

What Does Diet Have to Do With the Earth?

by Delisa Renideo

Most of us now know that our diet has a great deal to do with our health. From obesity to diabetes to heart disease to cancer, our food choices are the primary determinant of whether we will suffer from these conditions or not. Many of us are not as aware that our diet also has a tremendous impact on the health of the planet we call home.



provide a livable home for us and our children and children's children.

So what does this have to do with our food choices?

First of all, according to a 2006 United Nations Report entitled "Livestock's Long Shadow," animal agriculture accounts for 18% of all greenhouse gases, which is 5% more than all of the world's cars, trucks, trains, and planes combined! These

National news has been dominated for the past several months by the economic collapse, which obviously is of great concern to all of us. But this focus on our financial health has diverted a lot of our attention away from an even greater threat

include not only carbon dioxide, but also methane, (23 times more powerful in trapping heat than CO₂), and nitrous oxide, (296 times more powerful than CO₂).

In order to understand why animal agriculture is so damaging to our environment, we need to realize that the great majority of grain and soybeans are raised to feed to animals, which are very inefficient

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to our well-being, the health of our environment. The Earth literally provides EVERYTHING we require to live: air, water, food, and the raw materials for everything we manufacture and use. It would make a lot of sense to protect the Earth so that it can continue to

My Story

by Stacey Orlov

Thanksgiving of 2007, while visiting my family in the Mid Atlantic states, my sister, Jill, was reading Omnivore's Dilemma which inspired us to stop eating meat. Both of us have always been unhappy with the way animals used or consumed by humans are treated. We agreed that after the Thanksgiving meal, that was it, no more meat.

When I arrived back home in Anchorage on December 3rd, I was thrilled to have successfully finished out my trip back East as a vegetarian and I purchased Omnivore's Dilemma. Then, in January, I became a vegan. Now, it has been a little over a year and I feel the healthiest, strongest, and happiest I have ever been.

Of course, I could not stop reading with Omnivore's Dilemma. Who could? Next was Skinny Bitch. If I had one inkling that I was going to consume one crumb of animal-based food, reading that book sealed the deal for me. I love the authors' quick witted attitudes and soap box diatribes.

Before I became a vegan, I would overdose on sweets, crackers, bread, chips,

and LOTS of dairy. As one could imagine, my mood was up and down like the Colossus roller coaster (the loopiest in the world). Being in the fitness industry, all I ever heard

was PROTEIN, PROTEIN, PROTEIN. I was consuming more protein than anything else, yet my muscles were not recovering between workouts. I spent many days having low energy, stress, shot nerves, and stomach bloat. After realizing when a person consumes an animal-based diet, he/she is consuming all of the stress, hormones, and chemicals that were either eaten by or injected into these animals, I knew

that was the reason I was feeling these effects. And just eating organic meat isn't enough to solve the problem.

Most of those animals are not treated any better; they are most likely still from factory farms. Yes, they are not given the hormones and chemicals, but cows are still milked 3 or more times a day (only once

is recommended). The more I read about how farmed animals are treated, the more it bothered me. I could go on and on about

see ***My Story*** continued on page 10



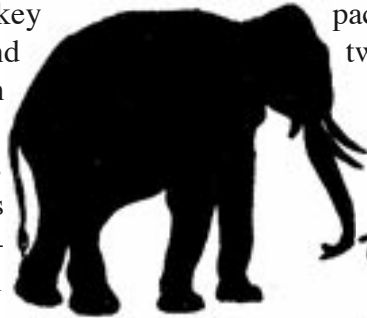
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FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS

by Rae Sikora

A friend came through town on his way back from Costa Rica this week. He told the story of a howler monkey he and his wife observed while there. They have been going to Costa Rica for many years and they know the howler monkeys well. One day they watched a single howler monkey race through the trees toward a dog who was chained in a yard. The dog had been barking all morning and was very agitated by being left in the dirt on a chain with no shelter. The howler monkey lowered himself down just above the dog and was making a sound that my friends had never heard a howler make before. It was a very soft and constant sort of cooing. The dog immediately stopped barking and settled into a deep sleep. Once the dog had fallen asleep, the monkey scurried up the tree and back in the direction he had come from.

