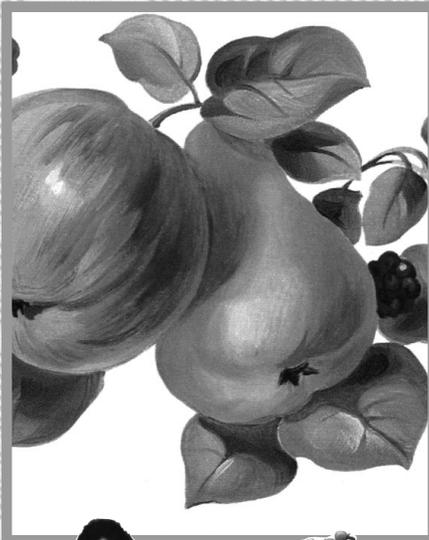


101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian

By Pamela Rice • SIXTH EDITION • 2003
Reprint with updates, 2005



Judea Johnson

Rochelle Goldman

Aqua-cide: Fishers employ high tech to scour the seas

1 Virtually all of the over 10 billion animals slaughtered for food in the U.S. every year are the product of a swift-moving assemblyline system, incorporating dangerous, unprecedented, and unsustainable methods of efficiency. If farmers were required by law to give their animals humane living conditions, including spacious quarters, clean surroundings, fresh air, sunlight, and opportunities for social interaction—if it were illegal simply to administer drugs to animals who would otherwise die from the environments they live in—cheap meat could never exist. Time and again, the industry fights proposed measures designed to improve the conditions endured by farmed animals—even slightly—some of which would cost only pennies more per animal. Ultimately, low prices have allowed demand to stay high and the industry to become highly concentrated. Over the past half century, farming in the U.S. has been allowed to grow into a grim corporate monstrosity, the scale of which is hard to comprehend or even believe.

2 When the Clean Water Act went into effect in 1972, the government exempted agriculture. One result: 35,000 river miles in just 22 states are polluted by feedlot operations. And today, an entrenched livestock industry, which produces several trillion pounds of manure per year, balks at regulation. In 2003, the government issued two reports. The first revealed that only a quarter of the nation's largest dairies and hog operations were spreading their manure on enough land to mitigate toxic runoff. The second said that the EPA's computer systems are grossly inadequate to track down farms lacking manure-management plans. As a result, millions of tons of waste are sent into our waterways, and the government is unable to control it.

3 After reviewing 4,500 scientific studies and papers on the relationship between cancer and lifestyle, a team of 15 scientists sponsored by two leading cancer research institutions advised those interested in reducing

their risk of many types of cancer to consume a primarily vegetarian diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and legumes. They declared that certain cancers can actually be prevented, with diet, weight management, and regular exercise having a 40 percent bearing on disease risk.

4 The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 70 percent of the world's commercial fish stocks are fully exploited, overfished, or collapsed. Fishers, using rapacious techniques, such as sonar, driftnets, longlines, dredgers, and refrigerated fish-packing factories, are ultimately not only putting themselves out of business but rapidly destroying ocean ecosystems. In the case of longlining, fishers launch 4.5 million hooks every night. Overall, a quarter of the world's fish catch comes from nontarget species; a third goes to feed livestock or farmed fish. Early in 1998, a meeting of

1,600 scientists sounded the clarion call that the oceans were in peril. Five years later, the Pew Oceans Commission blamed industrial-scale commercial fishing for depleting the Earth of 90 percent of the ocean's largest predatory species found only 50 years ago.

5 The Humane Slaughter Act requires that mammals be rendered unconscious with one swift application of a stunning device before slaughter. Due to rapid line speeds, however, fully conscious animals who missed being stunned may be

butchered while still conscious. Laborers, to their peril, will be forced to work on petrified creatures fighting for their lives. The legal designation of "animal" does not even apply to poultry. Consequently, birds destined for dinner plates are not afforded any humanely meaningful pre-slaughter stunning (see #72).

6 A meat diet dramatically raises your risk for heart attack, but in recent years you're less likely to die from the trauma. Technology will probably

save your life, but now you're left to live with the consequences. In the case of congestive heart failure—an increasingly common outcome—your heart, now so damaged, is unable to circulate blood to the rest of your body adequately; this results in fluid build-up and organ damage. In the U.S., nearly 5 million people live with the condition, and about 550,000 new cases crop up every year. The disease is the leading cause of hospitalization among the elderly,

and annual hospital bills attributed to it come to \$26 billion.

7 Pigs are naturally anything but dirty and brutish. And if given half a chance will display high intelligence. Ask Professor Stanley Curtis of Pennsylvania State University. He taught several pigs to understand complex relationships between actions and objects in order to play video games. Curtis, along with his colleagues, found these creatures to be focused, creative, and innovative—equal in intelligence to chimpanzees. Similarly, other researchers have found chickens to show empathy (and to be smart as well), cows to respond to music, and fish to be as individualistic as dogs.

8 U.S. livestock consume five times as much grain as is consumed directly by the entire American popu-



PHOTO BY MICHELLE FORNOF

Vegetarian outreach activist Jean Thaler raises a voice of dissent at Nathan's hot-dog-eating contest.

SPECIAL THANKS TO CANDLE CAFE, ELENA ROMANOVA, BERNIE G., GLEN BOISSEAU BECKER, HOWARD AND JEAN RICE, HANGAWI, JUAN TORCOLETTI, AND NALITH. BUT MOST OF ALL, THANKS TO MY HUSBAND, ALAN RICE, FOR HIS UNENDING SUPPORT, WITHOUT WHICH THIS BOOKLET COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN.

Plant Parade: Antioxidants, phytochemicals, fiber

lation. On average, it takes 5.86 pounds of plant protein (grain and forage) to produce one pound of animal protein—a horrible waste when hunger pervades so many regions of the world (see #31). The meat industry does work to improve feed-to-flesh efficiency, but its improvements come at the expense of the animals via genetic tinkering and growth-enhancing drugs.

9 About 25 million pounds of antibiotics are fed to livestock every year primarily for growth promotion—almost eight times the amount administered to humans. Though perfectly legal, the practice is leading to the selection of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and adding to the general worldwide crisis of drug-resistant disease. The consumption of meat contaminated with these superbugs raises the risk for a rise in human illnesses that physicians are unable to treat.

10 Every year, Americans suffer 76 million illnesses, over 300,000 hospitalizations, and over 5,000 deaths from something they ate. That something was probably of animal origin. With the exception of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *L. monocytogenes* (listeria), dangerous bacteria are considered “inherent” to raw meat. Producers may legally sell infected meat, leaving it up to the consumer to neutralize the pathogens via cooking. Except in rare instances, neither the USDA nor the FDA has any regulatory powers on farms where pathogens originate.

