

IVU Online News –September 2011

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The Evolution of Veg Societies

IVU Manager John Davis does a weekly blog on the VegSource website. In a recent blog post, John muses on the changes in the nature of veg activist organisations:

www.vegsource.com/john-davis/vegan-wolves.html

Here are two excerpts. What do you think? What are your experiences?

The end of the formal societies has come very rapidly. In the 1990s the Vegetarian Society UK had about 100 affiliated groups, almost all called 'society' – a quick survey of the current 106 shows that 100 of them are now just informal vegetarians / vegans / veggies / veg or some combination of those. Only 6 actual local societies remain. ...

The change is due to the internet of course – local groups mostly needed formal structures to look after the money they had to collect to print and post newsletters. Now everything is done on websites and email, so no costs involved, and no formal society needed.



Kill Counter

There are fewer than 7 billion human animals on the planet Earth, but every year, by one seemingly reasonable estimate, we kill 150 billion nonhuman land and marine animals for food. ADAPTT (Animals Deserve Absolute Protection Today and Tomorrow) offers a 'kill counter' to capture the staggering number of the various types of nonhuman animals dying: www.adaptt.org/killcounter.html



You can also learn about the methodology behind the counter, the counter's origins and how you can put the counter on your own website, blog, etc.



Another Interview with the Incredible Dixie

Yes, IVU Online News did have a March, 2011 interview with IVU International Council member, Dixie Mahy, president of the San Francisco Vegetarian Society, which is hosting the 2012 IVU World Vegetarian Congress, but we saw another great interview with her and some photos, and we knew we had to show them to you. After all, how many people do you know who not only eat green but also have green hair? (and look like that at 77??)

Below is an excerpt. Read the whole thing at www.openexchange.org/features/JAS11/mahy.html

Dixie mentions three "Zen" turning points in her life, three lessons that taught her the meaning of compassion and "universal love." The first was as a five-year-old, when she went fishing with her father and was horrified by the dying gasps of a hooked fish. The second was as a young dance student, when a teacher's harsh treatment of a fellow student made her rethink the value of perfect form over peace-of-mind. The third was after Dixie herself became a teacher, realizing that compassion was more important than knowledge or pride. In Dixie's own words, "When I stopped being so concerned about 'who am I?' and focused on caring about others—animal and human—I found who I was."



Food for Life Global Documentary

Food for Life Global - www.ffl.org - is the world's largest vegetarian food relief organisation. 'AmmA Means Mother' - www.vimeo.com/27041560 - is a 50 minute documentary of the touching story of Food for Life Global and the amazing warm-hearted lady, Nandarani Devi, who runs a children's home in Sri Lanka.

The documentary is narrated by Academy Award-winner F. Murray Abraham, with sound recording by performance artist Laurie Anderson, and music by The Smithereens, Nick Lowe, Trini Lopez, Sun Palace, Astrud Gilberto, and the Chintanami Band. A 30min version is available at www.vimeo.com/17274886

Doing a Veg Survey

IVU member, Vegetarian Society UK, has put together a 50-item survey of the practices, interests and concerns of vegetarians and others, such as meat reducers: www.vegsoc.org/survey
Although several of the survey items have a UK flavour, the survey is open to all, regardless of where you live, until 3 Sep of this year. For people from other countries, the survey might be a useful way to think about whether to do something similar in your own country.





FAO Wants Your Input on Food Security

Our friends at EVU (European Vegetarian Union) are organizing a campaign to influence FAO (The UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation). Currently, FAO is gathering inputs for the preparation of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), a document being developed to improve coordination and support global, regional and country-led actions to prevent future food crises, eliminate hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all.

The consultation will be open until 15 Oct 2011 and the results of the online consultation will be presented soon after. The discussion will take place in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese. Those interested in participating in the consultation can post contributions directly on the web site km.fao.org/fsn/cfs or send an email to fsn-moderator@fao.org

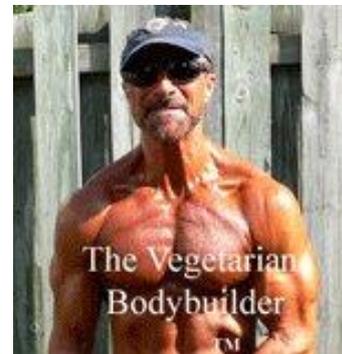
Is the Health Argument Strong

This is from Vegan Outreach:

www.veganoutreach.org/articles/healthargument.html To summarize, they believe that using the health argument to promote veg is not an effective strategy. Here are excerpts. Rebuttals are welcome.

Be honest with yourself

Just cutting animal products out of your diet will not make you healthier. As pointed out above, vegans do not have better mortality rates than nonvegans.² For this reason, I believe it is imperative that advocates move beyond the veg mythology. It is entirely possible that, with proper understanding and planning, a vegan diet can be as healthy as any other. But a thorough understanding of [all aspects of vegan nutrition](#), especially nutrients that need attention, is necessary.



