



# Sugar Wars

## Taking it to the peddlers of diabetes

Soft drink companies and schools are turning our kids into soda addicts; it's time to stop them.

by John F. Borowski

I look forward to September, a time when millions of students head back to school. There they build the foundations of democracy, delve into the arts, sharpen a sense of wonder and build equity in our society. But like many teachers, I am fighting a nemesis, one that inhibits thought, puts children on a roller coaster of emotion and drains their vitality. And this nemesis is often an invited and welcomed guest: soda pop.

Nearly 19 out of 20 high schools like the one I teach at, sell soda. Ironically, the past can foretell the future. In 1931, a Coke bottler bragged, "the kids play basketball at recess on Coca-Cola goals, use Coca-Cola blotters to blot our their troubles, consult a Coca-Cola thermometer and write their notes on Coca-Cola tablets." And seventy years later, Coca-Cola's senior vice president for public affairs and its chief lobbyist isn't passing out Coke blotters: no, John Downs Jr. now has a seat on the National Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) as a board member!

Under the Bush Administration the Secretary of Health, Tommy Thompson has heralded the Grocery Manufacturing Association for its "fine job in promoting healthy eating." With positioning on school related organizations and aided and abetted by the Bush Administration (Leave No "sugared" Child Behind?), pop pimps see schools as a "sugary nirvana."

Children are seduced daily by television (watching an average of 3-4 hours) where they are bombarded with 10,000 food advertisements yearly, many to consume pop. In 1998, the advertising budget for soft drinks was \$115.5 million. School often is the only "relatively commercial free" environment left for children, and the sugar peddlers know this. They know well that school provides a captive audience, with the reward of generat-



ing life long and dedicated brand consumers. Their strategy is simple: entice school administrators with dollars and bribe them to be their sales partner.

Coca-Cola provides "Coke in Education Day" in many schools, where Coke officials lecture in economic classes and an analysis of Coke products are done for Chemistry. Do you think that this "Coke Day" studied the yearly

cost of obesity in the United States, calculated between \$75-100 billion? Did they encourage the chemistry class to note that for every can of Coke you drink, it takes 32 glasses of water to neutralize the phosphoric acid in your body? Would they do experiments that show when sugar is combined with carbon dioxide the calcium/phosphorous ratio in the body is upset: making bones

brittle?

Coke just doesn't target schools. In 1998, Coca-Cola paid the Boys and Girls Clubs of America \$60 million for exclusive marketing of their sugar water in 2,000 clubs!

How many Coke or PepsiCo officials have read "Liquid Candy" a report that shows that

## How do you cope?

Dear John,

I read your recent Q&As with disbelief and dread. John, how do you cope? How can I find hope in a world where people exist that knowingly do harm to others? I am constantly disturbed by the ignorance and cruelties of others. As a musician, I am exposed daily

### ASK JOHN ROBBINS

to a phony, shallow world where age and looks take precedence over talent. I can deal with this by writing music reflecting my thoughts and values and hope my words will strike a nerve. However, I can't deal with ALEC, Wal-Mart and other greedy conglomerates. Being positive is becoming increasingly challenging.

### John Robbins Responds

Thanks for writing. I am moved by your honesty.

I know what you mean. There are things happening in our world today that must make the angels weep.

Each of us finds our ways to cope. If you are going to be open to the pain and the suffering in the world, I think it is important also to be open to the joy and the beauty. At this very moment, babies are being born, children are playing, people are dancing, people are communicating and learning to understand each other, people are finding new ways to resolve conflicts, and friendships are being made. Right now, people are learning to read, art and music are being created, relationships are growing, new health-giving practices are being discovered, and people are finding ways to add meaning and joy to their lives. At this moment, as in every moment, millions of people are working for a better world for themselves and for all children, now and yet to come.

If you are going to take into yourself the suffering and destruction of life, and you want to find a way to be positive, I think you must also take into yourself the creativity and joy.

It is not easy for me to sustain

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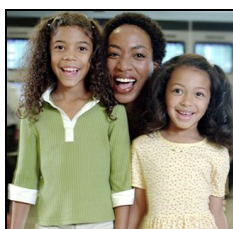
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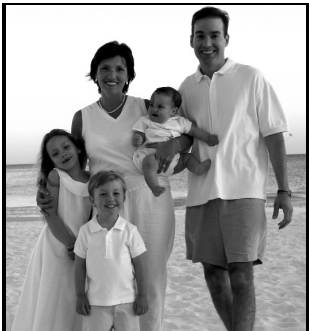


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Letter from the Chair



John Borders and family.

In hope and gratitude,  
John D. Borders, Jr., JD  
CHAIR, EARTHSERVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Letters



Appreciation

I was 12 when I was diagnosed with juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) in my knees by a pediatric RA specialist at Duke University. He started me on Ibuprophen and over the course of two years he steadily increased my dosage as my body reacted less to it. One day he told me that I would have to have Hydrocortizone injections to my knees since the 1,800 mg/day of Ibuprophen was no longer working. The very idea horrified me and my mother prayed for an alternative. At the time my sister was reading a book by John Robbins called *Diet for a New America*. She told mom that it mentioned some British women who changed their diets and discovered that their arthritis symp-

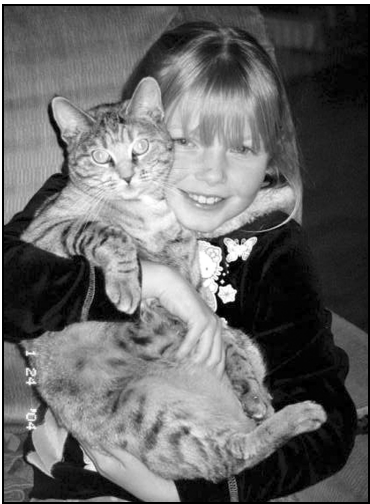
hydrocortizone shots, and within a month I was free of symptoms. My mom called the doctor to explain to him what had happened with my knees, so he could tell his other patients, but sadly, he was not interested. He did not even want me to come back for any testing. This was disappointing when I thought of the number of other children he treats. It has been five years now and I am as physically active as everyone else. I have even gone hiking with my family on the Appalachian trail with a heavy backpack. I used to have a hard time just carrying my bookbag up and down the school stairs. Neither my family nor I have ever even considered switching back to the way we used to eat. We have learned so much more



Hanna hits the trail

toms disappeared. That was it. We decided that we had nothing to lose from giving it a try, so mom determined that from then on that we would all switch to a vegan diet. We would buy no more meats, eggs, or dairy products. The transition was actually not too hard for us since we were already shopping at the local Wholefoods market, and after only a week of being a Vegan my knees were improved to the point where I felt able to go without the Ibuprophen. I never went in for the

about Veganism, and the way we see it, we all benefit from our diet, and so does the world we live in. I have wanted to share this story with other young RA patients and their families facing what I once faced, but Oprah is not knocking on my door. I am sure I'm not the only one that could benefit from this knowledge and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to share my story with others. **Hannah Hunsberger**  
age 18  
Fuquay-Varina, NC



Birthday Gift

In our family for our kids' birthdays, we have them ask for donations to a worthy cause instead of getting gifts. Our daughter, Suzette (pictured above), turned 10 and at her party with some of her school and neighborhood friends, she asked for donations to EarthSave. She raised the enclosed \$30 from five people at her party. We had a money order made out for the cash. Please use this as needed to help the earth. Thanks, from proud parents **Todd and RaeAnn Moldenauer**  
Ripon, CA

From Hannah's Father

We're obviously very pleased for Hannah, and have proste-litized the benefits of eating right to anyone who will listen, because before Hannah's situation, we were, while not skeptical, just un-informed. The phrase "you are what you eat" could not be a more stronger message to people. People are funny . . . they fuss about the oil and gas they put in their replaceable automobiles, but don't think at all about what they put in their irreplaceable bodies. The simple message I try to share with people is that when your body has a reaction, figure out what caused it . . . don't just treat the symptoms. The body is an amazing engine, and when it misfires, or makes an unfamiliar sound, don't just pour in a fuel additive or crank up the stereo, but rather figure out what cause the sound or misfire, and fix it. The car/body will last longer, be easier and cheaper to maintain, and will be happier. Not to mention the benefit to our environment & health care costs if we all thought & worked that way. **Jim Hunsberger**  
Fuquay-Varina, NC

Think About It...

Not that long ago, the average American mother would have been more concerned to learn that her son or daughter was becoming a vegetarian than to learn that he or she was taking up smoking. Not that long ago, organic food products could only be found in specialty stores. Blood cholesterol levels of 300 milligrams per deciliter were considered normal, and patients in hospital coronary care units were fed bacon and eggs, and white toast with margarine and jam for breakfast. Not that long ago, people who ate food that was healthy, environmentally friendly, and caused no animals to suffer were considered health nuts, while those who ate food that caused disease, took a staggering toll on the resource base, and depended on immense animal suffering were considered normal. But all this is changing. The revolution sweeping our relationship to our food and our world, I believe, is part of an historical imperative. This is what happens when the human spirit is activated. One hundred and fifty years ago, slavery was legal in the United States. One hundred years ago, women could not vote in most states. Eighty years ago, there were no laws in the United States against any form of child abuse. Fifty years ago, we had no Civil Rights Act, no Clean Air or Clean Water legislation, no Endangered Species Act. Today, millions of people are refusing to buy clothes and shoes made in sweatshops and are seeking to live healthier and more Earth-friendly lifestyles. In the last fifteen years alone, as people in the United States have realized how cruelly veal calves are treated, veal consumption has dropped 62 percent. I don't believe we are isolated consumers, alienated from what gives life, and condemned to make a terrible mess of things on this planet. I believe we are human beings, flawed but learning, stumbling but somehow making our way toward wisdom, sometimes ignorant but learning through it all to live with respect for ourselves, for each other, and for the whole Earth community.

From John Robbins' *The Food Revolution*

# Dr. Greger's health updates

## Milk and Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis is a devastating disease characterized by your immune system attacking the insulation of your own nerve cells, causing unpredictable short-circuiting within your nervous system, which commonly interferes with vision, speech and mobility.

But why would your immune system do such a thing? We know that other diseases of so-called immune "autoaggression" may be caused by something called "molecular mimicry," in which a foreign protein looks just like one of the body's own proteins. So then when the body makes antibodies against the foreign invader, it also unintentionally makes antibodies against some of the body's own proteins.

For example, there is a protein in bovine milk that looks like a protein in the human pancreas, and so human babies exposed to the milk of cows may try to fend off the foreign bovine protein and, in doing so, destroy their pancreas's ability to produce insulin, leading to type I diabetes.

Numerous population-based studies around the world have linked multiple sclerosis to dairy product consumption,[1-3] but cause and effect could never be proven. So a prestigious research team of German, Swedish, British and American scientists set out study bovine milk proteins and see if they could find any milk protein that cross-reacted with human nerve-sheath proteins. And now, for the first time ever, they found it.[4]

If a milk protein is causing or contributing to multiple sclerosis, why don't more people come down with the disease? Like all diseases, susceptibility has both a genetic and an environmental component. We don't know why in some people the bovine milk protein is able to sneak through the blood-brain barrier into the central nervous system and potentially trigger an inflammatory response that ends with your own nerves as victims of collateral damage.

This research is still in the preliminary stage, and blaming dairy for multiple sclerosis remains speculative, but evidence is mounting that this disabling disease may just be yet another problem inherent to humans eating the bodies and body fluids of fellow mammals.

## Insulin Sensitivity and Vegetarianism

Impaired insulin sensitivity sets people up for a whole host of life-threatening problems, including obesity, hypertension, atherosclerosis, diabetes. It is also thought to be at the heart of so-called syndrome X (now called metabolic syndrome) affecting 50 million Americans.[5]

A new study in China compared the insulin sensitivity of vegetarians and meat eaters, and even though the vegetarians were on average years older than the meat eaters, the vegetarians were significantly more insulin sensitive. Yet another clue to explain why vegetarians have so much less cardiac mortality. And the longer the research subjects were vegetarian, the better their values became.