11 Bypass surgery requires that your rib cage be opened, your heart stopped, and your body hooked up to an external pumping machine so a vein from some other part of your body can be removed and grafted as a replacement blood vessel to your heart. Memory, language ability, and spatial orientation are still impaired in 10 to 50 percent of bypass patients six months later. For some people these side effects never go away. Gloom and depression affect between a third and three-quarters of patients. Many will require a second operation. A vegetarian diet, regular exercise, and spiritual nourishment have been

proven to reverse heart disease, the biggest killer in Western countries.

12 Over the last century, Midwestern farmers drained more than 105 million acres of wetlands, half of all that once were. In Iowa, most dramatically, but all across the nation's middle states, prairies also have been essentially wiped out. Monotonous stretches of nitrogen-dependent and polluting feed crops—mostly corn and soybeans—have taken their place. Wetlands and prairies allow native plant species to flourish. They cleanse and filter pollutants from the water as well. To survive, they have no need for fertilizers; in fact, growth agents are likely to stress or kill them.

13 Eating a plant-based diet guards against disease, first in an active way, with complex carbohydrates, phytochemicals, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber, then by default. The more plant foods you eat, the less room you have for animal foods that clog arteries with cholesterol, strain kidneys with excess protein, and burden the heart with saturated fat. In 2003, a small but influential Canadian study found that a low-fat vegetarian diet, including soy, reduces cholesterol levels by about as much as the use of statin drugs.

14 Meat packing and poultry processing are notoriously hazardous and dangerous. Workers may be crushed by animals falling off the line. Poultry workers typically make a single movement up to 20,000 times a day and suffer repetitive stress disorders at 16 times the national average. Turnover at plants can be as high as 100 percent per year.

15 With so many fish species threatened with commercial extinction (see #4), governments try to regulate fishing gear, catch size, and fishing season, usually without success. Policing is expensive. Illegal fishing around the world is estimated at 25–50 percent of landed catch. A part of the problem lies with “flag-of-convenience” poachers, hailing from seem-

ingly insignificant nations that have not signed on to international fishing treaties that regulate environmental conventions. Their boats, which catch about a quarter of the world's fish, are actually owned by companies from signatory countries, often from the U.S., Europe, and Japan. Such “legal” pirating of the seas doubled in the 1990s.

16 Factory hens today are forced to live in “battery” cages stacked in rows by the thousands. Each is confined to 48 to 86 square inches of floor space. (This page is 91 square inches.) After months of confinement, necks are covered with blisters, wings bare, combs bloody, and feet torn. Manure fumes and rotting carcasses force poultry workers to wear gas masks. When the hens are spent, producers truck the mutilated birds to slaughter. This, or farmers gas them—often unevenly—in order to grind them up for chicken feed.

17 In 2003, *Consumer Reports* went to 60 cities in 8 states to purchase and test 400 packages of chicken and beef for bacterial contamination. It found that though the incidence of bacteria in chicken had decreased since its 1997 tests (75 percent then, compared to 50 percent in 2003), many more of the contaminated samples harbored antibiotic-resistant strains of salmonella and campylobacter. The magazine also found 25 percent of the beef contaminated with listeria, a pernicious and elusive bug whose infection carries a high death rate. The pathogen is killed by cooking. But since it tends to infect cold cuts, store labels of course advertise that the product is “ready-to-eat.”

18 An English study that compared the diets of 6,115 vegetarians and 5,015 meat eaters for 12 years found that the meatless diet yielded a 40 percent lower risk of cancer and a 20 percent lower risk of dying from any cause. After monitoring 2,000 vegetarians and near-vegetarians for 22 years, German researchers found that, compared with the general popula-



Meat Industry: Writes own laws on animal treatment

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tion, groups of people who eat little or no meat can expect to cut their death rates from diseases by 25 to 50 percent.

19 Half of every butchered cow and a third of every butchered pig becomes either by-product material or waste. In addition, about a billion animals die on U.S. factory farms each year before reaching slaughter. What's an industry to do with all this death and gore? Call the renderer straightaway! Recycling, they call it. Lips are exported to Mexico for taco filling; horns are made into gelatin; other parts are fashioned into everything from cosmetics to drugs to aphrodisiacs. The rest is minced, pulverized, and boiled down for more household products and ingredients. Much is dried to a tacky brown powder to be mixed into animal feed. In 1997, feeding ruminant slaughterhouse by-product to cattle became illegal—an attempt to safeguard the public against mad cow disease (see #63). Both compliance and enforcement have shown themselves to be lacking. A 2001 FDA survey found hundreds of animal-feed companies in violation of the ban.

20 Essentially, if a farming practice is established to be “accepted,” “common,” “customary,” or “normal”—no matter how inhumane—anticruelty statutes do not apply. Such a legal environment serves to grant meat producers *carte blanche* for the development of still other cruel practices and technologies. In general, any laws actually written to protect farmed animals are rarely enforced, and fines for violations are negligibly small. Basically, the meat industry enjoys a privilege unique in the world of jurisprudence. Instead of society judging which of its actions are to be legal or not, it determines this itself. Is there any wonder that precious little economic loss exists for the benefit of farmed animals?

21 In the mid-1970s, chicken processors argued that in order to keep up with skyrocketing demand they should be allowed merely to rinse off fecal matter from bird carcasses rather than to cut away affected parts. The government gave in to their request. A number of studies have since proved

that rinsing carcasses, even up to 40 times, is ineffective at dislodging the filth. Moreover, the violent motion of defeathering rubber fingers not only works to squirt feces out from the chickens' bodies, it can push bacteria deep into crevices of birds' skin where no process is able to dislodge it.

22 Several of the world's mightiest rivers no longer reach the sea, and aquifer levels everywhere are dropping precipitously. For these we can in large part blame the fivefold increase in worldwide meat production that took place over the past half-century, and the trend is far from over. Meat production is a water guzzler. Producing a pound of animal protein requires about 100 times as much water as producing a pound of vegetable protein. As *Newsweek* once put it, “the water that goes into a 1,000-pound steer would float a destroyer.” Seventy percent of the water that is pulled from the world's rivers, lakes, and underground wells goes to agriculture, and 40 percent of the world's grain goes to feed animals for slaughter.

23 Castration makes bulls easier to handle. It also results in their meat being more marketable. There are three castration methods, two of which shut off the blood supply so that the testicles either are reabsorbed into the animal's body or simply fall away after a couple of weeks. In a third method, the scrotum is cut so that the testicles can be pulled out. Anesthesia is rarely given before any of these procedures, and sometimes operations are botched. One livestock expert advises would-be emasculators, “Sloppy castration means lower profits.”

