

IVU Online News – December 2010

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New International Council Member from Togo

Erick Mokafo-Brhom Yeleneke is a new member of the IVU International Council. He is also President of Vegan Students Association, President of Vegetarian Society of Togo and Coordinator of the African League for the Rights of Human and Non-Human Living Beings. Erick kindly agreed to be interviewed for 'IVU Online News'.



1. How did you become a vegetarian?

I became a vegetarian because in 1998, I was having problems digesting my food, and eating vegetarian food helped to solve that problem. I also learned that it was good for the IQ, and since I was a high school student, this was very important to me. Later, I met a yogi from Ghana in 2000, Godson Ajaworlu, who gave me a list of thirty meat-related diseases. On the other hand, he also gave me a list of plant sources of protein, such as beans (all types), corn and other grains. In 2002, I joined a group where all were vegetarians (milk and butter were the animal products they used). By December 2009, we all went vegan. I am 33 years old now.

2. How did you become a leader of a vegetarian organization?

In 2008, the leader of the Vegan Students Association of Togo went to China to pursue his doctoral studies in Geophysics. Thus, he had to resign. When he resigned, I ran for the presidency and was elected. And since then, I have been happy to urge, support, motivate and encourage the members of my association to spread veganism and vegetarianism in Togo.

3. Has that situation with vegetarianism in Togo been changing?

In 2004, a man came in the media in Togo. His name is Elmoncio Godson, and he preached vegetarianism and spirituality. He preached the scientific benefits of a vegan diet and the spiritual advantages that people could get. He was so eloquent that he convinced many people through his TV shows.

In 2008, we joined the hard work of other groups in the field. But our style is different. At the university, we talk about veganism for the good functioning of our body and share the other benefits of a vegan diet with our fellow students. For example, we organize cooking demonstrations where people really touch and taste the vegetarian dishes. Then, we show them where to buy products and assist them in their homes in case of need. We have also gone on national TV to share the benefits of a vegan diet, including the question of meat production and climate change.

4. How does your organisation seek to change people's diets?

By assisting them closely, by taking people seriously, by cooking vegetarian or vegan dishes with them and telling them our experiences. The much raised question is the proteins and vitamins—where to find them in plant foods? We gladly respond by giving in detail the vegetables and other vegetarian sources via which people can meet their nutritional needs. By giving people answers to their questions and solutions for their problems, our support is appreciated. Plus, we ourselves are healthy and, thereby, influence people by our example.

5. What organisations – governmental, NGOs, corporates, and international organisations - do you work with?

Here are some examples. We work with GRETO (Reflection Group of Ecologists of Togo), the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Resources, and the staff of University of Lome, Togo. On the international level, we work with the IVU, the IFA (International Funds for Africa), EVA (Ethiopian Vegetarian Association), Wisconsin Vegetarian Society, ETOILE CALL SHOP (Cote d'Ivoire) and many more.

6. How did you hear about IVU?

I first heard of IVU in Ghana when 15 members of my association took part to the West African Vegetarian Congress from 29 Oct to 1 Nov, 2009. There, we met the Ghanaian IVU committee, Emmanuel Eyoh (the IVU Regional Coordinator for Africa), and many others from around the world.

7. Please tell us one recent success story.

At our university, the Vegan Students Association organized a sensitizing programme from 1 Sep to 31 Nov, 2010, entitled "Welcome to the Vegan University". As Sep and October are the months when students come in great numbers to register at the university, we were there once a week from 9am to 3pm. We walked around with soya and gluten kebabs and other vegan products, and spread the news about the benefits of a vegan diet. Many people tasted the kebabs and appreciated the food and information. Next, we did a show on national TV. We shared the benefits of a vegan diet so eloquently that people called to congratulate us, asked us to teach them how to go vegan and even asked for the another show done by us. People learned many advantages of a vegan diet, and, as a result, more students are joining our association.



