



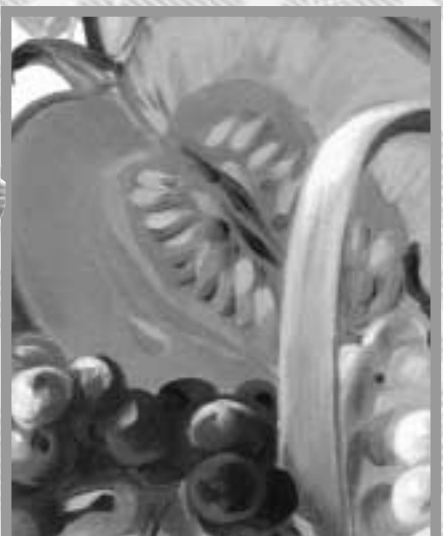
101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian

By Pamela Rice • SIXTH EDITION • 2003



Judea Johnson

Rochelle Goldman



Aqua-cide: Fishers employ high tech to scour the seas

1 Today, virtually all of the over 9 billion animals slaughtered for food in the U.S. every year are the product of a swift-moving assembly-line system, incorporating dangerous, unprecedented, and unsustainable methods of efficiency. If farmers were required by law to give their animals humane living conditions, with spacious quarters, clean surroundings, fresh air, sunlight, and opportunities for social interaction—if it were illegal simply to administer drugs to animals who would otherwise die from the environments they live in—cheap meat could never exist. Time and again, the industry fights proposed measures designed to improve the abject conditions endured by today's farmed animals—even slightly—some of which would cost only pennies more per animal. Ultimately, low prices have allowed demand to stay high and the industry to become highly concentrated. Over the past half century, farming in the U.S. has been allowed to grow into a grim corporate monstrosity, the scale of which is hard to comprehend or even believe.

2 When the Clean Water Act went into effect in 1972, the government exempted agriculture. One result: 35,000 river miles in just 22 states are polluted by feedlot operations. And today, an entrenched livestock industry, which produces several trillion pounds of manure per year, balks at regulation. In 2003, the government issued two reports. The first revealed that only a quarter of the nation's largest dairies and hog operations were spreading their manure on enough land to mitigate toxic runoff. The second said that the EPA's computer systems are grossly inadequate to track down farms lacking manure-management plans. As a result, millions of tons of waste are sent into our waterways, and the government is unable to control it.

3 After reviewing 4,500 scientific studies and papers on the relationship between cancer and lifestyle, a team of 15 scientists sponsored by two leading cancer research institutions advised those interested in reducing

their risk of many types of cancer consume a primarily vegetarian diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and legumes. They declared that up to 40 percent of cancers are preventable, with diet, physical activity, and body weight appearing to have a measurable bearing on risk.

4 The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that nearly 70 percent of commercial fish stocks worldwide are considered fully exploited, overfished, or collapsed. Fishers, using rapacious techniques such as sonar, drift nets, long-lines, dredgers, and floating refrigerated fish-packing factories, are ultimately not only putting themselves out of business but rapidly destroying ocean ecosystems. In the case of longlining, scientists estimate that fishers launch 4.5 million hooks every night. Overall, a quarter of the world's fish catch comes from nontarget species; a third goes to feed livestock. Early in 1998, a meeting of 1,600 scientists sounded a clarion call that the oceans were in peril. Five years later, the Pew Oceans Commission blamed industrial-scale commercial fishing for wiping the Earth of 90 percent of the ocean's largest predatory species found only 50 years ago (see #92).

5 The Humane Slaughter Act requires that an animal be rendered unconscious with one swift application of a stunning device before slaughter. This requirement, however, can easily be violated, thanks to exces-

sively rapid line speeds that can result in animals being cut up while fully conscious. Sped-up conveyor belts produce more profits for packing plants, but the cost is borne by the animals and by the laborers who have to work on the petrified creatures as they fight for their lives. As for birds (not legally recognized as animals), "humane" preslaughter stunning is not administered (see #72).

6 A meat diet dramatically raises your risk for heart attack, but in recent years you're less likely to die from one. Technology will probably save your life, but now you're left to live with the consequences. In the case of congestive heart failure—an increasingly common outcome—your heart, now so damaged, is unable to circulate blood to the rest of your body adequately; this results in fluid build-up and organ damage. In the U.S., nearly 5 million people live with the condition, and about 550,000 new cases crop up every year. The dis-

ease is the leading cause of hospitalization among the elderly, and hospital bills attributed to it come to \$19 billion per year.

7 It might be easy on your conscience to consume the flesh of a creature perceived to be stupid, dirty, and brutish. It may be surprising to some, however, that pigs are highly intelligent. Ask Professor Stanley Curtis of Pennsylvania State University. He taught several pigs to understand complex relationships between actions and objects in order to play video games. Curtis, along with his colleagues, found pigs to be focused, creative, and innovative, equal in intelligence to chimpanzees. Similarly, other researchers have found chickens to show empathy (and to be smart as



PHOTO BY MICHELLE FORNOF
Vegetarian outreach activist Jean Thaler raises a voice of dissent at Nathan's hot-dog-eating contest.

SPECIAL THANKS TO CANDLE CAFE, GLEN BOISSEAU BECKER, MARTIN ROWE, ELENA ROMANOVA, BERNIE G., JESSIE LEGUE, MIA MACDONALD, TOM THOMPSON, AND NALITH. BUT MOST OF ALL, THANKS TO MY HUSBAND, ALAN RICE, FOR HIS UNENDING SUPPORT, WITHOUT WHICH THIS BOOKLET COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN.

Plant Parade: Antioxidants, phytochemicals, fiber

well), cows to respond to music, and fish to be as individual as dogs.

8 U.S. livestock consume five times as much grain as is consumed directly by the entire American population. On average, it takes 5.86 pounds of plant protein (grain and forage) to produce 1 pound of animal protein—a horrible waste in a time when hunger pervades many regions of the world (see #31). Albeit, the meat industry continually works to improve feed-to-flesh efficiency, but improvements come at the expense of the animals via genetic tinkering and growth-enhancing drugs.

9 About 25 million pounds of antibiotics are fed every year to livestock for growth promotion and disease prevention, almost eight times the amount given to humans to treat disease. Though perfectly legal, the practice is leading to the selection of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. More and more, these superbugs are causing human illnesses that physicians are finding difficult and even impossible to treat. The practice is adding to the general worldwide crisis of drug-resistant disease.

10 Every year, Americans suffer 76 million illnesses, over 300,000 hospitalizations, and over 5,000 deaths from something they ate. That something was probably of animal origin. Except in rare instances, neither the USDA nor the FDA has any regulatory powers on farms where pathogens originate. With the exception of *E. coli* O157:H7, dangerous bacteria are considered “inherent” to raw meat. Producers may legally sell infected meat, leaving it up to the consumer to neutralize pathogens with cooking.

11 Bypass surgery requires that your rib cage to be opened, your heart stopped, and your body hooked up to an external pumping machine so an artery or vein from some other part of your body can be removed and grafted as a replacement blood vessel to your heart. Memory, language ability, and spatial orientation are still impaired in 10 to 50 percent of bypass patients six months later. For some people these side effects never go away.

Gloom and depression affect between a third and three-quarters of patients. Many will require a second operation. A vegetarian diet, regular exercise, and spiritual nourishment have been proven to reverse heart disease, the biggest killer in Western countries.

12 Jim Mason and Peter Singer write in their book *Animal Factories*, “Instead of hired hands, the factory farmer employs pumps, fans, switches, slatted or wire floors, and automatic feeding and watering hardware.” As with any other capital-intensive system, managers are concerned with the “cost of input and volume of output....The difference is that in animal factories the product is a living creature.”

