



## U.S. ate 777 mad cows (so far)

by Jeff Nelson

The United States has lagged far behind the rest of the world when it comes to testing for mad cow disease. This is primarily because the USDA is run by people looking out for meat industry interests, rather than the public's interests. Like most U.S. government agencies these days, the USDA is run by officials from the industries they are supposed to be regulating, in this case the meat, dairy and processed food industry.

Despite USDA best efforts to test as few cows as possible, mad cow has been discovered repeatedly in the U.S. herd. (For years the U.S. tested only one out of every 18,000 cows slaughtered, while European countries were testing one out of every three cows, or in many cases -- every cow.)

The USDA says it isn't testing for mad cow as a protective measure to the population, they are testing simply to "surveil" how widespread the problem may be. In other words, they're not testing to prevent infected cows from entering the food chain as many other countries do, they just want to get an estimate of how many mad cows are likely in the U.S. food chain.

The answer, from their own testing, is now available: statistically, there have been at least 777 cows with mad cow disease which have probably entered the food chain

since U.S. testing began.

To arrive at this number is simply a matter of mathematics.

According to USDA figures, since U.S. began testing for mad cow 8 years ago, we have tested about 773,000 cows.

Only in the most recent few years did the U.S. begin testing using the more sensitive tests which have long been widely used in the rest of the world.

Since that time, the more sensitive testing has discovered at least three mad cows in the U.S. herd. (The term "at least" applies here because there are many cases of suspect U.S. mad cows where after getting positive results, samples from the cows in question were "lost" or "compromised" by USDA labs, and so without proper samples for additional tests by independent labs, the USDA simply ruled them "negative." There have also been multiple cases of cows suspected of having mad cow being destroyed or "lost" by USDA representatives before required USDA testing could be performed.)

Based on three known mad cows out of the approximately 773,000 cows tested to date in the U.S., we know that 0.0000039% of cows tested in the U.S. herd are infected with mad cow disease.

An estimated 25 million cattle are slaughtered in the U.S. each year, so during



the eight years of the sketchy U.S. testing program, approximately 200 million cattle have been slaughtered.

Applying the known mad cow rate in the tested sample of 0.0000039% to the total of 200 million US cattle slaughtered in eight years -- reveals that there were probably 780 mad cows in the U.S.

herd during the past 8 years. Subtracting the three cows actually identified by the testing, this means that there were 777 other mad cows which were slaughtered in the U.S. since testing began, but which were not tested for and therefore not detected.

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## Meat-industrial complex How factory farms undercut public health

By Mark Winne

Drive through Don Oppliger's Feed Yard in Clovis, New Mexico, and you'll see 35,000 head of beef cattle confined to pens that stretch across the flat, barren landscape.

The constant shuffling of hooves raises a bacteria-laden dust cloud that's carried by the prevailing winds into west Texas, where it joins the plumes of hundreds of other feedlots. At one end of the complex sits a giant lagoon that catches the operation's chemicals, urine, antibiotics and other effluvia. In the narrow strip of land that separates the fencing from the road lie the carcasses of dead cows (a.k.a. "downers"), eyes bugged out, tongues dangling and bellies bloated in the summer heat.

Moving from bovine to porcine, factory hog farms generate an odor so intense it would knock a buzzard off a shit-wagon. In cramped warehouse structures, as many as 20,000 hogs are confined for their entire lives. After five months, the mature hogs are sent off to the slaughterhouse to have their throats slit and carcasses dipped in chemical vats to loosen their skins. According to Anita Poole, legal counsel for the Oklahoma-based Kerr Center, which has fought that state's takeover by the hog industry, "The average Joe Blow who might stumble into a hog facility would never want to eat pork again."

U.S. shoppers spend less on food as a percentage of their total annual expenditures than anyone else in the world. But this is because factory livestock farms-labeled "concentrated animal feeding operations" (CAFOs) by government agencies-don't pay for the natural resources they have squandered, the farm labor they have maltreated, the declining health of residents who live near their operations, or the animals that have been exploited far beyond their biological capabilities.

Texas County is in Oklahoma's Panhandle region. In 1990 it had 11,000 hogs. Today, according to the Kerr

Center, the number has swollen to more than one million. For a region that was in economic decline, the offer by Seaboard Farms to locate an industrial-style hog operation held out the promise of reinvigorating the flagging economy, creating desperately needed jobs and re-filling the empty school desks.

But it came with a price. Seaboard demanded and received \$60 million in local and state government assistance. This worked out to \$27,552 per new job, a tolerable sum if the jobs paid \$20 per hour, but the average hourly Seaboard wage was less than \$8. In spite of the low wages, the deal might have been justified if the community received a commensurate growth in tax revenues. But by the time the county completed the financing deal with Seaboard, they had agreed to taxes of \$9,700 per year until 2017 on a business site valued at \$100 million. Even after Seaboard agreed to pay \$175,000 annually to the district's school board for the next 25 years, this still amounted to the county forgoing \$120,000 per year.

Factory hog operations not only pay a meager return on a community's investment, they also extract a high price from the surrounding region. With Seaboard's influx of jobs came an increase in population, which in turn brought about a sharp rise in crime. From 1990 to 1997, crime in Texas County increased by 74 percent compared to a 12 percent decline in other rural Oklahoma counties. And factory farm workers in the West and Midwest are increasingly Mexican immigrants, only about half of whom are legally documented. They bring with them a host of needs that these rural communities are unequipped to handle.

But the worst problems are created by the ungodly amount of manure-an estimated 15 million pounds per day in Texas County. Because of water run-off from factory



The sorry gaze of a factory farm commodity.

farms, both groundwater and surface water quality have declined. Even worse, the Ogallala Aquifer upon which the region depends for its water is being depleted at a rapid rate. The Oklahoma Water Resource Board reported that water levels in many Texas County wells have dropped 50 to 100 feet over the last 30 years, due in large part to the high water demand of factory hog operations and the irrigated farmland that supports them.

Across the nation, factory farms of all types are wreaking environmental havoc. A 1995 North Carolina manure

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# Letters

## Raising Veg Kids

I just received your newspaper and was struck by the letter from the vegan parents who have non-vegan children and by your response (Ask Jo, March 2006). (I agreed with everything you said except the allowance restrictions.) I've been a vegetarian for more years than I can remember and a vegan for almost 18 years. I didn't know how to teach my then toddler daughter to respect all life if we ate it. Both my children decided as teens that they wanted to try non-vegetarian foods. I told them that while part of me wanted them to be as I was, most of all I respected their desire to become independent, thinking, adults with their own values. My oldest daughter is now a lacto-ovo vegetarian and my youngest daughter also eats chicken. They buy it with their own money. And yes it from their allowance as well as from what they earn. I believe allowance is given so the child may learn how to handle money, and while I made restrictions on what they could watch and the like, it's realistically impossible to restrict what they buy to eat. They respect my beliefs and while I sometimes struggle with their non-vegan choices, I focus on the fact they have made independent choices, that they prefer organic foods, that they don't eat much junk food, and that they care about animals and the environment.

Thank you for all the wonderful work you do.

Sincerely,  
Mary Rothschild  
Manotick ON Canada

Dear Jo Stepaniak: I appreciate so much your compassionate and informative responses in your "Ask Jo" feature in EarthSave News. One question/answer in the December, 2005 issue was especially interesting to me. I am also sixty-one years old as is the reader, and I too made my "life-altering transformation immediately after being confronted with graphic evidence about animal abuse in the food industry..."

For me, it happened overnight in 1989 when I read "Compassion the Ultimate Ethic: An Exploration of Veganism" by Victoria Moran. At that point, I decided I could no longer be a part of the cruel practices of factory farming. Immediately I stopped eating meat and chose to be vegan for ethical reasons. At that point my three children were grown and gone.

The succeeding 17 years have brought me great peace of mind. The children, their spouses, and my husband respect my choice and are content knowing that only vegetarian food will be served in my home. When I am asked what I eat, I reply, "A variety of colorful, delicious, nutritious plant foods, thereby contributing positively to a peaceful, non-violent world."

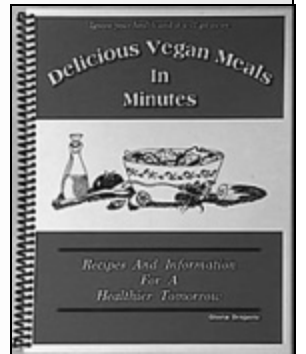
I enjoyed visiting your website and reading your essays including "The Compassionate Life: Bringing Heaven Down to Earth."

I am grateful for and totally support your work.

Lorelei de la Reza  
Houston, TX

**Jo Stepaniak Responds:** Thank you for your beautiful letter and the confirmation that everyone can make positive changes regardless of age, conditioning, family, or past. Your compassionate choices and approach surely have a beneficial effect on all who come in contact with you. You are an inspiration!

## CORRECTION



Last issue's review of "Delicious Vegan Meals in Minutes" listed the wrong website for more information and to purchase the book. The correct web address is

<http://welcome.to/veganhealthandrecipes>  
The book's author, Gloria Drnjevic, can be reached at 360-479-6652, or [gl\\_vegan@comcast.net](mailto:gl_vegan@comcast.net).

# San Diego Sushi High in Mercury

## Tuna trend means women and children must avoid tuna

A recent undercover investigation of San Diego's top sushi restaurants is adding to the bad news about high levels of mercury in tuna. The investigation found that 1 in 5, or 20 percent, of the tuna tested had dangerous levels exceeding that of king mackerel, which the FDA warns women and children to never eat. The public health group GotMercury.Org in partnership with San Diego KGTV television news secretly tested 20 pieces of tuna sushi from 10 of San Diego's top sushi restaurants in April.

The San Diego investigation follows on the heels of GotMercury.Org's investigation of Los Angeles sushi in March 2006, which created international concern after a Los Angeles Times article.

"We are seeing a toxic trend here in California," said Eli Saddler, public health analyst for GotMercury.org. "Families in San Diego and across the nation need to know the risks of eating tuna sushi and avoid it for the sake of their children. With so many healthier seafood choices available, why take the risk?"

The FDA data reports that fresh and frozen tuna averaged 0.383 ppm, significantly lower than GotMercury.Org's

results showed an average of 0.584 from 32 samples in San Diego and Los Angeles – over 150 percent of the mercury levels reported by the FDA. Overall, 25 percent of tuna tested in the two cities exceeded the federal advisory level for women and children. About 16 percent of the tuna tested – 1 in 6 tuna sushi – should not have been eaten by any consumer – man, woman, or child.

"In our combined studies, 1 out of 4 tuna sushi tested exceeded what is considered safe by the federal government," said Eli Saddler, public health analyst for GotMercury.Org. "This new round of testing affirms the need for women of childbearing age and children to avoid tuna served as sushi, sashimi, or ahi."

The FDA and EPA already warn women and children not to eat king mackerel (0.730 ppm), swordfish (0.970 ppm), shark (0.988 ppm), and tilefish (1.45 ppm). However, the FDA advisory on tuna is confusing and weak regarding tuna and differs from the calculations used by the EPA.

"Mercury contamination is a serious issue for pregnant women, children, and women who are even considering getting pregnant," said Erin Thompson of Women's Voices for

the Earth. "Women buy tuna for themselves and their children. Therefore, it is absolutely critical that women be informed about what types of tuna to avoid, and it the responsibility of the FDA to provide this information."

Consumers are at risk by eating tuna sushi or sashimi and should be aware of the risks, especially women who are or intend to become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children. Children developing in the womb and young children are particularly vulnerable to methylmercury, the toxic organic form found in fish, because it can harm neurological development – resulting lower IQ, nervous system damage, cardiovascular ailments, and motor skill problems.

"Sushi can be part of a healthy diet, but consumers need to know that too much tuna can be toxic," said Eli Saddler, public health analyst for GotMercury.Org. "Given that samples vary widely in mercury levels, there is no way to know how much methylmercury you are ingesting when you eat tuna sushi, sashimi, or ahi."

GotMercury.Org is a free, online mercury-in-seafood calculator that was recently revised to include the FDA's 2006 mercury in fish and shellfish data.

# Group Warns of Toxic Tuna

## Tests on sushi from L.A.-area eateries raise questions about FDA mercury monitoring.

Tuna is arguably the most popular offering at sushi bars. Many customers like slices of blood-red fish slathered in a spicy wasabi sauce. Others prefer the more simple nigiri style, which is sliced tuna over rice.

But now a public health advocacy group is warning about the safety of tuna sushi and questioning the Food and Drug Administration's system of monitoring the mercury levels in fish, based on tests on a small sample of such delicacies at Los Angeles restaurants.

