MYTH VS. REALITY

MYTH: We need to eat meat to get enough protein.
REALITY: The typical modern diet contains many times more protein than is actually necessary for good health. If you eat a variety of fruits, vegetable, whole grains and legumes, you will get enough protein.

MYTH: Vegetarians are liberals.
REALITY: You'll find people eating healthy, delicious plant-based meals all across the political spectrum.

MYTH: Vegetarians are sickly and weak.
REALITY: Try telling that to Ruth Heidrich, 3-time Ironman finisher and marathoner; Carl Lewis, winner of nine Olympic gold medals; David Scott, Ironman triathlete; Edwin Moses, Olympic gold medal winner in the hurdles; or World Champion body builder Piero Venturato.

MYTH: Genetics play a much greater role in who will develop cancer than eating meat does.
REALITY: Five to ten percent of all cancers are caused by inherited genetic mutations. By contrast, 70 to 80 percent have been linked to diet and other behavioral factors.

MYTH: It's too much work! Vegetarians have to carefully plan every meal to make sure all the necessary nutrients are present.
REALITY: A healthy vegetarian diet takes only about as much planning as any other diet.

Healthy People Healthy Planet
EarthSave International

OUR FOOD OUR FUTURE

Making a Difference With Every Bite:

The Power of the Fork!

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"[T]he choices we make, individually and collectively, in the coming years will make an incredible amount of difference, perhaps more so than at any other time in the history of life on this planet."— John Robbins, *The Food Revolution*

Are you concerned about your health? Would you like to reduce your risk of getting diabetes, heart disease, and many types of cancer? Would you like to help the environment, each and every day? Would you like to make food more available for the poor of the world? Would you like to ensure that animals suffer less in the world?

If you answered "yes!" to all of these questions, then you're about to learn how you can do this—and more—all by simply changing your diet. Read on, and learn just how big an impact your food choices can have—on your health, on the planet, and on the people and animals that live here with us. The truth is every time you lift your fork, you can make the difference. It's all in the power of the fork!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – FOR YOUR HEALTH

"There's no question that largely vegetarian diets are as healthy as you can get. The evidence is so strong and overwhelming and produced over such a long period of time that it's no longer debatable."
—Marion Nestle, former chair of the nutrition department at New York University.

"A diet rich in fruits and vegetables plays a role in reducing the risk of all the major causes of illness and death."
—Walter Willett, chair of the nutrition department at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Most of us know that diet plays a key role in determining long-term health and longevity. But with a never-ending supply of conflicting information in the media, it's easy to get confused about what we should and shouldn't eat. It's actually quite simple: study after study has shown that the more plant-based foods we eat, and the less animal-based foods we eat, the healthier we will be.

Choosing meals built on whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables is the best way to stay healthy, according to the American Dietetic Association. According to the ADA's position paper on vegetarian diets, "Studies indicate that vegetarians often have lower morbidity and mortality rates…Not only is mortality from coronary artery disease lower in vegetarians than in nonvegetarians, but vegetarian diets have also been successful in arresting coronary artery disease. Scientific data suggest positive relationships between a vegetarian diet and reduced risk for…obesity, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and some types of cancer."[1]

Protecting yourself from disease is in your hands: in the power of the fork! Let's take an in-depth look at some of the health problems associated with a meat-centered diet...

HEART DISEASE

Almost 700,000 people die from heart disease every year[2], and its treatment has become a serious business in the United States. Operations cost thousands of dollars, while popping pills has become commonplace and immensely profitable for drug companies.

Meanwhile, study after study has shown that a plant-based diet, rich in whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables, can stop and even reverse heart disease. Yes, even if you currently have coronary artery disease, you could possibly reverse the disease by changing your diet!

Dr. Dean Ornish made the cover of *Time* magazine when he proved that you could reverse heart disease with lifestyle (including dietary) changes. Since then, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn from the Cleveland Clinic has seen the same thing. Dr. Esselstyn can boast what probably no other doctor in the world can claim: he has never had a compliant patient experience any further progression of heart disease.

"Many studies have shown that vegetarians seem to have a lower risk of obesity, coronary heart disease (which causes heart attack), high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus and some forms of cancer."
—The American Heart Association

Compared to their omnivorous counterparts, people following a plant-based diet eat lesser amounts of saturated fat and little or no cholesterol. They also eat tend to eat a lot more fiber. As a result, the heart disease death rate for lacto ovo vegetarians is 1/3 that of meat eaters and for pure vegetarians it is only 1/10.[3] By switching to a healthy plant-based diet, you can significantly reduce your chances of dying from heart disease.

- Average U.S. man's risk of death from heart disease: >50%[4]
- Pure vegetarian's risk of dying from heart disease: <5%[5]
- Main culprits of heart disease: saturated fat and cholesterol

Dietary cholesterol found in plant foods: 0

- Average cholesterol level in the U.S.: 210[6]
- Average cholesterol level of U.S. vegetarians: 161[7]
- Average cholesterol level of U.S. vegans: 133[8]
- What the largest study on heart disease, the Framingham Heart Study, revealed if you reduce your overall cholesterol level to below 150: you become essentially "heart attack proof"[9]

CANCER

Diet is not only linked to heart disease, but it is also significantly linked to our risk of developing certain types of cancer.

According to the results of the China Study, the largest study ever conducted on the relationship between diet and disease, animal protein significantly contributes to cancer.[10] While it might have come to most cardiologists as no surprise that this enormous study revealed the connection between animal foods and heart disease, the most profound and shocking finding was the correlation between animal protein and cancer. The link was direct and so strong that it was indisputable.

Even after adjusting for smoking, socioeconomic status, and body mass index, cancer rates for vegetarians are 25-50% lower than for those of the general population.[11] Sixty to seventy percent of all cancers can be prevented by eating a healthy plant-based diet, avoiding most processed foods, and staying committed to a smoke-free and physically active lifestyle.[12]

Sadly, people just aren't getting the information they need about the power of their food choices. Studies show that only 23% of American women are aware that there are dietary steps they can take to lower their chances of developing breast cancer. [13] Among those women with less than a high school education, only 3% know they can help prevent breast cancer by eating wisely.[14] The death rate from breast cancer for American women is more than 350 percent the rate of Japanese women, and nearly 500 percent the rate of Chinese women.[15] It's no coincidence that Japanese and Chinese people eat more fruits and vegetables and fewer animal products. They also tend to weigh less, drink less alcohol, and exercise more than people in the United States. And it's not genetics: When these same people move to the United States and adopt our diet, they acquire our diseases at the same rate as Americans.