The researchers summarize: "In conclusion, the vegetarian diets had significant beneficial effects on insulin sensitivity of subjects in a low-risk population. The degree of beneficial effects appeared to be correlated with years on a vegetarian diet." [6]

It seems vegetarians are sensitive in more ways than one!

## Mercury Contamination in Fish

Each year in the U.S., up to 600,000 children are born at risk for lower intelligence and learning problems due to mercury exposure because their mothers ate fish. That's the number of children the Environmental Protection Agency estimated to be at risk in an analysis published last month using data from the Centers for Disease Control. This is double the Agency's previous estimate.[7]

This study follows on the heels of the joint FDA/EPA advisory in March, which warned young children, pregnant and breast-feeding women, or even women just planning to get pregnant to severely limit the consumption of many types of fish like canned tuna, and to stay away from some fish completely, like swordfish, mackerel, etc. Still, many scientists didn't think the advisory went far enough.

After learning that the FDA was going to "disregard" science [8] and allow women to eat a whole can of albacore tuna once a week, one leading FDA advisory panel expert resigned in protest. University of Arizona toxicologist Vas Aposhian said the advisory should have put more stringent limits on all canned tuna and warned women who might get pregnant to avoid albacore tuna entirely, claiming that "The new recommendations are dangerous to 99 percent of pregnant women and their unborn children.[9] "It seems that one should be more concerned about the health of the future children of this country," he said, "than the albacore tuna industry." [10]

The hundreds of thousands of babies born every year in the U.S. to the one in six women with enough mercury in their blood to put their babies at risk suffer most often subtle losses in potential. Although mercury can cause irreparable damage to the human central nervous system and has been found to deform fetuses, more often, "It might reduce IQ by a few points," says Dr. Michael Gochfeld, chairman of New Jersey's mercury task force. "It might reduce motor coordination, so that this child is someone we think of as a klutz. It might make them unmusical." [11]

Studies have shown that children born to mothers who ate a lot of fish were slower to talk, walk and develop fine motor skills and have weaker memories and attention spans. And the brain damage is apparently permanent. Follow-up studies over a decade later showed that their brains had not recovered.

The tuna industry feels that tuna is being unfairly singled out and is quick to point out that "almost all ocean fish and seafood naturally contain trace levels of mercury." [12] One such leading "natural" source is the smoke that

pours from coal-burning plants across the U.S. And this past Earth Day it was the coal and power industry executives that were celebrating.

Lost in Bush's "war on terror" is Bush's war on the Clean Air Act. As part of Bush's "Clear Skies Initiative," the Bush White House proposed to weaken and delay efforts to clean up mercury emissions from America's power stations, thus saving millions for their corporate campaign contributors. The energy industry alone contributed \$40 million to Republican election campaigns, including \$1.3 million directly to Bush. And they got their money's

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# Guidelines Advise Blood Pressure Checks for Children

New federal guidelines recommend checking children for possible heart and blood vessel damage if they have high blood pressure -- a hazard increasing among the very young as Americans put on more and more weight.

The new guidelines, like those issued eight years ago, urge doctors to begin checking children for high blood pressure at age 3 during routine office visits, just as they do for adults.

"I think there is still a large proportion of pediatricians and family practitioners who are not routinely measuring blood pressure," said Ronald Portman of the University of Texas at Houston, a member of the committee that drew up the new guidelines.

The guidelines were released on May 10, 2004, at a meeting in New York of the American Society of Hypertension and will be published in the July issue of the journal Pediatrics. They were written by the National High Blood Pressure Education Program.

"The real problem is obesity," said Barbara Alving, acting director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. "We are setting the stage for our children to develop into really unhealthy young adults."

The government now estimates that 16 percent of U.S. children are overweight. The risk of high blood pressure and the adult form of diabetes increases as children get heavier.

The latest nationwide health statistics, gathered in the late 1990s, show that children's blood pressures have edged up slightly but significantly in a decade. Average systolic pressure -- the higher number in a blood pressure reading -- has risen from 105 to 106, and diastolic has gone from 58 to 62.

Much of this can be explained by children's increasing weight, although doctors think that less physical activity and changes in diet also play a role.

Unlike adult blood pressure, healthy readings for children vary according to their size and age. Doctors consider any reading over the 95th percentile to be hypertension. Somewhat less than 5 percent of the population -- perhaps 1 percent to 3 percent -- are in this category, because readings that are initially high tend to drop with repeated measurements.

Children's readings between the 90th and 95th percentiles are now considered to be pre-hypertension. Earlier guidelines called this category high normal.

Bonita Falkner of Thomas Jefferson University, who chaired the guidelines committee, said that in recent years, doctors have learned that even very young children with high blood pressure can have resulting organ damage. So patients should be routinely checked for such conditions as heart enlargement and thickening of the carotid artery.

Even without signs of damage, doctors should work to help young patients get their blood pressure under control. "The first step is lifestyle changes, since the most common issue is that they are overweight," Falkner said.

A low-fat plant-based diet and exercise are the single most reliable and safe way to accomplish weight loss and lowered blood pressure, although food industry experts and lobbyists have successfully pressured the government not to identify any particular food types as "good" or "bad."



## ATKINS AND RISK

New findings by Yale epidemiologist Tongzhang Zheng might give pause to Atkins Diet devotees: for women, a diet high in fat or protein -- Atkins staples -- significantly increases the chances of developing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. A high-fiber diet reduces the risk.

"If you have a higher intake of fat, particularly saturated fat, your risk almost doubles," says Zheng,

who studied the diets of and disease incidence among 1,300 Connecticut women from 1995 to 2001. "For the most prevalent and deadly non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, your risk almost triples." High protein consumption also resulted in increased risk, while eating fruits and vegetables cut the risk by 40 to 60 percent, Zheng wrote in a paper published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

## EarthSave NEWS

### Our Mission

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.

JOHN ROBBINS  
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We welcome your feedback and ideas. Please write or email us.

### Contributors

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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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# Soy: What's the whole story?

Recently an article entitled "The Whole Soy Story, The Dark Side of America's Favorite Health Food," by Kaayla T. Daniel, appeared in the May/June 2004 issue of Mothering Magazine. The article can be read at: <http://www.mothering.com/10-0-0/html/10-6-0/soy-story.shtml>

The letters that Mothering received in response to the article can be read at: <http://www.mothering.com/10-0-0/html/10-6-0/soy-letters.shtml>

Because the article has generated more confusion than light, John Robbins sent the following letter, a portion of which was published by Mothering Magazine.

I've been a devoted fan of Mothering, and read every issue for more than fifteen years. On many occasions I've given subscriptions as gifts to new mothers and families. I've always understood why Mothering readers have so much respect for the magazine, and place so much trust in it.

But the article you printed warning against soy products betrays that trust. Actually, it wasn't an article, it was a diatribe. Under the guise of warning people, and pretending to be a voice of caution, it spreads fears that are unwarranted, exaggerated, and fictitious. Young mothers don't have the time to investigate the credibility and balance of the articles you print. They trust you to do that for them. In this case, you failed them big time.

I have no association to the soy industry, but I do have a strong dedication to people having accurate information about foods. It is difficult in a short letter to respond to seven pages of biased material, particularly when each page is crowded with half-truths, statements taken out of context, and conclusions drawn inappropriately from data.

The article's author, Kaayla Daniel, repeatedly says that people of China, Japan and other countries in Asia eat very little soy, so there is no historical precedent for eating the amounts being recommended by people like Dr. Andrew Weil and Dr. Christiane Northrup. This is a misleading half truth. It is true that in parts of Asia, most notably China, soy consumption has been low. But Asia is a very large area with several billion people.

What's important is not the average soy consumption for the whole of Asia, but the soy consumption in those parts of Asia which demonstrate the highest levels of human health. And there is no question about where that is. The elder population of Okinawa (a prefecture of Japan) have the best health and greatest longevity on the planet.

This is important because the highest soy consumption in the world is in Okinawa. Many North Americans know of Okinawa only for being the site of one of the longest and bloodiest battles of World War II, and for now housing U.S. military bases. But the people of Okinawa have repeatedly been shown to be the healthiest and longest-lived people in the world. This has been demonstrated conclusively by the renowned Okinawa Centenarian Study, a 25-year study sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Health.

How much soy have the elder Okinawans eaten throughout their lives? The Okinawa Centenarian Study included an extremely thorough analysis of food consumption in the prefecture. The principle investigators and authors of the study (Makoto Suzuki, M.D., Bradley J. Willcox, M.D., and D. Craig Willcox, Ph.D.) state: "Okinawan elders eat an average of two servings of flavonoid-rich soy products per day."

This is about 20 times more than the amount of soy Kaayla Daniel claims "Asians really eat." When she says "there is no historical precedent for eating the large amounts of soy food now being consumed," she is incorrect. Soy makes up twelve percent of the diet of Okinawan elders.

The authors of the Okinawan Centenarian Study analyzed the diet and health profiles of Okinawan elders and compared them to other elder populations throughout the world. They conclude that high soy consumption is one of the main reasons that Okinawans are at extremely low risk for hormone-dependent cancers, including cancers of the breast, prostate, ovaries, and colon. Compared to North Americans, they have a staggering 80 percent less breast cancer and prostate cancer, and less than half the ovarian cancer and colon cancer.

This enormously reduced cancer risk arises in part, the study's authors say, from the Okinawans large consumption of isoflavones from soy. This is an important finding. The lowest cancer rates in the industrialized world are found in the Okinawans who consume the most soy.

Other studies have confirmed the link between soy consumption and reduced cancer risk. The Japan Public Health Center Study found the lowest breast cancer rates in those prefectures where women ate the most soy products. And a recent study published in the British medical journal

Lancet showed that women who ate the most flavonoids (mostly isoflavones from soy products) had a substantially lower risk for breast cancer than those who had lower flavonoid intake.

The reason the ardently pro-pharmaceutical FDA wound up affirming that soybeans are a food that can prevent and even help cure disease was not, as Kaayla Daniel says, because the agency is in bed with the soy industry, but because the evidence was so convincing. The reason the FDA now allows food manufacturers to talk about the benefits of heart-healthy soy in their products is because the substantiating data are overwhelming.

Indeed, the authors of the 25-year Okinawa Centenarian Study state that high soy consumption in Okinawa is one of the primary reasons elder Okinawans have 80 percent fewer heart attacks than North Americans do. Their high soy consumption is also why, if Okinawans do suffer a heart attack, they are more than twice as likely to survive.

These are staggering numbers. The study's authors state that if North Americans lived more like the elder Okinawans, and ate the amount of soy they do, we "would have to close 80 percent of the coronary care units and one-third of the cancer wards in the United States, and a lot of nursing homes would also be out of business. By 1990, Okinawan life expectancy figures had even surpassed the absolute limits of population life expectancy assumed by the Japan Population Research Institute. Limits had to be revised upwards simply to account for the phenomenal longevity of the Okinawans."

It is not an accident that in Okinawa, home to the highest soy consumption in the world, heart disease is minimal, breast cancer is so rare that screening mammography is not needed, and most aging men have never heard of prostate cancer. The three leading killers in the West — coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer — occur in Okinawans with the lowest frequency in the world.

There's also the fact that elder Okinawans have much stronger bones than we do, and less than half the hip fractures that we do. The authors of the Okinawa Centenarian Study attribute the increased bone strength and health in Okinawa to soy consumption. Many other studies confirm the connection between increased soy consumption and reduced osteoporosis.