Another cross species connection is taking place at an elephant sanctuary in Tennessee. Tara and Bella are best friends. The elephants naturally pair up with someone when they arrive at the sanctuary from their difficult previous lives in the entertainment industry. Every elephant has paired up with another elephant, except Tara. Tara chose Bella, a rescued dog



who lives at the sanctuary, and Bella chose Tara right back. They have been inseparable for years. They eat, sleep and play together. It became clear just how close they are when



Bella recently suffered a spinal cord injury and could not move or even wag her tail. For the entire three weeks she was kept indoors healing, Tara stood vigil outside the building Bella was in. When Bella's caretakers finally carried her outside to Tara, the reunion was sweet. Bella even lets Tara gently stroke along her belly with her giant pachyderm foot. (See footage of these two friends at <http://tiny.cc/BsZ5C>)

Cassie and Moses are dear friends. Moses protects, trains, and feeds Cassie. Cassie is a once abandoned cat and Moses is a wild crow. Moses was upset when a couple decided to take Cassie into their home to care for her. He squawked and pecked at their door in the morning until they let Cassie out. (See footage at <http://tiny.cc/uDNCC>)

Recent news stories have featured an orphaned moose who connects with a see ***Friends...*** continued on page 8

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continued from the front page:

in turning this into meat eaten by humans. It takes up to 16 pounds of grain to make a pound of beef! It requires about 2000 gallons of water to produce a pound of beef and 1000 gallons of water to produce a gallon of cow milk. And the 10 billion land animals raised for food each year in the U.S. produce more than 130 times more manure than our human population. All this manure, much of it untreated, produces the powerful greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide, and contributes to the pollution of our air, water,



and soil. In addition, pastureland is usually created by cutting down forests. This creates even more CO₂ and removes the trees that actually counteract global warming by taking in carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen. As you read this, the Amazon rainforests are being burned in order for Brazil to raise more beef to export to the wealthy countries like the U.S. This not only contributes to global climate change, but also destroys the natural habitat of the wild plants and animals of the rainforests, causing mass extinctions. These rainforests finally become deserts, devoid of almost all life.

The great news is that we can have a direct, and very significant, positive im-

pact on this environmental disaster-in-the-making. By choosing a plant-based diet, we reduce our carbon footprint dramatically, more than we do by selling our car and using a bicycle! We also reduce our “water footprint” by eating plants directly rather than eating animals that have been fed all those plants that were irrigated with water that is in increasingly short supply. You’d have to forego showers for 6 months to save as much water as it takes to make a pound of beef! Wouldn’t it just be easier to eat a veggie burger?

The really wonderful part of all this is that the diet that is the healthiest for our planet is also healthiest for us. When we choose a plant-based diet of minimally processed foods, we greatly improve the odds that we will live a long and healthy life and that we will have a healthy planet to live on for all those years.

Earth Day is April 22nd. Let’s open our eyes and our hearts to the incredible beauty of this planet. The Earth really is our mother. Without her, we would not have life. Let’s honor her by doing everything we can to protect her.



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Meet Our New Family Members!

With donations made during our last Thanksgiving dinner, the Alaska Vegetarian Society adopted two rescued turkeys and one rescued chicken. All three now reside at Farm Sanctuary in California. Be sure to visit them there on your next trip to California.



California Farm Sanctuary's 300-acre farm sits on the eastern foothills of the coastal mountain range near Orland, 10 minutes west of Interstate 5. The farm is 30 miles west of Chico, and 100 miles north of Sacramento. Their visitor center includes educational displays, a cruelty-free gift shop, and an outdoor pavilion.

Amelinda is the female turkey and was rescued from an airline cargo disaster. She is feisty and curious, and her favorite food is squash.

Isaiah is the handsome male turkey and was found abandoned in a cardboard box. He is sweet and valiant and his favorite food is grapes.



Camilla is the beautiful red chicken. She was rescued from a feed store. She is joyful and talkative and her favorite food is raisins.



We received such a generous offering at our November 2008 dinner, we had enough to adopt two turkeys with enough left over to adopt a chicken, as well! Thank you to everyone who contributed. We'll plan to make this one of our Thanksgiving traditions.

For info on Farm Sanctuary's two locations (New York and California), call 530-865-4617 or visit www.farmsanctuary.org.



Why Become a Member?

The Alaska Vegetarian Society is part of the movement toward creating a healthier, more sustainable and compassionate world. It's become patently obvious that the health of Americans is deteriorating as we get heavier and heavier, leading to more diabetes, heart disease, and cancers. The environment is struggling to survive human excesses, and 10 billion land animals are slaughtered in the U.S. alone every year. The shift to a plant-based diet will help alleviate ALL these problems: improve human health, put much less stress on the environment, and save countless lives, both human and non-human.

