Why Veg?

For the planet, your health and the animals!
THE FACTS ON OUR FOOD

Many people believe (and hope) that animals raised for food for humans must be very well treated because sick, diseased or dead animals would be of no use to agribusiness. But this is not true.

FACTORY FARMING: INDUSTRIALISED CRUELTY

The pressure to produce inexpensive beef, chicken, pork, veal, fish, eggs, milk and dairy products has led modern farming to treat animals as mere commodities or machines. The worldwide trend is to replace small family farms with intensive, industrialised factory farms. The philosophy of mass production lies behind it all, while environmental devastation and our society’s epidemic of ‘diseases of affluence’ follow closely.

We don’t have to be complicit: a diet free of animal products can be the healthiest diet for us. The health benefits of a plant-based diet are outlined later in this booklet.

Meat chickens

Virtually all chickens raised for meat in Australia are factory farmed.

- The birds are crowded into sheds, by law up to about 20 full-grown birds per m². They are left to stand in their own stinking excrement, which releases noxious gases causing them eye and respiratory damage.
- Through selective breeding, meat chickens are forced to grow unnaturally fast. It once took 14 weeks for a chicken to grow to 1.6 kg, it now takes just over five weeks. This unnatural growth rate leads to high rates of leg disorders (well-documented by vets and the industry), leaving many birds crippled and unable to reach food or water.
- One veterinary study found 90% of meat chickens had a gait abnormality. For more than one in four it found “there is likely to be chronic pain and discomfort” due to their leg trouble. “In addition, some of the birds had probably died of malnutrition or dehydration before they could be (studied).”
- Often their hearts can’t cope, so many die from heart attacks, even before they are 6 weeks old. Overgrown babies, this is their age when they are taken for slaughter.

CLIMATE CHANGE

You’ve probably heard talk that eating less meat will reduce your greenhouse emissions, but this major issue rarely receives the attention and action it warrants. How much could you really save?

Per kilogram of product:

- Beef production emits a whopping 130 times more greenhouse gas than wheat and other types of grain,
- Sheep meat emits a massive 36 times more gas than grains, and
- Pig meat an unacceptable 9 times more.

Worldwide livestock production is responsible for more greenhouse gas than all the cars, trucks, airplanes, ships and other transport combined.

“Nothing will benefit human health and increase the chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Visit http://whyveg.com/LIFE for a fully referenced version of this booklet, more info and free recipes.
Egg-Laying Hens

Australian law allows farmers to keep a hen in a space smaller than an A4 sheet of paper for her entire life. Egg farms producing “cage eggs” are huge sheds keeping tens of thousands of birds in row upon row of such tiny cages. Hens can become immobilised in the bars and die of asphyxiation or dehydration. Decomposing corpses are often found in cages with live birds. Through selection, lighting and feed, hens are forced to produce an egg almost every day.

Stress can make caged birds peck each other. To combat this, part of their beak is cut off with hot blades. Research from within the industry gives a second reason to beak trim: to make them eat less (egg production being unaffected). Beak trimming cuts through nerves causing on-going pain, as well as impairing a hen’s ability to pick up food - considered an economic bonus for the farmer.

The life span of a commercial egg producing hen - whether cage, barn or free range - is approximately 18 months as opposed to 10–12 years in natural conditions - she is killed when her egg production declines. Hens lay so many eggs their bones often snap from osteoporosis.

For all egg production methods including free-range, male chicks are killed by gassing or mincing alive (they neither lay eggs nor grow quickly enough for meat).

This is how most eggs in Australia are produced today.

Pigs

Highly intelligent and social animals, pigs suffer enormously in close confinement — their stress is expressed by continually chewing the bars of their stalls, constant head waving, tongue rolling, chewing on nothing, mouth stretching, and pawing the floor. Many literally ‘go mad’. Sows are treated as breeding machines and endure a cycle of suffering and deprivation.