Only 5-10% percent of all cancers are caused by inherited genetic mutations[16] while 70-80% percent have been linked to diet and smoking.[17] We can't control our genes, but we can do our best to prevent this disease.

Men should be aware that diet plays an important role in determining their risk of developing prostate cancer, the most common cancer among males. Simply put, the countries with the highest consumption of fat have the highest rates of prostate cancer, while those countries that consume the lowest amount of fat have the lowest rates.[18] Dairy products are especially exacerbating to the prostate. Some studies have shown that men who consume large amounts of dairy products have a 70% increased risk of prostate cancer,[19] while men who consume soy milk each day have a 70% reduced risk of prostate cancer.[20] Tomato products in particular have shown great promise in protecting against prostate cancer.[21]

Americans also tend to get precious little fiber in their diet and fiber is only found in plant foods! High intake of fiber is directly correlated with lower rates of colon and rectum cancer. [22] Women who eat fiberless red meat only once a day have a 250% increased chance of getting colon cancer compared with women who eat it less than once a month.[23] A group of researchers banded together in 1990 to examine 60 total studies conducted on the relationship between colon cancer and fiber.[24] The studies revealed that the people who ate the most fiber had a 43% reduced risk of colon cancer compared to those who ate the least,[25] while the people who ate the most vegetables had a 52% lower risk of colon cancer compared with the people who ate the least amount of vegetables.[26]

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* found in a 2005 study that those who ate the most processed meats had twice the risk of colon cancer as those who ate the least, and those who ate the most red meat in general had a 40% chance of rectal cancer. [27] Another study by scientists at the MRC Dunn Human Nutrition Unit and the Open University published in *Cancer Research* found that eating a lot of red meat was associated with DNA damage, which can raise the risk of bowel cancer.[28] A study by the University of California San Francisco found that those who eat the most fruits and vegetables each day experience about a 50% reduction in the risk of getting pancreatic cancer.[29]

- Number 1 recommendation from the American Cancer Society for preventing cancer through diet: Eat more plant-based foods [30]
- Number 2 recommendation: Eat fewer animal-based foods[31]
- Risk of colon cancer for people who eat poultry once a week compared to those who abstain: 55% greater[32]
- Risk of colon cancer for people who eat poultry four times a week compared to those who abstain: 200-300% greater[33]

OBESITY

There are now officially more overweight and obese people in the United States than there are people of a healthy weight! American people today are eating an "experimental diet" which has never been seen before since time beginning. Our penchant for high fat foods, like meats and dairy products, and highly-processed, sugar-laden sweets, as well as our immobile lifestyles, has helped push the obesity rates into the stratosphere. As Eric Schlosser wrote in *Fast Food Nation*, more money is now spent in America on fast-food than on college, new cars, or computers.[34] But fast-food, as unhealthy as it is, isn't the only dietary problem.

Quick-fix solutions and fad diets often exacerbate the problem, as they are almost always temporary. According to a government review cited by Dr. Dean Ornish, 97% of dieters gain back all the weight they lost, most ending up heavier at the end of their efforts than before they went on the diet in the first place.[35] However, switching to a plant-based diet can dramatically reduce your fat and calorie intake and can be an important part of a long-term weight maintenance plan because it's not a fad diet; it's a satisfying way of life.

Dr. Deborah Wilson, M.D. explains: "Since vegetarian diets are the only diets that work for long term weight loss, it's no surprise that population studies show that meat-eaters have three times the obesity rate of vegetarians and nine times the obesity rate of vegans. It's possible to be an overweight or obese vegan, of course, just as it's possible to be a thin meat-eater, but adult vegans are, on average, 10 to 20 pounds lighter than adult meat-eaters."[36]

• Americans killed annually by diseases due to excess weight:	280,000[37]
• Increased risk of heart disease for obese people:	Double to triple[38]
• Increased risk of gallstones for obese people:	Double to triple[39]
• Increased risk of colon cancer for obese people:	Triple to quadruple[40]
• Increased risk of diabetes for very obese people:	40 times greater[41]
• Obesity rate among the US population, ages 20 and up:	30.5%[42]
• Percentage of overweight Americans, ages 20 and up:	64.5%[43]
• US children who are overweight or obese:	25%[44]
• US vegetarian children who are overweight or obese:	8%[45]
• Obesity rate among vegetarians:	6%[46]
• Obesity rate among pure vegetarians (vegans):	2%[47]

FOOD CONTAMINATION

Eating a meat-centered diet is not only linked to lethargy, obesity, and the development of certain diseases, but also to life-threatening cases of food poisoning, antibiotic resistance, and other problems. Every year in the U.S., there are 75 million cases of food poisoning,[48] with 5,000 of these cases being fatal.[49] According to the USDA, 70 percent of food poisoning is caused by contaminated animal flesh.[50]

Explains Dr. Michael Greger, Director of Public Health and Animal Agriculture at The Humane Society of the United States, "Farmed animals today are sick, these are sick and diseased chickens, pigs, fish, and cows, producing diseased and bacteria-laden flesh and pus-filled milk that even industry standards call 'unhealthful.'"[51]

Fecal matter in meat is a matter of grave concern. Not only are the cow's hides covered in manure when taken to the slaughterhouse, but their digestive tracts are often cut open and spill

onto the contents during slaughter.[65] Due to fast line speeds, workers cut so fast they have little time to examine each carcass, and can carve up 60 cows an hour.[66] Food that comes in contact with fecal material can result in the dangerous pathogenic bacteria, E. coli.

- US ground beef patties that contain traces of the deadly E. coli strain: 89%[67]

ANTIBIOTICS

The antibiotics that humans depend on to treat food poisoning and countless other illnesses are also being used to promote rapid growth in the animals we eat, and to prevent them from dying from the many diseases that run rampant on factory farms. A recent report by the U.S. General Accounting Office warns that "Antibiotic-resistant bacteria have been transferred from animals to humans, and many of the studies we reviewed found that this transference poses significant risks for human health."[52] One antibiotic contains significant amounts of the most carcinogenic form of arsenic,[53] and USDA researchers have found that "eating 2 ounces of chicken per day—the equivalent of a third to a half of a boneless breast—exposes a consumer to 3 to 5 micrograms of inorganic arsenic, the element's most toxic form."[54]

"We're sacrificing a future where antibiotics will work for treating sick people by squandering them today for animals that are not sick at all."[58]
—David Wallinga, expert on antibiotics for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Police.

