



October 8, 2018

Jack Dorsey, CEO  
Twitter, Inc.  
Via e-mail: [jack@twitter.com](mailto:jack@twitter.com)

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

I am writing on behalf of PETA and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide to commend you for your policy prohibiting language that is used in an ignorant, derogatory way to attempt to debase human beings. This is perhaps a bigger and more socially pressing area of discussion than you may yet realize.

PETA has always worked to urge people to stop using language that is meant to hurt the feelings of others or that denigrates those who happen not to be human. We hope to break the bad habit of calling animals "it" instead of "she" or "he," as if they were objects and *something* rather than *someone*. We are pleased to see that Twitter is working to stop hate speech and the prejudices that accompany it, including sexism, racism, bigotry, and, we hope, speciesism.

Hurling insults such as "pig," "snake," or "dog" is unacceptable on two levels. It is meant to sting—never mind that people who have spent time around pigs know that they are intelligent animals who lead complex social lives and show empathy for other pigs who are distressed. They have rescued drowning humans and alerted their guardians to fires. Snakes are clever, have rich family lives, and prefer to associate with relatives rather than with strangers. If taken many miles away, they can find their way back to their habitat, even if it takes them two years. Dogs have personalities as varied and distinct as those of the humans who adore them. They can understand some 400 words of human languages simply from paying close attention to us. We speak not one word of their language.

Our words matter, and our language can have profound repercussions—for both humans and nonhuman animals alike. Using phrases that trivialize cruelty to animals—such as "I don't have a dog in this fight"—or making animals the target of our derogatory language desensitizes the public and paves the way for cruelty as well as the normalization of violence against animals.

Today, well-read people and many others recognize that animals, including our own species, are thinking, feeling individuals capable of experiencing joy and suffering, love and grief, fear and courage—and our language must evolve to reflect this. We appreciate the conversation that you have started about this important issue.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid E. Newkirk  
President

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

Washington, D.C.  
1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles  
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

Norfolk  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Berkeley  
2855 Telegraph Ave.  
Ste. 301  
Berkeley, CA 94705  
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)