The group, GotMercury.org, purchased sushi from five top Zagat-rated restaurants in Southern California and from the Benihana Inc. chain in late January. Instead of eating the orders, the Forrest Knolls, Calif.-based organization took the fish for testing at CRG Marine Laboratories in Torrance.

The mercury levels of the 12 tuna samples averaged about double the FDA standard, and a quarter of the orders were near or above the limit where the agency says fish should not be sold, said Eli Saddler, a public health analyst and attorney for GotMercury.org.

"Eating sushi has become the new Russian roulette," Saddler said.

The advocacy group focused on sushi because the popular food has become one of the largest sources of fresh tuna consumption. Saddler believes this is the first time an independent group has attempted to monitor mercury levels in sushi.

The samples came from some of Southern

California's toniest restaurants - Matsuhisa, Sushi Katsuya, Sushi Sasabune, HamaSaku and Sushi Nozawa. GotMercury.org also went to Benihana in Santa Monica because it's part of a large national chain where sushi is



featured.

"Our testing shows a pattern of mercury levels being significantly higher than what the FDA reports," Saddler said.

Mercury, which is linked to reduced brain develop-

ment in fetuses and young children, is found in at least trace levels in nearly all fish.

The FDA and Environmental Protection Agency have warned that women who may become pregnant and young children shouldn't eat certain high-mercury fish, including swordfish, shark, tilefish and king mackerel. They should also limit their consumption of tuna, the agencies have said.

David Acheson, the FDA's chief medical officer, said the agency hadn't advocated large-scale testing of fish because of the enormous time and expense such an endeavor would take.

Saddler's organization also wants restaurants and grocery stores to stop selling the species known to be highest in mercury and that frequently exceed the FDA maximum threshold unless seafood suppliers provide proof that fish being sold don't exceed the FDA's limits.

As a branch of the Turtle Island Restoration Network, GotMercury.org previously has pushed for policy changes involving fish and mercury in California. It was one of the groups that persuaded California Atty. Gen. Bill Lockyer to sue the state's major supermarket and restaurant chains for allegedly violating California's Proposition 65 by failing to post signs warning patrons. Benihana and 10 other restaurant chains settled the suit last year and have posted warning signs. The supermarket case is pending, but many of the chains also have posted signs.

# EarthSave NEWS

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EarthSave educates people about the powerful effects our food choices have on the environment, our health and all life on Earth, and encourages a shift toward a healthy, plant-based diet.

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The editor reserves the right to reject or edit all submissions. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of EarthSave International.

EarthSave educates, inspires and empowers people to shift toward a diet centered on fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes -- food choices that are healthy for people and for the planet. Our influence and effectiveness is dependent upon our members, donors, and benefactors.

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# How foul is fowl?

by John McDougall, MD

Chicken and turkey are called "white meats," as in "clean white meat," and are considered to be health foods. The truth is fowl are filthy with a multitude of disease-causing ingredients. The horrible threat of a bird flu pandemic may cause health-conscious people to examine more closely the facts behind this traditional meal centerpiece—and we may see something like how mad cow disease, with all the emotions it aroused, caused people to rethink beef. Even though to date only a handful of people have died from either of these animal-borne infections, the fear of these two diseases could save millions of lives as people refrain from eating the more ordinary, but very lethal, parts of an animal's tissues.

The tissues of all fowl consist primarily of artery-clogging fat and cholesterol, and bone-destroying protein and acid. They are completely devoid of energy-giving carbohydrate and bowel-moving fiber. Like "sauce on the goose" they are contaminated with deadly microbes and cancer-causing chemicals. Have I stimulated your appetite?—to learn more?

## Amazing What People Eat

A fowl is a bird of any kind, although some types of birds use the word specifically in their names; for example, Guinea fowl and Peafowl. Chickens and turkeys are the most popular birds found on people's dinner plates. In the US, over 35 billion tons of chicken are consumed annually, with a per capita intake of 87 pounds a year. About 18 pounds per person of turkey are consumed each year. The scare of bird flu has already begun to take a bite, with chicken consumption down almost 90% in some European markets and India, and chicken prices are plummeting.

Besides chicken and turkey, Westerners also eat ducks, guinea hens, quail, pheasants, geese, and ostriches. In other cultures, people are known to eat anything they can catch, including parrots, swans, emus, rheas, and even penguins.

Parts commonly eaten are the muscles, skin, and fat of the fowl. People also eat the heart, liver, and gizzard — collectively known as the giblets. A prized delicacy, Foie gras (which is French for "fat liver"), is made from the enlarged livers of male ducks and geese. The Chinese even eat the chicken's feet—and chicken feet represented 43% of US poultry sales to China. (Recipe: Wash chicken feet. Chop off toenails. The feet are first fried, then marinated, and finally steamed.)

## Fowl Is Rich Feast Food—at Best/Worst

Birds as food have traditionally been considered a delicacy—a fare reserved for holidays, like Thanksgiving, or as a treat for Sunday's dinner. Today's practice of "making every day a feast day" has caused the worldwide epidemic of malnutrition from over-nutrition—now the most important killer of all. Too many calories, and too much fat and protein, mean disease—like obesity, heart attacks, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, and much more suffering.

The fat and protein content of a bird depends in large part upon its diet and activity level. (Heard that one before?) Wild birds are generally much leaner, and therefore, lower in fat and higher in protein. Meat breeds are chickens developed for their quick growth—heavy with fat and muscle—they are mass produced specifically to be eaten. The fat and cholesterol in fowl permeate its flesh; they cannot be cut away.

Birds and bird parts with a lower fat content are by nature higher in protein. Excess protein is as damaging to health as is excess fat—causing kidney stones, loss of kidney function, osteoporosis, and cancers (lymphomas). You will hardly find a "micro-spec" of dietary fiber or carbohydrate in a bird carcass.

## Bugs in Your Birds

Bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi found in fowl cause illness and death in humans. The most common pathogens found in commercially processed bird flesh are from their own bowel bacteria and these organisms are Campylobacter, E. coli, and salmonella. During the manufacturing processes used to bring chickens to market, "fecal soup" is created as thousands of dirty chickens are bathed together. In

one study of retail markets in the Washington, D.C. area from June 1999 to July 2000, 70.7% of chicken samples were found to be contaminated with Campylobacter, and 91.1% of the stores visited sold Campylobacter-contaminated chickens. E. coli were found in 38.7% of chicken samples.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 14% of the turkey samples yielded Campylobacter and 11.9% were positive for E. coli. Salmonella was found in 25% of both of these white meats.

Infections with any of these three bacteria can cause symptoms very similar to the flu, like nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, fever, chills, weakness and exhaustion; and can be deadly for children, the elderly, and people with suppressed immune systems. Infections are caused by close contact with the carcasses of birds. Eating the flesh of birds is as close as you can get to their germ-infested tissues. Although cooking destroys most of these infectious agents, people eat, often unknowingly, partially cooked and raw meats.

## Is Bird Flu a Real Threat?

During the 1997 epidemic of bird flu in Hong Kong eighteen people were infected by contact with birds, resulting in six fatalities. Since then the virus has been spreading from Southern China to other parts of the world by migratory birds and, less commonly, by bird trafficking. This year (2006) bird flu is expected to reach the US. From December 2003 through March 6, 2006, a total of 175 laboratory-confirmed human avian influenza A (H5N1) infections were reported to WHO from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. Of these, 95 were fatal.<sup>3</sup> Thus, more than half of the people who get bird flu die. There is no reliable vaccine for prevention, nor any effective treatment after infection occurs.

In addition to infecting wild birds and poultry, this virus has jumped the species barriers to infect cats, pigs, horses and other mammals. Right now your best strategy is to avoid contact with potentially infected fowl. People travelling abroad are advised, "...not to visit bird or poultry farms and markets, to avoid close contact with live or dead poultry, not to eat raw or poorly cooked poultry and to wash hands often with soap and water."<sup>4</sup> This message means don't handle (except for your own pets), cook or eat birds!

Whether an H5N1 influenza pandemic will occur depends on whether or not the present viral strains mutate so they can efficiently transfer from humans-to-humans. Influenza A viruses are known for their ease in transforming. Although no human-to-human transmission was documented initially, sporadic cases of such transmission are expected to occur as the infection spreads worldwide.<sup>5</sup> The biological behavior of this virus indicates that once a pandemic begins, isolation of sick people is not likely to contain the spread of disease. A specific vaccine against the bird flu will not be available until 6 to 12 months after the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> This message means once this disease begins to spread freely among people, you must isolate yourself from the outside world.

## Antibiotic-laced Meat and Vegetables

Antibiotics are used in factory-farmed animals to help prevent bird-borne infections and to stimulate growth in order to enhance the profits of the poultry industry. However, heavy use of these drugs hurts people by encouraging the development of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria. When people become sick they find that the powerful drugs

they need have been rendered ineffective.

These antibiotics contaminate plants, and are therefore consumed by even the strictest of vegetarians. Manure is used worldwide to grow crops—especially in organic and sustainable agriculture. The antibiotics, like tetracyclines, are incompletely absorbed by the animal's gut and are then deposited with the animal's feces onto the ground—to be absorbed and incorporated into the growing plants.<sup>7</sup> These drugs present health risks for people who are allergic and become another source for antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

## More Chemicals in Your Chickens

Poultry is high on the food chain. Chemicals from the environment undergo bioconcentration when the chickens eat the grains—or worse yet when chickens are fed pellets containing remnants of dead cows and/or fish meal. In these cases the biomagnification of dan-

## Point of View

Thanksgiving dinner's sad and thankless

Christmas dinner's dark and blue

When you stop and try to see it

From the turkey's point of view.

Sunday dinner isn't sunny

Easter feasts are just bad luck

When you see it from the viewpoint

Of a chicken or a duck.

Oh how I once loved tuna salad

Pork and lobsters, lamb chops too

'Til I stopped and looked at dinner

From the dinner's point of view.

-- Shel Silverstein



## Vegan-Organic Gardening

by M. Joy Katz, Gentle World

At the weekly farmers' market, I asked the many local organic growers if they used blood and bone to grow their produce. The common reply was "yes". I didn't know what to purchase: food grown with chemicals or blood and bone (yuck!). I went on an organic inspection along with the local certifier, which made buying organic food less desirable because of my strong stance on veganism. I needed a solution to this problem. I never thought I would get my hands in the dirt with the worms, but I decided to grow vegan-organic food for Shangri-La, our New Paradigm Center in New Zealand.

We started with two large plots for vegetables which were a success...more watermelons than we could eat, delicious sweet corn, excellent potatoes, and tomatoes to give away free to everyone I knew in town five times over! It was enough to inspire me to learn all I could. We added a third garden plot for next season. These three large garden plots are surrounded by native bush. The pristine rivers that come straight to us from the surrounding forest flow by the gardens as our irrigation source, if necessary, but it usually rains enough to water the gardens naturally. Our goal, among many others, is to grow all our own produce. In addition, we planted 137 fruit trees: mandarins, oranges, avocados, pears, plums, apples, feijoas, blueberries, bananas, peaches, nectarines, cherimoyas, sapotes, macadamias and almonds.

Gentle World's Center in Hawaii also has a vegan-organic garden, but it does not supply us with all our produce, yet. Here we use a raised bed system with minimal tilling.

The 'veganic' gardening system avoids chemicals, as well as livestock manures and animal remains from slaughterhouses/processing plants. Fertility of the soil is maintained with vegetable compost, crop rotation, mulching, (we covered all 3 of our gardens with a thick

layer of hay mulch and put them to sleep for the winter) and other methods. In the autumn, we planted a nitrogen-fixing cover crop of lupines and broad beans (fava beans). By growing our food veganically, there is also a greater hope of eliminating transmittable diseases and bacteria. We find growing 'veganic' to be a healthier and more compassionate alternative.

Soil conditioners and fertilizers that we use include: lime, gypsum, rock phosphorus, dolomite, rock dusts, rock potash, wood ash, hay mulches, composted organic matter (fruit and vegetable rinds, leaves, and grass clippings), green manures or nitrogen-fixing crops, liquid feeds such as comfrey or nettles, and seaweed (fresh, liquid or meal) for trace elements. Seaweed is best used harvested fresh from the sea as opposed to washed up and sitting on beaches. Marigolds have a root system that improves the soil and repels insect pests, so we plant them around the garden. For now, these are the methods we are using. We have also been enlightened to the system of "no tilling" which is gentle on the earth and doesn't kill worms. We are moving in this direction.

