

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

June 8, 2021

Jack Dorsey, CEO  
Twitter

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). We would like to thank you for banning hate speech on Twitter that is dehumanizing on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, disability, disease, and nationality—we certainly welcome this compassionate move. May we now urge you to expand your ethical position to include hateful, derogatory *speciesist* language that harms and degrades not just humans but *all* animals? Acknowledgment of speciesism and speciesist language has been a long time coming, but it is finally here.

This is no small matter: Allowing language that portrays animals as inanimate objects desensitizes the public and paves the way for the complacent acceptance of cruelty to them in all areas of life. Changing this requires an adjustment in the way we think and write, given that most of us have been conditioned since childhood to view certain species as worthy of care and compassion and others as unworthy—all based on arbitrary human preferences.

Words matter, and as our recognition and understanding of social justice evolves, our language must evolve with it. Animals are living, feeling beings, not inanimate objects. Intentionally or not, parents, teachers, the media, and others send children the message that puppies and kittens are “friends,” cows and chickens are “food,” and mice and insects are “pests.” Most children are also taught that humans’ wants, needs, and interests always trump those of any other species. We can—and must—overcome this self-serving and harmful mindset.

All animals deserve equal consideration, regardless of the way humans feel about them. We are all living beings with thoughts, feelings, and desires—and all of us should be spared pain and suffering and being treated as if we exist simply to serve others. We can start implementing this idea right now, by changing the way we speak about and refer to other animals. Rather than calling them “it,” we can call them “he” or “she.” Rather than calling someone a “chicken,” we can say “coward.” Instead of “pig,” we can say

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“glutton” or “repulsive.” And in place of “rat,” we can say “snitch.” By imposing a ban on speciesist language, Twitter can help drive the message that there is no “us” and “them”—we are *all* sentient living beings.

PETA would be happy to work with you on developing this policy. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the matter. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Reiman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy Reiman  
Executive Vice President  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals