

GIVE A WOLF A BREAK TODAY... go veggie!

If you eat a veggie burger instead of a hamburger, are you helping a wolf, a polar bear, a wild horse? YES! If you adopt a vegetarian — or, even better — a vegan diet, you give a break to wild animals.

A vegetarian eats no animal flesh — whether fish, fowl or mammal. A vegan eats no animal flesh and no animal products, such as dairy or eggs. The Guidelines accompanying the national Sierra Club policy on wildlife (adopted 1994) recommend “encouraging humans to eat lower on the food chain in order to better conserve habitats and avoid pollution problems.”

When cattle and other animals are raised for food, they often take over land that was once wildlife habitat. Even though crops such as grains or vegetables also take over wildlife habitats, these crops generally need less acreage than “livestock” to provide food for a given number of people. Cycling grain through “livestock” rather than letting people eat the grain directly is wasteful of land and water.

Vegans consume around 2,500 calories of crop production each day, whereas people who eat 30% of their food as animal products require crop production of over 9,000 calories.¹

OUR TAXES PAYING TO KILL WILDLIFE

In the West, much of the land wasted for meat production is public land. Grazing rights are sold at ridiculously low prices to ranchers (some of whom are actually large corporations), thus forcing taxpayers to subsidize their industry. Our taxes are also used to kill wild animals through the federal Wildlife Services at the behest of the ranching industry. Prairie dogs, coyotes, mountain lions, wolves and other animals are trapped, poisoned, burned in their den, and shot. Wild horses and burros are rounded up and sometimes sold for slaughter so they don't compete with cattle and sheep on public land. The Sierra Club wildlife policy states: “The U.S. Animal Damage Control Program (Ed. note: now Wildlife Services) should be terminated.”

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Grazing of cattle is part of the reason why land in the Southwest is hosting invasive plant species, which are pushing out native plants. A spokeswoman for Forest Guardians, an organization which is working to eradicate noxious plants and restore natives, says that basic causes need to be looked at. “On our projects, the first thing we do is kick out the cows...”²

FACTORY FARMS

But the West isn't the only problem area. Throughout the U.S., there are “factory farms,” where hogs, chickens, dairy cows and other animals are jammed into huge buildings. Typically, the animals never feel sun, breathe fresh air or move outside their tiny cages or stalls. It's not unusual for an operation to house 100,000 chickens or 12,000 hogs. The largest dairy operation in NYS as of 2005 housed 7500 cows and calves.

From a brochure produced by Linda A. DeStefano, Chair, Biodiversity/Vegetarian Outreach Committee of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club. (315) 488-2140 (9 a.m. - 10:45 p.m.) or biodiversityveg@newyork.sierraclub.org

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These operations pollute our water and soil with manure, pesticides and antibiotics — and foul our air with the stench from manure being stored in “lagoons” or spread on fields.

NEW YORK'S BLACK RIVER CONTAMINATED WITH MANURE

An example of death to wildlife from these factory farms comes from NYS. In August 2005 the Marks Dairy (with more than 5,000 cows) spilled 3 million gallons of liquid manure into the Black River, killing up to 375,000 fish. The Black River is also a source of drinking water for Watertown.³

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FISH GONE?

Modern methods of commercial fishing inflict great damage on the ocean and its inhabitants. The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that 70% of the world's commercial fish stocks are fully exploited, overfished or collapsed. Fishers use rapacious techniques, such as sonar, driftnets, longlines, dredgers and leviathan ships. In the case of longlining, 4.5 million hooks are launched daily. A third of the world's harvested fish go to feed “livestock” or farmed fish. Ninety percent of the top predator fish are gone.⁴

As the number of fish diminishes, sea mammals who depend on fish to survive are in trouble. Sometimes seals and other marine mammals are even shot by fishers in order to increase their own take of fish.

FISH FARMS ARE NOT A SOLUTION

As noted above, many wild fish are killed to feed “livestock” and farmed fish, adding to the burden of fish populations to replenish themselves. In addition, keeping fish in crowded pens causes

stress, which makes outbreaks of disease more likely, leading to the use of antibiotics. Oxygen depletion and the production of nitrogen can cause excessive plankton blooms, and accumulations of fecal matter and uneaten feed can smother the seabed. Sometimes farmed fish escape and spread disease to wild fish, leading to the chemical dosing of waterways.⁵

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

As the planet warms, largely as a result of human overpopulation and over-exploitation of fossil fuels and other resources, all of us — including wild animals — are in danger. A vivid image brings this home: polar bears stranded on melting ice, forced to swim long distances to find solid footing from which to hunt.

Animal agriculture plays a large role in creating the greenhouse gases which cause global warming. "Given the amount of energy consumed raising, shipping and selling livestock, a 16-oz. T-bone is like a Hummer on a plate."⁶

MORE DAMAGE THAN TRANSPORTATION

Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options is a 2006 report from the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization. It concludes that animal agriculture is one of the top two or three contributors to the most serious environmental problems at every scale from local to global. The authors suggest it should be a major policy focus when dealing with land degradation, climate change, air and water pollution, water shortage and loss of biodiversity. While the impact is massive, the potential for making changes and reducing the problems is also massive. The raising of "livestock" and the production of feed for those animals are responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions measured in carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent. This is a higher share than transportation.