I am very sorry that Mothering printed the article by Kaayla Daniels because it is so full of bias and fallacies. Its authoritative tone may sway some people to unnecessarily avoid soy, and that would be a shame. For most people, consumption of the levels of whole soy foods recommended by authors like Dr. Andrew Weil and Dr. Christiane Northrup, which correspond to the levels eaten by the Okinawans, are not only safe, but tremendously helpful to disease prevention and the creation of vibrant and resilient wellness. Of course if you are allergic to any food, then you shouldn't eat it. But dairy products, for which soy products are often substituted, are more likely to produce allergic reactions than soy. And by the way...

\* Cow's milk provides more than nine times as much saturated fat as soy beverages, so is far more likely to contribute to heart disease.

\* Soy beverages provide more than 10 times as much essential fatty acids as cow's milk, and so provide a healthier quality of fat.

\* Soy beverages are cholesterol-free, while cow's milk contains 34 mg of cholesterol per cup, which again means that cow's milk is far worse for your heart and cardiovascular system.

\* Soy beverages lower both total and LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels, while cow's milk raises both total and LDL cholesterol levels, providing yet more reasons soymilk is better for your health.

\* Soy beverages contain numerous protective phytochemicals that may protect against chronic diseases such as heart disease and osteoporosis. Cow's milk contains no phytochemicals.

\* Men who consume one to two servings of soymilk per day are 70 percent less likely to develop prostate cancer than men who don't.

I do not understand why Mothering would

# Ask John Robbins

EarthSave Founder, bestselling author & humanitarian

John Robbins is the founder and Board Chair Emeritus of EarthSave International. He is the author of *The Food Revolution -- How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and Our World*.

He is also author of the international bestseller *Diet for a New America -- How Your Food Choices Affect Your Health, Happiness, and the Future of Life on Earth*, *The Awakened Heart -- Meditations on Finding Harmony in a Changing World*, and the widely acclaimed *Reclaiming Our Health -- Exploding the Medical Myth and Embracing the Source of True Healing*.

The only son of the founder of the Baskin-Robbins ice cream empire, John Robbins was groomed to follow in his father's footsteps, but chose to walk away from Baskin-Robbins and the immense wealth it represented to "...pursue the deeper



John Robbins

American Dream...the dream of a society at peace with its conscience because it respects and lives in harmony with all life forms. A dream of a society that is truly healthy, practicing a wise and compassionate stewardship of a balanced ecosystem." Submit your questions or messages to John on his website: [www.FoodRevolution.org](http://www.FoodRevolution.org)

## COPE / FROM PAGE 1

the gaze, to be present with my eyes and heart open to the suffering in myself and in others. But when I shrink from the pain, when I avoid it and look away, something in me goes dead. Honoring life, to me, requires that I see both the light and the shadow.

You are someone who has been deeply touched by life's pain. I think I understand, because I am also such a person. You won't find me telling you it's all sunshine and roses, because it most certainly is not. But I will tell you this. I won't let that stop me from loving as best I can and in all the ways I can. Even though we are hurt and broken we can love. In fact, isn't it often the case that our wounds give us human depth and empathy and understanding? Our wounds can be places where we can meet others and grow.

How do I cope? I take care of myself the best I can. Sometimes it's pretty good. Sometimes it isn't. But even when I stumble I get up and keep going because there is something inside me that says this is what I am here to do. It's kind of like what St. Francis said. Where there is no beauty I will bring some. Where there is no love I will bring it. Where there is suffering I will do what I can to bring joy.

There is something in us humans that is destructive and unconscious. And there is also something in us that is wondrous, infinite and sacred. We have the capacity to hurt each other, and we also have the ability to love. We can react to circumstances, or we can act from a

vision of what is possible. I am best able to stay in touch with what sustains me, and best able to find a way to affirm life in the midst of the suffering, when I see the opportunities within obstacles, and find something precious in each moment. Things become beautiful when you love them.

Thanks for writing . I know how you feel, because I have felt that way, too. But what can we do other than continually rededicate ourselves to a path of awakening and compassion? In the presence of fear, what can we do other than see this as an opportunity to uphold another possibility and take a stand for a way of life that is based in cooperation and caring? What else is there to do but love?

We who are alive, with breath in our bodies and love in our hearts, have so very much to be thankful for. With all the pain and challenges that life can bring, let us never lose track of that.

What kind of music do you create? Is there any way I could hear a bit of it?

Hang in there, Kathryn. You have something precious to give the world, something no one but you can give. There is something inside you that is profoundly alive that wants to come out. It will be all the more glorious and beautiful and life-giving for your awareness of the suffering.

Be well, take care, and keep breathing. Who you are is needed.

With respect for it all,  
John

allow its pages to be used for such a misleading article. I hope that you allow more balanced voices substantial space in the future to undo the damage you've done. Mothering's readers expect and deserve sane and helpful articles, especially about subjects like nutrition. They don't need more fear mongering. We've got quite enough of that in our society today.

Readers who want further

information about health and longevity in Okinawa can see the excellent book *The Okinawa Program*.

And readers who want to see a balanced response to many of the specific allegations made against soy can visit: [http://www.foodrevolution.org/what\\_about\\_soy.htm](http://www.foodrevolution.org/what_about_soy.htm)

John Robbins

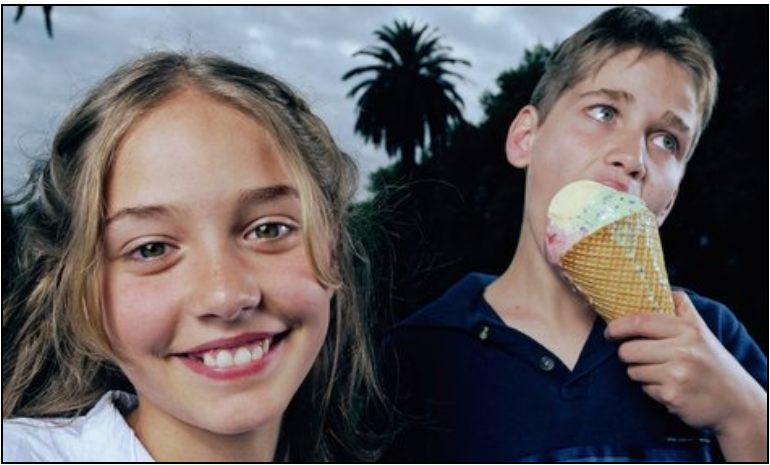


# Vice Cream: Over 70 Sinfully Delicious Dairy-Free Desserts

by Jeff Rogers

Reviewed by Caryn Hartglass

I will never forget the memories of making ice cream as a child at girlsclub camp. Back then, on a hot day, we'd mix all the ingredients from scratch. Then slowly, we'd take turns cranking the handle of the wooden bucket filled with rock salt and ice, with the container of ice cream in the center. It was hard work and our arms would tire but



the reward was worth it. The ice cream we made was the best I ever tasted.

About twenty years ago, leaving my first job out of college my friends bought me one of those cedar wood buckets for making ice cream with the manual crank. It wasn't as much fun as when I was a kid, but I was a purest and I believed I could make the best ice cream this way. When I gave up dairy, I used it to make soy based ice creams and fruit sorbets. At some point, I tired of the process and the bucket became a decorative fixture on top of my refrigerator.

Then came Vice Cream... Jeff Rogers (know to friends as The Naughty Vegan) has put together a delightful little book of recipes for vegan frozen desserts. Each recipe consists of only a few simple ingredients and you can choose to make it as simple and fast or as complicated and time consuming as you like. The desserts call for a base of cashew milk, almond milk, coconut milk or fruit. You can make the milks yourself and Mr. Rogers gives you the instructions on how to do so. Or you can simply purchase ready made coconut milk or almond milk from the store. You can use an automatic ice maker or be a purest like myself and manually crank and whip the ingredients into a heavenly dessert.

Cashew milk has a very distinctive taste which may not be overpowered by the other ingredients in the recipe. Some people like it - some don't. Almond milk has a much milder flavor. I recommend almond milk for those who don't care for the cashew milk taste.

I invited Jeff Rogers to be one of the chefs at EarthSave NYC's

Taste of Health this past June. He was coming from Seattle and I told him I could provide the utensils and appliances he needed for the demo. He needed an ice cream maker. At first I wasn't sure where I was going to get one and then I realized I had one. I took it down from the top of the refrigerator and cleaned it up. I was disappointed to find out that it leaked terribly and could not hold the salty water necessary to

freeze the mixture. When I spoke to Jeff about it he advised me to soak the bucket in water. I did so and the bucket did as he expected. The wood expanded and the leaks were sealed!

Jeff gave a great demo at Taste of Health. The audience couldn't wait for the desserts to be finished and they crowded around desperately waiting for their sample taste. The containers were licked clean!

My cedar bucket now has been moved to the countertop in the kitchen so that I can make Vice Cream treats regularly this summer.

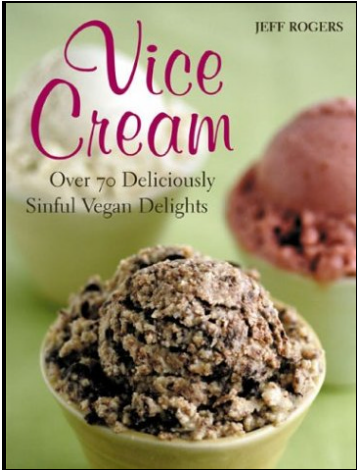
Try this one:

Coconut Carob  
Makes about 1 Quart  
3 cups fresh coconut milk  
1 cup packed organic pitted black dates  
½ cup unsweetened carob powder

Combine the coconut milk and dates in a blender. Blend on high until silky smooth at least 1 minute. With the motor running, add the carob powder and blend until evenly distributed. Place the blender in the freezer for 40 minutes to 1 hour or in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour or up to overnight, until well chilled.

Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately or transfer to airtight containers and store in the freezer until ready to serve.

*Vice Cream is published by Celestial Arts. More information about Jeff Rogers and Vice Cream can be found at his website: [www.theNaughtyVegan.com](http://www.theNaughtyVegan.com)*



# You don't want fries with that

SuperSize Me -- A film by Morgan Spurlock, distributed by Roaside Attractions

Reviewed by Aaron Davidson

As with Michael Moore's polarizing documentaries, the balance of fact and opinion wavers in films like Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me*. The viewer is asked to question society through the lens of an opinionated camera, and the success of such films hinges on the presentation of the opinion. *Super Size Me* wraps its subject and its politics like a Happy Meal, masking an indigestible subject as entertainment.

*Super Size Me* follows its director on a 30-day experiment meant to check the obese volatility of the fast food industry: Spurlock promises to eat three McDonald's meals a day, every day, for a month. There are rules: He has to try everything on the menu, and every time an employee asks if he would like to "super size" the meal, he must agree.

"Super sizing" is a cultural phenomenon of sorts. It refers to a considerable augmentation of the average fast food meal - instead of the normal burger, fries and a drink, one gets a burger, extra-large fries, and an extra-large drink. Spurlock is asked to "super size" only nine times during his monthlong experiment. The first time, after eating McDonald's for a mere three days, the larger meal made him vomit in the parking lot.

Spurlock admits that his idea ignores the consumptive rationale of any logical eating plan. He knows that by eating three McMeals a day, he will be consuming more calories, fat, salt and sugar per meal than he needs. Three doctors deem Spurlock in good health before he embarks on Ronald's diet; he (the man, not the clown) is 6'2" and about 185 pounds. He is in good shape.

The truth can be a flawless weapon, however, and predictably, Spurlock's results are horrifying. He gains 10 pounds in the first week, eight pounds the week after, and nearly 30 pounds by the end of the 30 days. He "pickles his liver" as if he were binge drinking, according to one of the doctors, all of whom strongly encourage ending the experiment after 20 days.

Spurlock persists, and although it's painful to watch, his wit and style keep the film afloat in the french fryer, as it were. He balances the greasy



grotesqueness of his quest with facts and funnies. In one scene, Spurlock is in the car with a legal adviser. The adviser says that like the cigarette companies and their candy cigarettes, the food chain uses Happy Meals and play areas to make children associate McDonald's with "positive feelings" from a young age. Spurlock replies something along the lines of, "When I have kids and we drive by a McDonald's, I'm going to punch them in the face."

