

Bad sin tax will ruin farmers

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LIVESTOCK farmers are working with, not against nature and people don't get that, food science and biotechnology expert Professor Frederic Leroy says.

The challenges of the post-truth era are not going away and as a matter of urgency red meat producers need to tell their story, he told the Red Meat Sector conference.

And the message should not be apologetic.

"Yes, we are facing a substantial public health crisis and there is a threat to our planet and life on it.

"The status quo is not acceptable but we need to work with the best evidence.

"We need to stop blaming farmers, livestock and animal source foods and integrate them respectfully as part of the solution instead.

"We must refrain from scapegoating for redemption to divert focus and start dealing more seriously with the actual priorities," Leroy said.

According to a vocal minority the future of food is non-food.

That is being promoted by leading companies such as Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat and, surprisingly, global

“ We need to stop blaming farmers and integrate them respectfully as part of the solution. ”

Professor Frederic Leroy

health organisations also appear intent on eliminating animal-based products from the food chain.

Leroy said systemic change requires social engineering.

The reports advocating a tax on red meat to save the planet have been designed by policy people.

"So don't underestimate their real value. These are high level policy makers."

Livestock and their derived products are being used as a scapegoat.

"Dietary comparisons need to be done on a fair basis and nutrition is changing the picture of true and reliable facts.

"We are facing a global challenge to feed a population with nutrient dense food.

"A similar contextualisation is needed for water, biodiversity and animal welfare. It's not fair to lump them into the calculations."



IT'S NOT ON: Belgian food scientist Professor Frederic Leroy says farmers are being lumbered with an unjustified sin tax.

Unfortunately, the anti-livestock product campaigns gain credibility by being backed by eminent scientists being selective with the facts they use to justify their position.

The EAT-Lancet report has fuelled diet recommendations with the need to reduce carbon emissions to reduce the rate of climate change.

"We have been eating red meat for 2.6 million years. Without red meat we would have died. It's been essential to our ancestors."

Leroy produced figures showing the universal adoption

of veganism would reduce the carbon footprint by only up to 6% while livestock are responsible for 4% of greenhouse gases and transport and energy production for 50%.

"So is a sin tax justified? "Fossil fuels is the elephant in the room here.

"So is animal protein unhealthy food? Is it what we need to combat?"

Red meat consumption is decreasing globally and in New Zealand.

"Don't try and cut corners, you are going down the right

path, stick to it," he advised.

He urged farmers and industry stakeholders to tell their story with passion and pride.

"Show meat is more than a patty.

"The pride and passion is there but it has to be brought to the public.

"Livestock farmers are working with nature, not against it.

"People don't get that and you have to change that, communicate that, get the science that shows that, get the people backing.

"Don't just treat meat as a commodity," Leroy said.