Returning to Hawaii, I went to a natural food store and found tomatoes with a sticker saying "Vegan Tomatoes"; organically grown with Neem oil and vegan fertilizer. There must be others who feel similarly and are demanding the growers to elevate the standards. I also received word that

one of New Zealand's organic certifiers has recently modified their standards by not allowing the use of blood and bone anymore. I believe this is because of United Kingdom's problems with Mad Cow and Hoof & Mouth Disease.

Veganic gardening in our magnificent setting in New Zealand has been fulfilling to my soul and beyond anything I ever conceived of before.

*M. Joy Katz is a founding member of Gentle World, and the co-author of "Incredibly Delicious; Recipes for a New Paradigm." For more info, visit [www.GentleWorld.org](http://www.GentleWorld.org)*



## MAD COW/FROM PAGE 1

Since flesh from many different cows is mixed together when making hamburger meat, the number of possible consumers exposed to mad cow material is very difficult to estimate.

The North/South distribution of mad cows in the U.S. has been from Washington State to Texas, and East/West distribution is from Alabama to Washington state (basically the North/South and East/West borders of the U.S. cattle industry).

The type of cows found to have mad cow in the USDA results to date were: 1 dairy cow, 2 beef cows.

In a recent article for United Press International, science reporter Steve Mitchell writes:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture was quick to assure the public earlier this week that the third case of mad cow disease did not pose a risk to them, but what federal officials have not acknowledged is that this latest case indicates the deadly disease has been circulating in U.S. herds for at least a decade.

The second case, which was detected last year in a Texas cow and which USDA officials were reluctant to verify, was approximately 12 years old.

These two cases (the latest was detected in an Alabama cow) present a picture of the disease having been here for 10 years or so, since it is thought that cows usually contract the disease from contaminated feed they consume as calves. The concern is that humans can contract a fatal, incurable, brain-wasting illness from consuming beef products contaminated with the mad cow pathogen.

"The fact the Texas cow showed up fairly clearly implied the existence of other undetected cases," Dr. Paul Brown, former medical director of the National Institutes of Health's Laboratory for Central Nervous System Studies and an expert on mad cow-like diseases, told United Press International. "The question was, 'How many?' and we still can't answer that."

Brown, who is preparing a scientific paper based on the latest two mad cow cases to estimate the maximum number of infected cows that occurred in the United States, said he has "absolutely no confidence in USDA tests before one year ago" because of the agency's reluctance to retest the Texas cow that initially tested positive.

USDA officials finally retested the cow and confirmed it was infected seven months later, but only at the insistence of the agency's inspector general.

"Everything they did on the Texas cow makes everything USDA did before 2005 suspect," Brown said.

Other experts also question the adequacy of the USDA's surveillance system. The USDA insists the prevalence of mad cow disease is low, but the agency has provided few details of its surveillance program, making it difficult for outside experts to know if the agency's monitoring plan is sufficient.

"It's impossible to judge the adequacy of the surveillance system without having a breakdown of the tested population by age and risk status," Elizabeth

Mumford, a veterinarian and BSE expert at Safe Food Solutions in Bern, Switzerland, a company that provides advice on reducing mad cow risk to industry and governments, told UPI.

"Everybody would be happier and more confident and in a sense it might be able to go away a little bit for (the USDA) if they would just publish a breakdown on the tests," Mumford added.

UPI requested detailed records about animals tested under the USDA's surveillance plan via the Freedom of Information Act in May 2004 but nearly two years later has not received any corresponding documents from the agency, despite a federal law requiring agencies to comply within 30 days. This leaves open the question of whether the USDA is withholding the information, does not have the information or is so haphazardly organized that it cannot locate it.

Mumford expressed surprise at the lack of concern about the deadly disease from American consumers. "I would expect the U.S. public to be more concerned," she said.

Markus Moser, a molecular biologist and chief executive officer of Prionics, a Swiss firm that manufactures BSE test kits, told UPI one concern is that if people are infected, the mad cow pathogen could become "humanized" or more easily transmitted from person to person.

"Transmission would be much easier, through all kinds of medical procedures" and even through the blood supply, Moser said.

Testing rate before 1st Mad Cow detected (about 55 per day)	about 0.06% of cattle slaughtered	6-18 years to detect next Mad Cow
"Enhanced" testing rate in effect now (about 1000 per day)	about 1.11% of cattle slaughtered	4-12 months to detect next Mad Cow
Proposed "scaled back" testing rate (about 110 per day)	about 0.12% of cattle slaughtered	3-9 years to detect next Mad Cow

Figure One

So is the actual number of mad cows in the U.S. food chain lower than the 777 which we might extrapolate from information USDA has released to date? Or is it higher, or maybe much higher -- possibly explaining why USDA refuses to publicly divulge its testing results?

Based on USDA statistics which have been published, Figure One shows how long it takes to discover mad cow in the U.S. herd, based on the testing rates employed by USDA. Again, these are extrapolating from actual USDA results, and do not include the various suspected mad cow cases which USDA refused to test.

What Figure One shows is that at the current U.S. testing rate of 1.11% of cattle slaughtered, the U.S. can statistically expect to find another mad cow every 4 to 12 months, as we have since going on the "enhanced" testing rate. If the USDA scales back the amount of cattle tested daily, it can expect to slow the rate of discovery of infected cattle since you have to test a certain number in order to find the next one.

Coincidentally, the USDA has recently announced it will scale back the testing rate, from about 1,000 per day

to 110 per day. By doing so, statistically it should take between 3 and 9 years to detect the next U.S. mad cow, rather than the current rate of one infected cow each 4 to 12 months.

Scaling back the testing for mad cow makes sense from the beef industry/USDA perspective. It is a bit of a public relations problem for McDonald's and the cattle industry in general when the rate of mad cow discovery gets too frequent, as the public starts being reminded too frequently that the U.S. herd is infected with this fatal disease.

For the public to be reminded one to three times a year that it may be eating beef which contains a brain-wasting disease similar to Alzheimer's (and often mistaken for Alzheimer's) is problematic to the sale of beef and beef products. Hence, the USDA won't continue current testing levels lest it cause more problems for the beef industry.

If the U.S. were using the same testing rates and methods as every other major democratic government in the world, it would be interesting to see where the U.S. stacks up in terms of herd infection. But this is the last thing the USDA wants the public thinking about.

In her book, *Safe Food*, Professor Marion Nestle, Chair of the Nutrition Department at New York University, and author of the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition under C. Everett Koop MD, writes:

*To pick just one example: food companies donate campaign funds where they are most likely to buy influence. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions on its Web site, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org), several food companies and trade associations discussed in this book ranked among the top 20 agribusiness donors in 2001, with contributions ranging from \$100,000 to nearly \$1 million. The skewed distribution of these donations to Republican rather than to Democratic members of Congress is especially noteworthy. For example, the giant cigarette company Philip Morris, which owns Kraft Foods, donated 89% of more than \$900,000 to Republicans. Other companies involved in food safety disputes of one kind or another also donated heavily to Republicans: Archer Daniels Midland (70%), the National Cattleman's Beef Association (82%), the Food Marketing Institute (90%), the National Food Processors Association (96%), and the United Dairy Farmers (100%). With the Republican administration of George W. Bush in power, these groups expect to receive especially favorable attention to their views on food safety issues, and they usually do.*

It is a tribute to the current money-driven, lobbyist-tainted, corrupt, corporate-controlled U.S. government that the U.S. beef industry can currently dictate health policy for U.S. citizens. Of course, the government cannot get away with duping the public in a democracy without the complicity of a corporate-controlled media, which is why you won't see exposes like this one on CNN or in the New York Times.

**MEAT INDUSTRY**/FROM PAGE 1 spill killed 10 million fish and closed 364,000 acres of coastal shellfish beds. In 2004 the Iowa Department of Natural Resources recorded ammonia levels near a hog factory that were six times the recommended health standard. In California's San Joaquin Valley, air pollution from factory dairy farms is a major reason that the region's children have asthma rates three times the national average. In eastern New Mexico-the state's factory dairy farm belt-recent research discovered antibiotic-resistant bacteria in dairy yards. For these reasons, the American Public Health Association has urged all levels of government to impose a moratorium on new CAFOs until a comprehensive environmental and health assessment can be conducted.

Herein lies the rub. The same government and private industry partnership that brought CAFOs to America's marginalized rural communities is highly invested in not just keeping them there, but in seeing them metastasize. Through lax environmental regulations or the under-funding of agencies charged with regulating CAFOs, state governments have fostered CAFO-friendly policies at the public's expense. To further protect their flank, factory farm interests have worked aggressively in state legislatures to restrict the ability of local government to keep CAFOs out of their communities. And just to be sure, New Mexico's dairy industry considers it an act of "civic duty" for its farmer members to "serve" on local commissions and boards.

The halls of academe have likewise been compromised by CAFO industry "donations" to universities. Rather than use their scientific talents to assess the impact of CAFOs, research faculty are required to solve the industry's problems (e.g., disposing of Himalayan mountains of manure). In 1998, New Mexico State University researcher Stephen Arnold found serious air and water quality problems near dairy operations in southern New Mexico. When the results were released through professional journals and conferences, the dairy industry complained so

vehemently to the university that Arnold abandoned his research. And the Kerr Center's Poole reports, "Oklahoma State University won't do community impact research because of all the money they get from the pork industry."

Barely 5 percent of U.S. farms now raise 54 percent of the country's beef and dairy cattle. Corporations now produce 98 percent of all poultry. Small to mid-size family livestock farms are going the way of the dodo. While "local food movements" and a resurgent interest in grass-fed and free-range animal production are gaining traction and deserve our full support, they will never be enough to stem the "blood-dimmed tide" of the livestock industry.

Are the research reports, the scientific studies, and the occasional manure spill only isolated "factoids" in an other-



wise benign landscape of inevitable agricultural modernization? Or is the increasing flow of data and the growing number of incident reports the proverbial canary in a coal mine? A recent World Watch Institute paper pronounced, "Factory Farms are breaking the cycle between small farmers, their animals and the environment, with collateral damage to human health and local communities." And the Washington

Post reported on North Carolina State University professor C.M. "Mike" Williams, who has spent five years researching how to treat manure from the state's 10 million hogs. He concluded, "I do not feel that system [of factory hog farms] is long-term sustainable."

Dr. Charles Benbrook, a former executive director of the Board of Agriculture for the National Academy of Science, shares Williams' assessment. After years spent studying the dairy industry, Benbrook says he is "perplexed" by the growth of gargantuan dairy farms west of the Mississippi where subsidized water supplies in an otherwise dry landscape have made the expansion of dairy herds feasible in the short term. In the long term, says Benbrook, further expansion of factory dairy farms "doesn't make sense and is

patently unsustainable because water will become too costly, and in not less than five years, but surely no more than 20, the dairy waste stream will overwhelm the absorptive capacity of the local environment."

In other words, our food system may be looking at a doomsday denouement before the middle of this century. It is becoming increasingly certain that the water will run out, the land will no longer absorb the torrent of nutrient waste spread upon it, and the over-bred, antibiotic and hormone-injected animals will eventually succumb to their natural limitations. Poole puts it this way, "The factory system of food pro-

duction will simply implode." Until the citizens of the heartland rise up in sufficient numbers to hold their government and the corporations accountable, this is both the best and worst we can hope for.

Mark Winne is a freelance writer from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Here come Big Brother and the Chicken Police

by Rabbi Yonassan Gershom

According to an article by Dr. Mary Zononi, PH.D., in the Feb/Mar 2006 issue of "Backyard Poultry", Big Brother is about to invade the backyards of every American who owns even one single animal that could conceivably be used as food. Even if you are a vegan and never use any animal products yourself, you should be concerned about this issue, because, if passed, the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations could spell the end of the animal welfare movement and the triumph of factory-farm agribusiness.

For several years now, the USDA has been asking the big producers in the meat, egg, and dairy industries to voluntarily register their herds and flocks under the proposed "National Animal Identification System" (NAIS). The goal, if the USDA has its way, is to make this registration MANDATORY by January 1, 2008 -- and not just for commercial producers. Even if you have only one chicken, turkey, goat, goose, duck, sheep, pig, cow, horse (yes, some people do eat horse meat), ostrich, emu or whatever -- and even if they are beloved pets that you never plan to sell or eat, you will still be required to:

1. Register your farm or backyard flock with the USDA, including your name, address, telephone number, and Global Positioning System coordinates for satellite-assisted location of your home and farm. You will then receive a 7-digit "premises ID number" to use in all reports to the USDA. (By doing this, you are essentially consenting to be spied upon.)

2. Register each animal individually and receive a separate 15-digit number for each animal. This will then be programmed into a microchip and implanted the animal at YOUR expense.