The film presents a wealth of information indicting fast food's health-depleting qualities and the permeation of those qualities in an ever-fattening American culture. The most interesting moments don't involve caloric numerology or Spurlock hunting McDonald's officials, Michael Moore-style. Instead, the best spotlighting is found in the unique - and real - characters formed from the fast food industry. One man has eaten over 19,000 Big Macs and remains skinny and relatively healthy. There is also a fascinating interview with EarthSave founder John Robbins, son of the owner of Baskin-Robbins, who relates how his childhood was pockmarked by a mood-swinging addiction to ice cream. He also notes that his uncle (Baskin) died of heart trouble when they were around 50 years old, while his father also suffers from serious health problems.

Spurlock's biggest success is his unending human accessibility. Even late in the month, when he admits to feeling depressed, craven, smelly and sexually uninspired, his sense of humor persists, keeping a glint in his eye and a movement to his film that never tapers off.

## Vegan marshmallows -- They're ba--aaack and boy, was it ever worth the wait!

by Gai Davis

When all the supplies of Emes Kosher Marshmallows dried up several years ago, a vegan marshmallow could not be found. Far and wide, we searched the world for a replacement to a beloved sweet treat. Finally, vegan marshmallows are back and in typical feast or famine style, there are now several varieties to choose from. Following are my favorites:

Vegan Supreme Marshmallows are tasty little pillows of pleasure that melt in your mouth. They're the perfect size (not too big, not too small) for dropping into your hot cocoa or toasting over an open fire. You can use them to make S'mores or top your baked yams and of course, they're delicious eaten straight out of the bag, too. You'll find

them at: [www.vegansupreme.com](http://www.vegansupreme.com).

Tiny Trapeze Confections makes vegan marshmallows that are distinctly delicious. These jumbo-sized marshmallows boast a heavenly sweet flavor. Though kids will love them, these marshmallows seem to have been designed for the adult palate. They come in two fabulous flavors: Simply Vanilla and Truly Chocolate. Made with real cocoa, the sensuously chocolate flavor is unlike any other candy or confection I've ever tasted. Though a bit pricey, they are a luxurious treat that you simply can't afford to deny yourself. Warning: once you try them, you will be hooked. We could even see more vegan marshmallow flavors on the horizon like Lemon (think Lemon Chiffon) and Peppermint. Get yours at: [www.tinytrapeze.com](http://www.tinytrapeze.com).

## LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO BARK ABOUT!

by Gail Davis

If you're like me, you want your pet to enjoy a vibrantly healthy, long life. But, feeding your pet the most healthful and compassionate foods can be a challenge. This is especially true if your favorite pooch is anything like my dog, Cicely.

She is plagued with a host of food allergies which make it nearly impossible to indulge her in delicious, meat-free treats. Like

many dogs, Cicely is allergic to wheat, soy, and most notably, corn. While there are many wonderful vegan dog treats on the market, most of them contain one or more of these ingredients. But, Tail Wagging Bakery makes a line of treats that your allergy-prone animal companion can truly howl about. They're made with wholesome, organic, cruelty-free ingredients without preservatives or by-products. They come in three vari-

eties: Peanut Busters, Oatmeal Oaties-Sweet Potato, and Sun Crunchies and are made with organic ingredients like spelt and kamut flours, rolled oats, flaxseeds, sweet potato, and molasses.

Though Cicely swears that anybody would love these treats, much to her relief, I haven't tried them myself. To find a store near you or to order online visit: [www.tailwaggingbakery.com](http://www.tailwaggingbakery.com).



# Lessons for vegetarians and vegans from the

## Large vegetarian/vegan study confirms consistent health benefits in avoiding animal foods.

Table 2 Selected lifestyle characteristics by sex and diet group

Characteristic	Women				Men			
	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan
Median age	48	39	35	32	51	42	39	35
Current smoker (%)	11	8	8	10	10	10	9	8
Sedentary occupation (%)	51	54	53	48	58	57	59	51
University degree (%)	35	47	44	45	50	61	55	49
Ever used the pill (%)	70	79	79	70	-	-	-	-
Take dietary supplements (%)	59	68	61	56	43	50	45	43

Table 3 Mean daily intakes of selected nutrients by sex and diet group

Nutrient	Women				Men				DRV
	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan	
Energy (MJ)	8.02	7.75	7.60	6.97	9.18	8.90	8.78	8.01	8.1
Carbohydrate (%E)	48.3	51.2	52.9	56.1	46.9	49.8	51.2	54.9	47
Protein (%E)	17.3	14.9	13.8	13.5	16.0	13.9	13.1	12.9	14.7
Total fat (%E)	31.5	30.7	30.4	27.8	31.9	31.1	31.1	28.2	33
Saturated fat (%E)	10.4	9.3	9.3	5.1	10.7	9.4	9.4	5.0	10
PUFA (%E)	5.2	5.4	5.3	7.2	5.2	5.6	5.7	7.5	6
Dietary fibre (g NSP)	18.9	21.6	21.8	26.4	18.7	22.1	22.7	27.7	18
Folate (µg)	321	346	350	412	329	358	367	431	200
Vitamin B12 (µg)	7.0	4.9	2.5	0.5	7.3	5.0	2.6	0.4	1.5
Calcium (mg)	989	1021	1012	582	1057	1081	1087	610	700
Iron (mg)	12.6	12.8	12.6	14.1	13.4	14.0	13.9	15.3	14.8

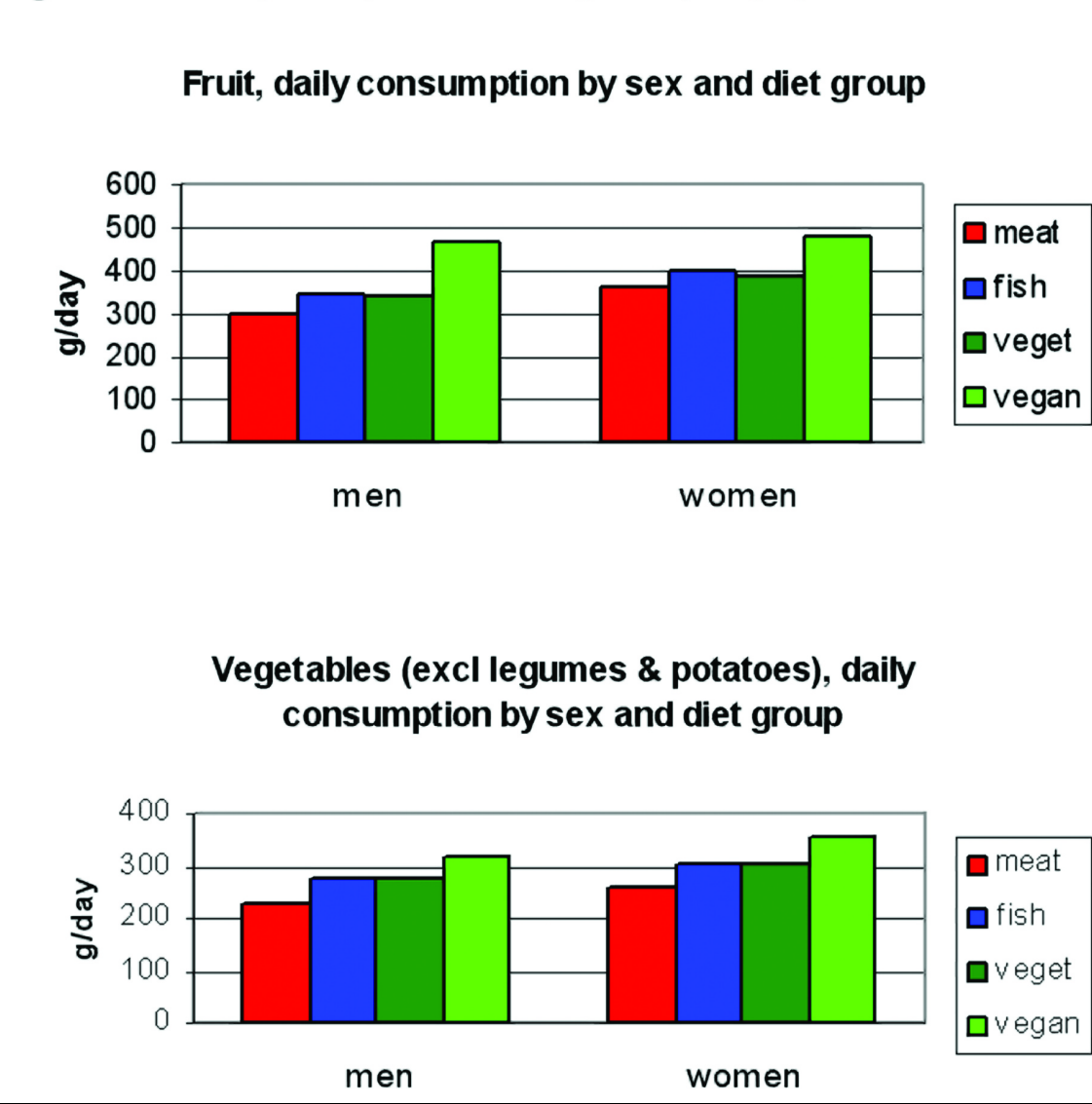
(%E indicates that the nutrient is expressed as a percentage of energy; PUFA denotes polyunsaturated fat; NSP denotes non-starch polysaccharide. The DRVs refer to women: values are identical for men except for energy (10.6 MJ/day) and iron (8.7 mg/day).)

Table 4 Mean systolic blood pressure by sex and diet group

Factors controlled for	Women				Men			
	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan	Meat	Fish	Veget.	Vegan
Age alone	120.1	119.0	120.0	117.6	126.6	125.3	125.5	122.4
Age and BMI	119.7	119.4	120.2	118.4	126.0	125.4	125.8	123.5
‘Everything’*	119.4	119.4	120.3	119.5	125.0	125.7	126.2	125.2

(\* Age, BMI, non-dietary factors and nutrient intakes.)

Figure 2 Mean daily consumption of fruit and vegetables by diet group



By Paul Appleby

The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) is the largest ever 'cohort' study of diet and health. Co-ordinated by the International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC, part of the World Health Organisation), the study includes 520,000 people in 10 European countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom; Figure 1). The aim of the EPIC study is to investigate the relationships between diet, lifestyle and environmental factors and the incidence of cancer and other chronic diseases.

### EPIC-Oxford

EPIC-Oxford is one of 23 EPIC centres. Recruitment to EPIC-Oxford was carried out between 1993 and 1999. Participants were recruited from throughout the UK both through participating GPs and by post, the aim of the postal recruitment being to recruit as many vegetarians and vegans as possible. Nearly 65,500 people were recruited to EPIC-Oxford, of whom 57,500 completed a detailed lifestyle and food frequency questionnaire (FFQ), 31,100 completed a 7-day food diary, 19,700 provided a blood sample, and 38,000 completed a follow-up questionnaire some five years after recruitment.

All EPIC-Oxford participants were asked the following four questions: "Do you eat meat?", "Do you eat fish?", "Do you eat dairy products?", "Do you eat eggs?". From the answers to these questions we were able to divide participants into one of four diet groups as shown in Table 1, these groups forming the basis for many analyses.

The main findings from the EPIC-Oxford study to date will be presented under the following headings:

- lifestyle characteristics and nutrient intakes
- diet and body mass index
- hypertension and blood pressure
- hormones and diet
- diet and mortality
- miscellaneous

### Lifestyle characteristics and nutrient intakes

Many nutrient intakes and lifestyle characteristics differ markedly between the four diet groups, with meat eaters and vegans often at the extremes and fish eaters and vegetarians usually having similar and intermediate values. Average nutrient intakes in the cohort as a whole are close to those currently recommended for good health. The wide variation in nutrient intakes should enhance our ability to detect associations of diet with major cancers and causes of death.