- Over 5 million pigs are slaughtered every year in Australia, with nearly all being kept in intensive conditions for their entire, unnaturally short lives.
- Breeding sows are kept inside sheds — continually pregnant and confined in a barren, metal barred stall too small for her to turn around.
- Any pork products which have not been labelled free range or organic have been produced in an intensive facility.
- To give birth, each sow is moved to an even narrower farrowing crate — a metal barred pen scarcely bigger than her body with a hard slatted floor area. There is no straw or bedding so she gives birth onto the hard floor. Denied of her strong instinct to make a nest, she becomes highly frustrated in the hours before giving birth. “Most sows substitute vigorous activity for nest-building a few hours before the onset of farrowing. Such activity often leaves the sow with lacerations, contusions and abrasions and sometimes even leads to apparent exhaustion.”
- Nurturing and interacting with her young is impossible as a cruel metal frame imprisons her. Her young are removed at three weeks old, and within days of their weaning she is again impregnated and returned to a single stall.
- Piglet’s tails are routinely docked and their teeth are clipped — all without anaesthetic. This can cause lasting pain.
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Sheep

Raised for meat and wool, sheep are the most populous farmed animal in Australia, and sheep farming is extremely varied. Sheep can be raised on dry, marginal lands where their grazing practices further destroy the land and vegetation, on irrigated pastures where 170,000 litres of water yields a kilogram of wool, or in sheds in close confinement like pigs.

Wooly sheep are often unsuited to the climates where they are kept. Adult sheep mortality rates can be high, particularly in drought. They die of maggot infestation in their skin, starvation, poisoning and disease, among other causes.

Death rates among lambs are extremely high — 20% or more can die in the first few weeks of life. Most die from starvation when either the mother has been malnourished and isn’t producing enough milk, or her nipples have been damaged during shearing. Cold exposure, infection and predation also take lambs.

Excruciating mutilations are also the norm: male lambs can be castrated using rubber bands to cut off circulation, tails are docked, and skin is stripped from their upper thighs, all without pain relief.

Even wool sheep are eventually sent in cramped trucks to slaughter.

“I know, in my soul, that to eat a creature who is raised to be eaten, and who never has a chance to be a real being, is unhealthy. It’s like... you’re just eating misery. You’re eating a bitter life.”

ALICE WALKER

Pulitzer Prize Winner, author of The Color Purple
Dairy Cows

- The amount of milk produced by each Australian cow more than tripled between 1950 and 2005, and farmers keep pushing for higher yields.

- To keep the milk coming, dairy cows endure pregnancy and milking at the same time, placing enormous demands on their bodies. They produce a calf a year until too exhausted to continue, then they are sent to slaughter, at around a quarter of their natural lifespan. The strain makes them susceptible to painful foot disorders and other ailments.

- Their calves are taken away on the day they are born, causing deep distress to mother and calf, who will bellow for one another for days. Male calves are killed as babies for veal; their sisters are reared on a milk substitute, away from their mothers.

- The most common disease of Australian dairy cows is mastitis, a painful bacterial infection of the teats and udder. Many cows have low level infections, causing blood cells and bacteria to contaminate milk. Millions of blood cells are in each teaspoon of milk sold to consumers.

- Despite clever campaigning by the dairy industry, animal milk is not a necessary or desirable part of the human diet.

Dairy milk is a perfectly balanced food for calves but for nothing else.

Don’t believe the myth that you need dairy for calcium as there are other less harmful ways to get it in your diet.

GREG CHAPPELL
Australian Cricketer, author

Feedlot Cattle

Many beef cattle are sent to barren feedlots to be fattened for the last few months of their lives. They are fed grain, an unnatural food for cattle, which causes digestive problems. Large amounts of antibiotics are added to their feed in an attempt to correct the problem. This is a human health issue, as harmful bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics.

Fish farming is not the answer. Like other intensive animal production it can be very polluting, stressful for the overcrowded fish, and often wild fish are caught to feed to higher-value farmed fish.

Transport

Crammed together, often terrified and disoriented, animals stand in their own excrement while being transported to the abattoir. They are deprived of food and water and most are forced to stand for the duration of the trip due to crowding. By Australian guidelines trips can be up to 24 continuous hours for chickens and pigs, and up to 48 hours for cattle. These conditions often result in ‘downers’ — animals too sick or weak to walk.

Fishing

Eating fish and seafood means pain and stress for millions of animals every year.