IVU Liaison Officer for Australasia

IVU has a new member of our International Council. Sundara DaSilva from Australia will serve as IVU Liaison Officer for Australia, working with IVU Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, Susianto Tseng, who is based in Indonesia. Learn more about Sundara at www.vegsource.com/john-davis/meet-sundara---our-man-down-under.html

New Film from Vegan Society

"Making the Connection" is a new film which invites you on a journey - together with a chef, a farmer, an MP, an athlete, a dietician, a poet - to explore an exciting lifestyle which combines delicious, healthy food with tackling many of the global challenges facing us today.

Will you make the connection and become part of the solution?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZAHIB97iGY&p=932A35B5E6B8965A&index=1&playnext=8



Unlikely Ancestors of VegSource Founder

Jeff Nelson, the vegan founder of VegSource.com which kindly hosts the IVU website has meat industry blood in his veins. Watch video at <http://bit.ly/9p4tJn> (the history segments starts at about 6.25 in the video)



Counter of Animals Killed for Meat

Last year, the approximately 6.8 billion humans ate about 60 billion land animals and probably many more marine animals. The enormity of this annual toll is now captured in an iphone app - iphoneakc.tumblr.com - in a counter you can put on your website, blog, etc. -

www.adaptt.org/killcounter.html or

drupal.org/project/animals

and on a MySpace app -

www.unleashed.org.au/change_the_world/life_saving_counter

How To Answer This Question? #1

Recently, a reader suggested we reprint an article from the Care2 website - [www.care2.com/causes/animal-welfare/blog/10 Arguments Against A Vegan Lifestyle](http://www.care2.com/causes/animal-welfare/blog/10_Arguments_Against_A_Vegan_Lifestyle) - that lists responses to frequently heard arguments against being veg.



Below is the first one with Care2's responses. Here's hoping that all your arguments are friendly ones. After reading this article please do two things: (1) suggest more points to counter this argument; and (2) please suggest arguments for which you would like to see more counterarguments. Thanks.

ARGUMENT #1: If we didn't eat animals, they would quickly overpopulate the planet and most likely starve to death.

The population of domesticated farm animals in the USA in 2008 is estimated roughly at around 20 billion. This figure is quite small since the actual number of animals slaughtered for food for the US was [10,270,019,000](#) (that's: ten billion, two hundred seventy million, nineteen thousand animals). What this means is farm animals outnumber human beings by a [65 to 1 ratio](#) in the USA.

As it may appear from these statistics, non-human animal populations seem to already be vastly out of control. You might think that to kill these animals would be the best solution since they are already consuming [80% of our corn grown in this country and 60 billion pounds of our soy each year](#), but unfortunately no matter how many animals Americans kill and eat each year, there continues to be more of them. The reason for this is quite simple. Animal farmers have intensive breeding operations where they artificially inseminate as many female animals as possible to create even more offspring than the year before. Without giant egg hatcheries and other artificial forms of breeding, animals would never have any hope of reaching, let alone sustaining, current populations.

As far as animals suffering from starvation due to over population goes, the amount of grains and other crops consumed by US livestock is enough to feed [800 million](#) human (animals) who are *currently* starving to death worldwide.

The argument against a vegan lifestyle stated above could also be reworded to read as "*But if we didn't slit the throats of animals and eat their flesh, they might die horrible deaths.*"

Here's an additional response from Saurabh Dalal, an IVU International Council member and head of the Vegetarian Society of the District of Columbia (USA).

If the world magically went vegan today, that would be a wonderful occurrence and not cause a problem of over-population of non-human animals, especially for any long period of time. As a society then, we'd immediately stop artificially inseminating domesticated animals, so the numbers would effectively stop increasing immediately too. Then we'd only have to work a solution for only one generation of those animals, whose natural lifespans would range from say 5 to 25 years, depending on the type of animal. Governments would be able to redirect the enormous resources and subsidies, that are currently wasted on animal agriculture, to animal sanctuaries and places to let those non-human animals live out their lives peacefully. When that's completed and the generation of each animal type has passed, we'd have significantly smaller populations to manage and care for. The solution could work without any further suffering.