3. Report within 24 hours the birth, death, sale, or any movement of each animal to or from your property (even to take it to the county fair or the vet!) -- again at YOUR expense.

If this sounds like some kind of weird conspiracy theory to you, check it out for yourself at the official NAIS website (<http://www.usda.gov/naais>). There you will find an overview of the plan and the stages for implementing it, plus updates and statistics on your own state, including how many animal owners have voluntarily complied with the request to register their premises. (The microchips will come later.) The USDA, in turn, is using this "voluntary compliance" data as "proof" that people don't object to this program -- even though most people with backyard flocks don't even know about it. At least one state, Wisconsin, has already made registration mandatory, with over 100,000 homes and farms registered. Other states are soon to follow, unless people wake up to what is happening and understand the REAL implications of this for the humane and organic movements.

Although this is being touted by the USDA as a way to track animals in case of an outbreak of a disease or pandemic such as Asian bird flu, the reality is, that it will hit hardest on small organic and niche farmers, people who want to raise their own eggs or meat, hobbyists who enjoy the animals as pets, and anyone who prefers free-run poultry or eggs to those from factory farms. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to NAIS, not even for people like the Amish, who, for religious reasons, do not use electronic devices. In short, this could spell the end of the family farm as we know it. Mary Zononi writes in her article:

*"The NAIS will drive small producers out of the market, will make people abandon raising animals for their own food, will invade Americans' personal privacy, and will violate the religious freedom of Americans whose beliefs make it impossible for them to comply. The NAIS will also encourage increased industrial-scale animal farming, and discourage the humane, small-scale production of animal foods." (Source: "The USDA's proposed 'National Animal Identification System': A plan for Government Monitoring and your Flock," Backyard Poultry, Feb/Mar 2006, p. 44)*

And get this: The big companies, like National Pork Producers and Cargill Meats, get special breaks and considerations. Rather than mark each animal individually, they can register a whole flock of poultry under a single ID number as the birds move through the system from chick to market. But backyard poultry owners, small-scale farmers, or even classroom incubator projects will have to individually register EACH CHICK as it is hatched, as well as keep up with all the paperwork that will entail. The extra costs of all this red tape in time, labor, and equipment (including the microchips and the computer with internet access needed for the "within 24 hours" reports) will NOT be funded by the government. Even the USDA admits this on their site. For small-scale family farms already on the edge economically, this additional bureaucratic burden will be the death knell.

So I ask myself: Are the USDA and the meat industry using the "mad cow" and "bird flu" scares to get this plan implemented without public protest? Quite possibly. It is no accident that recent news stories about bird flu show free-run birds being hauled off by workers in anti-contamination suits, while, at the same time, touting the "safety" of poultry raised under roofs or in cages in the commercial [read "factory farm"] industry. Even though Asian bird flu is difficult to catch unless you are actually slaughtering birds, people are now panicking over it. To the general public, the NAIS plan probably sounds like a nice, modern, efficient way to protect the food supply. But people in the organic, vegetarian, and animal welfare movements know that meat produced in factory farms and feedlots is MORE likely to pose a threat to public health. "Mad cow" disease, for example, is not caused by free-run cattle grazing in a field. It is caused by feeding cows commercial feeds contaminated

with the virus from ground-up animal parts -- something a cow would never choose to eat in its natural diet. As Zononi explains:

"The NAIS is touted by the USDA and agri-corporations as a way to make our food supply 'secure' against diseases or terrorism. However, most people instinctively understand that real food security comes from raising food yourself or buying it from a local farmer you actually know... Ultimately, if NAIS goes into effect, more consumers will have to buy food produced by the large-scale industrial methods which multiply the effects of any food safety and disease problems. (Ibid, p. 45)

What can you do? Zononi recommends that small-scale farmers and backyard animal owners should NOT participate in any so-called "voluntary" NAIS registration programs. I agree. Instead, we should get organized and create an effective movement against this unholy marriage between the USDA and the agri-corporations. Here are some activist suggestions:

1. Educate yourself on this issue by going to the NAIS site (<http://www.usda.gov/naais>). Then read up on the realities of factory farms, disease control, family farm economics, etc.

2. Work to make the public, and especially those in the animal welfare movements, aware of this well-kept secret that Big Brother has not been telling us about. Write letters to the editors of your local papers, email your contacts, etc.

3. Talk to your local farmers, Humane societies, animal activist groups, hobbyists, etc. and make them aware of this program and its negative impact on farms and farm animals. Hand out info at farmers' markets, coops, organic food stores, etc.

4. Write to your Congresspersons and tell them you are opposed to this plan. Suggest that money be spent instead to develop a bird flu vaccine, as has been done with other poultry diseases in the past.

5. As an act of civil disobedience on behalf of the animals, REFUSE to cooperate with this program, on the grounds that it violates your beliefs about kindness to animals by forcing them to be raised under factory farm conditions.

6. Organize public protests whenever a USDA representative comes to your area to speak on behalf of the program. Challenge him/her with your questions during the discussion period. You won't convince the speaker, but the audience is listening.

7. Join "Farm for Life," an organization formed to combat NAIS and promote healthier, more sustainable agriculture. For more info on "Farm for Life," contact Mary Zononi at [mlz@slc.com](mailto:mlz@slc.com), or call 1-315-265-2800.

And remember -- the NAIS is not yet law -- but it soon will be, unless people speak out and prevent it. The time to act is now!!!

Rabbi Gershom

# Biofuel, climate and energy security, and over-population

by Dr. Glen Barry

Interest is rising regarding climate change and energy security, but the true extent and nature of the Earth's environmental problems are not being recognized. Proposed solutions are often inadequate, such as the idea that hybrid cars can appreciably make the world's car culture sustainable. In the case of recently much hyped biofuels, the impacts upon the environment caused by further industrial resource intensive agriculture makes the solution equally bad if not worse than the problem. A large scale embrace of industrial biofuel will further harm prospects for global ecological sustainability.

Exponential growth in population, energy use and consumption are no longer a possibility as humanity is running head on into bio-chemical and ecological limits. The Earth is in ecological overshoot, largely as a result of deadly and unsustainable industrial agriculture that mines soil nutrients and water, allowing populations to burgeon to beyond what is sustainable in the mid to long term.

The Earth and human society are undergoing broad-based ecological collapse that far surpasses and is more complex than merely too much greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. Climate change is but one indicator of too many humans overwhelming the planet's ecosystems. If not climate change, it would be desertification or water scarcity or ocean ecosystem collapse or soil erosion/loss of fertility which would herald the deadly implications of humanity's population having exceeded the Earth's carrying capacity.

Biofuels are an example of doing what is easy and requires the least societal change - continuing to burn hydrocarbons to power inefficient and inequitable use of energy - rather than what is required. Continuation of advanced human societies in terms of reasonable comfort, leisure and intellectual endeavors requires stabilization and then reduction in human population. There must also be a complete transformation of how humans live and consume, with massive reductions in human per capita consumption of energy.

In the race to embrace biofuels I have seen little discussion of the apocalyptic harm agriculture has caused to the environment historically, nor the significant pressures modern agriculture continues to place upon natural life-giving ecosystems. Most terrestrial ecosystem destruction throughout history has resulted from agricultural conversion for farmland. Industrial agriculture causes water scarcity due to excessive irrigation, a toxic cocktail of agricultural chemicals which pervades food chains, and widespread soil erosion, infertility and even desertification.

To feed the human enterprise we are already using some 40% of the sun's energy captured by plants and over 40% of the Earth's surface is already comprised of agricultural lands. Around the world the last life giving large natural ecosystems are being razed - in such places as the Amazon and Asian rainforests - to feed an exponentially growing population of six billion (which was one billion 150 years ago and is expected to reach at least nine billion mid-century). Greater agricultural efficiency has always led to more people and less nature.

Even supposing biofuels yield an appreciable surplus of energy after subtracting the energy necessary for their production (which is far from certain), there is no way enough biomass could

ever be grown to meet a significant portion of current, much less anticipated, world energy needs without causing great environmental harm.

Resource intensive agricultural biofuel monocrops will unalterably and perhaps fatally continue the undermining of the biological foundation of life, intensifying existing loss of biodiversity and ecosystems. The Earth's remaining natural and ancient forests will become further endangered as pressures increase to expand agricultural lands and provide more forest biomass - the last thing the world's dwindling forests need.

Locally produced biofuels that are certified to have minimized ecological impacts may be an important part a comprehensive program to move local economies towards relocalized sustainability. But on the international agro-industrial scale which they are being proposed they are certain to further greatly degrade land and water ecosystems while prolonging the era of binge like non-sustainable energy consumption and population growth.

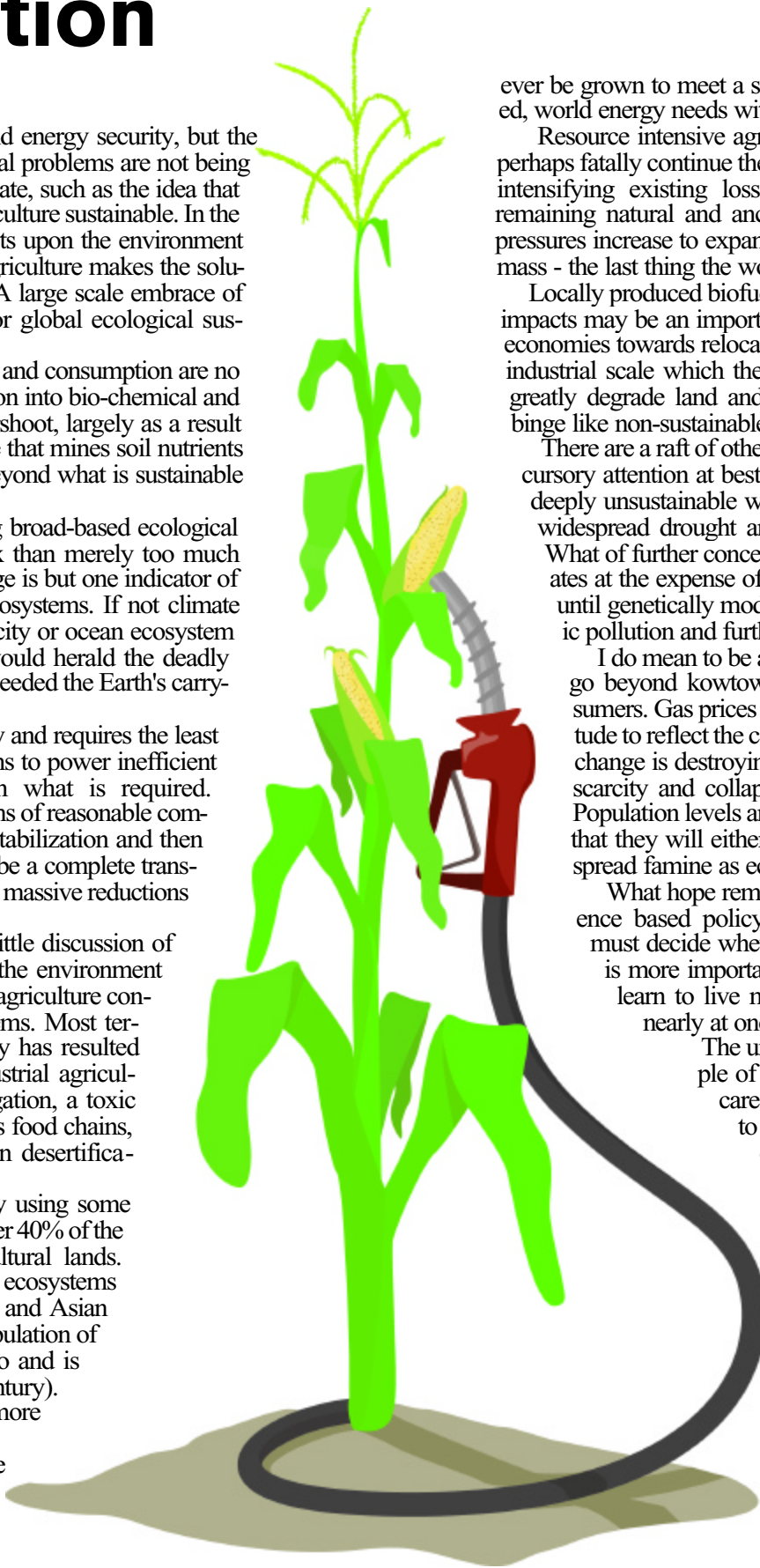
There are a raft of other social and economic issues that have been given cursory attention at best in the rush to continue an energy profligate and deeply unsustainable way of life. Wait until the first time a region has a widespread drought and society must choose between fuel and food. What of further concentration of agriculture into mammoth conglomerates at the expense of family farms and local communities? How long until genetically modified crops that maximize fuel yield cause genetic pollution and further ecosystem erosion?