- Industrial fishing is seriously damaging ocean ecosystems. Overfishing has already destroyed the natural balance of many ecosystems around the world to the point of collapse.

- A conservative estimate of 60,000-97,000 tonnes of non-target animals - bycatch - are caught in Australian waters each year, including dolphins, turtles, dugong and seals. Bycatch represents up to 95% of the catch in Australian trawl fishing, and is well over 50% in most Australian commercial fisheries.

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Kangaroos

Australia’s most beloved icons, kangaroos are killed by the millions each year.

- They are killed for their soft skins, used to make brand name sneakers, and for meat.

- They are wild animals, not farmed. They are hunted at night, and not always killed instantly.

- Joeys whose mothers are shot can legally be killed by swinging them against a tow bar, hitting them with a metal pipe, decapitation with a knife, or shooting. Joeys can escape however, and die a lonely death from starvation.

Some poorly researched reports suggest eating kangaroos instead of other meat is part of the answer to our environmental problems.

Each Australian consumes on average 112kg of meat each year. Roos are small, even a large kangaroo can only yield about 12kg of meat. In 2006 their total population was about 24 million in areas where they are hunted. Kangaroos breed slowly, about one joey a year per female. If the average Australian was to substitute just 10% of their meat for kangaroo, simple maths reveals the entire kangaroo population would be wiped out in a little over one year (even forgetting exports of kangaroo flesh). Eating our national emblem won’t solve any environmental problems. A much better environmental strategy would be substituting vegies, not Skippy, for our meat.

... not only do fish feel the same pain as cats and dogs and humans, but they are also highly intelligent. The most common form of cruelty in the world is fishing, and why? Because most people have no idea how sensitive and intelligent fish are.

RICHARD JONES
Member of the NSW Legislative Council
For our planet’s sake

The UN’s “Livestock’s Long Shadow” report exposes the environmental devastation wreaked by animal production.

“The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, on every scale from local to global. ... (It) may well be the leading player in the

- reduction of biodiversity, since it is the major driver of
deforestation, as well as one of the leading drivers of
- land degradation,
- pollution,
- climate change,
- overfishing,
- sedimentation of coastal areas
and
- facilitation of invasions by alien species.”

FOOD & AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)
Livestock’s Long Shadow 2006

Save water

Want to know the best way to reduce your water usage? Shorter showers? Not washing the car? How about reducing consumption of animal foods! Animal food production uses many times the amount of water used in plant food production. A simple way to save thousands of litres of water every week is to move towards a plant-based diet.

Economics of a change to veganism

For a sector that contributes just 3% to the Australian economy, agriculture uses much more than its fair share of resources, mainly due to livestock. Clearly we need to have food regardless of the economy, but to guarantee ourselves a future we should revise how we produce our food. Since a healthy economy relies on healthy ecosystems, soon we may find we must change.

By encouraging more low-impact plant agriculture, and discouraging inefficient and wasteful livestock industries, we would do wonders for our environment while being unlikely to harm our economy. The health crisis would probably ease too, easing another economic burden. Those currently employed in the meat industries could be retrained to work in sustainable plant food agriculture and processing. It makes sense, it could be done. The only thing stopping us is our eating habit.

The rich and the poor

Over a third of the world’s grain harvest is fed to livestock in an inefficient conversion of nutritious plant-based food to animal product. Often livestock feed is grown in poor countries for the markets of the rich, while their own citizens go hungry.

“The West’s obsession with meat plays a direct role in starving the world’s poorest people. Meat is a killer in every sense of the word.”

TONY WARDE
Associate Director Viva!
Vegetarians International Voice for Animals

Land clearing and Land degradation

Large areas of Australia’s forest and woodland vegetation systems have been cleared and degraded since European settlement, predominantly for agricultural activity. Currently 47% of Australia’s land surface is grazed, and just 3% cropped – and much of this 3% is growing feed for livestock.

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Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Livestock’s Long Shadow 2006

15% of the kangaroo population of Australia is killed each year.
Do we, as humans, having an ability to reason and to communicate abstract ideas verbally and in writing, and to form ethical and moral judgments using the accumulated knowledge of the ages, have the right to take the lives of other sentient organisms, particularly when we are not forced to do so by hunger or dietary need, but rather do so for the somewhat frivolous reason that we like the taste of meat?