24 In industrialized countries, as many as one person in three may be affected by foodborne illness each year, with children, pregnant women, the sick, the poor, and the elderly being the most at risk, according to the World Health Organization. Stacey A. Sawel, director of scientific and regulatory affairs for the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, tells us that “outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with produce are very rare. Centers for Disease Control data for

Veg-abundance: World without hunger through 2050

1986–1996 shows 3,227 outbreaks occurred from all food sources, but only 21...were associated with produce. And of these, almost half were due to cross contamination with raw meat products during food preparation.”

25 The USDA releases updated dietary guidelines every five years, and, as always, it advises people to eat less meat. Of course it doesn't use those exact words, “eat less meat.” When it did, in 1979, the meat industry sounded such a hue and cry that the U.S. agency quickly retracted the statement. Reduce “saturated fat and cholesterol” it says now, something that means little or nothing to many people.

26 Birds are cheap and cages are expensive, so battery hens live out their dreary days in space just about the size of their bodies. No hen gets to run, build a nest, enjoy a cleansing dust bath, mate, protect a chick, forage in the sun, perch, fly, or even lift a wing. Instead, this creature will spend her time crouching and fending off the frantic feather pulling of cage mates. And every egg that is laid will roll away down the slope of a wire floor, which will also cripple her legs and feet.

27 The senseless waste of the world's growing meat-centered diet is illustrated by a hypothetical statement put forth by the Population Reference Bureau: “If everyone adopted a vegetarian diet and no food were wasted, current [food] production would theoretically feed 10 billion people [56 percent more people than alive today], more than the projected population for the year 2050.”

28 In 1997 a virus jumped bird to human for the first time in history. The avian influenza strain H5N1 eventually killed six people as well as entire chicken flocks in Hong Kong. Fearing the strain might be signaling the beginning of a pandemic (see #35), authorities slaughtered and buried 1.3 million poultry-market chickens in the city over a chaotic three-day pe-

riod. Similarly, a pig virus directly infected 250 people in Malaysia in 1999. As a result, a million pigs were herded into pens and shot or beaten to death. Some pigs ended up being buried alive.

29 Today, gigantic open-air cesspools or holding pits of urine and feces are normally situated adjacent to or beneath the barns that hold



PHOTO BY MICHELLE FORNOF

Such a mural may not take on any particular significance for the everyday person, but a vegetarian may take note of the crazed look in the veal calf's eyes and a vandal's splash of paint above the nose. The air vents above the face add an extra touch of ignobility to the composition. Appropriately, the photographer found this one in the decrepit meat district of New York City.

thousands and even millions of factory animals. The stench that these emit is exceedingly more pungent than everyday farm odor—even miles away. It will hammer you, perhaps only intermittently like Chinese water torture. In one Illinois case, assessments on nearby homes were officially reduced by 10 to 30 percent.

30 A male calf born to a dairy cow: What does a farmer do with this by-product of the milk industry? If he is not kept for breeding stock or immediately slaughtered or factory-raised for meat, he will be raised for fancy veal. To this end, he is locked up in a stall and chained by his neck to prevent him from turning around for his entire life. He is fed a special diet without iron or roughage. He is injected with antibiotics and hormones to keep him alive and to make him grow. He is kept in darkness except for feeding time. The result? A nearly full-grown animal with flesh as tender and milky-

white as a newborn's. Somehow it makes some people happy.

31 An exploding human population combined with the world's sagging ability to feed itself appear poised on a collision course. The Green Revolution, which provided the foodstuffs and feedstuffs for much of the recent growth, has clearly stalled

out. Indeed, cereal availability per capita has been declining since 1984, and the promise of biotech is far from certain or free of risk. Today, 70 percent of grain in the U.S. and 40 percent of grain worldwide lavishly goes to feed livestock. And just as the world clamors for more grain to feed to animals (so they can be eaten), per-capita world cropland declined by 20 percent—this in the 1990s alone.

The World Health Organization says 1.2 billion people in the world don't get enough to eat. More meat production is definitely not the answer.

32 Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are highly toxic chemicals, once used

widely in a number of industrial applications. Though their manufacture is now banned in the U.S. and other Western countries, their residues have become part of the food chain, lodged in the fat of fish, beef, pork, and milk. Various studies have linked prenatal exposure to PCBs—even tiny amounts—to impaired intellectual development in children. Women who plan to become pregnant are advised to avoid the fatty animal-based foods that contain them, because the chemicals can accumulate in their bodies for years.

33 Some U.S. farmers feed chicken manure to their livestock. No, it's not illegal, and yes, the animals will grow by eating it. According to the FDA, the practice is safe if, during composting, the wastes are allowed to reach high enough temperatures to destroy harmful bacteria. The problem is, farmers often don't take all the necessary steps in the composting process.

Cows' Milk: Most significant chemical carcinogen

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34 The late parent advisor Dr. Benjamin Spock maintained that cows' milk "causes internal blood loss, allergies, and indigestion and contributes to some cases of childhood diabetes." In the last edition of his famous baby book he recommended that after the age of two children essentially adhere to a vegan diet. But he did not recommend dairy milk for babies either. According to renowned nutrition researcher T. Colin Campbell, "Cows'-milk protein may be the single most significant chemical carcinogen to which humans are exposed."

35 Because of animal agriculture, the world sees a global pandemic of influenza (where tens of thousands of people die) three or four times per century. New subtypes originate in migratory birds, but factory conditions of domesticated animals allow the viruses to take hold. Pigs in particular, but now humans themselves (see #28), may act as hosts for both avian and human strains. Within pig or, in theory, human lungs the viruses can swap genetic material, creating new viruses that can be passed back to or between humans. Historically, Southern China has been the mixing bowl for flu to develop, since billions of pigs, domesticated ducks, and people all live in close proximity to one another. The next flu pandemic is overdue, experts warn.

36 Beef cattle are best suited to moist climates, such as those in Europe where their ancestors evolved. But U.S. ranchers in America's West continue the destructive tradition of herding their animals on the nation's most arid land. Grazing often takes place along riparian zones—the strips of land along rivers and streams where wild species of plants and animals concentrate and regenerate. These delicate ecosystems, which serve as natural purifiers of the water, are summarily trampled by the cows and contaminated by their manure. Native grasses long ago were overrun by heartier foreign varieties, inadvertently brought to this hemisphere on bovine hooves.

37 Adopting one of today's high-protein fad diets may help you lose

weight in the short run. But so might chemotherapy, food poisoning, or serious illness. If health is what you desire, eventually you'll have to learn how to eat. Resoundingly, the American Heart Association and other major health organizations warn people against the Atkins Diet (just one example), because it can cause fatigue or dizziness and strain the kidneys. Often unbeknownst to the dieter, it will induce dehydration. Upping fat and lowering carbohydrate intake—part and parcel of these risky diets—have been found to impair brain function over time.