I do mean to be alarmist. Here are some more energy realities that go beyond kowtowing to the whining, wasteful energy super-consumers. Gas prices are not nearly high enough by an order of magnitude to reflect the cost of fossil fuels to the Earth and society. Climate change is destroying the Planet, and along with deforestation, water scarcity and collapsing oceans will make the Earth uninhabitable. Population levels and their cumulative ecological impacts are so high that they will either be brought down through wise policy or widespread famine as ecosystems collapse.

What hope remains lies in enlightened and urgent ecological science based policy-making. Essentially humanity and individuals must decide whether their and their children's continued existence is more important than their SUV and McMansion. We shall all learn to live more simply or we will all die unpleasantly and nearly at once.

The unquestioning embrace of biofuel is another example of a solution that exacerbates the problem. While a carefully controlled biofuel industry may have a role to play in meeting local energy needs and averting climate catastrophe, a much greater role will be played by energy efficiency, renewable energy, implementing population controls and learning to live a simpler, much less energy intensive way of life. There is no such thing as sustainable development at this level of population and consumption and an ill-conceived bio-fuel industry will make things worse.

Dr. Glen Barry is the President and Founder of Ecological Internet (EI). He is a conservation biologist and ecologist, a writer of essays and blogs, and a computer specialist and technology researcher. <http://www.ecologicalinternet.org/>



## Study: Vegan diets healthier for planet, people than meat diets

The food that people eat is just as important as what kind of cars they drive when it comes to creating the greenhouse-gas emissions that many scientists have linked to global warming, according to a report accepted for publication in the journal *Earth Interactions*.

Both the burning of fossil fuels during food production and non-carbon dioxide emissions associated with livestock and animal waste contribute to the problem, the University of Chicago's Gidon Eshel and Pamela Martin wrote in the report.

The average American diet requires the production of an extra ton and a half of carbon dioxide-equivalent, in the form of actual carbon dioxide as well as methane and other greenhouse gases compared to a strictly vegetarian diet, according to Eshel and Martin. Cutting down on just a few eggs or hamburgers each week is an easy way to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, they said. "We neither make a value judgment nor do we make a categorical statement," said Eshel, an Assistant Professor in Geophysical Sciences.

"We say that however close you can be to a vegan diet and further from the mean

American diet, the better you are for the planet. It doesn't have to be all the way to the extreme end of vegan. If you simply cut down from two burgers a week to one, you've already made a substantial difference."

The average American drives 8,322 miles by car annually, emitting 1.9 to 4.7 tons of carbon dioxide, depending on the vehicle model and fuel efficiency. Meanwhile, Americans also consume an average of 3,774 calories of food each day.

In 2002, energy used for food production accounted for 17 percent of all fossil fuel use in the United States. And the burning of these fossil fuels emitted three-quarters of a ton of carbon dioxide per person. That alone amounts to approximately one-third the average greenhouse-gas emissions of personal transportation. But livestock production and associated animal waste also emit greenhouse gases not associated with fossil-fuel combustion, primarily methane and nitrous oxide.

"An example would be manure lagoons that are associated with large-scale pork production," Eshel said. "Those emit a lot of nitrous oxide into the atmos-

phere."

While methane and nitrous oxide are relatively rare compared with carbon dioxide, they are—molecule for molecule—far more powerful greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide. A single pound of methane, for example, has the same greenhouse effect as approximately 50 pounds of carbon dioxide.

In their study, Eshel and Martin compared the energy consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions that underlie five diets: average American, red meat, fish, poultry and vegetarian (including eggs and dairy), all equaling 3,774 calories per day.

The vegetarian diet turned out to be the most energy-efficient, followed by poultry and the average American diet. Fish and red meat virtually tied as the least efficient.

The impact of producing fish came as the study's biggest surprise to Martin, an Assistant Professor in Geophysical Sciences. "Fish can be from one extreme to the other," Martin said. Sardines and anchovies flourish near coastal areas and can be harvested with minimal energy expenditure. But swordfish and other large

predatory species required energy-intensive long-distance voyages.

Martin and Eshel's research indicated that plant-based diets are healthier for people as well as for the planet.

"The adverse effects of dietary animal fat intake on cardiovascular diseases is by now well established. Similar effects are also seen when meat, rather than fat, intake is considered," Martin and Eshel wrote. "To our knowledge, there is currently no credible evidence that plant-based diets actually undermine health; the balance of available evidence suggests that plant-based diets are at the very least just as safe as mixed ones, and most likely safer."

In their next phase of research, Eshel and Martin will examine the energy expenditures associated with small organic farms, to see if they offer a healthier planetary alternative to large agribusiness companies. Such farms typically provide the vegetables sufficient to support 200 to 300 families on plots of five to 10 acres.

"We're starting to investigate whether you can downscale food production and be efficient that way," Martin said.

## Manic for organic

SCORE ONE FOR THE CRUNCHIES. Yes, proponents of organic farming have been maintaining for years that conventionally grown produce is neither as tasty nor as nutritious as organic fruits and vegetables. But many of us have been skeptics, perhaps to justify our reluctance to pay up to twice as much for food labeled "organic" and sold at smug yuppie temples to the "natural" lifestyle. Now comes a scientific study that shows that the nutrient content of conventionally grown fruits and vegetables has dropped markedly since the 1950s.

The study comes from the



University of Texas, where biochemist Donald R. Davis decided to try to quantify anecdotal reports of a trade-off between crop yields and concentrations of nutrients. He compared historic and current U.S. Department of Agriculture data on 43 garden crops (vegetables, strawberries and melons) and found that the modern produce had lost protein (down an average of 6%), calcium (down 16%), vitamin C (down 20%), riboflavin (down 38%) and phosphorus (down 9%).

What does this mean? According to the study, it may mean that methods that boost crop yields, such as chemical fertilization, irrigation and genetic breeding, decrease the amount of some nutrients in the crop. The theory is that when plants are made to grow bigger and faster, they are not able to draw as many

nutrients from the sun or soil. So those tangerine-sized strawberries may be as devoid of nutrition as they are of taste.

These findings have disturbing implications for the "green revolution" in the developing world, where most agricultural aid is aimed at boosting crop yields by using fertilizer, irrigation and genetically improved crop strains (engineered either through conventional breeding or genetic modification). Are we sacrificing quality for quantity? According to Davis, we don't know. But we should find out.

In the United States, these findings no doubt will speed the

expansion of the organic-produce aisle. For example, a group at Tufts University found higher concentrations of antioxidants - believed to be cancer-fighting compounds - in organic tomatoes than in conventionally grown ones. And a Swedish study found that the strawberries grown by organic methods inhibited the growth of breast and colon cancer cells more than did conventional strawberries. It has long been known that a diet richer in fruits and vegetables is correlated with lower rates of many diseases, from cancer to cataracts.

Of course, all this science is merely reinforcing what mothers have been saying for centuries: Eat your veggies - they're good for you. And, today's scientists may add, if you persist in eating conventional vegetables instead of organic, you may want to eat even more of them.



**"I'll take mine without pesticides, please!"**

## Obesity Finds Niche in American Marketing

From the cradle to the grave and most points between, obesity has found its niche in American marketing. Make that a wide berth.

Baby seats, doorways and caskets are but a few examples from a long list of life's accouterments that are getting much bigger to accommodate much bigger people. There are also vacation resorts for those embarrassed to be seen in a bathing suit.

At Freedom Paradise on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, the chairs are wider and without arms, to prevent getting stuck; the beds are king-sized and reinforced, to prevent collapsing; and the beach is private and secluded, to prevent gawking and staring.

"You should not be embarrassed by how big you are," said William Fabrey, whose online business "Amplestuff" offers larger versions of everyday things from umbrellas to footstools. "You can't just yell at someone and tell them to lose weight. You're already dealing with people who think they have no worth.

"They still have to sit down on a chair that doesn't collapse," he said.

Like others in this small but growing group of businesses, Fabrey started his company after discussions with an overweight friend. "She was a big woman, and she said, 'There's got to be an easier way to get through the day.'"

### Sponges on a stick

To make living large a little easier, Fabrey sells lotion applicators and sponges attached to handles — enabling the user to reach all parts of the body; handbooks on hygiene with tips on dealing with odor problems, chafing and irritations caused by skin folds. His business also provides links to

Such pronouncements help fuel criticism that catering to bigger people really means throwing wide the door to death by overeating. But is it overeating that's the problem? Consider this: it's nearly impossible to overeat — or gain weight — when eating a strictly plant-based diet.

### Go Veggie to Lose Weight

A scientific review in April's Nutrition Reviews shows that a vegetarian diet is highly effective for weight loss. Vegetarian populations tend to be slimmer than meat-eaters, and they experience lower rates of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other life-threatening conditions linked to overweight and obesity. The new review, compiling data from 87 previous studies, shows the weight-loss effect does not depend on exercise or calorie-counting, and it occurs at a rate of approximately 1 pound per week.

Rates of obesity in the general population are skyrocketing, while in vegetarians, obesity prevalence ranges from 0 percent to 6 percent, note study authors Susan E. Berkow,

Ph.D., C.N.S., and Neal D. Barnard, M.D., of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM).

The authors found that the body weight of both male and female vegetarians is, on average, 3 percent to 20 percent lower than that of meat-eaters. Vegetarian and vegan diets have also been put to the test in clinical studies, as the review notes. The best of these clinical studies isolated the effects of diet by keeping exercise constant. The researchers found that a low-fat vegan diet leads to weight loss of about 1 pound per week, even without addi-



Keith Davis of Goliath Casket poses with the company's largest stock size of casket, 52 inches wide, at the company's shop in Lynn, Ind. Caskets are normally about 27 inches wide. The company has produced caskets up to 7 feet square.

**The obesity price tag to taxpayers, according to the CDC, is a whopping \$117 billion a year. The amount Americans spend trying to get thinner — \$33 billion a year.**

physicians and medical services.

"We don't take any position on whether someone should lose weight," Fabrey said. "That's up to the person."

Seemingly every day, another study appears that shows the United States is becoming a country of fat people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 71 percent of men weigh too much, along with about 61 percent of women and 33 percent of children.

As Americans grow in weight, their life expectancy becomes shorter — by as much as five years, according to the latest national statistics — more than the impacts of heart disease and cancer. Obesity is fast approaching tobacco as the No. 1 cause of preventable death.

The price tag to taxpayers, according to the CDC, is a whopping \$117 billion a year. The amount Americans spend trying to get thinner — \$33 billion a year.

U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona sounded a dire warning last month, telling university students in South Carolina "obesity is the terror within," and that unless people start getting thinner, "the magnitude of the dilemma will dwarf 9-11 or any other terrorist attempt."

tional exercise or limits on portion sizes, calories, or carbohydrates.

"Our research reveals that people can enjoy unlimited portions of high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to achieve or maintain a healthy body weight without feeling hungry," says Dr. Berkow, the lead author.

"There is evidence that a vegan diet causes an increased calorie burn after meals, meaning plant-based foods are being used more efficiently as fuel for the body, as opposed to being stored as fat," says Dr. Barnard. Insulin sensitivity is increased by a vegan diet, allowing nutrients to more rapidly enter the cells of the body to be converted to heat rather than to fat.

Earlier this month, a team of researchers led by Tim Key of Oxford University found that meat-eaters who switched to a plant-based diet gained less weight over a period of five years. Papers reviewed by Drs. Berkow and Barnard include several published by Dr. Key and his colleagues, as well as a recent study of more than 55,000 Swedish women showing that meat-eaters are more likely to be overweight than vegetarians and vegans.

## House votes to dump state food safety laws

On March 8, 2006, the House approved a bill night that would wipe out state laws on safety labeling of food, overriding tough rules passed by California voters two decades ago that require food producers to warn consumers about cancer-causing ingredients.

The vote was a victory for the food industry, which has lobbied for years for national standards for food labeling and contributed millions of dollars to lawmakers' campaigns. But consumer groups and state regulators warned that the bill would undo more than 200 state laws, including California's landmark Proposition 65, that protect public health.

"The purpose of this legislation is to keep the public from knowing about the harm they may be exposed to in food," said Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, a chief critic of the measure.

Several critics argued that the bill was rushed through the House without complete hearings as a favor to a specific industry -- at the same time that members are talking about the evils of lobbying and proposing stricter ethical rules.

Under the bill, any state that wanted to keep its own tougher standards for food labeling would have to ask for approval from the Food and Drug Administration, which has been criticized by food safety groups as slow to issue consumer warnings.

