



Mr T Davie,
Director General,
BBC
10.04.21

Dear Mr Davie,

This week has seen the BBC stoop to new depths with their latest attempts to persuade the general public away from eating meat. It is one thing to influence adults, but quite another to attempt to direct children in a way that could be harmful to their health and growth, without providing them with both sides of a story.

The new Blue Peter 'green' badge encourages children to be 'environmentally friendly' by adhering to three tasks; turn off lights, use less plastic and not to eat meat. This absolutely implies that eating meat is not an environmentally acceptable thing to do. Meat - of all origins, but especially red meat - is a valuable source of protein, vitamins and minerals, and is scientifically established to provide nutrients which are essential to development and growth of children. Many of these nutrients that are vital to a healthy food balance cannot be found naturally in any other food source. The Blue Peter remit appears to be to encourage children not to eat meat without giving any positive balanced view on the benefits of meat, either to their health, to local industry or to countryside management, or any negative view on how fruit, vegetables or other plant food - and their corresponding air miles - might impact the environment. It is incomprehensible that this type of programme should offer views which are at best unbalanced, and at worst irresponsible. Whilst we accept that the next generation needs to be more environmentally aware than the previous, it is wholly unacceptable that only one side of a story is presented in this campaign.

Whilst we appreciate that the BBC has supported home schooling during the pandemic with educational programmes, we feel that in this instance you have failed miserably to provide adequate balance.

Blue Peter's attempts to influence the diet of young children away from these valuable food sources is a continuation of personal agendas by some journalists and programme makers within the Beef Bashing Corporation; agendas which are far from the views held by the average television licence payer in the UK, and do not represent the public interest. When you took your position last September, you made a commitment that the BBC would be activists for impartiality where bias has no place, and warned that staff who were partisan campaigners should not be working at the corporation. This is patently not the case. It appears that your organisation has a high degree of journalists with a personal food agenda, and the imbalance in reporting is plain for all to see.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you in person our concerns regarding a lack of impartiality within your environmental reporting and offer some ideas as to how these can be addressed in the future. After all, it is important to be guided by the truth, not a particular agenda.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Shand
Chief Executive Officer,
National Beef Association