Be honest with others

A first duty of advocates is knowledge. We must be knowledgeable in order to set a good example, and to offer honest information to potential new vegans. While it *feels* better to say, "Go vegan and you'll lose weight, have more energy, and never get cancer or suffer from heart disease!" this is not only untrue (and comes across as propaganda to the skeptical), but it sets up potential vegetarians for failure. People who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet to feel healthier will resume consuming animal products if they feel no improvement. Because they do not necessarily have their hearts into being vegetarian or vegan, they often will not experiment with it long enough to find a way of eating that makes them feel healthy. This can have far-reaching, negative effects, as they go on to tell others how unhealthy they felt when they were vegetarian or vegan.

Even those who are motivated for stronger reasons are likely to revert if their health suffers. Those who continue with a poorly planned, unhealthy vegetarian diet set an example likely to turn off anyone interested. (Many veg advocates, whose information has come from self-selecting veg groups, have little or no experience with "failed" vegetarians. Unfortunately, during our 17 years of activism, we have encountered a disheartening number of people claiming "[I was vegetarian for a while, but...](#)")



Argument #6: Being Veg Is Too Expensive

Last year, we started a series based on an article from the Care2 website -

www.care2.com/causes/.../10_Arguments_Against_A_Vegan_Lifestyle - that lists responses to frequently heard arguments against being vegetarian. Below is the sixth argument with an abridged version of Care2's response. Please send additional or alternative responses for publication in our next issue. Thanks. By the way, PETA also has a list of responses at www.peta.org/living/.../even-more-things-meat-eaters-say

It is true that if you buy pre-prepared convenience foods and luxury foods, you can spend a large amount of money each month on plant based food. But this is certainly not limited to a plant based lifestyle. If you compare the price of meat and other animal products against the price of vegetables, fruits and grains, you will find that vegetables and grains will routinely be more affordable. Some countries subsidise the cost of meat. For example, it is estimated if it weren't for government subsidies to the meat and dairy industries, a pound of beef would cost [\\$815](#) in the US. Instead, governments should subsidise production of healthy, plant based foods.

Rebuttal to Last Month's Care 2 Response

In our August issue, IVU Online News carried Care 2's response to the anti-veg argument that "If it's wrong to kill animals, should tigers and other predators stop eating other animals too?" A reader replied.



I read the answer to the above question, and it was so unsatisfactory. Part of the problem is that a large proportion of vegetarians and vegans follow this way of life in the belief that they are saving animals, and that animals have rights.

Look at the ethical argument in another way - i.e., that no animals (including women, children, men, the disabled, etc.) have rights; but that the lives of human beings are as pointless as those of cabbages, unless we strive to become more civilized, in the sense of being more compassionate, empathetic, sympathetic, understanding, knowledgeable and wiser. The only rights that any of us have are those that are granted to us by others - and, believe it or not, a tiger, polar bear, blood-sucking insect or psychopathic human will not grant us any rights. The only beings that will grant us rights are human beings with some degree of civilized ethical belief, and the greater degree of civilization, the more rights we will be granted. There are no 'rights' involved at all. It is a question of responsibilities as civilized beings.

As humans (individuals and communities) have become more civilized (i.e. wiser), we have treated others, both human and animal, with more compassion and respect. Hence, it is irrelevant what wild animals do to each other. After all, almost all carnivorous creatures also go in for cannibalism and infanticide. Male tigers, for example, will kill offspring of a female if they consider the offspring to be from another male. Some primitive human societies behaved in a similar way, but as we have progressed, so we have treated others with more respect and compassion - and this more civilized treatment has been extended to more and more 'inferior' beings from those in the next village, foreigners, 'savages', women, children, the disabled, pet animals, farm animals, etc. Human societies still have a long way to go, but most nations are making some progress, even if it is very slow. Meanwhile, some individuals are far more civilized than others

Brian Burnett, Chester & Clwyd Vegetarians and Vegans, UK



Moral Progress and Animal Welfare

For more than 25 years, one of the strongest voices for nonhuman animals has been that of philosopher Peter Singer (pictured here). Here, Professor Singer compiles some hopeful news, indicating that we humans may indeed be making progress in terms of our treatment of our fellow animals.

www.salem-news.com/articles/july192011/animal-morals-ps.php

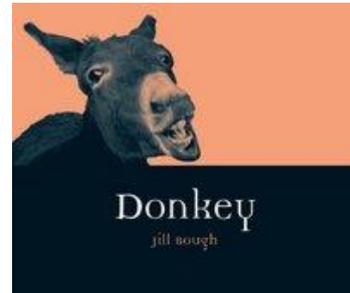
What about in your area? Are there similar signs of progress, even if not in regard to meat eating? For instance, what about laws against animal tracking or changes in regard to zoos and circuses? Here is an example from the article:

Chinese zoos have drawn crowds by staging animal spectacles, and by allowing members of the public to buy live chickens, goats, and horses in order to watch them being pulled apart by lions, tigers, and other big cats. Now the Chinese government has forbidden state-owned zoos from taking part in such cruelty.