70% of antibiotics used in this country are given to livestock, both healthy (to promote weight gain) and sick.[55] Most antibiotics are used on dairy cows.
A study by the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that human infections due to antibiotic resistant bacteria increased eight-fold from 1992-1997.[56]

A number of groups, including Environmental Defense, American Public Health Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Union of Concerned Scientists and Center for Science in the Public Interest, recommended that the FDA heed recommendations by the World Health Organization to ban the use of medically important antibiotics in animal agriculture to speed animal growth. They also recommended that the EPA should work to control run-off from factory farm operations because it contributes to antibiotic resistance. So far, the FDA has ignored these recommendations.

- Antibiotics allowed in cow milk: about 80[57]
- Antibiotics found in soy milk: 0

CHEMICALS AND PATHOGENS

Antibiotics are just one of the many families of chemicals that animals, and the humans who eat them, consume. Unless the animal is labeled as organic, it eats conventionally grown feed crops, consuming pesticides and herbicides which are concentrated and stored in the flesh. Animal products are responsible for about 80 to 90 percent of dietary pesticide and herbicide exposure.[60]

"Another good reason to get your nutrition from plant sources is that animals tend to concentrate pesticides and other chemicals in their meat and milk...Plant foods have much less contamination..."
—Dr. Benjamin Spock [59]

- Dietary dioxin (one of the most potent carcinogens on the planet) exposure from meat, eggs, fish, and dairy, according to the EPA: 95%[61]
- Illnesses caused by dioxin exposure: Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, impaired immune system, cancer, and liver problems[62]
- Percentage of American beef cattle treated with hormones: About 2/3[63]
- Percentage of American dairy cows treated with genetically modified growth hormone rBGH: 22%[64]

While much of Europe and the world have faced head on the potential risks associated with the spread of mad cow disease, or BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy), the US has done little to address it. As *Public Citizen* reported recently, "[o]f 829 violations at U.S. slaughter plants between January 2004 and March 2005, more than half were for not having adequate plans for dealing with BSE, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Of those 460 violations, 60 percent described overall safety plans that contained no mention of BSE at all."[68]

While many countries are taking this disease seriously, inspecting half or more of their cattle for mad cow, the US is inspecting about 20,000 out of 3 million.[69] If we're serious about addressing this potentially catastrophic disease, we're going to have to test many more animals and enforce USDA regulations prohibiting the feeding of ground up cows to cows. An August 2005 editorial in *The New York Times* explained that "The USDA says its inspectors can ensure that companies protect the beef supply. But whistle blowing meat inspectors contend that they lack the power to do their job, and that the agency lets companies pile up violations without any penalties."[70]

FISH – BRAIN (ROT) FOOD

Fish, like its meaty relatives, contains no fiber and usually is high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Fish also have the unfortunate distinction of absorbing a lot of the contamination we deposit in their waterways, so predatory fish (like tuna and swordfish) store in their flesh and fat toxins such as mercury, PCBs, DDT, dioxins, lead, and a range of other chemicals.

Mercury is especially problematic. Chemicals like PCBs and DDT have been banned (but are especially stubborn, and still in the environment), but 40% of U.S. mercury comes from coal-fired power plants,[71] and we're not giving up coal any time soon. A December 2005 *Chicago Tribune* investigation found "a decades-long pattern of the U.S. government knowingly allowing millions of Americans to eat seafood with unsafe levels of mercury. Regulators have repeatedly downplayed the hazards, failed to take basic steps to protect public health and misled consumers about the true dangers...".[72]

The feature continued, "Mercury can damage the central nervous system of children, causing subtle delays in walking and talking as well as decreased attention span and memory. Adults can experience headaches, fatigue, numbness in the hands and feet, and a lack of concentration. Some studies suggest that men also face an increased risk of heart attacks. No one knows how many people in the U.S. have been harmed by mercury in fish. But a recent government study estimated that 410,000 babies are born each year at risk for mercury poisoning because of high levels in their mothers' bodies."[73]

Predatory fish that eat smaller fish can have blood methylmercury levels up to a million times more concentrated than the water in which they swim.[74] The EPA and FDA recommend that pregnant women eat no more than 12 ounces of fish and no more than 6 ounces of albacore tuna a week. 75% of women who eat fish more than twice a week have been found to have seven times the blood mercury levels than women who don't eat fish at all.[76]

Babies are especially vulnerable. A newborn baby's blood mercury levels can exceed that of its mother's by 70%. Fully 1 in 6 babies born in the United States each year is found to have dangerously high blood mercury levels.[77] Almost every state in the union has issued warnings to its residents to avoid eating fish from certain bodies of water due to excessive mercury.[78]

CALCIUM DOES A BODY GOOD, BUT DOES MILK?

In the United States, drinking milk is touted as essential to good health. Indeed, government and industry ads lead us to believe that not feeding your kids milk is tantamount to child abuse. The wealth of data available on milk and calcium shows a completely different story.

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health looked at all of the studies of dairy consumption in human beings and wrote, in 2005: "The recommendation to drink three glasses of low-fat milk or eat three servings of other dairy products per day to prevent osteoporosis is another step in the wrong direction...Three glasses of low-fat milk add more than 300 calories a day. This is a real issue for the millions of Americans who are trying to control their weight. What's more, millions of Americans are lactose intolerant and even small amounts of milk or dairy products give them stomach aches, gas, or other problems. This recommendation ignores the lack of evidence for a link between consumption of dairy products and prevention of osteoporosis. It also ignores the possible increases in risk of ovarian cancer and prostate cancer associated with dairy products."[80] It is telling to note that the countries in the world with the highest rates of dairy consumption also have the highest rates of osteoporosis.[81]

"...There is virtually no evidence that drinking two or three glasses of milk a day reduces the chances of breaking a bone."
—Walter C. Willet, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health.[79]

Indeed, the 12-year Nurses' Health Study, involving 78,000 women, found no evidence at all that higher intakes of milk reduced osteoporosis or bone fracture incidence. In fact, the study found that the relative risk of hip fracture for women who drink two glasses of milk per day was 1.45 times *higher* than those who drink one glass or less per week.[82]

Young girls don't benefit from drinking milk either. A study published in 2000 in *Pediatrics*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, tracked for six years a large group of girls ages 12 to 18. Adolescence is a critical period for bone health because the average female gains 40 to 60 percent of skeletal mass during those years. The researchers concluded, "Calcium intake, which ranged from 500 to 1,500 mg/day…was not associated with hip Bone Mineral Density at age 18 years, or with total body bone mineral gain." Tom Lloyd of Pennsylvania State University, the coauthor of the study, was frank: "We [had] hypothesized that increased calcium intake would result in better adolescent bone gain. Needless to say, we were surprised to find our hypothesis refuted."[83]

Switching from cow's milk to soy milk can also help relieve constipation,[84] as dairy has no fiber. Milk also has (along with 80 different kinds of antibiotics) nine times as much saturated fat as in soy beverages! Two 12oz. glasses of whole milk contains as much saturated fat as a Big Mac & fries!!![85]

Another thing that the milk ads won't tell you is that milk is not the only, or best, source of dietary calcium. Many plant-based foods, including collard greens, almonds, kale and broccoli are abundant sources of calcium and don't come with all the saturated fat, cholesterol, antibiotics and hormones commonly found in cow's milk.

