

Oatly, I fear you have scored an environmental own goal...

I can only imagine that the recent Oatly advertising campaign has been a success, aimed squarely, as it surely must have been at Generations Y (millennials) and Z. It would be fascinating to see the impact on their sales statistics and the extent to which they have increased. In the short term there is no doubt it is clever marketing which, on the face of it, thrived on using a divisive tone to promote their own plant-based product by having a pop at the dairy industry.

I'm not fan of any marketing that relies on negative messaging about competitors. But my real concern here is that Oatly has naively polarised a complex debate and risked setting back action urgently needed to mitigate the damage already done to the environment by food production – negatively impacting on the very thing they claim to hold dear.

Anyone with any sense of understanding about food production and the environment it operates in will know that the issue is not black and white. It is not plant vs. animal. Biological systems are all about diversity and balance. If we are to have a more sustainable agricultural (and horticultural) industry, then we need a debate about how we balance animal production alongside cropping.

If we really want to regenerate our soils, reduce carbon, increase biodiversity, we need animal and plant production to be working in harmony with each other – reversing decades of monoculture and embracing the benefits of circular production where livestock benefits plant production, and vice versa.

Oatly's approach risks influencing those influential consumers to believe that the subject of agricultural sustainability is, and can be, a polarised issue. It isn't – it is a biological system which by its very nature is complex and nuanced. So please Oatly, you have created a great brand with a loyal following, so do the right thing and take your responsibilities seriously. If you want to chat it through, I'd be more than happy to take your call.

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