



America's Favorite Condiment Museum!

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MUSTARD MUSEUM TO PETA: 'NO THANKS!'

MIDDLETON, WI -- The National Mustard Museum has rejected a proposal from PETA ("People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals") to display a controversial PETA poster. A month ago, PETA sent the Museum a letter offering to help the Museum with its financial difficulties if it would post a PETA ad. The ad depicts a scantily clad woman holding a jar of mustard and an unidentified sausage with the message: "Meat Doesn't Cut the Mustard. Try Veggie Dogs." At the same time it sent the letter to Mustard Museum Curator Barry Levenson, PETA sent copies to the media. The letter did not specify a dollar amount PETA would give to the Museum.

"Mustard certainly goes well with veggie dogs," says Levenson, "but it also is the perfect condiment for hot dogs, bratwursts, and other meat products. The PETA message, as amplified on its website, is one that we believe will offend many of our visitors. "Levenson points out that the PETA website characterizes meat eating as "support[ing] misery, violence, and bloodshed." Levenson adds, "While we respect those who choose a vegetarian diet for all kinds of reasons, including ethical concerns, the National Mustard Museum should not be used as a forum for questioning the morality of those who choose to eat meat. Neither would we allow the presence of an ad by a sausage company that insults vegetarians."

The Mustard Museum's finances came under public scrutiny in early 2012 when it asked for and received a one-year deferral of loan payments from the Dane County Community Development Block Grant Commission. "We have experienced financial stress as a result of many factors, including the general downturn in the economy and significant unforeseen expenses. But the community has responded in a warm and positive way to support us. We're going to make it, and we are not about to insult many of our guests for a fistful of dollars from PETA."

The gift shop at the National Mustard Museum offers visitors the opportunity to taste hundreds of mustards and provides recipe ideas for using mustards, including many vegetarian options. The museum part of the operations, holding the world's largest collection of mustards and mustard memorabilia, split off from the business as a separate nonprofit organization in 2011. "This will relieve a lot of the pressure on the business," says Levenson, "as we raise money from foundations, corporations, and individuals who see our value of a unique food experience here in Wisconsin. We welcome donations from individual PETA members and everyone else, too."

The National Mustard Museum opened in 1992 and will celebrate its twentieth anniversary on April 5. "Meat eaters and vegetarians are always welcome," says Levenson, "and no matter what philosophical differences they may have, mustard can bring them together. The only smear campaigns allowed here are the mustards people smear on their food."

For more information, contact Barry Levenson at 608-831-2222 or curator@mustardmuseum.com

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