- Recommended daily intake of calcium: 300mg
- The average vegan's daily calcium intake: 627mg.[86]

Fortified soymilk vs. fortified cow's milk: you decide which is healthier. They both have calcium, protein and Vitamin-D. But cow's milk also has saturated fat, cholesterol and no fiber. It may also contain antibiotics, pesticides and genetically-engineered growth hormones. Soymilk has fiber, vitamins, phytochemicals, anti-oxidants, no cholesterol and little or no saturated fat. Add to this the results of the *China Study*[87] that animal protein contributes greatly to cancer – and it becomes pretty clear: soymilk is a lot healthier than cow's milk.

PROTEIN

When people switch to a plant-based diet, they are often concerned about their intake of protein. While plants can provide all essential amino acids, there is a pervasive myth that you need meat in order to get a sufficient amount of protein in your diet. According to a USDA survey, the average American vegetarian gets 150% of their recommended daily protein.[88] Beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains and soy are all high in protein. If you eat a well balanced plant-based diet, consisting of plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes, getting enough protein is pretty simple. Indeed, there are benefits from not eating the level of protein, especially animal protein, that most Americans consume.

Animal protein continues to be marketed as not only good for the body, but as absolutely necessary for good health. In actuality, animal protein is cancer promoting. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Colin Campbell concluded in *The China Study*, that "...dietary protein proved to be so powerful in its effect that we could turn on and turn off cancer growth simply by changing the level consumed."[89]

In his experiments leading up to *The China Study*, Dr. Campbell found that the more animal protein (in those cases, casein, or milk protein) fed to rats, the higher the growth rates of cancer cells. Plant protein, even in extremely high doses, did not promote cancer growth.[90] These studies were confirmed in humans by *The China Study*.

Adding up all this data, it's clear that eating a plant-based diet is not only healthy but it's protective against most of the debilitating "diseases of affluence" that plague our society: heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, and obesity, among others.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

As convincing as the data is that eating a plant-based diet is healthy for our bodies, it's equally compelling that it's healthy for our planet. More and more, people are taking what steps they can to protect this beautiful and fragile planet. We choose fewer disposables, more gas-efficient cars, and energy-saving appliances and light bulbs. We insulate our homes to cut down on heating and cooling energy use. We reduce, re-use and recycle. Yet most of us are unaware that there is one thing we can be doing every day that would have a tremendous impact on reducing pollution, conserving resources and protecting our ecosystem. Once again, it's all in the power of the fork!

"Other than not driving a car, not eating meat is the second most important positive environmental decision that a consumer can make."— *Union of Concerned Scientists* [92]

"Yet, as environmental science has advanced, it has become apparent that the human appetite for animal flesh is a driving force behind virtually every major category of environmental damage now threatening the human future: deforestation, erosion, fresh water scarcity, air and water pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, social injustice, the destabilization of communities, and the spread of disease."
—Worldwatch Institute, "Is Meat Sustainable?"[91]

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION, DEFORESTATION AND POLLUTION

About 80% of Americans consider ourselves environmentalists,[93] yet we are so far removed from food production that most of us remain unaware that a plant-based diet helps save forests, reduce pollution, and conserve resources, all while being easier on our wallets and our health.

The pollution isn't just concentrated around small American towns that happen to be near massive feedlots. The Earth's most ancient and sacred places are being trampled, razed and burned for the precious commodity of meat. As *Guardian* columnist George Monbiot once put it, "Next time you see footage of the forest burning, remember that you might have paid for it."[94] In the Brazilian Amazon Rain Forest, cattle ranching is one of the leading causes of deforestation.[95] According to the UN's Food & Agriculture Organization, cattle ranching is now the leading cause of forest destruction in Latin America.[96] If Costa Ricans ate as much beef per person as Americans do, it is estimated that their rainforests would be completely extinct in one year.[97] The problem of animal agriculture is so acute that Cornell University researcher David Pimentel estimates that 80% of world deforestation is because of animal agriculture.[98] Brazil has rampantly increased its soybean cultivation in recent years, but not to make tofu or miso. Most is shipped overseas to fatten European and Japanese livestock.[99] Forty per cent of Brazilian beef is exported to Europe.[100]

But Americans aren't off the hook. The US is responsible for 8% of Brazilian beef exports.[101] The industry has fought off all regulations on country-of-origin labeling, so if you want to be informed where exactly your beef comes from, good luck! Cattle grazing is also the leading cause of species extinction in the United States.[102] The Union of Concerned Scientists has linked household meat & poultry consumption to about 25 percent of all threats to natural ecosystems.[103]

It's hard to open a magazine or turn on the TV without being bombarded with urgent warnings that Mother Nature herself is dying. Many of us feel helpless when we read about it, and try to do our parts by recycling, using less gas or buying organic food. While all laudable, eating less meat or no meat at all would pack a much bigger punch. In fact, a full acre of trees would be saved every year by every person that switched to a pure vegetarian diet.[104] According to a 2005 report by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (a joint project of 1,300 ecologists and researchers from almost 100 countries) that determined the role ecosystems play in the world in regard to water filtration, food production and other functions necessary for human survival, 60% of these functions are being degraded by human activities.[105] Overfishing and deforestation were atop the list.