If you would like to become part of creating a healthier world, we encourage you to adopt a plant-based diet AND join the Alaska Vegetarian Society! You don't have to be a vegetarian to join, and you don't have to be a member to attend all the AVS activities and celebrations. But it

feels good to contribute to something that is making such a difference in the world. It also saves you money because you will receive a 10% discount on all books and media sold at AVS functions.



A wonderful new benefit of AVS membership is a highly discounted subscription to VegNews magazine. As a member, you can receive a full year (6 issues) of VegNews for only \$7.50 instead of the regular subscription price of \$20.

With AVS membership you get 3 complimentary copies before subscribing! Check out the magazine at www.vegnews.com.

You can join at our Earth Day Dinner or any other AVS potluck, or mail a check to: Alaska Vegetarian Society
5010 Lakeside Drive
Wasilla, AK 99654
or call Delisa and Charlie Renideo at 907-373-1526 with your credit card number.

If you are already a member and want to take advantage of this subscription offer, sign up at an AVS event.

Who to Call



Elaine Albertson: AVS Newsletter Editor.....746-4668
Peggy Robinson: Treasurer & Membership.....373-1901
Toni Truesdell: Advertising Coordinator.....745-4404
Delisa Renideo: Rays of Hope Director.....373-1526
Charlie Renideo: Bookstore and Website.....373-1526

Levels of AVS membership:

- Individual: \$25
- Family: \$35
- Student / Senior \$15
- Kinship Circle: \$100
- Lifetime Membership \$500

Animal Quotes

“I was so moved by the intelligence, sense of fun and personalities of the animals I worked with on Babe that by the end of the film I was a vegetarian.”

~ James Cromwell



“According to the group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, fish have feelings too. Whenever my sons go fishing they always tell me, ‘Dad it doesn’t hurt a fish to get hooked.’ Well I watch and I see and I believe it’s painful for the fish.”

~ Donald Trump

“...recognize and respect Earth’s beautiful systems of balance, between the presence of animals on land, the fish in the sea, birds in the air, mankind, water, air, and land. Most importantly there must always be awareness of the actions by people that can disturb this precious balance.” ~ Margaret Mead



“A good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is a bad as an act of cruelty to a human being.”

~ Prophet Mohammed

“Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind.” ~ Albert Schweitzer

~ Albert Schweitzer

“I became very critical of zoos and circuses and keeping animals in captivity. I wish it was against the law.”

~ Christopher Walken



Food for Life *Nutrition & Cooking Classes* *for Cancer Prevention and Survival*

• Anchorage •

Providence Cancer Center

3851 Piper St. Bldg. U2
Room 281 (Media Center)
Mondays, Noon – 2:00pm
April 20 - June 1, 2009

Meets for 6 weeks. Cost: \$80

(No class on Memorial Day, May 25)

Ak Center for Spiritual Living

929 E. 81st Ave., Suite 105
Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm
Begins April 23, 2009

Meets for 7 weeks. Cost: \$90

• Palmer •

Mat-Su Regional Medical Center (Hospital)

2500 S. Woodworth Loop
Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm
Begins April 22, 2009

Meets for 7 weeks. Cost: \$90

Pre-registration required!

To register call
Delisa or Charlie at
907-373-1526

Friends Without Borders.

continued from page 3:

dog and an orphaned pig being nursed by a dog with nursing puppies (See footage at <http://tiny.cc/418FY>). Cows and goats have been witnessed working together to unlatch gates on farms.

Animals are our best teachers. They often go beyond language barriers to find a place of connection. We know so little of the magical world of other species. Even the dogs and cats we share our homes with understand our world

more than we understand theirs. We humans can barely understand other humans. Put more than two of us together and there is often trouble. We judge, we focus on differences, and we battle. If we cannot find a way to make peace amongst our own species, how will we ever learn to accept and care for other species?

Lately, when I feel tension arise with another person, I try to close my eyes and picture Tara and Bella or Cassie and Moses. They are not thinking that the other one should be different than they are. They are finding a way to connect through the differences. Amazingly, it helps me every time. If that giant elephant can find common ground and love with that little dog, surely I can find the same with my partner and friends and family. Surely I can learn from these animal teachers and see beyond the differences.