In essence, should we know better?

PETER CHEEKE, PhD
Contemporary Issues in Animal Agriculture

Animals are not objects . . .

That means they are able to experience and to know. Like humans they feel complex emotions. Love, fear, distress, joy, humour, pride, shame, and many others have been documented in many animals. They feel pain as humans do.

Animals are sentient beings.

They are capable of thinking and planning, and can form strong social bonds, with one another and with humans. Each has a unique personality.

Instinct or feeling? Or both?

Each species including humans tends to perform certain behaviours, expressions and actions. These are different from one species to another, though there are many overlaps particularly between closely related species (for example all mammals share motherly instincts). For all of us, our behaviours and expressions show that we’ve thought or felt something. There’s no reason to believe other animals feel any less when they do something, even though their way of acting may be less familiar to us, and they don’t express their thoughts in words.

‘Aren’t they less important?’

This question shouldn’t even be considered in deciding whether it is okay to exploit other animals - in this context it is subjective and irrelevant. When we decide whether or not to exploit other humans, only empathy is important: to see things from the other’s perspective. An animal’s ability to experience things personally, to feel pain and frustration, is probably identical to a human’s ability - and that’s what’s important. If we understand this but still decide to exploit other animals, we must consider it as callous as exploiting another human in the same way.

Humans — who enslave, castrate, experiment on, and fillet other animals — have had an understandable penchant for pretending animals do not feel pain.

A sharp distinction between humans and ‘animals’ is essential if we are to bend them to our will, make them work for us, wear them, eat them — without any disquieting tinges of guilt or regret.

It is unseemly of us, who often behave so unfeelingly toward other animals, to contend that only humans can suffer. The behavior of other animals renders such pretensions specious. They are just too much like us.

Isaac Bashevis Singer
Nobel Laureate, author, philosopher

“Various philosophers and religious leaders tried to convince their disciples and followers that animals are nothing more than machines without a soul, without feelings. However, anyone who has ever lived with an animal — be it a dog, a bird, or even a mouse — knows that this theory is a brazen lie, invented to justify cruelty.”

Dr Carl Sagan & Dr Ann Druyan
Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors 1992

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They are capable of thinking and planning, and can form strong social bonds, with one another and with humans. Each has a unique personality.

“Anyone who has studied the social life of birds carefully will know that theirs is a subtle and complex world, where food and water are only a small part of their behavioural needs. The brain of each bird is programmed with a complicated set of drives and responses that set it on the path to a life full of special territorial, nesting, roosting, grooming, parental, aggressive and sexual activities in addition to the simple feeding behaviour. All these are denied the battery hens.”

Dr Desmond Morris
Zoologist, author and animal behaviourist

Jane, a battery hen just after rescue. She received veterinary care and a new home, and just three months after rescue was covered in healthy white feathers, enjoying her freedom.

Sows kept in isolated confinement suffer psychological problems, which can be expressed by compulsively chewing on the bars.

Crowded pens are the norm for pigs being raised for meat.
“If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian.”
PAUL AND LINDA McCARTNEY

If they survive the horrors of the farms and transportation, the animals, whether factory farmed, free range or organically reared, are slaughtered. This is not a kind way to die like putting a sick dog to sleep.

Most animals are stunned prior to slaughter, meant to cause unconsciousness, not to kill. In fact a stun lasts less than a minute before an animal may start to wake up.

Common stunning methods:
- Captive bolt stunning — a ‘pistol’ is set against the animal’s head and a metal rod is thrust into the brain. Shooting a struggling animal is very difficult, and the rod often misses its mark, leaving the animal still conscious.

Electric stunning — a current passes through the head, or from the head to body. Incorrect placement or insufficient amperage can leave the animal paralysed but fully conscious.

The throat is then cut, the animal is hung upside down, and he/she dies from blood loss. Evidence shows that very often the interval between stunning and cutting is too long, or the throat cut not deep enough for the animal to stay unconscious after stunning - hence they may wake up during bleeding or dismembering.

