



June 16, 2023

Omar Gaye  
President, Northern California Region  
Whole Foods Market

Dear Mr. Gaye:

We hope you enjoy these delicious coconuts, which—unlike coconuts picked by monkeys in Thailand—are cruelty-free. We also hope they remind you that Whole Foods has a choice: You can spare sensitive monkeys a lifetime of suffering by refusing to obtain coconut milk from Thailand, where forced monkey labor in the coconut industry is rampant and well documented—including in the supply chains of coconut milk brands that you currently sell. **I urge you to stop sourcing canned coconut milk from Thailand immediately.**

Multiple PETA Asia investigations have revealed widespread cruelty to monkeys in the Thai coconut industry. Pig-tailed macaques—recently elevated to “endangered” status on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List—are chained, whipped, beaten, and forced to endure a lifetime of labor. Handlers fit them with rigid metal collars, use chains and leashes to choke and control them, and may pull out their canine teeth so that they can’t defend themselves.

Monkeys are forced to climb tall trees in order to pick coconuts. As a result, they’re frequently bitten by ants and stung by hornets, sometimes fatally. They can also sustain broken bones when they fall—or are violently yanked—from trees. When the macaques aren’t laboring, they’re chained on barren patches of dirt or imprisoned in tiny cages, often without access to food or water. Because of their miserable lives of exploitation, they suffer from extreme emotional distress.

Whole Foods’ decision to continue selling Thai coconut milk—including through its own 365 brand—exhibits a willful disregard for animal welfare, especially given that your company already sells coconut milk brands obtained from countries that don’t use monkey labor, including Sri Lanka and the Philippines. **PETA will continue to protest until Whole Foods stops sourcing canned coconut milk from Thailand’s abusive coconut industry.**

Those who shop at organic food stores like yours don’t want to contribute to animal abuse. I hope you’ll take this opportunity to make a positive change for animals and your customers.

Sincerely,

Tracy Reiman  
Executive Vice President

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

Washington  
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

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

Entities

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