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Earth Day Dinner And Celebration

Please join us Saturday, April 25th for our 7th Annual Earth Day Dinner! This year it falls on our regular monthly potluck night, but we will plan an extra hour to allow for our special program. So the potluck will begin at 6 p.m. with the program to follow, lasting until about 9 p.m.

Highlights of our program will include a beautiful nature video by Charlie Renideo (In case you haven't seen his videos before, this is a real treat!), music, a skit, and discussion. You'll learn more about the ways a plant-based diet helps to protect and honor our Earth home and come away feeling really good about your contribution to a healthy world for all.

The Earth Day Dinner will be a potluck, so plan on bringing a 100% plant-based dish to share. (No meat, fish, eggs, dairy, or gelatin in anything.) We always have incredible, tasty, colorful, flavorful, healthy, ABUNDANT food at our potlucks!

The cost to attend is only \$2 per person if you bring a dish to share and \$7 if you do not bring a dish. If you need ideas about what to bring, feel free to call Delisa at 907-373-1526 or visit www.alaskaveg.org.



Nutrition Nuggets – IRON

by Delisa Renideo



I remember hearing TV advertising about “iron-poor blood” as a young child, and indeed, iron-deficiency anemia is a problem among many people around the world. But it is a problem that is widely misunderstood. (Anemia also has other causes besides dietary iron deficiency.)

Iron is needed for our bodies to make hemoglobin, the molecule in our blood which carries oxygen to all our cells. With-

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out enough iron, we become tired easily because our blood is not carrying enough oxygen, which is necessary for our body to burn glucose, our preferred

energy source. On the other hand, we don't want to have too much iron (iron overload), which may contribute to both cancer and heart attack. So, as in most things, more is not always better.

One very common misunderstanding is that we need to eat red meat in order to get enough iron. This is not true. Vegans, people who eat no animal products at all, are no more at risk for iron-deficiency anemia than omnivores.

There are 2 types of iron: heme iron and non-heme iron. Heme iron is found only in animal products. Non-heme iron is found in both plants and animals. Both

forms of iron can be utilized by our bodies, but there is a difference in how our bodies absorb them. Non-heme iron is absorbed at varying rates, depending upon our body's need for it. Heme iron, on the other hand, is absorbed at a fairly constant rate regardless of our need for it, which can be a problem.

Consuming foods containing vitamin C increases our absorption of non-heme iron, so eating fruits and vegetables enhances iron absorption. Dairy products and eggs interfere with non-heme iron absorption, so drinking milk with a meal actually prevents the absorption of the iron.

Non-heme iron is abundant in green vegetables, beans, and fortified grains. So eating a bowl of lentil soup, a slice of whole grain bread, and a green leafy salad is a perfect way to get iron in sufficient amounts. Your body will absorb greater amounts of

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this iron if its iron stores are getting low, and will absorb much less if its needs are less. This is a very good thing as it

prevents us from experiencing iron overload. Our body is smart! It knows how
*see **IRON** continued on page 10*

My Story, *continued from page 2:*

mistreatment of animals, but I think we all know what they go through. Just watch any animal rights film. We just don't want to think about it.

Then I became a Personal Trainer and my focus turned to health. I thought about how I wanted to educate people on health, fitness, and proper nutrition. I have always been concerned about health, but now it is

What we choose to put into our mouths is the one thing in life we can control.

at the forefront of my life.

My stomach is so much happier without dairy. Ever since I can

remember, my father has been allergic to dairy. I had always joked around with him, saying, "I suppose it is inevitable that I will be allergic to dairy."

A significant change I have noticed since becoming vegan is that I find I am enjoying my food more, rather than just eating because I am hungry.

Being a vegan has also made me more aware of our environment. My "footprint" has faded in many areas. I have become more committed to not using plastic bags, to conserving water, eating organic, buying sustainable products, recycling or re-using what I can, and composting my veggie scraps. For me, discovering the vegan lifestyle has changed my life in the most amazing ways. And in what has become a toxic world, what we choose to put into our mouths is the one thing in life we can control.

IRON, *continued from page 9:*

much iron we need and will just take what we need of non-heme iron.

Getting much of our iron from meat, on the other hand, means we will absorb about 23% of the iron whether we need it or not. Our body's intelligence is overpowered by the automatic absorption of heme iron. This can place us at risk for iron overload and the health problems associated with it.