38 Genetics through single-trait selection has become as important a component of today's intensive farming as drugs and confinement hardware. The animals themselves, right down to their DNA, must stand up to the rigors of the industrial process, both in life and in carcass form. They must produce at breakneck speeds and do so on as little feed as possible. And ultimately, the particular output they unwillingly give forth must please our final end user, the consumer, in texture, taste, uniformity, convenience, and price. Mutant genes that could never survive in the wild are cultivated to monstrous ends. Today's hen produces 300 eggs per year; her wild forebears would have laid 2 dozen. Today's cow yields a staggering 9.1 tons of milk per year on the average, whereas an annual 2.3 tons was the norm in 1940. Sows, breeding cows, and hens have been reduced to piglet-, calf-, and chick-making machines.

39 U.S. subsidies to ranchers on public lands amounts to about \$500 million annually. One government program eliminates predators to livestock—real or anticipated—with steel-jaw leghold traps, firearms, cyanide, and poison gas to exterminate thousands of black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, and coyotes every year.

40 Though osteoporosis is a disease of calcium deficiency, it is not necessarily one of low calcium intake. The bone disorder is the result of too much dietary protein. Excesses can leach calcium from the bones. The typical meat-eating American is consuming

Talking Fish: Vibratory “calls” sounding a message

at least twice as much protein as is advised for good health.

41 Young women who on average ingest 23 percent of their calories from animal fat—particularly from red meat and full-fat dairy products—are at a 33 percent greater risk of developing breast cancer than those women whose calorie intake from animal fat averages 12 percent, according to an 8-year study. Researchers looked at 90,000 women, ages 26 to 46, and reported in 2003 that the kind of fat, not the amount, was key. *Non*-hydrogenated vegetable fats, such as olive oil did not affect a woman’s cancer risk.

42 When faced with a flock of spent hens, an egg farmer knows he can induce production again by way of a forced molt—accomplished with starvation and water deprivation for periods of up to two weeks. No U.S. law prevents this, and in fact most hens are molted at least once in their lives. In 2000 McDonald’s announced that it would not purchase eggs from suppliers that employ the practice. It’s the least they could do.

43 Fish make vibratory sounds with various “calls” that researchers have identified as communicating alarm and aggravation. They possess fully formed nervous systems as well as complex social behaviors. They are also capable of learning complicated tasks. British researchers discovered in 2003 that fish have the cerebral mechanisms to feel pain. As one animal activist put it, “Fish are not merely vegetables that can swim.” It does seem all too convenient for commercial and sport fishers to declare that fish do not feel pain.

44 In any factory-farm operation, a percentage of the animals will be sick or crippled. In the case of mammals, the industry labels them “downers.” They will be dealt with conveniently. Veterinary care is not wasted on them. If unable to walk, a downer is likely to be dragged by chain or pushed by a tractor or forklift to slaughter. Such an animal may be left to starve or freeze to death. The downer phenomenon would be drastically reduced if all

stockyards refused to receive and process them. In 2003, the appearance of one “mad cow” in the U.S. resulted in a rule that prohibits meat from ruminants to enter the human food supply. Let’s hope it means that owners are now more likely to euthenize their disabled animals back on the ranch.

45 Jim Mason and Peter Singer wrote in their book *Animal Factories*, “Instead of hired hands, the factory farmer employs pumps, fans, switches, slatted or wire floors, and automatic feeding and watering hardware.” As with any other capital-intensive system, managers are concerned with the “cost of input and volume of output....The difference is that in animal factories the product is a living creature.”

46 Cattle thrive best on grass and hay. But to give beef its signature marbling and to speed growth, ranchers fatten their animals with a high-grain (mostly corn) diet. The rich feed causes abscesses to form on the livers of 75 percent of the animals, forcing antibiotic use—a practice that raises the risk for the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria (see #94).

47 If you like the idea of being welcome at the places where your food is produced, don’t count on the local poultry grower allowing you to see his birds any time soon. Just barely holding onto life in their drugged-up, overbred, and chronically immunodeficient state, chickens and turkeys in today’s factory systems must be protected from outside infection. If farmers are even slightly lax in applying rigorous measures of “biosecurity,” minor infections can escalate to mass outbreak, sometimes forcing the destruction of millions of birds.

48 The livestock industry euphemistically refers to football-field-size outdoor manure pits as

“lagoons.” But these giant cesspools of feces and urine, which percolate with bacteria, wormy parasites, and viruses, essentially need to be designated as sites of hazardous industrial waste, and regulated as such. The waste can be 10 to 100 times as concentrated as human waste. The National Resources Defense Council documented at least 1,000 manure spills and at least 200 fish kills in 10 states from 1995 to 1998.

49 Eating fish from coral reefs is like burning the Mona Lisa for kindling. Reefs are home to 25 percent of all known marine fish species. Yet a burgeoning demand from restaurants for live coral-reef fish has created lucrative incentives for unsustainable fishing, typically with cyanide. Divers first dissolve concentrated tablets of the poison into plastic squirt bottles. Once the prey is stunned, full immobilization tends not to take place until after the fish has had a

chance to burrow back into the reef. The diver will extract his catch with destructive tools. Some reefs are over a million years old. Yet 20 percent have been destroyed in just the last several decades, in large part by fishing.

50 According to a European study of 400,000 people, a high-fiber diet can slash the risk for deadly cancers by as much as 40 percent. Because of its ability to satiate, fiber helps people to lose weight. One study found that when diabetics eat copious amounts of fiber, they are able to control their blood-sugar levels significantly. Because only plant foods contain fiber most Americans don’t get enough of the substance to fend off disease.

51 Eastern North Carolina today is home to 10 million factory-farmed pigs. Each one, on average, produces two to four times the waste of a human. A survey in 1998 found 1,000

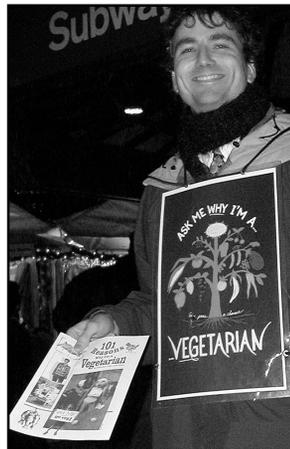


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VivaVegie outreach activist Jeff Boghosian distributes “101 Reasons...” at Union Square in New York City.

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abandoned waste pits in the state, the result of a sudden plunge in pork prices. A year later, Hurricane Floyd inundated many of the pits, sending much of the waste into the Pamlico Sound. There it contaminated marine nurseries that replenish the fish that inhabit the entire eastern seaboard.

