, just because it's trendy and needed. And don't forget about the example of the crisis that might happen again as buying power has been under pressure for the last 18 months, even if people are all about ethical practices, if there's a crisis and they don't have money any more or less of it, they'll just take the cheapest product.

**A:** It makes sense, and speaking of greenwashing, do you believe there's a prevalent issue of "greenwashing" and hidden actions among major food companies? How could consumers discern genuine efforts from marketing tactics?

**P:** Well I don't want to make consumers to look stupid, but there are a lot of people who don't even think about it, and if you go and ask random people to describe sustainability, how many do you think will be able to answer? And that's also why repeating and repeating the message until it comes across is a solution, but I remain convinced that there are a lot of people out there who hardly know what we're talking about, who have heard about it but are barely paying attention. I believe that if you're not into it from the beginning, to what extent will the food brands advertising on you have a real impact?

**A:** Ok and so a last question for me would be do you pay attention to your customers' CSR or do you carry out a form of due diligence to make sure that the marketing you put in place is in line with your customers' actual practices?

**P:** Not really. Of course we're in the business and we know quite well who's operating there, and honestly you feel quite quickly which brands are for real or not. Let's take this example, if I knew that a company is not straight or respectful, with my business ethics and my company's business ethics, I would never work for them. Business ethics is a very big word because it's also about how you treat people, how honest you are, how open you are and so on. If we, at a certain point in time, while giving advice to a company, they say yes ok let's do that, we are then sticking out our neck, telling supermarket, "this a company that we trust and believe in, because they have something interesting to offer". If this is not the case, I'm not going to put my name and my credibility at stake because I'm representing a company or a brand in which I don't believe. For example I probably won't fly the flag of animal welfare, but if I feel there's a company not respecting it, I won't work for them, and that's based on your own business ethics. I mean we work also for the meat industry, where meat is being slaughtered, and we work for Quorn which is vegetarian, and I eat both. But if a company is not correct, and I learn they have a very negative slaughtering process, then I won't work with them. And a lot of mechanisms and systems are in place to prevent, notice and limit things like that, because once you deal with people, there are always people that are not respectful.

**A:** There's also the fact that we see more and more supermarkets like Delhaize, Carrefour, and Colruyt paying more and more attention to CSR and conducting due diligence with their suppliers and the products they're selling, did you observe that too when interacting with them?

**P:** Yes! And that's because at some point, your brand's name is attached to the product you're selling, and if the last thing they want is negative publicity. If something happens they have plenty of plans ready to be put in place to limit the problems, but the best way is still to prevent any problems from happening. However, it will always happen sometimes. The mindset of people on how to treat animals has changed over the last 30/40 years, does that mean people were bad 30 years ago, probably not, they were simply evolving in tune with their time, you'd have to be a contemporary of that time to judge them. So everything is evolving and we find it way more normal now, so that's a process, it takes time of course.

**A:** Yes totally!

**P:** Does it help?

**A:** Oh yes! It definitely helps a lot, thanks again for your time today.

**P:** Sure, if you need anything, you've got my contact, don't hesitate to ask me.

**A:** Sure I will, thanks and have a great day!

**P:** Good luck with your thesis! Bye.