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Vegan —OUTREACH

WORKING TO END CRUELTY TO ANIMALS



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Vegan Outreach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the suffering of farmed animals by promoting informed, ethical eating.

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On Living with Compassion

What we choose to eat makes a powerful statement about our ethics and our view of the world – about our very humanity. By not buying meat, eggs, and dairy products, we withdraw our support from cruelty to animals, undertake an economic boycott of factory farms, and support the production of cruelty-free foods.

Choosing to act with compassion is a potent public affirmation of our character. From children and athletes to celebrities and grandparents, compassionate living is spreading – and easier than ever! Today, even small-town grocery stores can feature a variety of [veggie burgers](#), [dogs](#), [deli slices](#), [plant-based milks](#), [nondairy desserts](#) – a bounty unimaginable only a decade or two ago!

“Cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘Is it politic?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘Is it popular?’ But conscience asks the question, ‘Is it right?’

“And there comes a point when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Opposing Cruelty: A Results-Based Approach

When you first discover the reality of modern animal agriculture, avoiding all products from factory farms might seem too big a change. But don't be overwhelmed – just take small steps. For example, you could eliminate meat from certain meals or on certain days. As you get used to eating less meat and find alternatives you enjoy, it may become easier to eliminate meat altogether.

At some point, you might decide to try to root out every product associated with modern animal agriculture. But some type of connection can be found everywhere if one looks hard enough. Some examples are organic foods (manure used as fertilizer), bicycles (animal fat used in the vulcanization of tires), books (hooves and bones in binding glue), roads and buildings (animal products used in curing concrete), and even water (bone char used for filtration by some water treatment plants).

Ultimately, living with compassion means striving to maximize the good we accomplish, not following a [set of rules](#) or trying to fit a certain label. From eating less meat to being vegan, our actions are only a means to an end: decreasing suffering.

For this reason, we believe that the consequences of our actions should guide our choices. Oftentimes, there's more to consider than whether or not an item is completely animal-free. For example, it can be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming to shun every minor or hidden animal-derived ingredient. More importantly, avoiding an ever-increasing list of these ingredients can make us appear obsessive and lead others to believe that compassionate living is impossible. This defeats our purpose: ending cruelty to animals!

Our desire to oppose and help end cruelty to animals can help guide our choices, as well as provide a simple, easy-to-understand explanation of our actions. The question isn't, “Is this vegan?” but, “What is best for preventing suffering?”

Dealing with Others

When you share your new discoveries and ideas, some friends and family members may not only show resistance. but might even react with mockery or anger. In order to prevent suffering,

however, we must let the compassion we feel for animals shine through the pain and anger we feel about what happens to them in factory farms and industrial slaughterhouses. Unless others can respect us – as opposed to finding us cold and judgmental – they will have little interest in taking steps to end cruelty to animals.

Instead of expecting others to change immediately, we need to be understanding, giving everyone time to consider the realities of factory farms on their own time and within their unique situations. Burning bridges with anger only serves to create enemies and feed the stereotype that vegans are self-righteous.

Although it may be tempting to get into arguments about our prehistoric ancestors' diet, the simplest statement can be the most powerful: "I know that I don't want to suffer. Therefore, I don't want to cause others to suffer."

As long as we remain respectful, our positive example and the information we provide will ultimately be the best voice for the animals.

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