Vegetarianism Mushrooming — On This They Agree

By JUDY KLEMESRUD
N.Y. Times

ORONO — Some are reed-slim; the way vegetarians are always thought to be; others are quite obese. Some have healthy, glowing complexions; others have acne. They are young and old, rich and poor, long-haired and short-haired. Many are passive by nature, but some are pushy and aggressive — especially when they have to wait in the long cafeteria lines for some of the most exotic vegetarian foods they have ever encountered.

Perhaps the only clue that the 1,500 black;white;brown and yellow people from 30 countries who have gathered here for the World Vegetarian Congress don't eat meat is to look at their feet. Most of them eschew leather for rather tacky looking shoes made of canvas, plastic or rubber — and some of them don't wear any shoes at all.

THE VEGETARIANS, who chose the University of Maine campus here as their conference site because it was in a pollution-free part of the country; are here for 12 days of studying; socializing; arguing; proselytising; and — perhaps the most enjoyable of all — eating.

To many people of the people here the food is secondary. To them; vegetarianism is a serious political ,social and economic issue, and many believe that a failure to create a vegetarian world may result in a failure to save the world.

"THE PEOPLE are here for three reasons that are equal, like the three sides of a triangle," said H. Jay Dinshah, 41, of Malaga, N.J., president of the North American Vegetarian Society, which is hosting the congress, the first ever held in North America.

"They are here because they think meat-eating is harmful to their health," he said. "And they are here for ethical reasons, because they believe it is wrong to slaughter animals for food. And they are here because they believe that vegetarianism could help solve the world's food crisis, because then the eight pounds of grain it takes to make one pound of beef would be diverted from feeding animals to feeding people."

ACCORDING TO DINSHAH, 50 per cent of the world's nearly four billion people are already vegetarians, many of them for religious reasons or because they have no other choice. In the United States, about 10 million people are vegetarians, he said.

"If one person becomes a vegetarian, he or she is responsible for sparing the life of one large animal a year," Dinshah asserted. "That's one cow, sheep or pig. And that's about 50 large animals over 50 years of life."

MOST OF THE 1,500 people at the congress are staying in dormitories on campus here. Dinshah said about 90 per cent of them are committed vegeta-

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