- Pigs are dunked in tanks of scalding water after their throats are slit to soften their hides for skinning. As a result, a botched slaughter condemns some pigs to being both scalded and drowned in the boiling water.

- To induce unconsciousness in birds, their heads are immersed into an electrified tank of water, but this is not always successful. Large numbers of chickens, turkeys and ducks reach the throat cutter or scalding tanks alive and are either boiled to death or drowned.

From a Perth vet:
“During my veterinary degree I visited a number of standard Australian abattoirs. Nothing prepares you for the smell and sight of blood covering every surface or the thrashing animals on hooks metres from your face. Cattle wait in line for their turn to die while staring directly at the “kill floor” as their friends have their throats slit in front of them. With any fast production line mistakes happen and often animals are killed while fully conscious and struggling to escape. There is so much hidden suffering which happens right here in Australia when turning animals into food - just to satisfy the trivial interest of “it tastes good”. Every meat eater should visit an abattoir.”

“I grew up in cattle country – that’s why I became a vegetarian. Meat stinks, for the animals, the environment, and your health.”
K.D. LANG
Canadian singer and recording artist
Becoming a vegan

Becoming a vegan usually involves a conscious decision to reduce animal suffering or our environmental impact, to eat a healthier diet, or some combination of these and other reasons.

So why would anyone want to go vegan? There are so many benefits, near and far!

The China Study

The China Study is the most comprehensive study of diet, lifestyle and disease ever done with humans, a joint project between Oxford and Cornell Universities and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, which has produced more than 8000 statistically significant associations between various dietary factors and disease. The Study found “people who ate the most animal-based foods got the most chronic disease. Even relatively small intakes of animal-based food were associated with adverse effects. People who ate the most plant-based foods were the healthiest and tended to avoid chronic disease.”

The findings of hundreds of unconnected studies were also analysed, indicating that heart disease, diabetes and obesity can be reversed, and these and many other conditions prevented by a whole-foods, plant based diet.

“We now have a deep and broad range of evidence showing that a whole foods, plant-based diet is best for the heart...cancer...diabetes and autoimmune diseases ...kidneys, bones, eyes and brains.”

Dr T COLIN CAMPBELL, PhD
The China Study 2004

Well-planned vegan diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy and lactation. Appropriately planned vegan diets satisfy nutrient needs of infants, children, and adolescents and promote normal growth.

AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION
Position statement on vegetarian diets

Is veganism healthy?

The tragedy of animal food production is that it is neither necessary nor desirable for optimum health. A good vegan diet is all we need.

What is veganism?

“Veganism is a way of living which excludes all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, the animal kingdom, and includes a reverence for life. It applies to the practice of living on the products of the plant kingdom to the exclusion of meat, fish, fowl, eggs, honey, animal milk and its derivatives, and encourages the use of alternatives for all commodities derived wholly or in part from animals.”

DONALD WATSON
creator of the term ‘Vegan’ in 1944

“I don’t understand why asking people to eat a well-balanced vegetarian diet is considered drastic, while it is medically conservative to cut people open and put them on cholesterol lowering drugs for the rest of their lives.”

Dr DEAN ORNISH, MD
Author and founder of the non-profit Preventive Medical Research Institute, California

“Veganism to me is simply knowing that I haven’t been a part of exploiting any living thing for my own purpose.”

DANIEL JOHNS
Australian musician, Silverchair

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“If you want to vibrate at a higher level, folks, you’ve got to run your system on clean fuel. That’s veganism.”

STEVE KILBEY, Australian musician
Lead singer from The Church

“On why he went from vegetarian to vegan: ‘I always knew the problems with dairy, but used the ‘at least I’m doing something’ defence to justify my cheese and egg lovin’ diet. Then I realised that acknowledging the problems but not doing anything about it was almost as bad, if not worse, so I cut out all dairy products, too.’”

LINDSAY MCDougall, aka ”THE DOCTOR”
Triple J radio presenter and musician from Frenzal Rhomb

“Like everyone, vegans should eat a balanced diet. Vegans must also ensure they get a good source of vitamin B12 – fortified foods or a B12 supplement are ideal.”