The measure was approved after a debate in which House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco accused the Republican majority of "shredding the food safety net that we have built in this country."

A group of 39 state attorneys general, including many Republicans, has warned of the consequences of the measure. State food and drug regulators and agricultural officials also are urging the Senate to reject the bill.

A major target of the legislation is Prop. 65, which was approved by two-thirds of California voters in 1986 and requires labeling of substances that may cause cancer or birth defects. The law has inspired other states to follow suit with their own rules on food labeling that are more stringent than federal standards.

Critics say the laws have added costs for food manufacturers and distributors, who must comply with different rules in different states. The industry's backers claim the different warning labels confuse consumers.

"There is no reason nor is there any excuse to allow regulatory inconsistency to drive up costs and keep some consumers in the dark on matters that may affect their health," said Rep. Phil Gingrey, R-Ga.

But California officials said the new legislation would reverse the gains made through Prop. 65. Many companies, fearing the warning labels, have changed their food to meet the state's tougher standards. Bottled water companies have cut arsenic levels, and bakers have taken potassium bromate, a potential carcinogen,

out of many breads, doughnuts and other bakery goods.

"We've had a lot of success in getting them to reformulate," said California Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

Opponents of the bill complained that it was rushed to the House floor without a public hearing, where state regulators and food safety advocates could have testified against it.

"That is the job of Congress, to hold hearings, to introduce facts, to listen to debate," said Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., who co-sponsored the bill but opposed it on the floor, saying it needed a thorough public debate. "I am wondering right now what the food industry is afraid of. Why are they trying to ram this piece of legislation through the House?"

Critics of the measure also have been frustrated that California Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has not taken a position on the bill despite being urged to do so by Waxman and Rep. Mary Bono, R-Palm Springs, early last month.

The vote was a sign of the tremendous power of the food industry in Congress. Corporations and trade groups that joined the National Uniformity for Food Coalition, which backed the bill, have contributed more than \$3 million to members in the 2005-06 election cycle and \$31 million since 1998, mostly to Republican candidates, according to data from the Center for Responsive Politics.

The industry also has many top lobbyists pushing the bill, including White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card's brother, Brad Card, who represents the Food Products Association.

A leading fundraiser for the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., has also been lobbying on the bill. Matt Keelen, a Republican consultant whose fundraising firm raised more than \$315,000 in political action committee donations for Rogers in 2001, is now a lobbyist for the Grocery Manufacturers of America, which has led the charge for the measure.

"The food industry wants to take the states out of the picture because they can't control them," said Andy Igrejas of the National Environmental Trust, which opposes the bill. "This is how they do it. They make campaign contributions, and they hire people close to members of Congress."

The House defeated an amendment by Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara, that would have let states keep laws that warn consumers about exposure to substances that could cause cancer, birth defects, reproductive health problems or allergic reactions associated with sulfites.

The House also rejected a proposal to allow states to label meat that has been treated with carbon monoxide. The gas is used to keep meat looking a healthy red or pink for longer, but consumer groups say it allows stores to sell potentially dangerous meat that has already spoiled.

## Study casts doubt on Glycemic Index

Diets that distinguish between "good carbs" and "bad carbs," are not an effective way of controlling blood sugar levels, a new study suggests.

Although made popular by the South Beach Diet and others, the glycemic index has never been fully embraced by most dietitians and remains a point of debate among scientists.

Now, diabetes researcher Elizabeth Mayer-Davis of the University of South Carolina says the use of the index should be ended altogether in favor of more traditional methods of losing weight and reducing the risk of diabetes -- eating less and exercising more.

"The glycemic index is sufficiently flawed as an index that it is not helpful for scientists or people trying to create a healthy diet," Mayer-Davis said.

The glycemic index is a 100-point scale, with white bread at 100 points, that measures how quickly carbohydrates enter the bloodstream as sugar.

According to index supporters, people should avoid high-glycemic foods such as white bread and potatoes because they will quickly raise a person's blood-sugar level. Meanwhile, low-glycemic foods such as carrots and apples are absorbed more slowly, making a person feel full longer and reducing cravings, which helps with weight loss.

Promoters of the diet also say that eating low-glycemic foods will result in less fluctuation in their blood sugar levels.

Both the Atkins and South Beach diets have raised interest in the theory, and an entire series, "The Glucose Revolution," guides consumers through a diet based on it.

Beth Kunkel, a professor of food science and human nutrition at Clemson University and presi-

dent of the South Carolina Dietetic Association, said that while there is debate among dietitians about its validity, it would be a mistake to reject the concept altogether. Kunkel was not involved in the University of South Carolina study.

"To just reject it out of hand and quit working on it would be a mistake," Kunkel said. "I just think we're five to 10 years away from really understanding it from a research viewpoint."

Previous studies have shown conflicting results. One small study showed that people on a low-glycemic diet were less hungry later in the day than a group fed a high-glycemic diet. Another study, involving 39 overweight people, showed that those on a low-glycemic diet lowered their risk of heart disease. Both studies were conducted by Dr. David Ludwig of Boston's Children's Hospital.

However, American Heart Association officials have disputed the significance of those findings.

The new study, published in the February issue of the British Journal of Nutrition, relied on food questionnaires from more than 1,000 people over five years and assessed their consumption of high- and low-glycemic foods. Researchers tested their blood sugar levels twice during the study period and found no significant correlation between the glycemic index of foods and the blood-sugar levels of participants.

Mayer-Davis said that researchers should develop a new measure of how different carbohydrates can affect health. She said a better index would be based on the physical characteristics of foods, such as fat content and calories, because numerous factors influence a food's effect on blood-sugar levels.

## A link in the food chain

Avoiding the use of antibiotics in food animals appears to reduce drug resistance in humans, according to a study published online late April in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

The study involved the use of antibiotics called fluoroquinolones in Australian poultry. Australia restricts use of the antibiotics in animal husbandry because the practice is thought to contribute to drug resistance in people who contract bacterial infections from eating contaminated food. One such infection, *Campylobacter*, is a leading cause of food-borne illness in industrialized countries.

The study, by researchers at the Australian National University, examined 585 Australians who had *Campylobacter* infections. Only 2% of

these were resistant to the drug ciprofloxacin, a type of fluoroquinolone. Countries that allow fluoroquinolone use in poultry have resistance rates in humans as high as 29%.

After years of debate, the Food and Drug Administration last year banned use of one fluoroquinolone drug in poultry to try to reduce drug resistance in the United States.

"This is a very important study," says Dr. Edward Septimus, an infectious diseases specialist in Billings, Mont. "We've been saying that we have to reduce antibiotic overuse in humans. We also have to remove it from animals."

## Vegan diet lowers odds of having twins

Women who eat a vegan diet -- a strict vegetarian diet that excludes all animal products including milk -- are one-fifth as likely as other women to have twins, a U.S. researcher reported on Saturday.

The reason may be hormones given to cattle to boost their milk and meat production, said Dr. Gary Steinman, an obstetrician specializing in multiple-birth pregnancies at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, New York.

Writing in the *Journal of Reproductive Medicine*, Steinman said he compared twin births rates among women who ate a regular diet, vegetarians who included dairy products, and vegan women.

The vegans had twins at one-fifth the rate of the milk-drinking women. Insulin-like growth factor may be responsible, Steinman said.

All animals, including people, produce a compound called insulin-like growth factor or IGF in response to growth hormone. It is found in milk and it increases

the sensitivity of the ovaries to follicle stimulating hormone, thus increasing ovulation.

Some studies also suggest that IGF may help embryos survive in the early stages of development.

Vegan women have about a 13 percent lower level of IGF in the blood than women who consume dairy.

The number of multiple births, including twins, has increased significantly in the United States since 1975, about the time assisted reproductive technologies were introduced.

And women are waiting until they are older to have children, which can increase the rate of twin births.

But Steinman thinks something else may be contributing to the increase in the rate of twin births.

"The continuing increase in the twinning rate into the 1990s, however, may also be a consequence of the introduction of growth-hormone treatment of cows to enhance their milk and beef production," he said in a

statement.

There could be a genetic link to IGF's influence, also, Steinman said.

In cattle, regions of the genetic code that control the rate of twinning have been found close to the IGF gene.

And black women in the U.S. have, on average, the highest rates of twin births -- and they also tend to have normally higher levels of IGF in their blood, Steinman said. Asian women have the lowest IGF levels and the lowest rate of twin births and Caucasian women fall in-between, he said.

"Because multiple gestations are more prone to complications such as premature delivery, congenital defects and pregnancy-induced hypertension in the mother than singleton pregnancies, the findings of this study suggest that women contemplating pregnancy might consider substituting meat and dairy products with other protein sources, especially in countries that allow growth hormone administration to cattle," said Steinman.



## Vegan With a Vengeance: Over 150 Delicious, Cheap, Animal-Free Recipes That Rock

Reviewed by Dan Balogh

I find it very heartening that today I can go to Amazon.com, do a book search on the words "vegan" and "cookbook", and get well over a hundred titles, the vast majority of which were released within the last few years. I remember doing this as recently as five years ago and getting only a dozen or so. This bodes well for veganism which is apparently alive and well. Otherwise why would publishers take the risk?

What I also find heartening is that a good percentage of the most recent releases are from folks who don't fit into the safe, bland profile of a cookbook author. Since vegan cookbooks are no longer anomalies, the more interesting ones seem to be those that distinguish themselves in some manner from the rest of the pack. Just last month I reviewed "La Dolce Vegan", the latest book by the lavishly tattooed spunky British Columbian vegan warrior Sarah Kramer. The book is a delight. Before I finished reviewing that book the next one arrived in the mail for my consideration. Life is tough sometimes.

"Vegan With a Vengeance" is the first cookbook by offbeat Brooklyn punk Isa Chandra Moskowitz, seen on the cover dressed in black (and adorned with at least one tattoo) offering the reader a sumptuous platter of grilled tofu, greens, and other sides that my mouth seems to recognize (since I'm drooling) even before my brain does. Isa is also the co-host of the vegan cooking show "The Post Punk Kitchen" which is viewable for free on the web. I stumbled on one episode which began with Isa contemplatively strumming an electric guitar ... while wearing oven mitts. Just moments later, against the program titles, I recognized a tune from the legendary San Pedro punk band The Minutemen. Being a longtime fan of punk rock, I was instantly hooked.

But the proof is in the pudding, as they say, so off to the kitchen I went. Fast forward nearly twenty dishes later and it's apparent that this cookbook is another winner.

The Tofu Dill Salad Sammiches are amazingly easy to make. Crumble some tofu and then add the rest of the ingredients (minced red onion, fresh dill, mustard, vinegar, etc.). After chilling for 15 minutes, spread it on toast. These are coming along on my next hike. The Chickpea-Hijiki Salad Sammiches are nearly as good, and almost as easy to prepare. Mash some chickpeas (there is something incredibly satisfying about mashing legumes in recipes) and then, once again, add everything else. The Veggie Burgers, on the other hand, require more time and ingredients and aren't as good as the sammiches. A few other lighter dishes I tried were the The Olive, Tomato, and Millet-Stuffed Zucchini, the Black Bean, Mushroom and Quinoa-Stuffed Peppers and the Chickpea Broccoli Casserole. All do-overs and the last one is particularly easy to prepare with nearly all of the time dedicated to baking.

For soups the Potato-Asparagus Soup was a hit.

The potatoes are chopped and boiled, the asparagus (cut into 1/2" pieces) added during the last few minutes. Next, onion and garlic are sautéed in olive oil and spices and then stock is added, followed by the drained potatoes and asparagus. Partial blending preserves some chunkiness in a tasty, creamy soup. The Carrot Bisque, made with three pounds of carrots, curry powder and coconut milk is also delectable, and quite easy to prepare — boiling followed by blending. For something chunkier, the Chipotle, Corn, and Black Bean Stew is quite good and can be easily varied with different combinations of beans and veggies.

One of my two favorites in the book is the Stewed Tofu and Potatoes in Miso Gravy. The tofu is simmered with (among other ingredients) shallots, cremini mushrooms, potatoes, garlic, miso and white wine. The result is one of the best tofu dishes I've prepared; the tofu is firm and flavorful and deliciously drowned in tasty gravy. Lovers of tofu will be pleased to learn that several entrees have the word tofu in their title. Likewise, there are several entrees with the word seitan in their title, and my second favorite recipe in the book is Jerk Seitan. Here two cups of seitan strips are

marinated in a concoction of pureed onion, garlic, ginger, lime juice, maple syrup, olive oil and a host of spices including cayenne and cinnamon. The seitan is then sautéed with onions and green peppers. It goes great with rice. For a taste of India, I tried the Chickpea and Spinach Curry (which also goes well with rice) and loved it.

