



February 25, 2025

Ajay Banga
President, World Bank Group
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Via Electronic Mail, president@worldbank.org

CC: World Bank Group Executive Directors

Dear President Banga,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the World Bank Group's continued financing of industrial livestock farms, which play a major role in the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and pose serious risks to public health worldwide.

A series of alarming reports this week highlight the rapid spread of bird flu across wild and domestic animal populations, raising serious concerns for human health. The nonpartisan Center for Biological Diversity has warned that "factory farming is at the heart of the latest spread of bird flu." A [recent study](#) on bird flu states: "This panzootic did not emerge from nowhere, but rather is the result of 20 years of viral evolution in the ever-expanding global poultry population".

WHO [reported](#) 10 human cases of A(H5N1) infection in Cambodia in 2024, and according to the [CDC](#), more than 60 people in the U.S.—primarily workers at dairy and poultry factory farms—have already been infected.

Industrial-scale factory farms create ideal conditions for the rapid transmission, mutation and amplification of viruses, increasing the likelihood of spillover to other species—including humans. A [report](#) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) states: 'A certain way to reduce risk of zoonosis and emerging infectious diseases globally ... is to reduce dependence on intensive animal-based food production systems'. A [2022 study](#) states: "Large pig and poultry farms are where the genetic reassortment needed to source pandemic influenza strains may most likely occur".

Yet the World Bank Group continues financing industrial animal agriculture—undermining global health security while claiming to prioritize pandemic prevention.

As the World Bank Group prepares to [double](#) its agricultural and agribusiness finance to \$9 billion annually by 2030, we urge you to acknowledge the growing evidence and take immediate action to mitigate this global health threat. Specifically, we call on the Bank Group to:

- **Immediately halt all new financing for pandemic-inducing factory farms.**
- **Redirect investments toward sustainable agricultural systems** that promote “[One Health](#) and One Welfare” and do not rely on concentrated animal feeding operations.
- **Conduct a comprehensive, [independent](#) review** of its financial ties to factory farming and its role in disease transmission.
- **Integrate public health risk assessments** and action plans into agricultural financing to ensure investments do not contribute to future pandemics.

The consequences of inaction are severe—with each new outbreak, the world inches closer to another pandemic. The time to act is now.

We look forward to your response and to engaging in a dialogue on how the Bank can sustainably promote food security while better addressing these potentially fatal concerns.

Sincerely,

Stop Financing Factory Farming (S3F)

World Social Forum on Health and Social Security

Anna Spurek, COO, Green REV Institute

Carolina Galvani, Executive Director, Sinergia Animal

Christina Ledermann, People for Animals Rights, Germany

Crystal Heath, DVM, Executive Director, Our Honor

Daniele Dionisio, Chair, PEAH - Policies for Equitable Access to Health

Dr Jes Hooper, Founder of The Civet Project Foundation - UK

Dr Shireen Kassam, Plant-Based Health Professionals UK

Erich Pica, President, Friends of the Earth U.S.

Kelley D. Wind, JD, Coalition for Healthy School Food

Mark Dia, International Director of Campaign Strategy, World Animal Protection International

Maurice Ouma Odhiambo, Jamaa Resource Initiatives, Kenya

Natalia Greene, President, CEDENMA, Ecuador

Olga Kikou, Director of Advocacy, The European Institute for Animal Law and Policy

Ola Janus, BankTrack, The Netherlands

Paolyel Onencan, Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation

Peter Stevenson OBE, Chief Policy Advisor, Compassion in World Farming

Philip Jakpor, Executive Director, Renevlyn Development Initiative

Stephanie Feldstein, Population and Sustainability Director, Center for Biological Diversity

Articulação Agro é Fogo, Brasil

Oyu Tolgoi Watch Mongolia

Fundación Econexión, Ecuador

Asociación para el rescate y bienestar de los animales (Arba) Perú