52 Animal agriculture routinely mutilates farmed animals for its own convenience and often simply out of habit. Debeaking, branding, castration, ear notching, wing and comb removal, dehorning, teeth clipping, and tail and toe docking are ever-present tasks on today's farm and ranch. Untrained workers, not veterinarians, perform the surgeries, employing only restraint, not anesthesia.

53 Male chicks are a bothersome expense to the egg producer. Chick sexers must be employed to pick them out for diversion to expedient deaths. No law protects the little ones as they are dumped in trash bins to die by crushing, suffocation, starvation, or exposure.

54 Fish and shellfish farming, or aquaculture, is no less disruptive to the environment than taking fish from the wild. ■ Aquaculture shoreline pens are a major reason for the decimation of mangrove forests, vital habitats that wild fish need to reproduce. Mangroves are proven shields against the ravages of tsunami waves. ■ Some farmed species will not breed in captivity, so fish farmers must acquire juveniles from the wild. The ability of these species to replenish their numbers in nature is perilously reduced. ■ Farmed fish often escape into the wild, corrupting the genetic purity of wild species and spreading disease. ■ So-called *biomass fishing*—done with fine nets—is employed to derive the feed. Such a method breaks with the prudent tradition of using loosely wrought nets, which allow juvenile fish to escape and replenish the species. Biomass fishing extracts fish indiscriminately and unsustainably, threatening ecosystems. ■ Huge amounts of polluting nitrogenous waste emanate from fish farms.

55 The growing adoption of meat diets in the developing world threat-

ens to wreak financial disaster on fledgling economies. Without health-care infrastructures in place, the inevitable need for high-tech medical procedures puts undue strain on national coffers.

56 Women put their babies at risk for irreparable brain damage when they eat seafood high in mercury while pregnant, and even beforehand. According to the EPA, about 630,000 newborns in the United States every year—roughly 15 percent of all—may be exposed to dangerous levels of mercury in the womb. Heavy fish eaters, themselves, can easily fall victim to the debilitating effects of mercury poisoning.

57 Hoof-and-mouth disease is rarely fatal for livestock, but it remains a death sentence nonetheless. When blisters form on hooves and lips, and growth slows because of fever, economic dictates prescribe execution and incineration. In 2001, Great Britain responded to an outbreak by destroying nearly 6 million mostly healthy cattle, sheep, and pigs at a cost of (U.S.)\$9 billion to save its export trade. There were only 2,030 known cases of the disease. The balance were exterminated to provide buffers to contain the outbreak.

58 If examples of lawlessness are what you seek, the meat industry provides fertile ground for such a quest. In February 2000, *USA Today* broke a not-atypical story about an IBP slaughterhouse in Nebraska. The Justice Department was accusing it of emitting up to 1,800 pounds of hydrogen sulfide a day—18 times the level that is to be regulated. Some of the townspeople walked around with tanks of oxygen, but most were just gagging. H₂S corrodes the lungs, destroying a person's ability to breathe. One expert described the poison's effects: "It's this progressive loss of brain," he explained. The chemical is to blame for 70 percent of all workers employed in hog barns suffering from bronchitis. Not surprisingly, the *USA Today* story noted that IBP had a 20-year history of environmental misconduct.

59 Genetic manipulation through single-trait selection has already created monsters as well as monstrous

Bacterial Firewall: Many ingenious antidotes to filth

suffering for farmed animals. Cloning threatens to jack up that misery yet another notch, that is if this perfect monoculture of the most freakish, super-producing specimens takes hold. Cloning for production agriculture is, albeit, a ways off, provided it becomes commercially viable at all. Meanwhile, as the technique is perfected, cloned animals suffer premature deaths and deformities, and the resultant meat and milk are all but guaranteed to enter the human food supply.

60 In 1982, *E. coli* O157:H7 poisoning was rare. In 1999, the USDA revealed that during the summer the deadly strain infects half the cattle on America's feedlots. Today's confined cattle live in their own excrement, which is the carrier of the bug. Caked-on manure will aerosol its way to edible portions at the slaughterhouse where line speeds of 300 animals per hour cause mishaps. Ground beef today is made up of mixtures of hundreds or even thousands of animals. The grinding process brings surface pathogens to patty

interiors that may never be cooked adequately. A university study found that O157:H7 can now also be harbored in the interior of a solid piece of meat.

61 From the animal-feed breadbasket of the nation's Midwest, massive amounts of fertilizer, pesticides, and manure runoff travel down the Mississippi River and end up in the Gulf of Mexico. This high-nutrient mix causes an ecological chain reaction that ultimately ends with microscopic organisms robbing the bottom of the ocean of oxygen. Marine life must relocate or suffocate. The phenomenon is known as hypoxia. Scientists have dubbed affected areas "dead zones." Each summer the Gulf's dead zone grows to the size of a small U.S. state. It would be hard to tolerate such ecological ruin if such an area on land were so big and so devoid of life.

62 In what is still the most comprehensive study of diet and

life-style ever made, the China Project found that the ingestion of relatively small amounts of animal protein are linked to chronic disease. The findings from this grand epidemiological study are especially compelling because they allowed meaningful comparisons between populations with similar genetic backgrounds, yet with nonhomogeneous diets and lifestyles. All together, the China Study provides the ultimate vegetarian vindication.

63 One by one we're hearing of people downed by the very mysterious *new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*, a brain-eating affliction that experts say is the human version of

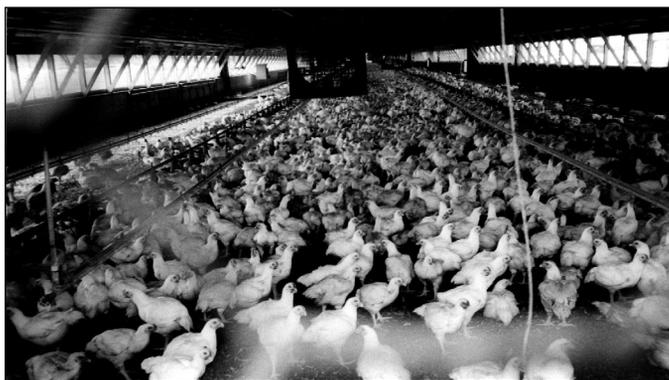


PHOTO BY PAMELA RICE

Factory broiler chickens on the Delmarva Peninsula.

bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease. At press time, the number of definite or probable nvCJD cases (dead and alive) amounts to 147—a relatively small number. Dread about the disease arises from its ghastly nature. Over a prolonged period, victims display involuntary movements and appear insane. The theory is, these people became infected with the brain-wasting disease after eating beef from cows who had been fed brain and nerve tissue of scrapie-infected sheep. The disease has an undetermined though apparently long incubation period and so may some day become much more widespread. Projections run as high as half a million human victims over time. Though feeding ruminant remains back to ruminants (cows to cows) was outlawed in the U.S. in 1997, the practice of recycling animal parts back to livestock has been going on for decades.