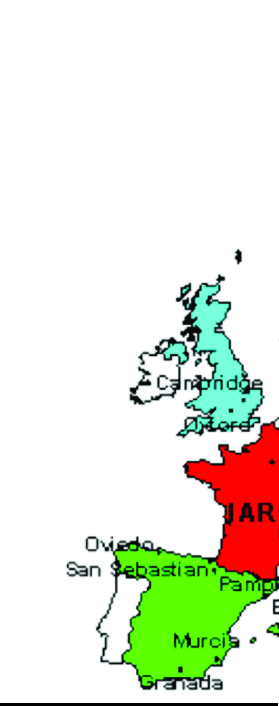
Selected lifestyle characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 2. It can be seen that the non-meat eaters are, on average, younger than the meat eaters, that the participants are generally well educated with a low prevalence of smoking, and that many take vitamins or other dietary supplements.

Figure 2 shows the average daily consumption of fruits and vegetables by sex and diet group. Vegans generally consume more fruits and vegetables than vegetarians and fish eaters who, in turn, consume more than meat eaters. On average, each of the diet groups consume at least half a kilogram of fruits and vegetables daily, suggesting that most participants eat at least five portions of fruits and vegetables daily in line with healthy eating recommendations.

Table 3 shows mean (average) daily nutrient intakes, estimated from the FFQ, by sex and diet group. The table also shows the UK Dietary Reference Value (DRV) for each nutrient as a guide to how closely the participants are following recommended guidelines for healthy eating. It should be noted that the

figures are derived from food and drink and do not take account of minerals from supplements. However, differences in nutrient intakes between diet groups that probably reflect differences in protein intake. Thus, compared with meat eaters, vegetarians generally consume less protein, less saturated fat, and less energy. Vegetarians and vegans have similar intakes of total fat and

Figure 1 Countries and centres participating in the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC)



meat eaters and the vegetarians, the vegans have the lowest energy and nutrient intakes, the vegans an advantage over the meat eaters. However, to a lesser extent, the fish eaters, although all follow the dietary guidelines, have mean intakes of energy and nutrients among the vegans for both women and men.

### Diet and body mass index

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of obesity obtained by dividing weight in kilograms by the square of height in metres. For example, a person with a weight of 70 kilograms and a height of 1.75 metres has a BMI of 22.2 (kilograms per square metre). A BMI of 20-25 kg m<sup>-2</sup> is considered a normal range, where a BMI greater than 25 kg m<sup>-2</sup> is considered overweight and a BMI of 30 kg m<sup>-2</sup> or more is considered obese. Obesity increases the risk of developing diseases including heart disease and some cancers.

We compared the BMI of the participants in the EPIC-Oxford study. Fish eaters, vegetarians and vegans had significantly lower BMI than meat eaters. Differences in macronutrient intake (protein, fat, carbohydrate) accounted for

Table 1 Numbers of participants

Diet group	Men
Meat eaters	7,800
Fish eaters	1,700
Vegetarians	4,200
Vegans	900
Total	14,600

(Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100)

mean BMI between the diet groups. High protein and low fat diets were factors most strongly associated with low BMI.

Figure 3 shows the BMI of the women in the four diet groups. The vegans have the lowest BMI, followed by the vegetarians (by 1-2 kg m<sup>-2</sup>).



# IC-Oxford study

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fish eaters having similar and intermediate values. Results were similar for men.

### Hypertension and blood pressure

We compared the prevalence of self-reported hypertension and mean systolic and diastolic blood pressures in the four diet groups. Non-meat eaters, especially vegans, had a lower prevalence of hypertension and lower mean systolic and diastolic blood pressures than meat eaters. The differences were largely attributable to differences in body mass index, which is positively correlated with blood pressure. Table 4 shows mean systolic blood pressure by sex and diet, first controlling for age alone, then controlling for age and BMI, and finally controlling for age, BMI, non-dietary factors and nutrient intakes. Controlling for age alone, the difference in mean systolic blood pressure between meat eaters and vegans was 2.5 mm Hg for women and 4.2 mm Hg for men. However, these differences disappeared after controlling for BMI, non-dietary factors and nutrient intakes as well as age, so that differences in these factors account for most of the variation in blood pressure between the diet groups.

### Hormones and diet

Insulin-like growth factor-I (IGF-I) is a hormone that stimulates cell proliferation. It has been associated with increased risks for prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in women. We compared mean IGF-I concentrations in meat-eaters, vegetarians and vegans for both men and women. Mean IGF-I was similar in the vegetarians and meat eaters, but was 9% lower in the

vegan men and 13% lower in the vegan women. These results suggest that vegans may be at lower risk for hormone-related cancers such as those of the breast and prostate.

### Diet and mortality

In a preliminary analysis we compared mortality (death rate) in vegetarians (including vegans) and non-vegetarians. Overall mortality in the two groups was similar although mortality from ischaemic heart disease (heart attack) was 25% lower in the vegetarians. The results were similar to those found in previous studies. Mortality for both the vegetarians and the non-vegetarians in EPIC-Oxford is low compared with national rates.

### Miscellaneous

In the first analysis of data from the follow-up questionnaire, we compared self-reported bowel movement frequency by various factors including diet group. Being vegetarian and especially vegan was strongly associated with a higher frequency of bowel movements, which might confer a lower risk for colorectal cancer. There were also significant positive associations between bowel movement frequency and body mass index, and intakes of dietary fibre and non-alcoholic fluids.

### Summary

EPIC-Oxford is the largest single study of Western vegetarians and vegans to date, and presents a unique opportunity to study the long-term health of people who do not eat meat. Results from the study suggest that vegetarians and vegans follow diets that generally correspond well with guidelines for healthy eating and confer some benefits in terms of avoiding overweight/obesity and high blood pressure. Whether these benefits will

translate into lower mortality and morbidity compared with the 'health conscious' non-vegetarians in the study remains to be seen.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my colleagues at the Cancer Research UK Epidemiology Unit in Oxford and all of the participants in the EPIC-

# How does your garden grow?



With the help of EarthSave Miami member, Linda Bower, local Garden Club volunteer, Sig Michelson, and the support of Principal, Dr. Tanya Dillard, the children at Springview Elementary in Miami Springs, Florida, started and maintained a vegetable garden throughout the school year. This small 10 X 10 strictly organic plot produced green beans, romaine lettuce, broccoli, beets, cabbage, cherry and big boy tomatoes, strawberries, peppers, carrots, and several kinds of herbs.

Working in the garden together often included discussions about our two basic food sources: plant or animal. Ms. Bower often

shared information about her vegan diet and about the secret suffering of farm animals. The children were periodically given leaflets supplied by various organizations exposing the truth behind the standard American diet. Some of the children even became vegetarian when they learned about all the benefits.

Ms. Bower is currently seeking a new school for the upcoming school year to begin a new garden. In the meantime, the 5th Grade Class at Springview will be expanding the garden a little and maintaining it with Mr. Michelson's guidance and the help of some volunteers.

Oxford study, without whose collaboration none of findings reported above would have been possible. EPIC-Oxford is supported by Cancer Research UK, the Medical Research Council, and the European Community.

### Paul Appleby, June 2004

Paul Appleby is a Senior Statistician at the Cancer Research UK Epidemiology Unit, Oxford, England. EPIC-Oxford website ([www.epic-oxford.org](http://www.epic-oxford.org))

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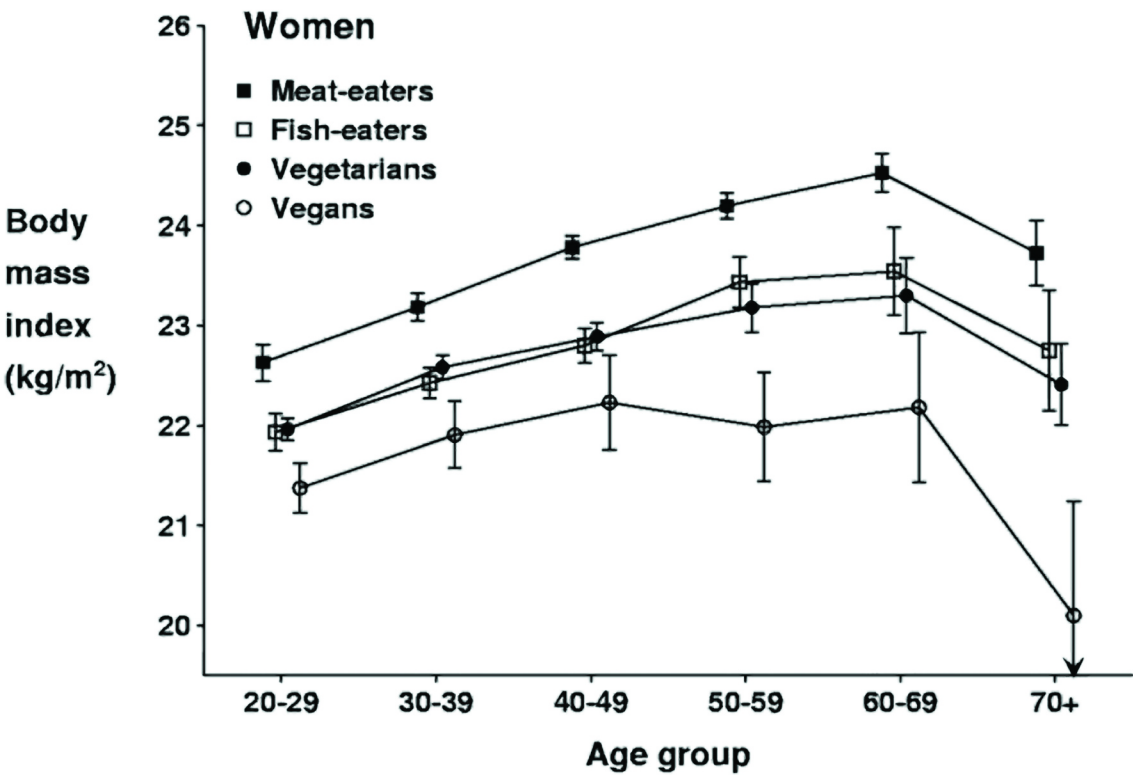
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Key TJ, Appleby PN, Davey GK, Allen NE, Spencer EA, Travis RC. Mortality in British vegetarians: review and preliminary results from EPIC-Oxford. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2003; 78: 533S-538S.

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Figure 3 Mean body mass index by age and diet group in women, showing 95% confidence intervals



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Women	Total
26,100	33,900 (52%)
8,400	10,100 (15%)
14,700	18,900 (29%)
1,700	2,600 (4%)
50,900	65,500

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## My Taste of Health Experience

By Katherine MacKenzie

It happened on a blazing hot Saturday, at the Taste of Health event at Lincoln Center, hosted by EarthSave. The first booth I stood in front of was Farm Sanctuary. They had a really bright display, lots of colored pamphlets, and a TV. I watched a minute of the standard "Here's how inhumane the meat industry is" video. That's about the longest I've ever watched one of those things. I don't really want to be barraged by images of blood and gore and suffering. This is also why I don't watch those commercials about people starving in Ethiopia. You do what you can, but beyond that, who wants to see that kind of stuff?

I'm generally a happy person, and I like to stay that way. So when after a minute of watching the video, my eyes started to tear, I wiped them and moved on to the other displays. I took about 12 pamphlets from various vegetarian groups.

But once again, I found myself in front of the Farm Sanctuary booth. I signed their book to get information, and then, again, stood in front of the video. It was hot, and I kept pushing my cold water bottle against my neck. As I watched what happened to pigs I felt even hotter.

A man chained the pig up in the air, took his knife, gutted it, and moved on to the next animal with the succinctness of any factory worker. The pig jerked from side to side, screaming, blood spilling out of his belly. He didn't die. He jerked so hard in the air that the chain ripped and he fell onto the floor, squealing.