For pasta the Orecchiette with Cherry Tomatoes and Kalamata Tapenade is a bit watery for my tastes, and next time I may leave out the sliced onions which seem stringy and out of place. But the Fettucine Alfredo, with pine nuts and a cup of nutritional yeast, is excellent.

If you have room for dessert (who doesn't), the Chocolate Chip Cookies are delectable. However, as Isa herself warns, they are far from healthy. They're basically flour, sugar and fat (and entire cup of vegan margarine) — all for about three dozen cookies. There's no denying they're fabulous, but I'm too scared to compute the calories per cookie. The Raspberry-Chocolate Chip Blondie Bars are also quite tasty but a bit heavy — a tiny cube goes a long way. I also liked the Mocha Chip Muffins made with, among other ingredients, instant coffee powder!

The book is also peppered with ancillary topics from the many different ways to slice tofu to the staples of a Post Punk Pantry. And it even includes color photos of about a dozen of the recipes. How cool is that? So head on over to Amazon and pick yourself up a copy. Before you checkout, though, make sure you throw some Ramones or Minutemen into your shopping basket. Cooking is always more fun when accompanied by appropriate music.

*Dan Balogh works full-time as a systems engineer in the telecommunications industry. He and his wife have been vegans since early 2001.*



## Hold Your Water! 68 Things You Need to Know to Keep Our Planet Blue

By Wyland with Steve Creech

Reviewed by Caryn Hartglass

Hold Your Water! is a brand new book offering tips on how to save one of our most precious resources - water. Wyland, the world's premier marine life artist and Steve Creech, coauthor of Chicken Soup For the Ocean Lover's Soul (a book I really enjoyed reading) have put together 68 topics related to water and conservation for you to ponder and do something about. They have used a light, whimsical approach to discuss a very serious subject.

Some of the tips you've heard before like using a low-flow showerhead and choosing products with less packaging. But they are all important and if everyone would follow them it would make a huge difference. It takes many "seemingly insignificant" drops to fill a bucket of water. Every drop counts!

Then there are things we don't hear much, if anything, about. Do you know where aquarium fish come from? Hold Your Water! tells us they may have been drugged with cyanide squirted in the water, temporarily knocked out with dynamite blasts or collected illegally where fish are endangered. And the Great Lakes Basin, which holds one fifth of the world's fresh water supply is drying up with declining water levels for 4 years in a row, causing losses for shipping companies, marinas and other businesses.

Hold Your Water! makes the reader aware of all those little things in our lives that add up and contaminate our water supply: improperly disposed of pet waste, littered cigarette butts, soap suds from washing the car in the driveway and used motor oil dumped down a storm drain. One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water. The authors encourage you to use a commercial car wash and oil change shops where they are required to dispose of wastes properly.

The book covers the impact of industry and the resulting water pollutants: chemical pesticides, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, MTBE in gasoline and waste from animal agriculture. The fish industry with techniques like trawling are going deeper than ever and pulling in more fish. As a result, thousands of pounds of unwanted fish are

discarded, resulting in lost or endangered fish species and a negative impact on biodiversity in coastal ecosystem.

Hold Your Water! gives you easy tips for the kitchen, the bathroom, the laundry room, the yard and the outdoors. There's a check list to follow which

includes cutting the meat you eat in half. They report that in 2000 the average American ate 200 lbs of beef, 57 lbs more than in the 1950s. And they note that it takes 2500 gallons to produce a pound of beef which results in half a million gallons of water per year for your average beefeater. That's a lot of water!

EarthSave is highlighted in Chapter 66, Making a Stink About Methane for our report on global warming which points out that animal agriculture is the most significant source of climate change: <http://www.earthsave.org/globalwarming.htm> and we are listed as one of fifty environmental organizations worth supporting. We are grateful to the authors for the recognition.

Each chapter consists of two pages but each subject could easily be a book on its own. A brief, easy to understand explanation of each subject is given with a couple of facts on why we want to be mindful about them. This book would be great to use with junior high school or high school students, to provide ideas for research reports as well projects they can bring home to do with the family or with their community.

The authors report that in Stigomta, Sweden they have an annual "Pee Outside Day" where no one flushes a toilet all day and they save half the water used in a day. For some reason I can't see an event like that going over very well in the United States but there are many tips we can follow in the book to save plenty of water. I am reminded of a new musical comedy that came out several years ago called Urinetown, where the water supplies are so limited people have to pay to pee and are executed if they don't. Let's all work together to keep dark stories such as this one from becoming a reality by assuring a generous supply of affordable, fresh, clean water for generations to come.

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## Reverence for All Life

by John Webster and Ty E. Webster -- Prell Books

Reviewed by Caryn Hartglass

request your free copy of their book at [reverence@trivest.net](mailto:reverence@trivest.net)

In the March 2006 issue of the EarthSave News, we ran an ad with information for you to receive a free copy of a book upon request called Reverence for All Life.

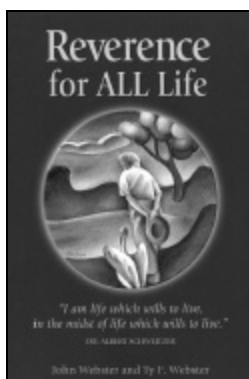
Using the contact info, I received my free copy and gave it a read through. The

authors were extremely inspired by the life and words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer. In addition to being a physician, musician, theologian, philosopher and founder

of the Lambarene hospital in Africa, Dr. Schweitzer was a great humanitarian. He strived to have reverence for all life forms and to be mindful of his actions and his impact on all life, human and non human. A brief history of Schweitzer is included along with

some of his excellent writing and lovely anecdotes.

The authors include other inspirational people that are demonstrating a reverence for life. One of them is Congressman Dennis Kucinich. The book contains some speeches of Kucinich that are very moving. In a speech in Madison, WI in 2003, Kucinich said, "This is a moment when we as individuals are called upon to assert a holistic world view, an understanding of the world as interdependent and interconnected. And as we insist on this connection to each other there is great power. We are affirming the



power of our own humanity, and we are confirming that expressive power which comes from understanding that we are one."

Wow. Imagine a world where all leaders and politicians thought this way!

Essays and speeches by the

## Beyond diet: Broadening the boundaries of our compassion

by Jo Stepaniak

Vegetarians usually cite a variety of reasons that motivate them to follow and maintain a plant based diet. These can include health, religious, and environmental considerations, among many others, but no matter which concerns take precedence, compassion typically is high up on the list. Knowing that we can incorporate kindness into something as fundamental as our food choices makes us feel good about ourselves. Even if compassion is not the primary basis for our vegetarianism, we still enjoy the emotional and spiritual satisfaction that comes from knowing we are eating a harm-free diet.

Sadly, for many vegetarians food is the beginning and ending of their compassion towards other life forms. They may feel that not eating animals is sufficient and that they do not need to do more, or they may not be aware that there are other ways to demonstrate compassion in our daily lives. I became a vegetarian as a young girl, and I did not know any other vegetarians. Because I was on my own, I often made mistakes and ate prepared foods that contained animal derivatives, although I was unaware of it at the time. For me, as is the case for most other people, vegetarianism was, and still is, a learning process. The longer I lived as a vegetarian, the more I discovered about the widespread use of animal products in foods. I found out about "hidden ingredients" such as beef broth in tomato sauce, gelatin in salad dressings, chicken extract in gravy mixes, or whey (a dairy derivative) in vegetable bouillon. It was an eye-opening and frightening undertaking. Suddenly my vegetarianism was not just about avoiding meat but about asking questions, investigating, and uncovering the truth.

A few years after I became a vegetarian, I was confronted with some startling realizations that I had not previously considered. A friend pointed out to me the ethical contradiction between not eating beef but wearing leather shoes. I had not thought about this before, and it jolted me awake. It had not occurred to me that by purchasing leather products I was negating the good I thought I was doing by avoiding beef. I learned that there is a direct connection between the foods we eat and the clothing we wear. In countries where cow meat is popular, leather is a widespread commodity.

In other countries sheep skin, pig skin, goat skin, or kangaroo skin is prevalent. Animal skins are one of the residues of animal slaughter. They are what the meat industry terms "byproducts" -- parts of animals they cannot market as food. By selling skin and other byproducts to various manufacturers, the animal slaughter businesses can reap extra revenue that directly subsidizes their dastardly operation. It is an endless loop. Thus there is virtually no difference between eating animals and wearing them. In fact, all animals used as commodities -- even those that are not immediately killed for their products, such as wool-bearing sheep or dairy cows -- eventually end up on someone's plate. Their flesh will be carved into lower-grade cuts of meat or ground into burgers, their hides and hair will adorn wealthy human beings, and their remaining body parts will be sold to other industries -- such as glue and gelatin factories -- to be made into myriad products.

Vegans are strict vegetarians who have come to realize the interconnectedness of the animal slaughter industries and who have made a personal pledge to avoid animal exploitation in all its forms. This entails not purchasing or wearing the by-products of meat production or any other items that involved suffering or death including the skin, fleece, feathers, shells, hair, or body parts of any animal, bird, fish, or insect. Consequently, vegans shun fur, down, silk, camel's hair, mohair, angora, tortoiseshell, fish scales, snakeskin, ivory, bone, pearls, and all other animal-derived commodities. To vegans, these items are repulsive because of the cruel and hideous manner in which they are obtained.

All vegetarians can and should make the move toward greater compassion by eliminating the remaining products of suffering from their lives. When we stop eating meat but still support slaughter through buying items that are closely aligned with meat production, we nullify the good intentions behind our diet. Once we know the truth, there is no way to ignore it without consciously consenting to the exploitation of sentient beings.

For vegetarians who have compassion among their reasons for eschewing meat, becoming vegan is the next logical step. In the spirit of genuine compassion, there just is no other choice.

lives are needlessly sacrificed for this human indulgence, because one animal's body covering usually is insufficient to make a single piece of attire.

Every day, more and more vegan alternatives are becoming available, because there is a growing demand for them. While the situation is not yet ideal, nor the marketplace yet brimming, reasonable replacements for leather and wool do exist. Synthetic leathers are flexible, sturdy, "breathe," and preserve all the functional qualities of animal hides without the slaughter. Although a few large corporations produce the majority of these products, several small start-up companies make fantastic vegan "pleather" shoes and jackets, and some manufacture their goods from vegan recyclables, making them more environmentally sound as well as practical. The same is true for polar fleece articles, which can be spun from recycled plastics and other reusable items. In addition, these products are durable, so they seldom need to be replaced.

Since animal products are made from

## Strategies for Activism

### Dear Jo:

I have a one-year-old baby and I have fastened a "Meat Is Murder" pin on his jacket, hoping to get people to think about its message. Even though I'm a longtime animal lover and vegetarian, I've never done much activism and I'm confused about whether this strategy is a good idea or not. By having my innocent baby wear such a message, I thought people wouldn't find it controversial, but many do. When they respond negatively, I tend to become annoyed and angry. Also, I recently designed a Web site about my son questioning animal cruelty, and I persuaded my family and friends to view it. No one has responded, though, and I've been feeling down about it. These are my first attempts at activism, but am I going about all wrong?

### Jo responds:

There are many forms of activism, and you have chosen one approach that is very personal. It aims your views at specific individuals who can respond to you directly and immediately. In addition, you have put your young son in an awkward position at the forefront of your tactics by making him a buffer between those you come in contact with and your controversial views. This is not fair to either your son (he has not yet chosen to be vegan or an activist) or those you approach, who may be put off by the defensive shield you have attempted to place between them and yourself. Your strategy comes across as though you are saying, "Don't attack me or my beliefs, because if you do, you will be attacking an innocent baby." Most people are

bright enough to see through this, and many will be offended by it.

When you set yourself up as a social activist, you must be prepared for negative reactions. Activism, by its very nature, implies that generally accepted views are being challenged. There are less personal and contentious ways to go about opposing established cultural perspectives, and behind-the-scenes efforts can be equally as effective as more public ones. Each person who chooses activism must also pick the approach and comfort level that best fits her or his style and personality.

In order to endure, activists must realize that cultural change is gradual, people are entitled to disagree with or ignore them, and the intensity of the methods used may result in similarly intense reactions. Just as you are convinced you are right in your point of view, others feel they are absolutely right in theirs. No one, including friends and family, owes you an explanation for how they feel or why they have not responded. Activists persevere because they believe in what they are doing, not because they receive positive reinforcement or encouragement.

Continue to evaluate your course of action to determine if it is the best fit for you. Not everyone needs to be an official "activist" to make a difference in the world. Sometimes just living our truth and leading by example is a more constructive and satisfying approach than "in-your-face" activism, and it often has a more beneficial and productive outcome.