- Acres of US land producing hay for livestock: 56 million[106]
- Acres of US land producing vegetables for humans: 4 million[107]
- Amount of U.S. agricultural land used for feed grains and animal farms: 80%[108]
- Amount of land needed to feed a pure vegetarian for a year: 1/6 acre[109]
- Amount of land needed to feed a meat-eater for a year: 3 1/4 acres (about 20 times as much)[110]
- Amount of rainforest needed to produce just one hamburger: 55 square feet [111]

AIR AND WATER POLLUTION, AND WATER DEPLETION

Factory farms also produce massive amounts of dust and other contamination that pollute our air. A study in Texas found that animal feedlots in the state produce more than 14 million pounds of particulate dust every year, and that the dust "contains biologically active organisms such as bacteria, mold, and fungi from the feces and the feed."[112]

When the cesspools holding tons of urine and feces get full, factory farms will frequently get around water pollution limits by spraying liquid manure into the air, creating mists that are carried away by the wind. People who live nearby are forced to inhale the toxins and pathogens from the sprayed manure. According to a report by the California State Senate, "Studies have shown that [animal waste] lagoons emit toxic airborne chemicals that can cause inflammatory, immune, irritation and neurochemical problems in humans."[113]

Dairies are now the number one cause of smog-producing pollution in California's San Joaquin Valley, out polluting even cars and light trucks.[114]

The millions of livestock out there emit a staggering amount of waste. One cow can produce the waste equal to 16 humans.[115] For example, on an average feedlot with 10,000 cattle, 500,000 pounds of manure can be produced every day.[116]

Accidents are common. During the summer of 2005, one of New York State's largest dairies spilled 3 million gallons of cow manure into local waterways, poisoning fish and local water supplies. The size of the leak totaled about one-quarter the size of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.[117] Nationwide, waste from livestock has polluted roughly 27,000 miles of rivers and contaminated groundwater in several states.[118] North Carolina, where 7 million hogs produce 4 times the waste as the state's human population[119], has been on the receiving end of countless catastrophic waste accidents.

According to Eric Schlosser in *Fast Food Nation*, two massive feedlots outside Greeley, Colorado produce more waste than Denver, Boston, Atlanta, and St. Louis combined.[120] Chicken processing operations are not immune to criticism either. The chicken producing regions of Maryland & Delaware produce more manure than a city of 4 million people.[121] In Arkansas, home of Tyson Foods, chicken farms alone produce the same amount of waste every day as a city of 8 million people.[122]

- Amount of excrement produced by farmed animals in the U.S.: 130 times more than humans [123]
- Amount of water pollution the livestock in America are responsible for: 10 times that of the human population[124]

With water, life on Earth flourishes. Forests and plains grow green; animal life thrives in its millions of forms. Without water, we die. In order to conserve water, many of us buy low-flow showerheads, toilets, and sink fixtures, wash our cars less often, don't leave the water running for extended periods, or let the lawn fend for itself. But all these measures combined don't save anywhere near the amount of water we would save by shifting to a plant-based diet.

Between watering the crops that farmed animals eat, providing drinking water for billions of animals each year, and cleaning away the filth in factory farms, transport trucks, and slaughterhouses, the farmed animal industry places a serious strain on our water supply. Nearly half of all the water used in the United States goes to raising animals for food.[125]

According to a Senate Agricultural Committee report discussed in *Time Magazine*, "Mass production of meat has become a staggering source of pollution…. [I]n recent years, [chicken, pig, and cattle] waste has been implicated in massive fish kills and outbreaks of such diseases as pfiesteria, which causes memory loss, confusion and acute skin burning in people exposed to contaminated water. In the United States, livestock now produce 130 times as much waste as people do….These mega-farms are proliferating, and in populous areas their waste is tainting drinking water."[126]

And fish farms also contribute to water pollution. Farmers cram thousands of fish into tiny enclosures, and the accumulation of feces and other waste means that aquafarms are little more than open sewers. The massive amounts of feces, fish carcasses, and antibiotic-laced fish food that settle below fish farm cages have actually caused the ocean floor to rot in some areas, and the sludge of fish feces and other debris can be toxic for already-strained ocean ecosystems.

What about our readily available supplies of fresh water? How much is actually used in the production of animals? Well, a lot. The production of beef in America uses more water from the Ogallala Aquifer (one of the largest and quickly diminishing underground aquifers in the world) than the production of all fruits and vegetables combined.[127]

- Amount of water needed to produce one pound of steak: 2,500 gallons[128]
- Amount of water needed to produce one pound of pork: 1,600 gallon[129]
- Amount needed to produce one pound of lettuce, wheat, tomatoes, or potatoes: 25 gallons or less[130]
- Water needed to produce the daily diet for the average American meat-eater: 4,000 gallons[131]
- Amount of water required to feed a pure vegetarian for a day: 300 gallons[132]

ENERGY USE

E, the respected environmental magazine, noted in 2002 that more than one-third of all fossil fuels produced in the United States is used to raise animals for food.[133] Let's add up the energy-intensive stages: (1) grow massive amounts of corn, grain, and soybeans (with all the required tilling, irrigation, crop dusters, and so on); (2) transport the grain and soybeans to manufacturers of feed on gas-guzzling 18-wheelers; (3) operate the feed mills (requiring massive energy expenditures); (4) transport the feed to the factory farms (again, in fuel-inefficient vehicles); (5) operate the factory farms; (6) truck the animals many miles to slaughter; (7) operate the slaughterhouse; (8) transport the meat to processing plants; (9) operate the meat-processing plants; (10) transport the meat to grocery stores and (11) keep the meat refrigerated or frozen in the stores, until it's sold. Every single stage involves pollution, greenhouse gases, and massive amounts of energy.

- Amount of all raw materials (base products of farming, forestry, and mining, including fossil fuels) used in the U.S. each year that go into raising animals for food: 33%[134]
- Amount of fossil fuel energy needed to produce animal protein: 8 times that of plant protein.[135]

GLOBAL WARMING

There are ample ways an individual can fight global warming. Using less energy, taking public transport, installing energy-efficient appliances, using alternative fuels...all of these things can help. But, surprisingly, choosing not to eat beef and milk can also have an enormous impact in helping to fight climate change.

As a greenhouse gas, methane traps heat over 20 times more efficiently than carbon dioxide, which is by far the more widely discussed and fretted about of the two. What isn't being discussed is the fact that worldwide, ruminant livestock account for about 28% of human-induced methane emissions, while US cattle alone account for 19% of worldwide human-induced methane emissions, according to the EPA.[136] Livestock are now the number one source of methane worldwide from human activities.[137]

The livestock themselves aren't the only contributors to global warming in the meat cycle. The amount of greenhouse warming carbon gas emitted into the atmosphere from burning Costa Rican rainforest to produce beef for one hamburger is 75 kilograms.[138] Comparatively, the typical American car in one day emits a total of 3 kilograms into the atmosphere.[139] So potentially damning to the atmosphere is the consumption of meat that in 1999 The Union of Concerned Scientists issued a report stating that the two most damaging things people in the United States do to our climate are driving cars and eating beef.[140]

THE DEATH OF WILD FISH AND THE RISE OF AQUACULTURE

Most Americans buy their fish in supermarkets, fish markets, or restaurants, where tracking the origins is virtually impossible. It is hard to wrap your head around how something as gigantic as the ocean could possibly be "fished out" or depleted, but the process has already begun.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, more than 50% of the world's main stocks are fully exploited, and more than 25% are overexploited, depleted, or recovering.[141]