American Dietetic Association
Position statement on vegetarian diets
Adopting a plant based diet

Many people who eliminate animal products from their diet discover a wealth of plant foods and delicious recipe ideas awaiting.

It’s possible to prepare vegan versions of most dishes – it just takes a little ingenuity, a good vegan recipe book or a quick recipe search on the internet.

Most vegetarian restaurants serve vegan meals, and many other restaurants will cater for specific dietary requirements.

“The bottom line is that you can eat a plant-based diet with great pleasure and satisfaction. But making the transition is a challenge. There are psychological barriers and practical ones. It takes time and effort. You may not get support from your friends and family. But the benefits are nothing short of miraculous. And you’ll be amazed at how easy it becomes once you form new habits”

Dr T COLIN CAMPBELL
The China Study

WORRIED ABOUT MISSING OUT ON TREATS?

Animal-free chocolate, ice cream, sorbets, flavoured ‘milks’, sweets, chips and snacks are readily available in supermarkets and health food shops. Cakes, desserts, biscuits, pies and other goodies can also be bought or made at home using vegan substitutes for egg, gelatine, milk and butter etc.

In moderation of course!

Vegan sausages, burgers, cheeses and dips are also easy to find. Asian supermarkets often have a good selection of “mock” meat.

Some simple meal ideas:

Breakfast
• Smoothies made with fruit, soaked dried fruit and nuts, soya yoghurt, coconut milk
• Cereal, porridge or muesli with soya or rice milk and fresh fruit
• Wholemeal toast with avocado and tomato / sautéed mushrooms / peanut butter / baked beans / scrambled tofu

Lunch
• Minestrone soup with rye bread topped with guacamole
• Pita bread with falafel, salad and hommus
• Jacket potato piled up with tomato relish, salad, soya mayo, olives etc
• Japanese nori rolls with various fillings

Dinner
• Vegan lasagne, spaghetti bolognese or shepherd’s pie
• Mixed vegie stir-fry with tofu, tempeh or nuts served with noodles or rice
• Tossed mixed salad topped with almonds, cashews or pecan nuts and vinaigrette dressing
• Lentil burgers with vegan cheese, tomato sauce and salad on a wholemeal bun

The variety of vegan ingredients, dishes and products available is enormous - Veganism is NOT about food deprivation!
Still concerned?

“I’m still worried about…”

Protein
We can easily meet all our protein needs from plants, particularly legumes, vegetables, nuts and grains. Protein deficiency is extremely rare in wealthy countries. Many people eat much more than is necessary, often to the detriment of their health.

Iron
Plenty of iron can be found in plant food. Particularly high in iron are raisins, avocado, kale, nuts, peas and tofu. Iron absorption is boosted by the vitamin C in fruit and vegies.

Calcium
Calcium is abundant in many plant foods, e.g. sesame seeds, green leafy vegies, tofu, figs, nuts and baked beans. Many plant foods are high in other nutrients good for our bones, such as vitamin K and potassium.

Animal protein e.g. from meat and milk (but not plant protein) acidifies the body. Calcium is leached from the bones to neutralise the acid, then excreted, causing bone loss. Plant foods alkalise the body and reduce this calcium loss. Countries with the highest animal protein intakes (and paradoxically the highest calcium losses) have the most osteoporosis. (Yes, that’s comparing people of the same age.)

Moreover, cow’s milk has been linked to many other diseases and in this sense plant sources of calcium should be preferred.

Useful websites
– www.vegsoc.org.au (Vegetarian/Vegan Society Qld)
– www.animalsaustralia.org (animal advocacy group)
– www.veg-soc.org (Australian Vegetarian Society)
– www.animalliberation.org.au (for a thorough, referenced introduction to animal issues)
– www.veganic.net (Vegan Voice)
– www.ivu.org (International Vegetarian Union)
– www.notmilk.com (a different perspective on milk)
– www.vegansociety.com (British Vegan Society)

