

leather, or wool; avoid participating in cruel entertainment such as rodeos and animal circuses; and avoid buying products that were tested on animals. Rescuing injured wildlife and adopting homeless animals instead of buying them from breeders or pet shops also saves lives.

Going vegan is good for the environment, too. Waste from farmed animals pollutes the land and water. Most grain grown in the U.S. is fed to these animals instead of to people. The huge amount of land, water, fertilizer, and fuel used to raise these animals displaces wildlife, puts a strain on water supplies, and makes us more dependent on oil. The process of turning animals into food contributes to global warming more than all forms of transportation combined, according to “Livestock’s Long Shadow,” a recent U.N. report. In addition, the crowded, stressful conditions in most animal farms spread disease that can lead to epidemics.

SIMPLE STARTING STEPS FOR VEGAN DIETS

A vegan diet can be an incredible boost to your health, but learn about vegan nutrition as you make the transition; soda and chips, while vegan, will not keep you healthy (see www.veganhealth.org for a dietitian’s guide to vegan health). Some of your favorite foods may already be vegan or can easily be made vegan – for example, Middle Eastern falafel and hummus, Mexican bean burritos, Asian stir fries, Indian curries, and so on. If you miss the taste of meat, dairy, or eggs, don’t worry – delicious cruelty-free substitutes are becoming increasingly available at grocery stores. And you can make amazing dishes from protein-rich tofu, tempeh, and seitan.

There are lots of vegan cookbooks, and searching online for vegan recipes is simple. Or check out web sites such as www.vegweb.com, with over 15,000 vegan recipes.

And then there are the desserts! Vegan baking is easy and fun. Just remember to eat healthy foods along with your cupcakes!

Compassion for Animals is an all-volunteer 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Visit us at <http://www.compassion4animals.org/>.



www.Compassion4Animals.org

TAKING STEPS TO GOING VEGAN

Many of us love our pets, who share our lives and delight us with their affection and joy.

We were brought up to believe that “food” animals such as cows, chickens, pigs, and turkeys are different. “Food” animals, we were told, are so stupid they don’t care whether they live or die.

But the reality is, these animals have intelligence, strong emotions, strong family ties, strong instincts – and a strong will to live. They feel happiness, fear, and pain. When the meat industry denies them their natural, complex lives and forces them to exist in conditions so restrictive that they are barely able to move or breathe, their suffering is unbearable.

Don’t take our word for it. Please search online for factory farming and animal slaughter videos. Almost any video (such as www.meatvideo.com) will do; shocking cruelty is legal and is the norm, not the exception, in the meat industry. Just once, don’t turn away. Watch and listen to the animals. Their cries and struggles will tell you what they are feeling.

Many of us conclude that the only real way to avoid contributing to the suffering of these animals is to stop eating them, and that’s why we become vegetarians.

But why avoid dairy and eggs? Aren’t these taken from animals without hurting them? Unfortunately, no. These animals suffer just as much as the ones killed for meat. So although going vegetarian is a great way to cut down on animal suffering, it leaves behind these animals, who also need our help.

CRUELTY IN DAIRY

Standard practices include:

- ▶ Taking baby calves from their mothers when they're as young as a few hours old. The mothers call out for them for days. (Cows are kept continuously pregnant because they must bear young to produce milk.)
- ▶ Manipulating cows, through breeding and artificial insemination, to produce much more milk than normal, which causes discomfort and increases the risk of painful udder infections.
- ▶ Killing cows when they're five years old. Their normal lifespan is 20-25 years.
- ▶ Confining calves to incredibly cramped crates for their entire short lives, feeding them an iron-deficient diet, and killing them at about 20 weeks of age to sell as veal.

Most dairy cows today do not even graze on grass; they live on mud or in barns, chained. On organic dairy farms, cows can suffer even more because when they get painful infections, they might not receive antibiotics. When allowed to live naturally, cows live in herds with their families, frequently grooming and licking each other.



CRUELTY IN EGGS

- ▶ Male chicks aren't used for food, so they're ground up alive in machines or thrown in plastic garbage bags to suffocate.
- ▶ Most eggs come from hens in cages so small that each bird must spend her whole life in a space **about 2/3 the size of this sheet of paper!** Most "free range" and "cage-free" operations also intensively confine animals—just in crowded barns instead of cages.
- ▶ To prevent hens from pecking each other excessively—which happens because of the extremely crowded and stressful conditions—part of each hen's beak is cut off without anesthesia, causing great pain and difficulty eating.
- ▶ Hens are killed at 18-24 months old, when they can no longer lay as many eggs.

When they are free, chickens enjoy the same activities as other birds: dust-bathing, sunbathing, exploring, roosting in trees, and forming close long-term friendships.



Adopting a vegan diet means you stop eating all animal products (and fish are animals, too). But veganism isn't just about food; it's about helping animals whenever you can. Animals' lives are saved when people avoid using fur,