COWS: BIG BURPERS

Al Gore's website, www.climatecrisis.org, under "What You Can Do," says: "Eat less meat. Methane is the second most important greenhouse gas and cows are one of the greatest methane emitters. Their grassy diet and multiple stomachs cause them to produce methane, which they exhale with every breath."

COMPARISON OF DIETS

According to a study by researchers from the U. of Chicago, the average U.S. diet requires the production per year of an extra 1 1/2 tons of CO₂ equivalent, in the form of actual CO₂ as well as methane and other greenhouse gases, compared to a vegan diet.⁷

Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, says "A plant-based diet requires roughly one-fourth as much energy as a diet rich in red meat. Shifting from a diet rich in red meat to a plant-based diet cuts greenhouse gas emissions as much as shifting from a Suburban SUV to a Prius."⁸

JOHN MUIR WEIGHS IN

John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club more than 100 years ago, said "Surely a better time must be drawing nigh when God-like beings will become truly humane and learn to put their animal fellow mortals in their hearts instead of on their backs or in their stomachs."⁹

MAKING CHANGES

A spokesman for the Food Policy Research Institute says he foresees "a stronger public relations campaign in the reduction of meat consumption — one like that around cigarettes — emphasizing personal health, compassion for animals, and doing good for the poor and the planet."¹⁰

SO WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

A healthy vegan diet includes grains, beans, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and all the foods which can be made from them (pasta, soups, burgers, desserts, salads, etc.). Vegans are more likely to avoid heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer than people who eat a typical U.S. diet. So consider moving toward a plant-based diet (perhaps starting with one day a week without animal flesh or animal products) for these reasons:

1. your health
2. providing more grain to hungry people instead of feeding it to "livestock"
3. leaving habitat for wild animals
4. reducing soil, water and air pollution
5. reducing global climate change
6. saving animals used for food from a miserable life and terrifying death

RESOURCES

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

5100 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Ste. 400
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 686-2210
pcrm.org
email: pcrm@pcrm.org
One of their websites is NutritionMD.org. You can access a meal planner, along with nutrient analyses, recipes and a shopping list. You can receive free weekly recipes and a copy of their "Vegetarian Starter Kit" in English or Spanish.

Vegpledge, Earthsave International

P.O. Box 96
NY, NY 10108
(800) 362-3648
vegpledge.com
Help in making the transition to a vegetarian or vegan diet.

"101 Reasons I'm a Vegetarian" brochure

2007 edition. \$3 for first copy postage paid or FREE for download on website. Viva Veggie Society
P.O. Box 294
Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012-0005
vivavegie.org/vv101/ccorders
or download the PDF for FREE:
<http://www.vivavegie.org/vv101/2007ednew>

North American Vegetarian Society

P.O. Box 72
Dolgeville, NY 13329
(518) 568-7970
navs-online.org
Produces *Vegetarian Voice* magazine, organizes vegetarian gatherings, loans videos, and more.

Food Studies Institute

60 Cayuga St.
Trumansburg, NY 14886
(607) 387-6884
foodstudies.org
The institute promotes the long-term health and education of children through curriculum development, multi-media publishing, teacher training and consulting on the implementation of a unique curriculum. The

food-based curriculum integrates academic disciplines with experiential learning about food, nutrition, culture and the arts. Helps schools incorporate low fat, high fiber entrees into school meals.

New York Coalition for Healthy School Food

(607) 272-1154 (office)
(631) 525-3650 (cell)
healthyschoolfood.org
email: amie@healthyschoolfood.org
Works through the legislative process to encourage healthy school food.

The Mail Order Catalog for Healthy Eating

P.O. Box 180
Summertown, TN 38483
(800) 695-2241
Provides vegetarian and vegan cookbooks and ships food.

The Wasting of Rural NYS: Factory Farms and Public Health

29 pages. FREE.
Produced by Citizens' Environmental Coalition and the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club.
Contact Farm and Food Committee Chairperson Erin Riddle:
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(607) 372-5503

Western Turf Wars: The Politics of Public Lands Ranching

396 pages. 2007. \$30 + \$4 shipping & handling.
(NYS residents add 8% sales tax)
Order at westernturf wars.com or Biome Books
38 Oliver St.
Binghamton, NY 13904
(607) 330-0351
email: biomebooks@yahoo.com
Government employees and grassroots conservationists reveal the government's complicity in the ranching industry's destruction of our public lands.

Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food

Gene Baur. \$25. 2008. Available in book stores or at genebaur.org.

1. *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating* - Revised, 2001

2. *Forest Magazine*, Winter, 2008, p. 18

3. Aug. 4, 2006 *Post-Standard*, Syracuse

4. "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian," 2007 edition

5. *Sierra* magazine, Nov./Dec. 1994, pp. 65, 73

6. *Global Warming*, Time, Inc. Specials, 2007, p. 109

7. April 2006, *Earth Interactions* journal, geosci.uchicago.edu/~gidon/papers/nutri/nutri3.pdf

8. Feb. 2008 letter to potential members

9. *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* by John Muir, quoted in the leaflet "John Muir on Animals and Their Treatment" by Mike Hudak.

10. "Rethinking the Meat-Guzzler," *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 2008, nytimes.com/2008/01/27/weekinreview/27bitman.html