



Paul McCartney takes aim at Colonel Sanders over chicken cruelty

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LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Pop superstar Sir Paul McCartney fired a salvo for chicken rights, accusing fast food giant KFC of condoning cruelty to the birds that end up as take-away meals.

The vegetarian former Beatle published an open letter to the president of the company that the jovial Colonel Sanders made famous, calling on KFC to heed animal rights activists' appeals for it to reduce cruelty to the birds.

"If KFC paid for dogs or cats to be treated the way these unfortunate chickens are treated, they could be charged with cruelty to animals," he said in the letter to KFC chief executive David Novak in the Louisville Courier-Journal, the local paper in KFC's home town in the state of Kentucky.

"These remarkable animals are deserving of at least a little kindness," he said in the letter written on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which this month sued KFC for allegedly disguising "grotesque abuses inflicted upon chickens by suppliers" in its online advertising.

McCartney called on KFC and its parent company Yum! Brands to implement an eight-point PETA plan aimed at improving the treatment of the poultry that he said would "end the most egregious forms of abuse" endured by the birds.

"For example, I would like to see KFC stop allowing chickens to be bred and drugged so that they become so heavy that they cripple under their own weight," the singer wrote.

In addition, he asked Novak to see that suppliers improve their methods of slaughter to eradicate the birds being scalded to death in feather removal tanks and to phase out electric stunning and burning the beaks of birds.

McCartney's public appeal comes after PETA sued KFC and Yum! Brands in Los Angeles over their allegedly deceptive advertising claims over the way their suppliers treat chickens.

"KFC has said from the outset that they will not allow the animals to feel any pain, (but) in fact every moment of these animals' lives is characterized by unmitigated misery," PETA's Bruce Friedrich said earlier.

The animal rights group has also claimed victory in its campaigns against other US fast food outlets aimed at stopping cruelty to animals, including McDonalds, Burger King, and Wendys.