A Meat Eater's Dilemma

As the horrors of factory farming become more widely known, more and more meat eaters struggle with their consciences. Here are the thoughts of one such person, a teacher in the U.S.

I struggle with this dilemma. I am a meat eater. I am aware of the practice of factory raising meat animals and I am disgusted. That information has led me to begin to produce my own food on my little hobby farm. I have chickens and eat their eggs. When they stop laying, they are delicious. I raised and butchered a turkey for last Thanksgiving's feast. I am currently raising cattle with the intention of giving them a stress free, content life right up until the moment their status changes from friend to food. I struggle with it but in the end, I tell myself that their lives could have been very different with the same end result. It does pose a dilemma; a big one. I am going to read *The Omnivores Dilemma*. I have heard it's a very good book. I loved *The Botany of Desire* by the same author. Until I can work through all of this, I'll continue to treat them as friends who will eventually end up on my table. It's ridiculous, isn't it?



Welcome to New IVU Members

Teen International Progressives - www.tipprogressives.com - Each summer, we offer three two-week retreats (grouped by age, 11-19 yrs) in Sweden for progressive-minded young people from around the world.



- ✓ **East Africa Vegetarian Congress** – 17/18 Dec, 2010, Nairobi, Kenya. Contact the IVU Regional Coordinator for Africa, Emmanuel Eyoh - nigveganimal@yahoo.com
- ✓ **Middle East Vegetarian Congress**, 6-7 Dec - Dubai, UAE. Contact IVU International Council member, Sandhya Prakash - sandhya@meveg.info The Congress will take place during the 8th Middle East Natural & Organic Foods Expo 2010, 6-8 Dec – www.mevegcongress.com – which will include 16 booths in a dedicated MEVEG Pavilion.
- ✓ **2nd Latin American Vegetarian Congress** in Bolivia – Jun, 2011 – exact place and date to be announced - marly.winckler@gmail.com
- ✓ **13th International Vegan Festival** – 4-12 Jun, 2011 - Malaga, Spain www.ivu.org/veganfest/2011
- ✓ **5th Asian Vegetarian Congress** – Oct, 2011, Hangzhou, China
- ✓ **40th IVU World Vegetarian Congress** – Oct, 2012, San Francisco (USA)



Possible Future for the Veg Movement

In this blog post, IVU Manager, John Davis, looks at trends in the veg movement. Do you see the same trends from your own vantage point? Are these trends good or bad for the vegetarian movement?

www.vegsource.com/john-davis/the-future-of-the-movement.html

Welcome to Organisations That Have Recently Registered with IVU

AUSTRALIA

Vegan Society NSW - www.vegansocietynsw.com

INDIA

People for Animals – Faridabad - Ravi Dubey – pfafaridabad@ymail.com

ITALY

BioVeganFest - www.bioveganfest.it

Mens@Sana - www.mensasana.it

Tenuta Savorgnano - Organic vegetarian B&B, Tuscany - www.tenutasavorgnano.com

NEPAL

Shree Krishna Pranami Sewa Samiti - www.krishnapranami.org

UK

Vegonia Wholefoods - www.vegonia.co.uk

Veg Parents UK - groups.yahoo.com/group/VegParentsUk

USA

Bastida Studios - www.bastidastudios.com

Book Publishing Company - www.bookpubco.com

ChicagoVeg - www.chicagoveg.org

Northwest VEG - Serving the greater Portland, Oregon area - www.nwveg.org

Northern Connecticut Vegetarian Society - www.northctveg.org

Vegetarian for Health - www.vegetarianforhealth.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. IVU-Veg-News E-Mail List

www.ivu.org/news/veg-news

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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