This rapid decline is not caused by small scale operations, but by humongous fishing ships known as bottom trawlers that can pull in close to a million pounds of fish in a single haul. Many of the species pulled up in these massive nets (some of which can stretch to a mile down) are not commercial species. The National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that the by-catch of just the shrimp industry alone is a billion pounds or 10% of the US commercial catch.[142] The by-catch is, in most cases, thrown back into the oceans, already dead. World Wildlife Fund researchers estimate that about 300,000 dolphins, whales, and porpoises are killed by fishing gear each year.[143]

Gill nets hang like massive curtains in the oceans, drifting with the currents. Ranging from 200 feet to more than a mile in length, gill nets are weighted at the bottom and held upright by floats at the top, creating what some have called "walls of death." Fish are unable to see the netting, and unless the mesh size is larger than the fish, they get stuck. When they try to back out, the netting catches them by their gills or fins, and many suffocate. Others struggle so desperately in the sharp mesh that they bleed to death.

About one third of the world's total fish catch is ground up into fishmeal. The overwhelming majority is fed to livestock.[144] If we eat meat, we are eating fish.

- Percentage of total US fish catch thrown away each year: 22%[145]

AQUACULTURE

In 1985, about 95% of the fish we ate was caught in the wild. But by 2000, one-third of the fish we ate was coming from fish farms, or "aquaculture."[146] For salmon, the percentage is even higher—40%.[147]

The fact is fish farming -paradoxically- causes a greater strain on ocean fish populations than eating wild caught fish. Farmed fish tend largely to be carnivorous species like salmon, trout, bass and yellowtail. Like their "turf" relatives, they must be fed to grow to a size profitable for industry. Although they don't eat corn, soybeans and wheat, they do feed almost exclusively wild fish. An average of almost 2 kilograms of wild fish is required for every kilogram of farmed fish.[148]

A fish farm can hold up to a million fish and is a breeding ground for diseases that can easily spread to wild populations. When the World Wide Fund for Nature and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization reported on the causes of a 90% drop in salmon population, one factor cited was the spread of disease from fish farms into the wild.[149] For every acre of a shrimp farm, 200 acres of natural ecosystems are destroyed.[150] So taxing is the practice on the environment that the United Nations once described fish farming as a "rape and run" industry.[151] Shrimp farms in third world countries often replace mangroves, trees cited as buffers against tsunamis.

Are farmed fish even good for you? Farmed fish tend to have a lot less omega-3 fatty acids, as wild fish manufacture omega-3's from eating algae. And, naturally, farmed fish are still high in saturated fat and cholesterol, and have no fiber. Farmed salmon were found to have dioxin levels 11 times higher than wild-caught salmon, and PCB levels averaging 36.6 parts per billion (ppb), compared to 4.75 ppb for the wild fish, according to a 2004 study in the journal, *Science*.[152] University of Illinois researchers found that fish-eaters with high levels of PCBs in their blood had difficulty recalling information that they had learned just 30 minutes earlier.[153]

- Pounds of fishmeal needed to produce just one pound of farm-raised salmon: 3[154]
- Percentage of shrimp feed actually converted into farmed shrimp biomass: 17%[155]
- Levels at which salmon farms attract parasitic sea lice: 30,000% higher than in the wild [156]
- Amount of space a typical fish is given to spend its entire life: About half a bathtub of water[157]

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – FOR WORLD HUNGER

According to Bread for the World Institute's 2005 Report, 852 million people across the world are going hungry;[158] that's about one in seven people. While politics has always played a role in distribution of food, the western meat-based diet is partly culpable, as land, water, and other resources that could be used to grow food for human beings are being used instead to grow feed for livestock. According to a recent report by Compassion in World Farming, "[c]rops that could be used to feed the hungry are instead being used to fatten animals raised for food. It takes up to 22 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of edible animal flesh."[159]

According to the Worldwatch Institute, "[M]eat consumption is an inefficient use of grain, the grain is used more efficiently when consumed by humans. Continued growth in meat output is dependent on feeding grain to animals, creating competition for grain between affluent meat-eaters and the world's poor."[160] And with the great depletion of fish in our oceans, the poor nations of the world which depend upon fish as a cheap food source are competing with our fish sticks and sandwiches. There's only one solution, according to *The Guardian*: "It now seems plain that [a vegan diet] is the only ethical response to what is arguably the world's most urgent social justice issue."[161] If you want to make a difference for the world's poor, it's possible...with the power of the fork!

- Percentage of all cereal grains grown in the US that goes to feed livestock and not people, according to David Pimentel, Ph.D.: 72%.[162]
- Percentage of American-grown corn that goes to feed livestock across the world and not people: 80%[163]
- Pounds of corn needed to produce one pound of beef: 10[164]
- Amount of grain eaten by America's livestock: 10 times as much as the amount eaten by the American people.[165]

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – FOR THE ANIMALS

The meat and dairy industries would like for us to believe that farm animals are happy and comfortable, living their lives on idyllic farm settings. This may have been the case 50 years ago or more. But today, nothing could be further from the truth. And while it may well be a personal decision as to whether an animal should die for our use, factory farming has changed all of the rules. It's no longer just a personal choice; it demands a public response. The vast majority of farm animals today are raised in conditions which would shock our consciences. Most people assume that there are laws which protect farm animals from egregious abuse. But what few laws exist are almost never enforced. Consequently, since profit is deemed more important than comfort for the animal, farm animals are routinely and patently abused and neglected. Fortunately, if we want to reject this abuse, the answer is simple. One more time, it's all in the power of the fork!

The mass production and slaughter of animals has become easier for big corporations. Intense animal confinement is beneficial for animal producers because more animals can be housed in smaller spaces, resulting in increased profit margins. But these overcrowded conditions prevent the animals from carrying out even the most basic and natural behaviors. This causes the animals psychological stress, physical injury, illnesses and agony.