64 Though considered more healthful than beef (not exactly a stellar endorsement), fish is still a high-fat, high-calorie, fiberless food, imbued with artery-clogging cholesterol. More than a quarter of the nation's lakes at any one time post advisories warning consumers that the fish may be contaminated (see #32 and #56). According to one expert quoted in a 1992 *Time* article, you could drink water from a polluted lake over a lifetime and not absorb the chemical contamination you would get from just one fish meal.

65 When researchers employed videocameras in the kitchens of 100 homes to watch residents prepare designated pathogen-prone dishes, they were shocked to find the study participants undercooked the meat 42 percent of the time, risked cross-contamination of deadly pathogens to raw foods numerous times, and even put their young ones in danger—in one case returning a raw-egg-infected baby bottle to the mouth of a child. The

meat industry claims it does not have to provide pathogen-free products, despite the fact that bacteria in animal foods have become increasingly deadly and ubiquitous.

66 From farm to table, animal foods are a filthy business. Antidotes to the many pathogens they harbor are an ever-burgeoning industry. ■ On the farm, there are ionizing systems to reduce pathogen-laden dust. ■ In the slaughterhouse, there are steam, saline and acidic solutions, ultra-high pressure, competitive exclusion (which adds benign bacteria to crowd out the lethal kinds), electrolyzed water, liquid nitrogen, ozone gas, and, of course, the nuke-based food irradiation. ■ In the supermarket, detection tabs monitor food temperature. Other detection devices include scat scanners and fiber-optic pathogen sensors that use vibrating quartz crystals. ■ In the kitchen, a silver-coated

Global Warning: Belching ruminants threaten climate

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Your "101 Reasons..."
saved my life.

—Ted Teisler

Congrats, Pamela, on
finishing the book version
of "101 Reasons..."

—Jean Thaler

cutting board kills food bacteria.
■ Then, if you still get sick, you can take a drug to absorb the toxicity. What'll they think up next?

67 Cows tend to want to be milked to unload their burden and, when in heat, to receive a bull naturally. Still, according to the *Handbook of Livestock Management*, "Two or more people may be needed to force a cow into her [milking] parlor." Similarly, the book notes, "A cow in heat may require two or more persons to move her from her group." Once she is pried away, she will be tethered in a stall with a swinging gate behind her, allowing access to the adjacent bull pen. Stock men designate the stall as the breeding rack. Animal activists call it the rape rack.

68 Today the poultry industry is a vertically integrated oligopoly, meaning that a few giant chicken companies control production from chick hatching to grocery-store delivery. Squeezed into the arrangement is the contract grower. The big company owns the birds; the grower

supplies the farm hands and the factory confinement hardware. The situation appears inviting to the grower when she signs her first contract and goes into debt by several hundred thousand dollars. It's not long, however, before she finds that the multi-billion-dollar corporation she's dealing with is calling all the shots, and that the debt she's incurred has reduced her to little better than indentured servitude. And now, as more stringent federal manure-handling regulations begin to be instituted, even more burden is likely to be heaped on to the growers, leaving the chicken conglomerates off the hook.

69 About 22 percent of human-generated emissions of methane is released by the world's 2.4 billion belching ruminant livestock. This adds up to 80 million tons per year of a potent

greenhouse gas associated with global warming. Meanwhile, ranchers and feed-grain farmers contribute significantly to the clearing of the Amazon rainforests, which otherwise work to reverse Earth's warming trends by naturally releasing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide. Because of the nitrogen from the petrochemical fertilizers, the methane from decomposing vegetation, and the nitrous oxide from acidification, the modern field of corn (primary feed crop) emits a global warming effect not unlike a Los Angeles freeway.

70 Up against the powerful meat industry, USDA inspectors are more and more facing hostile and even violent working environments. A 2000 survey of 6 percent of the meat inspection force revealed that almost half chose not to report animal feces, vomit, metal shards, and other contaminants, weekly or monthly. A Freedom of Information Act finding revealed in 1998 that seven meat plants were allowed to operate, even after each had received more than a thousand citations.

71 Today's turkeys have been selectively bred to such an extent that their huge breasts make it impossible for them to accomplish the sex act on their own. The industry must artificially inseminate them. The job is nearly as dehumanizing for the workers—who must work rapidly for long hours and low wages—as it is deplorable for the tortured breeder birds, who are essentially raped once or twice a week for 12 to 16 months until they are sent to slaughter.

72 In most large commercial chicken slaughter plants the inverted heads of doomed birds are first plunged into an electrified brine bath. The electric current is set at a voltage just high enough to immobilize the birds and to promote bleedout without hemorrhage. The birds are not only



Pamela Rice holds a sign in midtown Manhattan as part of a spirited demonstration of 25 activists. The target? Big Red, a \$100-a-plate "celebration" sponsored by 31 red-meat and red-wine restaurants and purveyors.

Okinawan Longevity: Seniors outliving the kids

sentient during slaughter but must also suffer the excruciating shock. The current serves to minimize inconvenient flailing that would interfere with the slaughter process.

73 Legally, the term *free-range* is virtually meaningless. The federal government has only the vague requirement that the animals, from which such meat is derived, have access to the outdoors. This could mean one small opening for thousands of birds. There is nothing in the law to prevent these “free-range” animals from receiving the same cruel treatment imposed on other factory-farmed animals. Moreover, *Consumer Reports* found free-range poultry actually more contaminated with salmonella and campylobacter than other poultry.

74 In 2000, New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation and its Department of Health released a flyer called “Eating Sport Fish.” The advice speaks for itself: No one should eat more than one meal of fish per week from any of the state’s fresh waters; chemical contaminants may be a problem; trim all fat; don’t consume cooking liquids. On the other hand, if you still want to enjoy the “fun” of sport fishing but don’t want to contaminate yourself, the flyer recommends catch and release. But don’t tear out the hook—cut its leader. Also, avoid playing fish to exhaustion.

75 Okinawa has the healthiest and longest-lived people in the world, boasting the highest percentage of people who live to 100 years old. The super-seniors found there also tend to retain their mental keenness, and few need to live in nursing homes. No surprise: They eat very little food of animal origin, according to a 25-year study on the island. Genes could take some of the credit, although those of the younger generation, who have adopted Western eating habits, are, in general, projected to not outlive their parents.