If this was done to an American in Iraq, it would've made world news. Because this brutal. This was torture. And it was happening all over America, said the video. It was clear from the way that the handlers killed the animals that these were not living creatures with nerve endings and a capability for suffering and pain. These were items to be bought and sold. The way the pig was killed was pretty similar to the way you cut paper with your scissors. It was as if it wasn't a living thing at all.

I was sobbing by this time, so hard that I had to walk away and sit down. But I couldn't stop. So I left, and got on the train to go home. I cried the whole way back to my place in the east village. I took a nap when I got back.

When I woke up, I started to think. I've been a vegetarian for

over 12 years, so I didn't think these things applied to me. On and off, i've been vegan, at one point I gave up leather, but 6 months after throwing my shoes and belts out, I bought leather shoes again. People ask me all the time about being a vegetarian, and I say it's what i believe, that the meat industry is cruel to animals and that i don't want to be part of it, but that i would never tell anyone how to live. And to be honest, many of the people I talk to get hostile until I say the final line. I would never tell anyone how to live.

Think about that. If you really believe something is wrong, how do you let people know? Because let me tell you, there isn't a person who hasn't noticed that I'm vegetarian, mostly vegan, and yet, I still wear leather shoes and sometimes have milk in my coffee. They always notice.

And I remember when I was giving out postcards at work for the Taste of Health event. One girl said she'd never thought about how animals were killed until she saw a video about how the meat industry works. That made me think. If I don't tell people how their food is made, will many of them still go on believing in the happy image that is marketed to us? That image of Little House on the Prairie, of animals living long lives on farms, of happy cows on pastures?

Maybe my becoming a vegetarian at 19 and a finicky meat eater before even then had everything to do with the children's stories I read as a child. There was a series of books about a family of squirrels and their struggles, a tv show about a boy and lassie, the dog who loved him, several different books on a horse's feelings while wearing blinders and being whipped, and movies about bambi the deer and arnold the pig. I clearly remember being 12, laying in a hammock under peach trees in Georgia, being breathless with excitement as the Black Stallion ran. That was the same year my father finally told me that the reason my mother, who was raised on a farm in Minnesota, didn't want me to adopt a dog was becuase she was still traumatized from the time she'd eaten lamb during a family dinner, only to discover during desert that it was really her pet lamb that had been slaughtered.

She hadn't wanted to become attached to an animal since.

So what i'm realizing is that

TASTE/PAGE 11

## Using the courts to push GMOs

By Catherine McBride

The inherent danger of genetically modified crops is becoming shockingly apparent with recent examples which illustrate the negative effects of this technology. Despite the fact that there is widespread use of genetically modified crops, very little research has been done about them, especially regarding their interaction with other plants in the wild and on neighboring farms. It is extremely difficult to contain them: studies have shown that, under the right conditions, pollen can travel up to half a mile from its source. This can cause huge problems for farmers whose neighbors take advantage of this technology: a recent case in Canada is a cautionary tale about what can happen.

In a landmark ruling, the Canadian Supreme Court recently decided in favor of biotechnology giant Monsanto in the patent suit they brought against a canola farmer for saving and growing their genetically modified seeds. This case sets a dangerous precedent. It is the first time a high court in any country has ruled on the extent to which biotechnology companies can limit a farmer's use of their product. This case raises concerns about the invasion of fields by such crops and the patent laws which favor biotechnology companies over farmers. It also brings to the surface the ethical question of what it means to have a patent on a living organism.

The suit began in 1997, when Monsanto discovered their genetically modified canola plants growing on a Saskatchewan farm owned by Percy Schmeiser. Monsanto filed a suit against Mr. Schmeiser because he did not have a contract giving him the right to grow the "Roundup Ready" seeds, which were genetically altered to be resistant to the company's chemical Roundup. Mr. Schmeiser claimed that he had unknowingly obtained the seeds when they blew onto his fields from a neighboring farm. Following the tradition of canola farmers, Mr. Schmeiser habitually saved the seeds from his best plants to start his crops the next year. He stated that when his fields were polluted by Monsanto's patented seeds, he inadvertently planted them the next year as part of his seed-saving custom.

In the original verdict, which the Supreme Court overturned, Mr. Schmeiser was ordered to give Monsanto the profits from his 1998 crop, pay punitive damages, and pay all court fees and expenses. In a small victory for Mr. Schmeiser, the high court ruled that although he was guilty of patent infringement, he and Monsanto would be each be responsible for their own costs, and he would not be required to pay any penalties. The Supreme Court based this decision on evidence that showed Mr. Schmeiser did not see an increase in profits from his use of the genetically altered seeds. This was largely due to the fact that he did not spray his crops with Roundup, and therefore did not take advantage of the seeds' special property. However, in 1998 Mr. Schmeiser suffered a serious hardship when he was forced to dispose of all his canola seeds, which he had developed over the course of 50 years, due to contamination by Monsanto's seeds.

In a closely related case, a group of Canadian organic canola farmers is engaged in filing a class action suit against Monsanto and partner Bayer Cropscience, Inc. for losses caused by contamination of their fields by genetically modified seeds. Due to the pollution of their fields by the enhanced seeds, these farmers are unable to retain their farms' organic certification. According to the suit, this has caused them to lose \$14 million, which they are hoping to recoup from Monsanto for the company's lack of responsibility in taking precautions to contain their technology.

As part of their suit, they filed an injunction to prevent Monsanto's intended commercialization of genetically modified wheat. However, on June 19, Monsanto announced that it was voluntarily pulling its applications for approval to grow the wheat from

regulatory agencies in several countries, including Canada and the United States. They did so due to pressure from numerous exporters, who worried that consumers would reject the product. Monsanto's application for approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is still in progress; however, approval from that agency will not be adequate to allow the company to grow and sell the genetically modified wheat product within the United States.

The fact that the Monsanto v. Schmeiser case was tried in Canada, which has laws against patenting plants, makes the verdict more worrisome. Monsanto's Canadian patent only covers the genetically modified genes and the gene insertion process. The crux of the case was the question of whether Mr. Schmeiser's possession of the plants was a violation of the patent, since the plants themselves cannot be patented. The Supreme Court decided that possession of the plants required possession of the genes, and thus ruled in favor of Monsanto.

In the United States, the Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that seeds as well as plants can be patented. Therefore, many predict that when a case concerning field contamination by genetically modified crops comes before the U.S. Supreme Court, the verdict will be far more severe and will have more serious implications than did the case in Canada. Monsanto currently is pursuing suits, similar to the one they brought against Mr. Schmeiser, against numerous American farmers. The biotechnology company has an impressive team of legal representatives, and has not yet lost a court case.

There is currently a bill being reviewed by a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee which could have significant bearing on this issue. The goal of the Seed Availability and Competition Act of 2004 is to allow farmers to practice seed-saving methods on patented seeds without fear of criminal prosecution. The farmers would pay a fee to the USDA for the privilege of saving the seeds, and the USDA would compensate the appropriate patent-holding companies. This would give farmers the option of either buying new seeds each year, or paying a fee to save the seeds. Due to intense lobbying by biotechnology groups, however, it is doubtful that the legislation will pass.

Even if the legislation does pass, however, it will not address the most crucial issue: the contamination of crops by genetically modified seeds. This is an issue that is likely to continue to plague farmers for as long as genetically modified crops are grown. Clearly, there was not enough research done prior to allowing these crops to be grown commercially. The laws currently in place seriously hurt farmers while the biotechnology companies reap the profits.

It is not a stretch to imagine where this technology is leading: to total control of the world's food supply by the biotechnology companies. The prevalence of genetically modified crops in certain areas is rendering it impossible for adopters of the technology as well as regular farmers to save their seeds as they have done for centuries. This is slowly forcing the farmers to increasingly depend on the biotechnology companies to supply them with seeds. This is an extremely favorable and profitable climate for the biotech companies, and one which they will exploit to its full potential. The public needs to work to undermine their business through a boycott of their products and the passing of legislation to prevent them from continuing with their unsavory business practices. A helpful start to this end would be for the United States to require the labeling of genetically modified food products, as the European Union does. This would allow consumers to be aware of their food sources, and to choose accordingly.

*Catherine McBride is an organic gardener in Louisville, Kentucky, and a volunteer with her local EarthSave chapter.*

## Victory for democracy -- but will Monsanto force its way back into Mendocino County?

Spreading the GE-free zone

People across the U.S. and the world have been inspired by the historic David versus Goliath victory in Mendocino County, California on March 2, 2004 where voters banned the production of genetically engineered crops and animals. Mendocino is the first county in the U.S to implement such a ban. The Mendocino GE ban has rattled Monsanto and the Gene Giants, who fear that global civil society will now follow Mendocino's example. Of course this is

exactly what is happening. Recently, halfway across the world, a number of major agricultural states in Australia, including Western Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, have already passed, or will soon pass, GE crop bans. (Learn more)

But Monsanto and their friends are fighting back. According to the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), the biotech lobby will soon introduce a bill in California to nullify the Mendocino GE ban and make it illegal for other California counties to pass similar laws. World Trade Organization bureaucrats and the

White House have also made it clear in the past that local citizen control over unpopular technologies such as genetic engineering will not be tolerated. OCA has launched a major campaign called the Biodemocracy Alliance to defeat this legislation and spread GE-Free zones across at least a dozen of California's 59 counties, as well as counties all over the U.S.

To learn more about this campaign and join in supporting the fight against the GE corporations,, visit the OCA website at <http://OrganicConsumers.org>



Jo Stepaniak, MSED, 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 guide-book 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



Jo Stepaniak, MSED

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)

## Politics of food

**Dear Jo:** It seems to me that the meat and dairy industries are politically powerful these days. They parallel the tobacco industry of the Seventies. What shocked me is an ad I saw on television for a diet that consists entirely of meat, dairy, and eggs. Watching it appalled me. The actors were middle aged and older people talking about how young they felt, how healthy they were, and how much weight they had lost. They talked about how they hated eating like rabbits and how now they felt stronger and were experiencing "a happy shrinking feeling" (hah -- don't get me started there). The thought that kept running through my head was that this program was developed by the meat industry. Who else would advocate such lunacy? Could the meat producers be backlashing against the trend of good nutrition with this plan? Sure smells like it.

**Jo responds:** More and more nutrition specialists and health-care practitioners are recommending diets that include higher amounts of fresh vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fruits. Consequently, it is not surprising to see those industries that would be most economically damaged by a sweeping move away from animal-based foods to react by promoting their products even more aggressively.

History has demonstrated that whenever groups of people effect lasting social change, the public passes through three stages: denial/rejection, tolerance, and, finally, acceptance. Actually, we

could interpret this type of dogged advertising in a very positive way. The meat, egg, and dairy industries are no longer able to refute the healthful benefits of a vegan/vegetarian diet, so their only recourse at this point is to champion their products based on whatever premise they can devise. This also means that the general public is becoming more tolerant of vegetarianism, creating a threatening situation for the brokers of animal-derived foods. It may be a long time before society arrives at stage three, but the profusion of vegetarian commodities in the mainstream marketplace is a distinct caveat that vegetarianism has arrived.

As you pointed out, the parallels between the tobacco industry and the meat, egg, and dairy industries are compelling. From personal habit and dependence to public censure, from physician endorsement to open denouncement, from government collusion to levies and law suits, meat, eggs, and dairy products are inevitably headed down the same slippery slope as tobacco. However, all these industries are deeply entrenched in our society's economy and way of life, and it will take a long while to untangle the practices they have worked so hard to weave into the fabric of our culture.

I agree that these types of ads are shocking and infuriating. But vegans and vegetarians can, and should, take heart. View them with a smile and a grain of salt knowing that because someone felt the need to create such promotions our movement and influence have been acknowledged.