Book News

Review of *Donkey* by Jill Bough, Reaktion Books, 200pp, pbk, 99 illustrations, 68 in colour; ISBN 978 1 86189 803 6, £9-99

If the domestic dog hadn't claimed the title already you could make a strong case for donkeys, who are vegetarians, to be awarded the accolade "man's best friend". Australian scholar Jill Bough does just that in *Donkey*, the latest title in Reaktion Books' *Animal* series. Dr Bough also contributed an article about donkeys to the *Encyclopaedia of Animal Rights and Welfare* (2009),



There are an estimated 41 million donkeys in the world today, the vast majority in Asia, Africa and South and Central America (where donkeys are also known as *burros*). Although they remain the main form of transport in many parts of the developing world, donkey populations are continually diminishing as motorised transport becomes more widespread.

Donkeys were first domesticated in North Africa around 4000 BC (the progenitor African wild ass is now a critically endangered species) where they were originally bred for meat and milk. Donkey milk is the closest in composition to human milk of all the mammals and is claimed to have therapeutic and cosmetic properties - Cleopatra kept a stable of 300 jennies (female donkeys) simply in order to bathe in their milk! However, donkeys were most valued as draught animals, a role for which both donkeys and mules - the sterile offspring of a male donkey (jack) and female horse (mare) - are ideally suited. Donkeys can carry up to two-thirds of their body weight and are reported to have the longest working life of all draught animals.

Donkey is concise, informative and profusely illustrated. Within its pages Jill Bough describes the origins and natural history of donkeys, their intelligence, their domestication in the old and new worlds and use in warfare, their place in religion and mythology, and their representation in art and literature. You certainly won't be making an ass of yourself if you buy a copy.

Paul Appleby, August 2011



The Evolution of Veg Congresses & Fests

The IVU International Council is currently discussing the future of the IVU World Vegetarian Congress and other international events that IVU has had some involvement with. To help us understand some of the history of such events as well as current trends, IVU Manager, John Davis, did some digging. Of particular interest may be what John found about the popularity of vegfests

(the photo shows some of the crowd at the VegFest in Washington, DC):

www.vegsource.com/john-davis/the-vegfest-phenomena.html

Efforts Grow on Behalf of Spanish Activists

In our last issue, *IVU Online News* reported on the arrest by Spanish police of twelve animal activists from the organisations Igualdad Animal/Animal Equality and Equanimal. The activists were accused of offences against the environment, public disorder and conspiracy. The campaign to win their freedom continues to grow. For instance, the musician Moby, second from the left in the accompanying photo, has lent his support.



Here's some of what Moby said: "Animals are sentient creatures with their own wills, and it seems wrong to force our will onto another creature just because we're able to". For more information and to lend your support:

thespanish12.wordpress.com



International Vegetarian Week – 1-7 October, 2011, or around those days

www.vegetarianweek.org

VegSource Healthy Lifestyle Expo 2011 - 14-16 October, 2011, Los Angeles, USA - www.HealthyLifestyleExpo.com

3rd China Xiamen Veg Food Fair and International Forum – 20-23 October, 2011 – www.vffair.com

5th Asian Vegetarian Congress – 8-9 November, 2011, Hangzhou, China - www.5avu.com

2012 IVU World Vegetarian Congress – 5-11 October, 2012, San Francisco (USA) - www.ivu.org/congress/2012

Welcome to Organisations That Have Recently Registered with IVU

Bangladesh

ISKON, Dhaka - www.iskconbd.org

Canada

Brenda Davis, RD - www.brendadavisrd.com

Spain

Ixaya Natural Health Trainers - www.ixaya.es

USA

Green Menu - www.greenmenu.org

Yoga Retreats - featheredpipe.com

Other Online Sources of Veg News

In addition to *IVU Online News*, there are many other places to go online for general veg-related news, rather than news mostly about one country or one organisation. Here are some.

1. Dawn Watch - www.dawnwatch.com/alerts.htm
2. European Vegetarian Union - www.evana.org
3. Farmed Animal Net - www.farmedanimal.net
4. Vegan Outreach - www.veganoutreach.org/enewsletter
5. VegE-News - www.vege-news.com
6. VegNews - www.vegnews.com
7. VegSource - www.vegsource.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi
8. AnimalConcerns.org doesn't have a newsletter, but they post stories daily at www.animalconcerns.org/categories.html?do=shownews
9. Vegan.com - www.vegan.com
10. IVU-Veg-News E-Mail List - www.ivu.org/news/veg-news
11. Care2 - www.care2.com
12. Vegetarianism in the News - www.vegsoc.org/page.aspx?pid=928



Please Send News to IVU Online News

[Dear Veg Activist](#)

Please use this newsletter as a way to share your knowledge, ideas and experiences with fellow veg activists.

[Thx.](#) --[george](#) jacobs - george@vegetarian-society.org



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