

COOKING GREEN

Eating Green: A Win-Win Situation

by Kay Bushnell

The Sierra Club's document, "America's Wasting Away", describes the pollution of water and air from massive amounts of animal manure that are discharged from corporate livestock factories. Out of the sight and awareness of the public, most of the country's meat, eggs, and dairy products are now produced factory-style, in which the animals are severely crowded and stressed. The factory system of raising animals bears little resemblance to the traditional family farm of yesteryear.

Livestock agriculture also contributes to an ongoing loss of wildlife, forests, and topsoil. For a shocking eye-opener about these losses take a look at Lynn Jacob's fascinating book, *Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching* (\$28, Lynn Jacobs, P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, Arizona 85703). Mr. Jacobs documents masterfully in words and photos the environmental damage caused by the livestock ranching industry.

Those who want to take action to stop the devastating consequences of raising animals for food can do so most effectively on a personal level by becoming consumers of plant-based food. Many people discover that the decision to adopt a plant-based diet can lead to a new world of culinary enjoyment. They find that protecting the environment by eating plant foods also rewards them with great personal eating pleasure and good health.

Creamy black-eyed peas often become a favorite food of those who decide to eat more plant based meals. Southerners have long appreciated black-eyed peas and have a tradition of eating them on New Years Day. Like most legumes, black-eyed peas are rich in healthful nutrients, including folacin, potassium, and calcium, and they are an excellent source of dietary fiber. "Savory Black-eyes" is one of my favorite and most versatile dishes. Serve this casserole at a summer barbecue (with veggie burgers and veggie dogs) or as a hearty main dish over steamed rice on cool days. Warmed leftovers can be scooped onto a warmed whole wheat tortilla and rolled up for an easy, nourishing treat.