

Frequently Asked Questions

about Veganism

Section 3: Farming

Q: What will happen to farmers if everyone goes vegan?

Some land will be returned to wildlife and forestry and other land can be used to grow crops such as vegetables, fruits, grains and legumes.

It is worth noting that much of the land of Ireland was at one time cleared of forest in order to create pasture for grazing.

It should also be pointed out that substantial EU subsidies are currently paid to farmers to keep the price of meat and dairy products artificially low.

Q: What about the parts of the world where people cannot grow crops, such as parts of the developing world and polar regions?

Modern technology now allows food to be grown anywhere, regardless of the soil quality. The fact that some parts of the world have hostile climatic and soil conditions should not be used as a justification for those of us who do have a wide choice regarding the types of food that we eat.

Section 4: The Environment

Q: Is a vegan diet better for the environment?

Cattle produce more greenhouse gases than all the cars, planes and ships on the planet combined.

It takes 16 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of beef.

Vegan diets use, on average, one third of the land that a meat-based diet would require.

People in the developing world who do not have enough to eat could be fed on the grain that is currently being fed to animals.

Much land degradation and deforestation has occurred because of land having been cleared to grow food crops (such as soya) for the meat industry.

90% of all soya that is grown on the planet goes to feed animals, and vast areas of rain-forest have been cleared to grow this crop. Thus, while we are destroying CO₂ sinks (ie. rain-forests) we are simultaneously creating methane-emitters (ie. cattle). This practice has to stop.

Q: What about commercial fishing and fish farming?

Commercial sea fishing has depleted the oceans' fish stocks to such an extent that it is believed there will no longer be any fish left after 2048.

Fish caught in trawler nets suffer painful decompression and are suffocated under the weight of the catch as they are slammed on the boat's deck.

Scientific studies now show that fish do feel and react to pain.

It takes 5 pounds of fish to produce just one pound of farmed fish. Farmed fish are prone to disease as a result of being confined in a restricted space.

Humans do not need to eat fish to be healthy. Every nutrient that can be obtained from fish can also be obtained from plant-based sources.

Section 1: Food

Q: Humans have always eaten meat. Isn't this natural?

Humans started eating meat at some point in their history, but prior to this they did not eat meat. During most of our evolutionary history, we were largely vegetarian. Plant foods like potatoes made up the bulk of our ancestors' diet.

The more frequent addition of modest amounts of meat to the early human diet came with the discovery of fire, which allowed us to lower the risk of being sickened or killed by parasites in meat. This practice did not turn our ancestors into carnivores but rather allowed early humans to survive in periods when plant foods were unavailable.

It should also be pointed out that there is now overwhelming evidence that a meat and dairy-based diet is directly related to the leading causes of death (ie. cancer, heart disease, diabetes and obesity).

Q: Where do vegans get their protein?

Most meat-eaters already get too much protein! Protein is found in varying amounts in almost every type of food. The following are excellent protein sources:

Tempeh, Tofu, Beans, Lentils, Seitan, Chickpeas, Almonds, Cashews and Quinoa.

Protein is also found in: Potatoes, Sunflower Seeds, Flax Seeds, Soybeans, Spinach and a host of other plant-based foods.

Q: What about protein supplements for bodybuilding?

As an alternative to whey protein there are many other protein powders widely available for bodybuilders. These include:

Pea Protein, Hemp Protein and Soya Protein.

Well-known vegan bodybuilders, athletes and sportspeople include:

Carl Lewis (Olympic Gold Medal-Winning Athlete),

Serena Williams (Wimbledon Tennis Champion),
Billy Simmons (Winner of 'Mr. Natural Universe 2009'),

Peter Ebdon (World Champion Snooker Player) and **Patrik Baboumian** (Germany's Strongest Man).

Q: What do vegans eat?

There are vegan versions of almost every type of food available in health and wholefood shops. These include vegan cheese, cream, chocolate, desserts and sauces. There is also a wide range of vegan 'fake meats' such as chicken, mince, sausages, burgers and roasts.

A healthy vegan diet includes a wide range of fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes and grains. In fact, any type of healthy diet should include a high proportion of these foods.

Section 2: Animals

Q: What will happen to all the farm animals if people go vegan?

Domesticated animals such as chickens, pigs, sheep and cows have been created by humans using selective breeding techniques over many generations. They are, therefore, not 'natural' animals in the sense that they do not exist in the wild, and probably would not survive very well without human intervention.

Chickens, for example, have been bred so that they cannot fly. Their wings can carry them off the ground temporarily but they cannot get very far. This makes them easy for humans to control, and also very vulnerable to predators.

Cattle have been bred to have various characteristics such as large udders (which make them produce excessive quantities of milk – often up to 10 times more than a calf would need).

Other cattle have been bred to have large, lean bodies so that they can be used for meat.

Certain sheep have been bred to have excessive quantities of wool, and pigs were bred to have temperaments which make them more docile.

If our society was to adopt a vegan diet 'en-masse' then these types of animals would simply die out.

Q: What about bugs and insects – don't they feel pain also?

Vegans avoid food colourings that are made from insects, and they do not eat honey or wear silk.

Vegans aim, through their diet and lifestyle, to do the least possible harm to all creatures – large or small. They realise, for example, that as a side effect of modern food harvesting methods many insects and small creatures will be killed.

Vegans would advocate a farming method called 'Vegan Organic Growing' – a method of growing and harvesting crops which does the least amount of harm to other living creatures.