## Steaming tofu

**Dear Jo:** I've heard that tofu that is eaten "raw" should be steamed before using. Why is that?

**Jo responds:** Tofu that is water-packed is not airtight. Consequently, air and bacteria are in the package or can easily get into it. Because tofu is a moist, high-protein food, bacteria are attracted to it and joyfully take up residence and rapidly proliferate. When tofu is cooked, this food-borne bacteria is destroyed. However, when tofu is added to a

recipe "raw," as in a tofu salad or spread, the bacteria are alive and well and growing. Many people who eat "raw" tofu and get gassy or a tummy ache afterwards (or worse) sometimes think they are allergic or have a sensitivity to tofu. That's rarely the situation; true food allergies of any kind occur in only about 1% of the adult population. Typically it is a case of mild food poisoning. We cannot see or smell foodborne bacteria, so there is no way to detect it on "raw" tofu. Most people think that if tofu looks and smells fresh, it's okay to eat it

# Ask Jo Stepaniak

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 best-selling author, Jo Stepaniak. Jo can address individual concerns as well as general inquiries about vegan ethics, vegetarian philosophy, practical applications, and living compassionately.

## Should vegans be vocal?

Is it necessary for vegans to be activists?

**Jo Stepaniak responds:** Activism as defined by Webster's is "a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action, especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue." Within the parameters of this definition, there are many different kinds of activism that could be suitable for vegans: environmental protection, environmental justice, deep ecology, animal rights, civil rights, human rights, social justice, economic justice, nonviolent conflict resolution, hunger relief, gender equity, rights for sexual minorities, religious freedom, labor equity, abolition of vivisection, abolition of capital punishment, boycotting exploitative industries, and numerous others. Even though many veg-

ans may be drawn to activism that is specifically related to animal suffering, such as "food animal" agriculture, fur, vivisection, hunting, animal exhibitions, animal racing, puppy mills, and similar concerns, there are countless opportunities for non-animal-related direct action in which vegans could become involved.

The definition of veganism does not compel adherents to be activists in the strictest sense of the term. This is because veganism is a philosophy and way of living that is expressed chiefly through the compassionate day-to-day choices that each practitioner makes. Veganism is not a political movement, even though both insiders and outsiders may see it as a political statement or a loosely organized social movement. A shared philosophy and the dynamic application of vegan

principles is what unites vegans everywhere. "Direct action" by vegans is most commonly asserted merely through the daily application of basic vegan values. These tenets do not encourage or discourage zealous activism. One can comply with all the requirements of veganism and be highly outspoken, participate in nonviolent conflict or civil disobedience, engage in protests or boycotts, or remain subdued and unobtrusive.

Generally speaking, the vegan lifestyle itself is a form of activism, regardless of how public or private vegans may be about their convictions. On the one hand, the vegan ethic does not oblige vegans to participate in any type of explicit activism. On the other hand, activism could be construed as an intrinsic and consequential aspect of simply being vegan.

## Humans meant to eat meat?

**Dear Jo:** When talking with people about the physical differences between carnivores and humans it has come up that we have the physical characteristics of both carnivores and herbivores and therefore were meant to eat meat. Even though we have more characteristics of herbivores, it is assumed that since we have a few carnivorous attributes it follows that meat should be included in our diet. How would you tackle this? I have quoted the following differences:

- \* We do not have a hinged jaw for ripping apart flesh but one that is able to grind sideways.
- \* We have a longer digestive system so we are better able to get the nutrients from our foods as opposed to the shorter tract that carnivores have to enable them to pass the meat through their body before it becomes rancid.
- \* It has been put forward that we have incisors for tearing flesh, but I have always thought that these were for cropping the harder vegetables.
- \* We do not have claws or talons for tearing flesh.
- \* The enzymes in our saliva that start breaking down the food in our mouths and the early part of our digestive tract are of a low acidity level and in alignment with a plant based diet.

I would greatly appreciate any ideas or thoughts that you may have on this subject.

**Jo responds:** There has been much dissension among scientists regarding the topic of human physiology and diet, and opinions have spanned the continuum from one end to the other. The fact is, human physiology does not fit neatly into any of the three major categories of mammalian diets: carnivorous, herbivorous, or omnivorous. We have a few traits from each of these classifications, which makes it easy for researchers to "prove" their position merely by pointing out those characteristics that suit their particular opinion.

It is often suggested that specific features of human anatomy or physiology dictate our behavior.

However, from the perspective of diet, our physical makeup only prescribes our nutritional requirements, not how specific nutrients must be obtained. For instance, although we have a nutritional need for iron, there are many dietary sources of iron. Nutritionally speaking, it is irrelevant whether we get our iron from plant or animal sources; what matters is simply that we get it.

The argument that "biology is destiny" is typically used to justify a particular eating style. In that light, we must acknowledge that humans are the only species on Earth that appears to have no idea what its ideal diet should be. We are also the only species that has self-inflicted diet-related diseases, caused extensive environmental destruction through basic food production, and created pathogenic infestations that widely infect our food supply.

This type of reasoning also blatantly ignores a critical element of human evolution -- the aspect of choice. The arguments that "humans are meant to eat meat" or "humans have always eaten meat" are certainly no rational defenses for its continuation. If we were to accept this type of twisted logic, we would also have to say that humans have always murdered, raped, enslaved, and committed other heinous acts that our culture today finds reprehensible. Unlike most other animals, humans can choose what foods to eat. Sadly, our poor choices in the past have ravaged our land; fouled our air and waterways; heaped immeasurable suffering upon other species; and undermined our own health.

Our ability to digest a wide variety of foods undoubtedly contributed to our species' survival throughout history. Today, however, our dietary choices have more to do with tradition, culture, economics, politics, and availability than with some predetermined fate. It is time for our species to behave responsibly and select those foods that best sustain the Earth, the animals, and ourselves. Only then can we truly say we that humans have evolved in body, spirit, and wisdom.

"raw" -- so they do. When they suffer the consequences, they usually don't make the connection between bacteria on their tofu and their short-lived illness.

To destroy this bacteria, tofu that is to be eaten "raw" should be rinsed and boiled in fresh water or steamed for 5-10 minutes before

using. To quick-chill it afterward, slice it into slabs and lay it in a single layer on a stainless steel, glass, or ceramic tray or plate in the refrigerator or freezer. When it is thoroughly cold to the touch, proceed with your recipe.

Tofu that is not water-packed but is already cooked and vacuum

sealed or aseptically packaged does not need to be boiled or steamed before using, nor does tofu that will be cooked in a recipe. This step is only necessary for tofu that is water-packed and will not be cooked.



# Pollutin' Good in the Neighborhood

There's an old saying that laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made. When it comes to laws about the meat industry itself, the Bush administration has taken that notion to the extreme.

Last year, it was reported that the Bush administration negotiated a deal on animal factory farm pollution in secret, backroom meetings with meat industry officials. Based on those meetings, the Bush administration has proposed a new policy that would let factory farms off the hook for violations of air and toxic pollution protections while communities near these facilities wait in vain for relief.

In early May, new evidence brought to light the true extent of the meat industry's influence: industry lobbyists approached the EPA in the fall of 2001 with a polluter-friendly proposal and, shockingly, the administration's draft closely mirrors the polluters' wish list! What's more, leaked emails reveal the frequent and close access that meat industry had to the administration,

including private monthly meetings, and - just think of how unbelievable this would sound coming from any other administration - even the ability to draft PowerPoint presentations for EPA officials to deliver.

For rural residents who are suffering from the toxic pollution caused by factory farms, this new development is just salt in the wound (no cured meat jokes, please). Livestock production is the single largest contributor of ammonia gas releases in the United States - a dangerous toxin that can cause severe respiratory illness. For years, communities located close to these facilities have complained of the toxic stench poisoning the air. In response to real community concerns about environmental pollution, health risks, and quality-of-life issues, the Bush administration's EPA simply did what any legitimate watchdog agency would do. It sat the polluting industry down...and asked THEM to write new regulations! Oddly, this has not worked out too well for the

tens of thousands of residents living within miles of these factory farms.

Just ask Bernadine Edwards, whose home is surrounded by 82 Tyson chicken houses in McClean County, Kentucky. In the summers, the air pollution from the animal factory gets so bad that she can't even leave her house or let her kids play in the yard. "The administration should have spoken with representatives from rural communities like ours, the folks who deal with the health risks of factory farm pollution every day," she says. Instead, the opposite is true for all-too-many powerless residents. "We're the last to hear about these deals and the first to suffer the consequences."

Sadly, this behavior simply follows a pattern the Bush administration appears hell-bent on continuing. Whether it's gas-drilling or gas fumes, corporate profits trump human and environmental concerns every time, no matter how much average people squawk.

## Bush Says U.S. WHO Scientists Require Political Approval

In June 2004, the Bush administration ordered that government scientists must be approved by a senior political appointee before they can participate in meetings convened by the World Health Organization, the leading international health and science agency.

A top official from the Health and Human Services Department in April asked the WHO to begin routing any request for participation in its meetings to the HHS secretary for review, rather than directly invite individual scientists, as has long been the case.

Officials at the Geneva, Switzerland-based organization so far have refused to implement the request, saying it could compromise the independence of international scientific deliberations. Denis G. Aitken, WHO assistant director-general, said Friday that he quietly has been negotiating with Washington to reach a compromise solution.

The request is the latest instance in which the Bush administration has been accused of allowing politics to intrude into once-sacrosanct areas of scientific deliberation: It has been criticized for replacing highly regarded scientists with industry and political allies on advisory panels. A biologist who was at odds with the administration's position on stem cell research was dismissed from a presidential advisory commission. This year, 60 prominent scientists accused the administration of "misrepresenting and suppressing scientific knowledge for political purposes."

The newest action has drawn fresh criticism as the request from HHS has circulated among scientists.

"I do not feel this is an appropriate or constructive thing to do," said Dr. D.A. Henderson, a well-known epidemiologist who ran the Bush administration's Office of Public Health Preparedness and

now acts as an official adviser to HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. "In the scientific world, we have a generally open process. We deal with science as science. I am unaware of such clearance ever having been required before."

Henderson worked for the WHO for 11 years directing its smallpox eradication program. He said he could not recall having to go through government bureaucrats to invite scientists to participate in expert panels, except in the case of small eastern European countries. In 2002, Henderson received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and was praised by Bush as "a great general in mankind's war against disease."

A handful of scientists have been worried about the HHS' vetting demand since April, but concerns heightened this week when Rep. Henry A. Waxman, D-Calif., formally complained in his own letter to Thompson.

"The new policy . . . politicizes the process of providing the expert advice of U.S. scientists to the international community," Waxman wrote.

The WHO, founded in 1947, is the United Nations agency dedicated to health. It is governed by 192 member states and conducts forums, recommends international health and safety standards and draws leading scientists from around the world to expert panels that review the latest literature on chemical, biological, industrial and environmental threats.

The organization traditionally insists on picking experts to sit on official scientific review panels.

"It's an important issue for us," Aiken said. "We do need independent science. If we want government positions, we have government meetings. We have many, many of these government assemblies, but they address a separate set of concerns" than the scientific

gatherings.

Scientists who attend the meetings are reminded that they are invited to offer their scientific views, not to represent their government or financial interests.

The letter to Aiken declaring the new vetting policy was signed by William R. Steiger, special assistant to Thompson. He came to Washington with Thompson from Wisconsin, and is the son of a congressman and the godson of former President George H.W. Bush.

"Except under very limited circumstances, U.S. government experts do not and cannot participate in WHO consultations in their individual capacity," Steiger wrote. Civil service and other regulations "require HHS experts to serve as representatives of the U.S. government at all times and advocate U.S. government policies."

The letter asserts that "the current practice in which the WHO invites specific HHS officials by name to serve in these capacities has not always resulted in the most appropriate selections."

The letter provided no specifics. But WHO panels sometimes have disagreed with positions taken by the administration. A WHO panel met in Lyons, France, earlier this month and declared formaldehyde a known carcinogen - relying on studies that Bush administration political appointees in the Environmental Protection Agency previously had rejected as inconclusive and contradictory.