76 As markets for animal-based foods become more global, “carnivore conflicts” increasingly threaten international peace. In just the first month after a “mad cow” was

discovered in Canada, the beef industry there estimated that import bans cost it (U.S.)\$410 million. In 2001, hoof-and-mouth disease (see #57) instantly resulted in countries all over the world severing trade with the entire European Union, although the disease was mostly confined to England. Meanwhile, trade wars simmer between the U.S. and the European Union over hormones in beef. Worldwide, varying sanitary standards in meat production leave nations at odds. In 1997 the United Nations reported that over 100 countries were involved in fishing disputes.

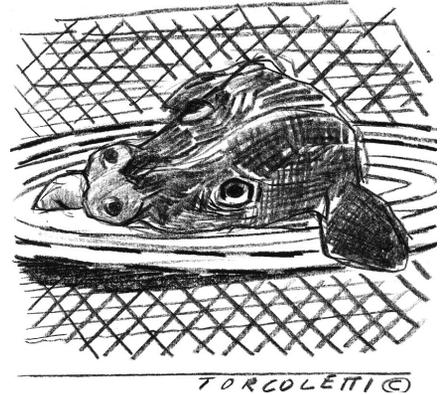
77 The population explosion should not be thought of exclusively in terms of people—not when the combined weight of the world’s 1.2 billion domesticated cattle exceeds that of the entire human population. Cattle disrupt ecosystems on over half the world’s land mass. In the past half century alone more than 60 percent of the world’s rangeland has been damaged by overgrazing, the most pervasive cause of desertification.

78 It is estimated that 40 to 50 percent of U.S. dairy cows are infected with mastitis at any one time. The painful udder infection is considered a man-made condition. Cows get it by improper care, poor milking procedures, overmilking, and improperly functioning milking machines. The genetically engineered bovine growth hormone *Bovine Somatotropin* (bST), which boosts milk yields, is also linked to mastitis.

79 Animal foods are high in sodium, which causes the blood to retain water. They also cause plaque to build up in the arteries, narrowing the flow area for blood. Combine these phenomena and you have a recipe for a disease that afflicts about 50 million Americans: high blood pressure. You can take calcium channel blockers and diuretics to control it, but studies warn that you risk losing intellectual function if you do so.

80 In the early twentieth century man learned how to extract nitrogen from the air, cheaply and in

large quantities. The discovery ultimately allowed 2 billion more people to inhabit the Earth and has given humans the luxury of feeding crops to livestock. Yet what gives the world abundance has, by way of runoff, poisoned waterways from the China countryside to the Ohio Valley. (Excess nitrogen causes algae to grow, robbing waterways of oxygen.) Waterways in



North America and Europe have 20 times the nitrogen they did before the Industrial Revolution. With a world today overflowing with meat eaters, even human sewage has become more nitrogen-rich. To produce a gram of meat you need over 15 grams of nitrogen; to produce a gram of wheat flour, only 3 grams.

81 Food animals are transported in all weather. When it is cold, animals may freeze right to the sides of trucks or become frozen in the urine and feces that build up on truck floors. In hot weather, heat stress kills many. Losses, however, are figured into the cost of doing business. According to swine specialist Kenneth B. Kephart, “Even with a zero death rate that might be associated with providing more space on a truck, the hogs that we save would not be enough to pay for the increased transportation costs of hauling fewer hogs on a load.”

82 When meat, fish, or poultry is barbecued, dripped fat over the open flame sends up plumes of smoke that coat the food with carcinogens. Other unhealthful chemicals are created just by extended cooking times. Chemists are telling meat eaters today to keep those grill times down. Even

Exotic & Endangered: Conduit for deadly pathogens

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environmentalists are saying that restaurant grilling is an important source of soot and smog. But you still need to cook your meat thoroughly: How else are you going to kill all of those nasty bacteria?

83 As a result of the introduction of cattle to this hemisphere, major forest fires in the American West occur today at the rate of one every three years, where earlier they may have occurred only once in a century. Historically, ranchers suppressed “cool” grass fires on the bovines’ behalf, allowing tinderboxes of dense foliage to build up below taller trees. Factor in cheatgrass, a non-native plant that could not have taken root in this hemisphere without overgrazed lands. This prolific weed provides dry, papery kindling in early summer, perfectly conducive to massive forest fires.

84 Negotiating truck on- and off-ramps can be a cruel challenge for large mammals bred for muscle without attendant skeletal strength. Broken bones are common. Likewise, the bones of egg-laying hens are especially fragile, weakened by a life of intense egg production. Industry research has revealed that by slaughter time over one in four will have broken bones. And since chicken catchers—the laborers who gather up birds into transport cages for slaughter—are poorly paid by the job, not the hour, they are invariably swift and brutal on the birds.

85 Clog up your arteries on a diet loaded with saturated animal fat year after year and you risk a heart attack or stroke. Of course, you can opt to avert these afflictions with an expensive, though now-routine, operation known as angioplasty. Performed with a balloon-tipped catheter, it works to flattens plaque against artery walls, thus opening up passageways for blood flow. (Often it needs to be repeated.) A whole-foods vegetarian diet—along with regular exercise—can have the same effect.

86 More than half of the nation’s seafood companies do not follow federal food-safety guidelines. Regulators from the FDA visit processors only once a year to oversee essentially volun-

tary company sanitary measures. Often, inspections entail nothing more than an overview of company paperwork. Moreover, three-quarters of all fish consumed in the U.S. are imported. Only a few of the largest foreign processing plants are ever seen by U.S. inspectors.

87 Joel Fuhrman, M.D., who has cured hundreds of people from chronic diseases with no-nonsense vegetarian diet plans, says that it is impossible to devise a diet that conforms to the recommendations in the scientific literature about food and health if animal foods are included in significant quantities. Sure, meats contain nutrients, but plant foods give you much more nutrition for your calorie.

88 Just as smokestack emissions result in acid rain, toxic fumes from decomposing livestock waste on factory farms become poisonous to fish when returned to the Earth via rainfall. The errant ammonia also ravages terrestrial ecosystems because certain plant species that thrive on nitrogen are favored over those, such as wild prairie flowers, that don’t. Fallout can degrade environments as far away as 300 miles.

89 Eating meat must, more and more, be considered risky behavior, as humans increasingly contract diseases from animals: Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Nipah virus, influenza, and now SARS can all be counted as examples. “Exotic,” and often endangered, animal cuisine, in particular, provides the conduit for a potentially deadly disease. In China, so-called wet markets display caged and invariably sickly creatures, such as cobras, civet cats, and anteaters, for consumers who want that “taste of the wild.” In Africa, the bushmeat trade not only threatens the very existence of our closest relatives—the larger primates—it is blamed for the spread of Ebola and AIDS. Logging, which allows people into pristine forests, and contemporary air travel continue to deftly facilitated both.