COWS

If you watch beef or dairy industry commercials, you might think cattle live long, peaceful lives grazing to their hearts' content on the open range until they ultimately meet a humane end. The truth is that in 2003, 82% of the cattle raised in the United States were confined to crowded feedlots,[168] where they have little room to move and are fed an unnatural grain diet that causes thousands to die from bloat each year. Former USDA veterinary inspector Dr. Lester Friedlander puts it into perspective: "In the summertime, when it's 90, 95 degrees, they're transporting cattle from 1,200 to 1,500 miles away on a trailer, 40 to 45 head crammed in there, and some collapse from heat exhaustion. This past winter, we had minus 50 degree weather with the wind chill. Can you imagine if you were in the back of a trailer that's open, and the wind chill factor is minus 50 degrees, and that trailer is going 50 to 60 miles an hour? The animals are urinating and defecating right in the trailers, and after a while, it's going to freeze, and their hooves are right in it. If they go down, well, you can imagine lying in there for 10 hours on a trip."[169]

"The human spirit is not dead. It lives on in secret...It has come to believe that compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind."
—Albert Schweitzer [166]

"The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated."
—Mahatma Gandhi [167]

Dairy cows are kept constantly pregnant to keep up milk production. Shortly after birth, the calves are separated from their mothers, which can cause endless emotional trauma. The calves are then either used to make veal (males) or raised to be dairy cows (females). Dairy cows are usually fed hormones to increase their milk production to unnatural levels, and high production, ironically, causes severe calcium deficiencies. Dairy cows also commonly suffer from painful mastitis, or infection of the udders, that requires antibiotic treatment. When they are no longer considered productive, dairy cows are sent to slaughter and used for hamburger meat or other cheaper cuts.

- Length of time that baby calves will suckle from their mother in a natural situation: 8 months
- Age at which US dairy calves are routinely taken from mothers: Less than 24 hours
- U.S. dairy calves taken from their mothers within 24 hours of birth: 90%[170]
- The way veal calves are raised: in a dark stall, separated from their mothers, unable to see light, often unable to lie down, for their entire lives

CHICKENS

Chickens are now commonly understood to be the most neglected and abused animals on the planet. Egg-laying hens are kept in "batteries", long, narrow buildings that house stacks and rows of crates and cages. Chickens naturally have a complex social structure, but in modern-day farms they spend their entire lives crowded in a space too small to lift a single wing or take a step. The intense confinement causes severe psychological stress and physical injury, resulting in unnatural behaviors. Instead of taking steps to improve conditions and prevent overcrowding, the industry has opted to "de-beak" newborn chicks to prevent the birds from cannibalizing each other while they are confined to their cages – something that would never happen if they were left to roam free on a farm.

Newborn male chicks have no value to the industry and are regularly discarded and destroyed, often thrown in plastic bags en masse. To increase egg production, farmers use food and light to alter the birds' egg-laying cycles. This "forced molting" (which may include withholding food and water for several days) is commonplace in the industry and involves manipulating the animals feeding to shock their bodies into another laying cycle. The hens lay an unnatural number of eggs in a very

short period of time resulting in calcium depletion, brittle bones and fractures. When they are considered "spent" and no longer productive, they're slaughtered.

"Broiler" chickens, those raised for meat rather than eggs, also live in crowded, closed confinement during their short lives—each bird having the equivalent of less than an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper of space in which to live. They are specially bred and pumped with growth-promoting drugs, causing them to grow about six times as quickly as they would normally, most of them so top-heavy that they are barely able to move. When gathered for slaughter, little regard for life is shown. Broken wings and legs are common. At the slaughterhouse, the chickens are hung upside down, fully conscious, while their necks are slit.

"As a trick at conferences I sometimes list [their mental] attributes, without mentioning chickens, and people think I'm talking about monkeys."
—Dr. Christopher Evans, avian behaviorist.[171]

In her renowned book *Slaughterhouse*, Gail Eisnitz explains: "Other industrialized nations require that chickens be rendered unconscious or killed prior to bleeding and scalding, so they won't have to go through those processes conscious. Here in the United States, however, poultry plants...keep the stunning current down to about one-tenth that needed to render a chicken unconscious."[172]

Essentially, this means many are still fully conscious when their throats are cut, and when they are scalded to death in feather removal tanks.

- Percentage of commercial laying hens that spend their entire lives in wire cages, with seven or eight of them typically crammed into an 18 by 20 inch cage: 99%[173]
- U.S. broiler chickens killed in 2004: more than 9 billion[174]

There has been much talk lately about the term "free range" in regard to chicken and eggs. According to the Consumers Union website Eco-Labels.org, the USDA has not defined "free range" for eggs, so claims on eggs go unregulated. For chicken meat, all that is required is that the birds have access to the outdoors for "an undetermined period each day".[175] Put simply, birds could still be crowded together on a warehouse floor, but if the door to the warehouse is open for 5 minutes each day it's "free range" chicken.[176] The best way to ensure that your eggs or chicken are indeed "free range" is to know the farmer.

PIGS

Pregnant sows are isolated in gestation crates barely larger than their bodies, where they are unable to stand up or turn around. After they give birth, the sows are kept confined in order to allow the piglets to nurse at will. Once they are no longer considered productive, they are slaughtered. Piglets have their tails cut off and their teeth clipped in order to prevent them from mutilating each other (think major dental surgery without pain relief). Pigs raised on the unnatural slat floors suffer foot and leg problems and lameness. Growing pigs are penned in close confinement and deprived of fresh air, resulting in respiratory problems.

According to industry reports, one million pigs are crippled or dead by the time they arrive at the slaughterhouse. The numbers are increasing due to drugging and breeding which make their bodies too heavy for their legs.[177] Another industry report notes that, in some transport loads, as many as 10 percent of pigs are "downers"– animals who are so ill or injured that they are unable to stand and walk on their own.[178]

- Pigs are much smarter than dogs and even play video games better than some primates. Says Dr. Sarah Boysen, "[Pigs] are able to focus with an intensity I have never seen in a chimp."[179]
- U.S. pigs raised for meat: 90 million[180]
- U.S. pigs raised in total confinement factories where they never see the light of day until being trucked to slaughter: 65 million[181]
- U.S. pigs that have pneumonia at time of slaughter: 70%[182]
- Amount of veterinary care a farmed pig receives every 4 months: about 12 Minutes[183]