Suggested reading
– The Silent Ark Juliet Gettlerley
– The China Study Dr T Colin Campbell & T M Campbell
– The Pig Who Sang to the Moon Jeffrey Masson
– Raising Vegetarian Children Joanne Stepaniak, Vesanto Melina
– Becoming Vegan: Complete Guide to Adopting a Healthy Plant-Based Diet Vesanto Melina, Brenda Davis
– How It All Vegan: Irresistible Recipes for an Animal-Free Diet Sarah Kramer, Tanya Barnard
– May All Be Fed: A Diet For A New World John Robbins, Gia Patton
– Animal Liberation Peter Singer

Suggested viewing
– Earthlings (narrated by Joaquin Phoenix)
– A Sacred Duty (environmental, animal cruelty and religious aspects of the decision to go vegan)
– A Diet for all Reasons Dr Michael Klaper (diseases of affluence and the health reasons to go vegan)

“I have another concern”

Please feel free to contact the Vegetarian/Vegan Society of Queensland or your local group (details on back page) and discuss anything you are concerned about. Remember, millions of people around the world have chosen to adopt a vegan diet and are living in excellent health - it’s tried and true!

“But meat eating is natural!”

Veganism is also natural - many mammals don’t eat flesh. If you want to be ‘natural’, a whole-foods vegan diet is much closer to our natural diet than the standard western diet.

Like other primates, we’ve evolved to eat a predominantly plant-based diet. We can’t kill large animals with our human hands, better designed for gathering plant foods to eat - natural carnivores always kill their own meat with their large teeth, claws and agility. Only very recently in our evolution (well after our split from the ancestors of modern apes) have we even had weapons to kill our own meat - before that, we were virtually vegan. Through environmental pressures our species adapted to be able to survive on flesh, but not only have we retained the ability to live on a plant-based diet, evidence suggests it is still best for our health.

Drinking the milk of another species has been practised in only a few cultures for a few thousand years. Many cultures continue to grow strong bones without it - in fact evidence shows these cultures have much less osteoporosis than milk-drinking cultures!

Then, what is natural about the way humans enslave and incarcerate billions of animals? What’s natural about choosing cruelty and environmental degradation when we don’t have to?

Want to find out more?

“Veganism has given me a higher level of awareness and spirituality.”
Dexter Scott King
Son of Martin Luther King, Jr

“A Diet for all reasons”

Vesanto Melina

“Veganism has given me a higher level of awareness and spirituality.”
Dexter Scott King
Son of Martin Luther King, Jr

“A Diet for all reasons”

Vesanto Melina

When non-vegetarians say that ‘human problems come first’ I cannot help wondering what exactly it is that they are doing for human beings that compels them to continue to support the wasteful, ruthless exploitation of farm animals.”
Peter Singer
Australian philosopher, Professor of Bioethics, Animal Liberation 1975

“I still have doubts about how animal products are produced”

A thoroughly referenced version of the text in this booklet is available from the Vegetarian/Vegan Society of Queensland, or from http://whyveg.com/LIFE.

Most of the information comes from published reports and articles from farm industry bodies, the veterinary profession, the Australian Government, the UN, etc.
Few consumers realise how much farming animals for food has changed over the last fifty years. As long ago as 1965, a British report by Professor Brambell (The Brambell Report, UK) established five principles of welfare for farm animals:

- Freedom from Hunger and thirst
- Freedom from Discomfort
- Freedom from Pain, injury or disease
- Freedom from Fear and distress
- Freedom to express normal behaviours

These freedoms were regarded as the minimum standard of care that all livestock should enjoy. The intensive system itself patently excludes the possibility of guaranteeing these freedoms. Australian Codes of Practice for farm animals claim to offer the same basic welfare standards, but provide very little real protection for animals. Legally, Codes of Practice excuse farmers for doing things to animals which would be illegal if they were done to non-production animals. Remember, even ‘free range’ or ‘organically reared’ animals suffer pain and terror when they are slaughtered for our food. So why not oppose all cruelty and try going vegan!

For a free info pack about going vegetarian or vegan contact:

The Vegetarian/Vegan Society of Queensland
info@vegsoc.org.au ph: (07) 3300 9320

“I think everybody has that capacity to stop and think and say, ‘If I knew you, I wouldn’t eat you.’ And in some ways, it really is that simple.”

TOM REGAN, PhD
Professor of Philosophy
from A Cow at My Table