## Creating a cruelty-free life: A thank-you letter to Jo

This is a big THANK YOU for Jo. I recently picked up Being Vegan and The Vegan Sourcebook. I had no idea about the depth of veganism!

When I was 17 I made the decision to not eat veal because of the cruelty involved. Not until now -- at 39 years of age! -- when your books spelled it out for me did I make the connection between dairy products and veal. Incredibly, I never thought of dairy as being directly linked to animal cruelty. Since reading your books, my eyes have been opened. I now realize that many items derived of animal suffering are in my home -- including cheese and ice cream!

Wool clothing is no longer an option, and I have contacted a local seamstress for my clothing needs. She

was excited and even supportive when I told her I do not want any animal products in my fabrics or clothing.

When I brought home cruelty-free cleaning products, our housekeeper profusely thanked me. She stated there is a distinct difference between how she feels when using toxic, chemical-based products and those that are nontoxic and animal free. She is not adversely affected by the new vegan products, and they work just fine.

Thank you for being a positive influence for change and for helping me improve my life in so many ways.

Respectfully,  
Diane D.  
San Diego, California

## Are Vegan Products Bad for the Environment?

### Dear Jo:

Since becoming a vegetarian I have refused to buy leather or any other animal skin products. I have recently become very concerned about synthetic materials, however. Is it worse to use leather products or synthetics in terms of global ethics? Nearly all synthetic products are created from oil. These materials will take centuries to decompose, if at all. Synthetic products are grossly accumulating in landfills, and the chemicals required to create them and the pollutants from the manufacturing process are being dispersed into the environment. What is the best alternative?

### Jo responds:

Animals do not have a closet full of clothing; what nature provides is all they possess. In order for humans to use an animal's skin, fur, fleece, or feathers, they must deny the animal its basic needs and inevitably take its life. Every piece of animal-derived apparel entails a minimum of one life; though, more typically, multiple

once-living beings, it would seem at first glance that they would be more environmentally sound, because all living things decompose after death. But this particular characteristic is at the core of the environmental problems with using animal skins. Leather is organic and needs to be chemically treated so it doesn't deteriorate while being worn. The chemicals used to tan hides and preserve leather apparel are arguably as bad, if not worse, for the environment than the processes involved in producing oil-based synthetics. These chemicals pollute the environment and are especially hazardous as runoff that contaminates our ground water and waterways. In addition, the chemicals used in preserving leather pollute the atmosphere through

off-gassing (the same as plastics). Tanned leathers are intended to last for decades or longer; thus they do not break down in landfills.

Leather and similar animal-derived products are the direct result of willful, premeditated murder. Harm caused by petroleum-based goods is secondary, because it is not the primary motive of the industries that produce them. The distinction between these two industries and their products revolves around intention as well as repercussion. Both the leather and plastics industries wreak environmental havoc, but only one aims its artillery at an individual's head.

**CHICKEN/PAGE 2**

gerous chemicals raises levels many hundreds-fold from their original concentration in the plants.

Chicken flesh must be cooked in order to be edible for most humans. The process of cooking chicken flesh leads to the formation of powerful cancer-causing heterocyclic aromatic amines. Cooked poultry has some of the highest concentrations of these toxins found in foods commonly consumed.<sup>9</sup>

**The scenario may be:**

Low concentrations of chemicals are present in the sea vegetables and in the water

— fish consume these environmental poisons and concentrate them in their body fat

— cows eat fish meal and concentrate these noxious wastes even more into their fat

— chickens eat dead cow remnants and the toxins become packed further into their flesh

— Finally people get the strongest doses, as they are at the end of the food chain.

The greatest concentrations of tissue-damaging contaminants are delivered to babies nursing from pollutant-overloaded mothers.

**Common Pollutants Found in Poultry**

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)

Phthalic acid esters

Polychlorinated dibenzodioxins

Dibenzofurans (PCDDs and PCDFs),

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)

Organic phosphates

**Have Some Compassion**

Chickens and turkeys are crowded together in cages barely big enough to allow them to move. Commonly, they are mutilated by cutting off their beaks when they are young. These helpless birds are overstuffed with food and drugs during processing. And finally, their lives are cut short to become food for pets and people.

People (mostly immigrants) work in dangerous, bloody, greasy surroundings in order to bring fattened fowl to the dinner tables of fattened consumers. AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said, "Meat and poultry workers who toil at breakneck speeds in the extremely dangerous and dirty work not only suffer high rates of injuries and deaths but risk losing their jobs when they get hurt, apply for workers' compensation or attempt to improve their lives by trying to form a union."<sup>10</sup>

By showing compassion for tortured animals and underprivileged people working in despicable conditions you will improve the health and well-being of yourself, your family and friends. Everything benefits from enlightened decisions at the dinner table.

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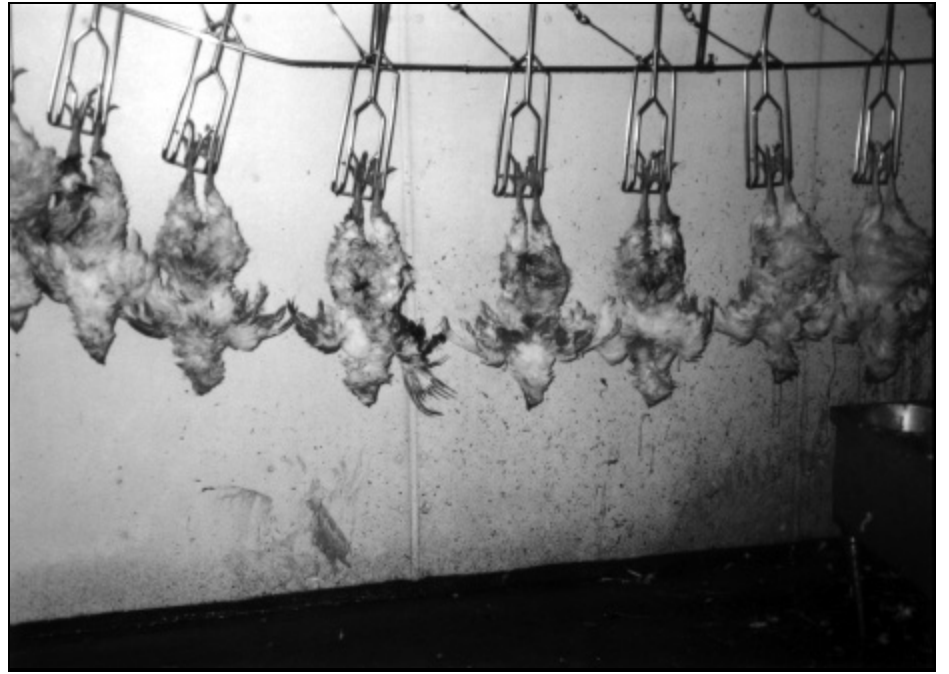
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**REVERENCE/PAGE 9**

very young Charlotte Aldebron are amazing. In 2002, as a sixth grader, Charlotte wrote a very compelling essay entitled "What

the American Flag Stands For." She movingly points out hypocrisy in "patriotism" to the flag while the homeless and the hungry are ignored. She gained

notoriety when her piece was posted on [www.common-dreams.org](http://www.common-dreams.org). It is unbelievable that the words of someone so young can be so poignant.

The book also contains several vegetarian recipes (those calling for dairy could easily be made with non-dairy substitutes for those of us who revere dairy cows, too!).

The main purpose of *Reverence for All Life* is to promote the importance of nuclear disarmament and world peace. There can be no reverence for any life if we've blown ourselves up.

For the works of Kuncinich and Aldebron alone, the book is worth having in your bookshelf.

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**Jo Stepaniak, MEd**

Jo Stepaniak, MEd, is an author and educator who has been involved with vegetarian- and vegan-related issues for nearly four decades. She holds a master of science degree in education and an undergraduate degree in sociology and anthropology. Jo is the coauthor (along with Vesanto Melina, MS, RD) of *Raising Vegetarian Children*, a comprehensive guide for bringing up healthy vegetarian children and maintaining family harmony, author of *Compassionate Living for Healing, Wholeness & Harmony*, an invaluable guidebook for restoring inner and outer peace and inspiring kinship and harmony with all life, *The Vegan Sourcebook*, the definitive resource for compassionate vegan living, and *Being Vegan*, a question-and-answer guide to the essentials of vegan philosophy and ethics, with practical, down-to-earth advice on how to incorporate these principles into everyday life. She also is the author and coauthor of over a dozen additional books and has been a contributing author to many other books, pamphlets, national publications, and magazines. Visit her online at [www.vegsource.com/jo](http://www.vegsource.com/jo)

**Do you have questions about being vegetarian or vegan? Send them to us at [AskJo@earthsave.org](mailto:AskJo@earthsave.org) and we'll forward them to bestselling author, Jo Stepaniak. Jo can address individual concerns as well as general inquiries about vegan ethics, vegetarian philosophy, practical applications, and living compassionately.**



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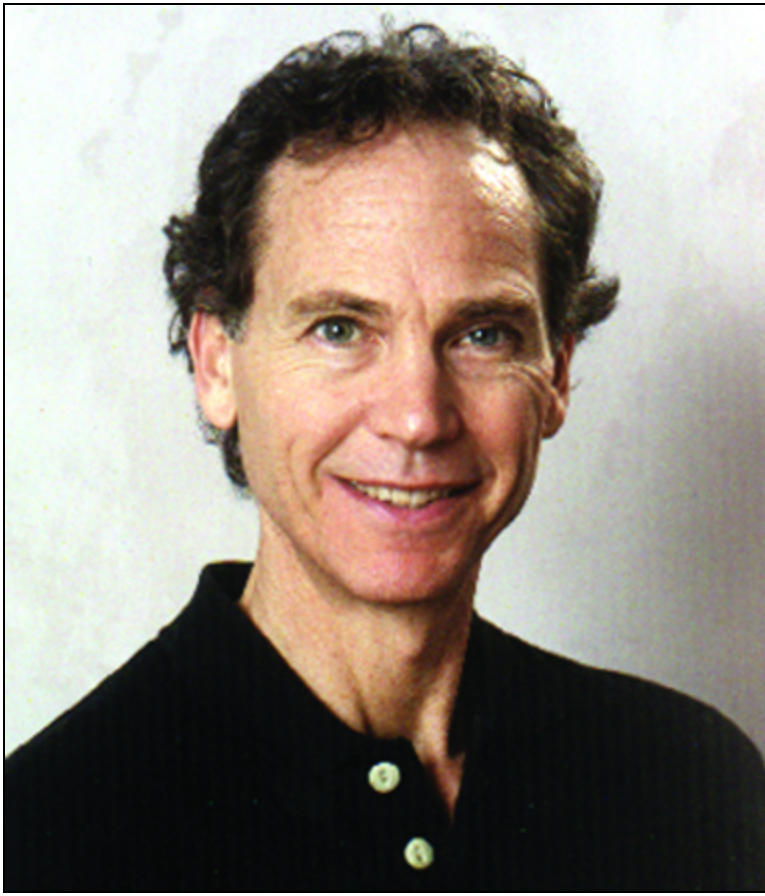
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## Come celebrate with John Robbins the publication of his new book!

EarthSave founder John Robbins recently completed a new book which advance readers have said may be his best book yet!

"This book clearly has the potential to be as big as or even bigger than John's watershed *Diet for a New America* was 25 years ago," said one knowledgeable source who has seen the manuscript.

*Diet for a New America* sold nearly 2 million copies, inspired millions of people to adopt a healthier, more compassionate way of life, and sparked the creation of EarthSave International.

John's new book, entitled *Healthy At 100* brings crucial, fascinating new information about successful aging.

The book was the subject of an intense bidding war between publishers, and the winning publisher is Random House.

Now is your chance to be among the first to hear John talk about his new work in person, and to get a signed copy of what promises to be one of the most significant and important books to hit the

scene in many years.

John's *Healthy at 100* will be in stores in September, 2006, and John just agreed to appear at this year's Healthy Lifestyle Expo on Saturday, September 23, 2006 – come meet him!

The Expo takes place Sept 22-24, 2006 at the Burbank Hilton Convention Center in Burbank, California, directly across from the Burbank/Bob Hope Airport.

Come spend an afternoon you will never forget with John and learn information you never knew about – which can help insure you have every advantage to live, love and last for many years to come. Ask John your questions, and send him your best wishes as he and his new book embark upon the world.

Full details on this exciting weekend of illustrious speakers, and over a hundred companies featuring vegan food, clothing, kitchen and other products, can be found online at:

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