So, if we eat a plant-based diet rich in green vegetables, fruits, grains, and beans, and avoid dairy products, we'll get plenty of iron along with the vitamin C which enhances absorption. And getting our iron from plants allows the wisdom of our bodies to take just what we need.

(Source: NutritionMD.org)

AdoptAFriend.net

Did you know there's a website where you can:

- Look for companion animals from several local rescue groups.
- Find links to Valley animal shelters.
- List info about an animal you can no longer keep.
- Save a life--give a home to a furry friend in need.
- Volunteer to be a foster home for homeless animals.
- Post info about animals you have lost or found.
- Donate food, bedding, toys, kennels, leashes, & money.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Create-Your-Own Tostada

From the kitchen of Peggy Robinson

Here is a fun way to put healthy foods together--and a dish you will really enjoy!

Prepare in steps:

1) Corn Tortillas:

100% Corn Tortillas (Taco-LoCo brand that lists the ingredients as stone ground corn, water and lime)

Set oven to high broil. Lay corn tortillas single file directly on the oven rack.

Toast and lightly brown on both sides. Watch them carefully and turn at least once. (Note: Make extra as they store well. You can also break them into pieces and use them as chips instead of store-bought ones that are high in fat.)



2) Beans

Large can of vegetarian refried beans OR
2 cups cooked, drained white or black beans
1/3 cup large flake nutritional yeast
2 Tbsp tahini or almond butter
1/2 tsp (or to taste) prepared mustard

1/2 cup red bell pepper OR
1 tsp smoked paprika
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp onion granules
1/2 tsp salt

Blend in food processor or VitaMix and chill. Add small amount of water as needed for desired consistency. Warm in oven or microwave.

3) Brown Rice

2 cups cooked brown rice, warm

Spread approx. 1/3 cup beans on toasted tortilla. Layer approx 1/3 cup brown rice over beans and top with the following:

Your favorite guacamole

Your favorite salsa

Your favorite vegan sour cream

Sprigs of fresh cilantro

Pick up the whole tortilla and eat one delicious bite at a time. Enjoy!

Are you wondering how to celebrate Easter with your family without animal products and lots of sweets? Here are some ideas: • Find egg-shaped fruits and veggies to put in Easter baskets (grapes, grape tomatoes and kiwi fruit for example). • Rabbits love 'em, so carrot sticks are a must! • Plastic eggs filled with money, small gifts, and love notes are always hits. • Make some yummy vegan cookies or cupcakes to have a few sweets. • Put a bowl in the bottom of a basket and use shredded lettuce instead of that horrible plastic grass. • Or plant some soil circles with grass seeds now, and you'll have real grass for the baskets!

Upcoming Events



Saturday, April 9

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 10:00am. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526.

Saturday, April 11

AVS will have a booth at the Baby Health Fair sponsored by Mat-Su Regional Medical Center (hospital).

Friday, April 17

Deadline for articles and information to be included in the May AVS newsletter. Call Elaine at 746-4668, or email elaine@alaskaveg.org

Mon, Wed, Thurs, April 20, 22, 23, 2009

3 new series of **Cancer Project Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Classes**. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For information, see notice on page 7 or call Delisa or Charlie at 907-373-1526.

Saturday, April 25

Earth Day celebration and potluck dinner, 6:00 to 9:00pm at the United Protetant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. There will be a special Earth centered program, songs and nature video. Call 373-1526 for information. For a map, visit: AlaskaVeg.org/PotluckDinners.html

Vegan:

Pronounced vee'-gun.

Referring to a vegan diet:

(n) A person who eats no animal-derived products, including meat, fish, dairy products, and eggs or foods containing those ingredients.

(adj.) Containing no ingredient derived from the animal kingdom.

Referring to a vegan lifestyle:

(n) One who chooses a diet and lifestyle free of consuming, using or wearing animal products, and of supporting businesses that exploit animals.

Alaska
Vegetarian Society

The Alaska Vegetarian Society is non-profit and under the umbrella of Rays of Hope, a 501(c)(3) organization. To join AVS, contact Peggy Robinson at 373-1901, or send an email to peggy@alaskaveg.org.

Mission Statement:

To create a compassionate and sustainable world by inspiring and supporting reverence for all life and the adoption of a plant-based diet.

5010 Lakeside Drive
Wasilla, AK 99654

907-373-1526
www.AlaskaVeg.org