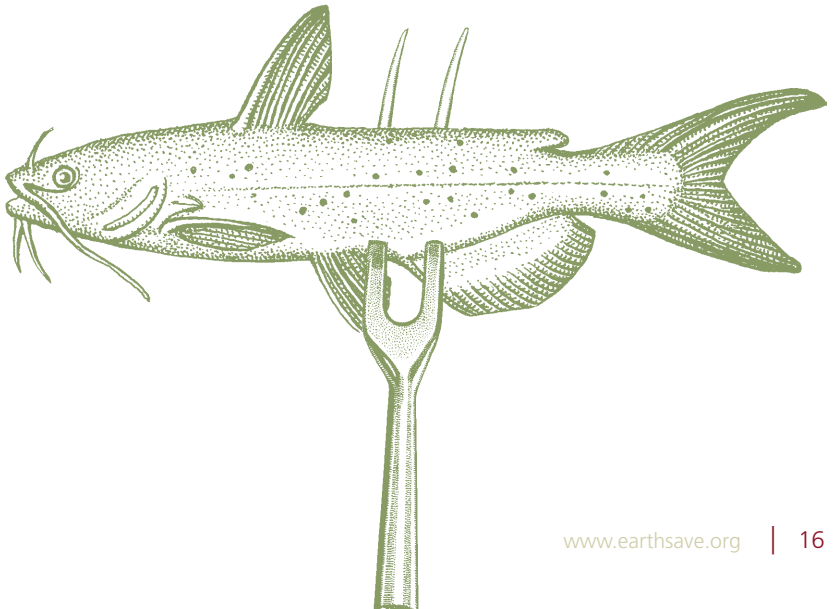
One worker explains that "In the wintertime there are always hogs stuck to the sides and floors of the trucks. They [slaughterhouse workers] go in there with wires or knives and just cut or pry the hogs loose. The skin pulls right off. These hogs were alive when we did this."[184] In *Slaughterhouse*, Eisnitz writes: "When hogs arrive frozen at slaughterhouses, which is a common occurrence, their protections under the Humane Slaughter Act are mysteriously waived. Since they are of no value for human consumption, ante mortem inspectors neither examine them nor make a decision as to their disposition. Nor are they provided shelter or promptly stunned. Instead they are left to fend for themselves until they die."[185]

FISH

Fish look so unlike humans that many people don't realize that they feel pain just as we do and lead complex intellectual lives that rival those of dogs and some other mammals.

Long-lining is one of the most widespread methods of fishing. Ships unreel as much as 75 miles of line bristling with hundreds of thousands of baited hooks. The hooks are dragged behind the boat at varying depths or are kept afloat by buoys and left overnight, luring any animal in the area to grab a free meal. Once hooked, some animals drown or bleed to death in the water, and many others struggle for hours until the boat returns to reel them in.

Most fish die by suffocation or by being crushed to death by the weight of other fish caught in the net. And as mentioned previously, because of the types of fishing techniques used today, many thousands of "byproduct" (including turtles, dolphins and whales) are also killed by the same means.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The situation is clear: our demand for animal foods is having a devastating impact on the natural world. The good news is that, again, you have the power to make a difference. Every time you sit down to eat, you can make a powerful difference – for good health, for our environment, for the world's poor and for animals. It's all in the power of the fork!

EarthSave works to educate and inspire people to shift toward a plant-based diet. Your choices really do make a difference and we at EarthSave welcome you to join us in making others aware of the power of our food choices.

- Take the VegPledge: Starting today reduce the amount of animal foods you eat: www.vegpledge.com.
- Join EarthSave: Get active with others who want to spread the word about healthier food choices. You can join by visiting us on the Web at www.earthsave.org.

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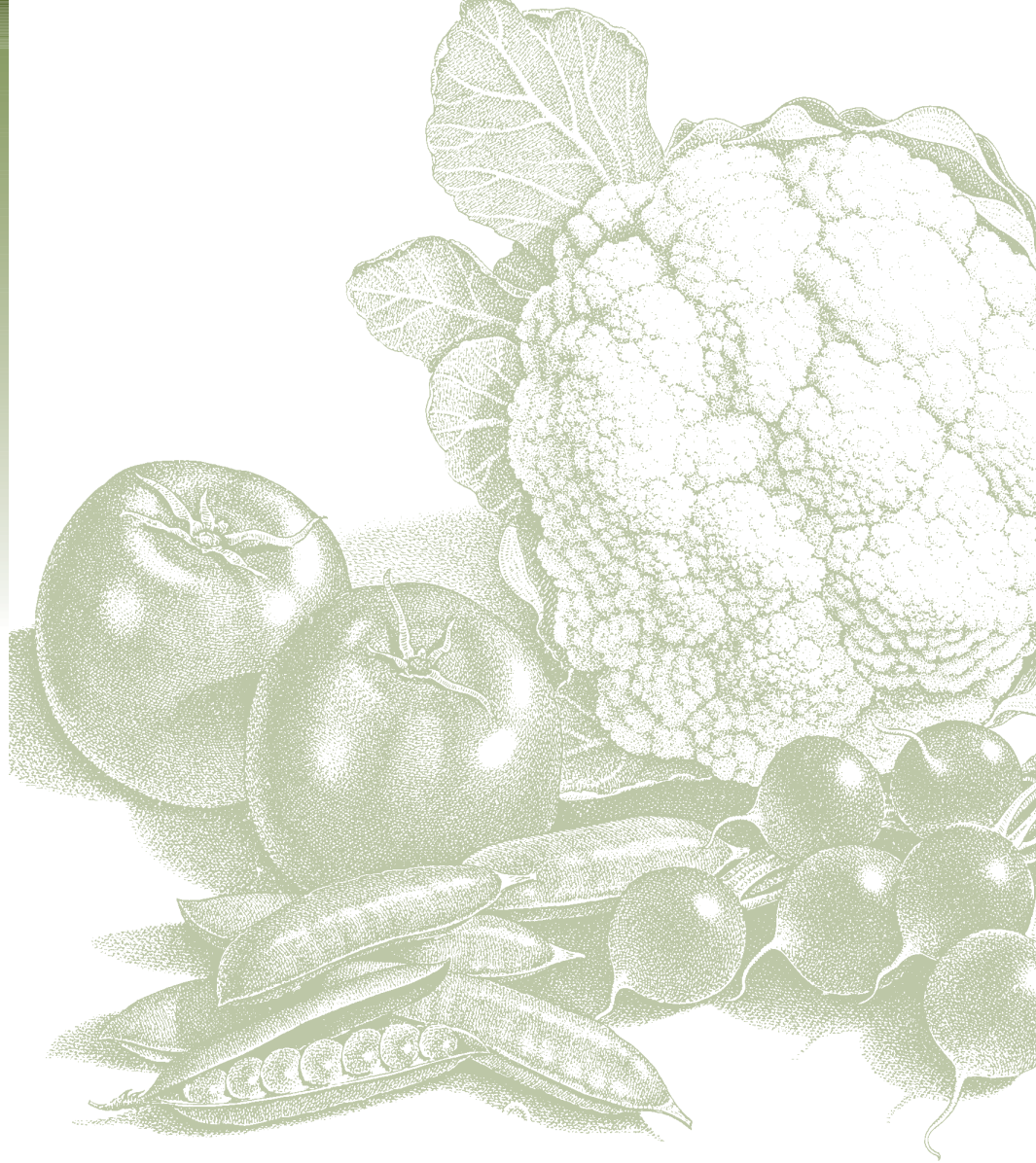

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