Voting members of the panel included scientists from the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, who had authored those studies.

Several leading scientists said the government's new policy would undermine scientific deliberations.

"This is really tampering with

## Scientific integrity under the current administration



## Report Charges EPA Deliberately Underestimating Toxic Releases

Report Charges EPA Deliberately Underestimating Toxic Releases

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) this week distributed its Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) for 2002. TRI reports the release of chemicals from refineries and chemical plants.

According to the data, the amount of chemicals released into the air was up 5% in 2002.

But a new report by two organizations that monitor enforcement of pollution law charges that EPA and state governments are knowingly underreporting toxic air emissions from refineries and chemical plants, to the tune of 330 million pounds per year. They assert that certain carcinogens -- benzene and butadiene -- are in the air at levels 4 to 5 times higher than what the EPA leads the public to believe.

The Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), a nonpartisan organization that monitors enforcement of environmental laws, and the Galveston-Houston Association for Smog Prevention (GHASP), show in their report, "Who's Counting? The Systematic Underreporting of Toxic Air Emissions" that because most air pollution is estimated instead of actually monitored, the result is systematic underreporting.

"The 'guesswork' is being done by the polluters, who have the incentives to keep the numbers as low as possible," said Kelly Haragan, EIP counsel and equal justice fellow.

New rules adopted this year by EPA require polluters to monitor emissions little more than once every five years. Previous standards mandated that major air pollution sources monitor at a level sufficient to show compliance with federal pollution limits. [1]

"Refineries and chemical plants report their toxic emissions under an honor system that is based on calculations that are out-

dated and inaccurate," Haragan said. "Instead of cleaning up this problem, the EPA has further weakened monitoring rules and continues to knowingly feed the public inaccurate data regarding toxic air emissions."

The EIP-GHASP report is based on findings by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. It shows extreme jumps in carcinogens released into the air. In one case -- a reported release of 6 million pounds of benzene, a known carcinogen -- the 2001 TRI in fact totaled more than 20 million pounds. [2]

In 2001 the U.S. General Accounting Office asked that EPA improve oversight reporting for large facilities, noting that 96 percent of all emissions estimates were based on "emissions factors". [3] Emissions factors were originally developed as a way to estimate long-term average emissions, but are recognized by EPA as not being accurate for calculating a particular facility's emissions. Nevertheless EPA has actively limited the amount of direct monitoring that large sources of air pollution are required to perform.

"We are tired of industry accounting tricks that always seem to show pollution releases dropping rapidly, while air quality improvements seem so slow. It is time for EPA and the states to require real measurements from industry, and take forthright action to protect the public from chemicals that cause cancer, respiratory, cardiovascular and reproductive diseases," said John Wilson, director of GHASP. [4]

### SOURCES:

[1] EIP press release, Jun. 22, 2004.

[2] "Who's Counting? The Systematic Underreporting of Toxic Air

Emissions," EIP report, Jun. 22, 2004.

[3] EIP report, op. cit.

[4] EIP release, op. cit.

a process that has worked very well," said Linda Rosenstock, the dean of the University of California, Los Angeles School of Public Health who directed the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health under President Clinton. "To have this micromanaged at the HHS departmental level raises the specter that political considerations rather than scientific consid-

erations will determine who is allowed to go" to the world's most important scientific meetings.

Rosenstock said that some WHO divisions - including the one reviewing cancer threats - have become targets of industry groups worried about the deliberations. "There is real concern that science could be trumped by politics and vested interests."



SUGAR/FROM PAGE 1

soft drinks are the single greatest source of refined sugar in children's diets?

PepsiCo holds the "pouring contract" in my school district. Two years ago, when a cheerleader from the newly built West Salem High tried to sell bottled water, the monolithic pop company crushed her attempts. Maybe, PepsiCo had fallen on hard times and could not stand the competition? As of July this year, their profits are up by 12% from last year, with a first quarter net profit of \$1.06 Billion.

\* Don't be fooled by rhetoric and semantics, simply provide the staggering data that damns any reason to peddle pop in our public schools:

\* One can of coke contains nearly 10 teaspoons of sugar or the entire daily recommended amount of calories from sugar;

\* One of five American children is now considered obese. Americans consume nearly 53 teaspoons of sugar daily;

\* Sugar in soda makes blood acidic robbing the body of calcium and which can lead to osteoporosis;

\* The "quick energy" from soda is followed by "lows" -- ask any teacher who has to deal with students who are loaded with sugar;

\* The sugar in soda helps to whither crucial bacteria in our intestines, reducing vitamin B which inhibits thinking, making children sleepy;

\* Studies have shown that girls who play sports and consumed soda daily experienced three times the risk of bone fractures.

When considering whether to join the battle against the sugar pushers, consider that victories are being recorded nationwide and people are now making a difference. California has banned junk food and pop sales in elementary and middle schools. Los Angeles has banned the sale of soda in all public schools, with Philadelphia following with a similar plan. These are tremendous victories; yet, with much work ahead we all can share in the legwork necessary to free our children from osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity and predatory advertising.

The strategy is simple and clear, the time for compromise

and apathy is over: our children will not be tools for negotiating massive profits for soda corporations. First, call Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson and chide him for being a lapdog to the sugar pushers. The toll free number is 1-877-696-6775. He told the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) to "go on the offensive" against critics blaming the food industry for obesity. This was proudly stated in a GMA news release. Tell him that the federal government should take a position of no soda pop vending in schools.

Secondly, call the PTA and ask them to make an unambiguous statement against the vending of pop in schools. The President of the PTA, Linda Hodge can be reached toll free at 800-307-4782 (extension 312). Demand that Coke VP and lobbyist John Downs Jr. be removed from the PTA board due to conflict of interest. On the PTA's homepage you can contact your own state's PTA representative. The PTA provides rosy language about children's health in schools, yet avoids the tough talk needed to protect children from soda pop.

Thirdly, contact the National Association Secondary School Principals. Principals are crucial when it comes to decision making in their districts. On the NASSP website under "Guidelines for School Beverage Partnerships" they speak eloquently "The importance of providing healthy choices to students, faculty, and school visitors should be paramount for school officials in discussions with beverage companies."

If healthy choices are "paramount" then soda pop contracts should be abolished. You can contact Jay Engeln at [engelnj@principals.org](mailto:engelnj@principals.org). He is the Resident Practitioner for the Business/School Partnerships at NASSP. He also speaks on the "benefits" of pop contracts through the Council for Corporate and School Partners: funded by -- yep -- the Coca-Cola Corporation. Call your local principal and demand that soda contracts with the school district be voided.

Fourth, contact the National School Board Association (NSBA) at [info@nsba.org](mailto:info@nsba.org). In the last three weeks I have contacted all fifty state contacts and have received two responses. On their home page, you can find the

email of your state representative. Ironically, in his book, "Food Fight" Doctor Kelly Brownell, Director of the Yale Center for Eating Disorders, states that the soft drink and sugar lobbyists fight off legislation proposed by the Department of Agriculture "aided by the National School Board Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals." I suggest that school librarians in high schools make this book available and all parents should read it as well.

Lastly, contact your own child's school. Write editorials. Speak up at soccer, music, basketball and other school fundraisers. Contact your local pediatricians and ask them to write letters demanding that pop be removed from public schools. The American Academy of Pediatrics has come out with a policy statement that suggests limits on soft drinks.

Defenders of pop contracts will wail, "We need the money." Let corporations make altruistic donations without strings. We fund organizations like the "School of the Americas" or provide vast tax subsidies for tobacco, timber extraction and oil exploration. How about funneling some of those dollars into music, science and sports instead?

Some will decry that students need to make their own choices when it comes to soda. Nonsense, if their elders actively peddle pop in schools, it sends the message that it is okay. When did adults give up on providing directions through the minefield of adolescence? Let soda pop be an infrequent and rare treat, not a substitute for water or fruit juices.

Parents are proud of providing safe car seats or sturdy athletic shoes for their children; second best is not an option for their child. So let the school year 2004-2005 become a time where parents took schools back from the purveyors of osteoporosis, diabetes and public apathy. Second best is not best enough when it comes to this nation's children.

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GREGOR/FROM PAGE 3

worth.

Last December as the EPA signed the first proposal ever to cut mercury emissions from coal plants, Bush was busy proposing mercury be delisted as a toxic air pollutant. The EPA was hoping to cut mercury emissions 90% by 2008. Bush had a better idea--how about 70% by 2018? Bush's plan would also allow coal plants to buy and sell pollution credits; in other words, bigger plants could buy the right to continue emitting mercury.

At the same time, Bush is applauding Congress for passing the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which makes harm to a fetus a federal crime separate from harm to the mother. Of course Bush's "Clear Skies Initiative" is going to mean harm for both.

On a personal level, people can reduce their exposure to mercury by not eating fish. In a recent public relations blitz, Chicken of the Sea International was quick to point out the heart-healthy benefits of the omega 3's found in fish. Thankfully people don't need to choose between mercury poisoning or heart disease.

For adults, mercury overload from eating fish can cause fatigue and memory loss--something we clinicians often call "fish fog". Mercury poisons the heart and may double one's risk of dying from a heart attack. In fact, the mercury contamination in fish and fish oil may be so extensive that some recent data suggests that it may cancel out the benefits of the omega 3's in the fish. There are a number of studies, for example, showing increased mortality among fish-eaters, which we think is from the toxic mercury.

Thankfully, plant-based sources of omega 3's provide a safe and healthy alternative.

Our bodies convert some of the short chain omega 3's found in flax seeds, for example, into the long chain omega 3's found in fish fat, so one can choose to get omega 3's packaged with soluble fiber and antioxidants in flax, rather than getting them packaged with heavy metals and carcinogens in fish. I recommend everyone eat 2 tablespoons of ground flax seeds a day.

For those who want to take supplemental long chain omega 3's directly, but don't want to be exposed to the high concentrations of PCBs and pesticides in fish oil capsules,[13] there are two vegan algae-based contamination-free supplements in veggie-caps currently on the market.[14]

So when a fish-eating woman comes into my office, I've really got to just put my hand up and say, "Just the flax, maam."

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I can make a difference, simply by letting people how meat is created. Because maybe they don't know. Or maybe like me, they need a bit of kick. And all those people watching me when I wear leather or drink milk in my coffee, how much more of a difference could I make if I wore the cutest non-leather shoes to work, and then when someone complimented me on them, talked about why I wouldn't wear leather. What if I brought in vegan cookies next christmas, and then when people asked me where I'd gotten such delicious treats, I mentioned that they were vegan, and why I was too? What if I was always consistent, said I what I believed and then acted on it, day by day, month by month, without shame because I am saying things that are not commonly accepted?

Because not eating meat really is considered abnormal. I've often had people tell me that eating meat is natural, and I've often shrugged, said I disagreed but that I wasn't going to tell them how to live. I look about as sweet and American as you can get, and I rarely have problems fitting in or being accepted, until people hear that I'm a vegetarian. I've actually been in large groups of people where i'm the only one

who doesn't eat meat. After they find out and I talk for just one minute about the reasons why I became vegetarian, many times they begin to look at me a bit more warily, as if I'd just grown a third eye. Until I say, "While I don't agree with eating meat, I'm not going to tell you how to live your life." Then they smile at me, like you would at a precocious child.

I understand it. After all, it took me 12 years to watch more than 1 minute of an expose on the meat industry. It's so horrible you don't want to know and after all, it's an accepted fact of American life that animals must die. This is a basic preconception that people grow up with, and it's hard to challenge basic preconceptions.

But standing in front of the video, watching animals being slaughtered in a way I wouldn't wish on any living creature, I knew I had to change. From now on, I plan on speaking up. I plan on simply telling the truth. Over and over. Because I believe that people mean to do the right thing, and if I can just plant the seed of doubt in as many people as possible, then I have a chance to make a difference.





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