

Cows, Pigs Face Carbon Tax in Denmark

今回は、デンマークが家畜の炭素税を導入するというニュースです。最近では、carbon（炭素）やmethane（メタン）といった単語を耳にする機会が増えましたね。本文では、この税の導入背景や世界への影響について詳しく解説されています。その他にも、climate neutral（気候中立）やclimate change（気候変動） carbon dioxide（二酸化炭素）など、現代の環境問題を語る上で欠かせない単語も登場しますので、覚えておきましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Denmark will tax farm animals such as cattle and pigs for releasing methane, a kind of greenhouse gas, starting in 2030.

Some scientists think that greenhouse gases trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere causing rising temperatures.

The European country is the first in the world to agree to such measures targeting greenhouse gas **emissions**.

Taxation Minister Jeppe Bruus said the aim is to reduce Danish greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent from 1990 levels by 2030.

Danish farmers will be taxed about \$43 per ton of carbon dioxide **equivalent** in 2030. However, because of an income tax **deduction** of 60 percent, the actual cost per ton will start at \$17.30 and increase to \$43 by 2035.

Carbon dioxide usually gets more attention for its part in climate change. But the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says methane traps about 87 times more heat over on a 20-year timescale under some conditions.

Methane is emitted from landfills, oil and natural gas systems and farm animals. Scientists say it has increased quickly since 2020. The United Nations Environment Program says 32 percent of human-caused methane comes from farm animals.

Bruus said, “We will take a big step closer in becoming [climate neutral](#) in 2045.” He added that Denmark “will be the first country in the world to introduce a real CO2 tax on agriculture” and hoped other countries would follow.

New Zealand passed a similar law that was to take effect in 2025. However, the legislation was recently removed after farmers criticized the measure. There was also a change of government following the 2023 election. New Zealand said it would not include agriculture in its emissions trading policy and would look for other ways to reduce methane.

In Denmark, the center-right government reached the tax agreement after meeting with farmers, business representatives, labor organizations, and others.

Denmark’s move comes after months of protests by farmers across Europe against climate change measures. The rules, they say, could drive them out of business.

The Danish Society for Nature Conservation, an environmental group, took part in the talks. It described the tax agreement as “a historic [compromise](#).”

Maria Reumert Gjerding, head of the organization said, “We have succeeded in landing a compromise on a CO2 tax, which lays the groundwork for a restructured food industry — also on the other side of 2030.”

An average cow in Denmark is believed to produce the equivalent of about six metric tons of CO2 yearly. The government of Denmark said that there were nearly 1.5 million cattle in the country in 2022. The Scandinavian country is a large dairy and pork exporter. Denmark also will tax pigs although they produce far less emissions than cows.

The tax is to be approved in the 179-seat parliament. The bill is expected to pass.

I’m Mario Ritter, Jr.

Jan Olsen reported this story for The Associated Press. Hai Do adapted the report for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. emissions (n.) material that is released from a chemical reaction or burning

Mercury emissions are produced from burning coal.

2. equivalent (n.) something of equal or almost equal value

A TOEFL score of 90 or the IELTS equivalent is needed to enter this university.

3. deduction (n.) the lowering of a tax, price, or salary

Running a business can be expensive, but you can take tax deductions to lower the cost.

4. climate neutral (adj.) in a situation where carbon released equals carbon absorbed

Bhutan is the first country to become climate neutral.

5. compromise (n.) a situation in which people give up something in order to agree

I wanted to play basketball, but she wanted to play video games, so we made a compromise and played a basketball video game.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why did Denmark create a methane tax for cattle and pigs?

2. How is methane different from carbon dioxide in its effect on the climate?

3. Maria Reumert Gjerding of the Danish Society for Nature Conservation calls the tax and agreement a “compromise.” In what way is it a compromise?

4. Do you think a tax on methane is an effective way to lower carbon emissions?

5. Without using a tax, what other methods could be used to lower emissions?