90 Even if meat eaters are spared the big killers that can cut life short (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer), they may be robbing themselves of good health just the same. A

Feedlot Fish: Strange sex characteristics downstream

meat diet is sure to lead to nagging conditions and ailments. A whole-foods, high-fiber vegetarian diet, full of grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, is just the ticket to ease arthritis pain, cool irritable-bowel disorders, mitigate common back pain, relieve cold and allergy symptoms, and lower risk for gallstones, kidney stones, and heartburn. But perhaps the greatest gift of all from a vegetarian diet is a life free of constipation!

91 At some slaughterhouses, drains and sewers become backed up with guts and coagulated blood. The pools that develop may rise to workers' ankles. Whole heads of shackled animals may even be dragged through them. The muck may splash up onto the animals, spreading contamination.

92 As fishers find that their usual catch has been diminished by overfishing, they are likely to turn to species lower on the aquatic food chain. Knowingly or not, consumers are putting fish that would otherwise be food for endangered fish on their own dinner plates. If the trend continues, experts predict marine food webs will collapse in 25 to 35 years (see #4).

93 In nature, swine avoid filth and will trek and root over 9 miles in a night. Yet factory internment brings a breeding sow cold, strawless floors, noxious filth, deafening noise, and space barely bigger than her own body. This highly intelligent creature will be driven insane as she endures repeated pregnancies via artificial insemination. Her body will be pinned in place to expose her teats to her piglets. When her productive capacity wanes, she will be sent to slaughter.

94 To a great extent, it's the high-energy starch of corn feed that makes beef cattle grow to slaughter weight so quickly—14 to 16 months today, versus the traditional 4 to 5 years on grass (see #46). In terms of energy concentration, today's feed has been compared to Snickers bars. As a consequence, feedlot manure is too nitrogen rich to be used as fertilizer. And it is so laced with hormones and other pharmaceuticals that fish down-

stream can be found with strange sexual characteristics.

95 Except for a single decade from time to time, the climate above America's Ogallala aquifer is bone-dry. Thanks to titanic amounts of water tapped from this ancient underground lake, however, for the last fifty years the land has been blanketed with thirsty feed grains. Farmers in some years have irrigated their land with more water than the annual flow of the Colorado River. Since this aquifer was originally the gift of a glacier in another age, today's rainfall has essentially no recharging effect. Consequently, the experts give only fifty years before this phenomenal creation of the natural world is gone forever.

96 A 25-percent decline in heart disease in Poland in the early 1990s coincided with the country's switch to a market economy that ended government subsidies to meat. A switch primarily to vegetable fats and the increased importation of fruit were also seen as factors in the decline, according to a report made by a team of multinational researchers. The authors of the report noted that the decline was "apparently without precedent in peacetime."

97 To produce foie gras, male ducks are force-fed 6 or 7 pounds of grain three times a day with an air-driven feeder tube. This torturous process goes on for 28 days until the ducks' livers, from which the pâté is made, bloat to 6 to 12 times their normal size. About 10 percent of the ducks don't make it to slaughter. They die when their stomachs burst.

98 Every year, 24,000 fishers worldwide die on the job, making fishing the most dangerous occupa-

tion in the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. In the U.S., a fisherman is 16

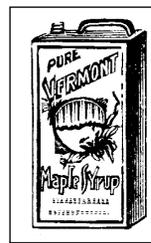
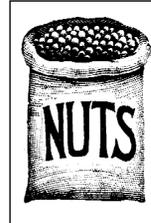
times as likely to die on the job as a policeman or fireman. On one day in 2003, more than 200 fishers were drowned after nearly 60 Bangladeshi fishing boats sank during a storm. As fish become increasingly scarce, thanks to unsustainable practices, fishers must take more risks just getting to fishing grounds worth the trip.

99 Every day 600 people in the U.S. die so suddenly from cardiac arrest that they don't even make it to the hospital. Of the victims, 90 percent have two or more arteries narrowed by atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), a disease inexorably linked to a meat-based diet.

100 Vegetarians are believed to be less likely to suffer from certain cancers, stroke, and hardening of the arteries because their blood tends to contain high levels of salicylic acid, the active ingredient in aspirin. A Scottish study found vegetarian subjects with levels of salicylic acid 12 times as high as meat- and fish-eating subjects. The chemical is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent found in abundance in fruits and vegetables.

101 A symposium of scientists in the mid-1990s predicted that energy shortages, exhausted land, scarce water, and a doubling population will impose more of a plant-based diet onto America's dinner tables by 2050. They acknowledged that this diet, born of scarcity, would

"actually be a healthier one." Surely, the sooner we all learn to enjoy it the better!



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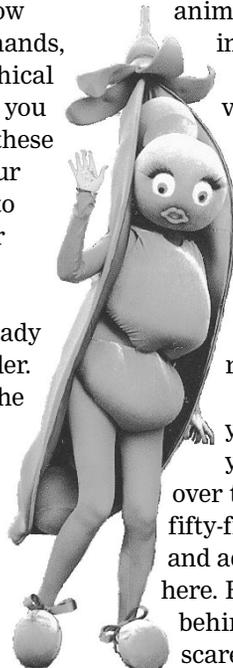
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History of the VivaVegie Society

The VivaVegie Society is a non-profit, 501(c)3, organization, dedicated to public education about vegetarianism. When the group was formed in 1991, its objective was vegetarian street advocacy—reaching out to New York City pedestrians with the group’s hallmark publication, “101 Reasons Why I’m a Vegetarian.” Then, as now,

founder Pamela Rice would wear a signboard—created by her sister, Julia Fauci—which reads “Ask Me Why I’m a Vegetarian.”

Thanks to a gift from costume designer Janet Bloor, the group has enjoyed the use of a giant “pea pod” suit (see left) to draw interest from pedestrians. VivaVegie makes appearances at street events in New York City where it knows it can find great numbers of people. At the Easter Parade, one recent year, VivaVegie handed out—to willing, inquisitive recipients—2,000 copies of “101 Reasons Why I’m a Vegetarian” in only three hours.

VivaVegie regularly enjoys coverage of its activities—in the past, most notably, from CNN, *The New York Times*, WNYC-Radio, *The New Yorker*, *TimeOut*, and New York 1.

Since 1992, VivaVegie has published its own magazine, *The VivaVine*. And in 1999, the group opened a vegetarian center, which it continues to maintain.

Founder Pamela Rice is an expert on vegetarian issues. She gives lectures on government subsidies to the meat industry and the environmental impact of society’s meat-centered diet. She has organized and emceed numerous vegetarian events in New York City.

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