



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 12, 2024

Edward Gekus
Owner
Gekus Photography Inc.

Dear Mr. Gekus:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the largest animal rights organization in the world. I'm writing with a suggestion for your photographers to swap the old-fashioned and outdated phrase "Say cheese" for a fresh, fun saying that would really put a smile on their faces: "Say peas!" Let me explain.

"Say cheese" is so last century—it's as old as many of Gen Alpha's grandparents and even great-grandparents, and kids are ready for something new and silly that would actually make them smile. Let's "feed two birds with one scone" by chucking the cheese. The much-needed switch to "Say peas" would be a simple but meaningful change for people both in front of and behind the camera. No kid wants to be reminded of the suffering of cows while not too awkwardly trying to pose for their yearbook photo.

People today are eradicating racist, sexist, homophobic, and ableist phrases from our common language. Words carry immense power, and making even a small change to familiar, common words and phrases can have an enormous impact. Dairy products are nothing to smile about: Mother cows are fiercely protective of their babies, but the dairy industry denies them this important bond, forcibly taking their calves away from them shortly after birth. Dairy farms repeatedly impregnate female cows and exploit them like milking machines until they're no longer able to produce milk.

They say millennials have killed diamonds and golfing, but it might just be Gen Alpha that kills the dairy industry. Gen Alpha is setting the new normal, and that norm increasingly rejects cow's milk, with nearly one-third of the generation now incorporating vegan options like oat milk into their meals several times a week. PETA's popular PETA Kids program, with delicious kid-friendly recipes and activities, has seen increased engagement like never before.

So let's follow Gen Alpha's lead. Will you please update your photography sessions to include animal-friendly wording that truly makes young folks smile?

Sincerely,

Tracy Reiman
Executive Vice President

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