13 Eating a plant-based diet guards against disease, first in an active way, with complex carbohydrates, phytochemicals, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber; then by default: The more plant foods you eat, the less room you have for animal foods, which clog arteries with cholesterol, strain kidneys with excess protein, and burden the heart with saturated fat. In 2003, a small but influential Canadian study found that a low-fat vegetarian diet, including soy, reduces cholesterol levels by about as much as widely used statin drugs.

14 Meat packing and poultry processing are notoriously hazardous and dangerous. Workers may be crushed by animals falling off the line. Poultry workers typically make a single movement up to 20,000 times a day and suffer repetitive-stress disorders at 16 times the national average. Turnover at plants can be as high as 100 percent per year.

15 With so many fish species on the brink of extinction (see #4), governments often try to regulate fishing gear, catch size, and catch season—usually without success. Policing is expensive. All told, illegal fishing around the world is estimated to equal

between 25 and 50 percent of the reported catch. A big part of the problem lies with “flag-of-convenience” poachers, operating on ships from nations that have not signed on to international fishing treaties that regulate environmental conventions. These boats, which bring in a full quarter of the world’s fish, are actually owned by companies from signatory countries, particularly the U.S., European states, and Japan. Such “legal” pirating of the seas doubled during the 1990s.

16 Factory hens today are forced to live in “battery” cages stacked in rows by the thousands. Each is confined to about 48 to 86 square inches of floor space. (This page is 91 square inches.) After months of confinement, necks are covered with blisters, wings bare, combs bloody, feet torn. Manure fumes and rotting carcasses force poultry workers to wear gas masks. When the hens become what the industry matter-of-factly calls *spent*, producers truck the mutilated birds—often long distances—to slaughter, or they will gas them and grind them up to feed the next flock.

17 *Consumer Reports* went to 60 cities in 8 states in 2003 to purchase and test 400 packages of chicken and beef to check them for bacterial contamination. It found that though incidence of bacteria in chicken had decreased since their 1997 tests (75 percent then compared to 50 percent in 2003), many more of the contaminated birds this time harbored antibiotic-resistant strains of salmonella and campylobacter. It also found 25 percent of the beef contaminated with listeria, a pernicious and elusive bug usually associated with cold cuts. Listeria carries a high incidence of death from infection. Cooking kills it, but store labels say “ready-to-eat.”

18 An English study that compared the diets of 6,115 vegetarians and 5,015 meat eaters for 12 years found that the meatless diet yielded a 40 percent lower risk of cancer and a 20 percent lower risk of dying from



Meat industry: Writes own laws on animal treatment

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any cause. After monitoring 2,000 vegetarians and near-vegetarians for 22 years, German researchers found that compared with the general population groups of people who eat little or no meat can expect to cut their death rates from diseases by 25 to 50 percent.

19 Half of every butchered cow and a third of every butchered pig becomes either by-product material or waste. In addition, 920 million animals die on U.S. factory farms each year before reaching slaughter. What's an industry to do with all this death and gore? Call the renderer straightaway! Recycling, they call it. Lips are exported to Mexico for taco filling; horns are made into gelatin; other parts are fashioned into everything from drugs to aphrodisiacs and cosmetics. The rest is minced, pulverized, and boiled down for more products. Much is dried to a powder to be mixed into animal feed. In 1997, feeding ruminant slaughterhouse by-product to cattle became illegal—a stopgap attempt to safeguard the public against mad cow disease (see #63). To begin with, the measure remains riddled with loopholes. And then, in 2001, the FDA found hundreds of animal-feed producers in violation.

20 Essentially, if a farming practice is established as “accepted,” “common,” “customary,” or “normal,” no matter how inhumane, anticruelty statutes do not apply. Such a legal environment serves to grant meat producers carte blanche for the development of still other cruel practices and technologies. In general, the laws that are written to protect animals are rarely enforced. Fines for violations are negligibly small, and prosecutors may have to demonstrate that a defendant was in a particular mental state when an act was committed. Basically, the meat industry enjoys a privilege unique in the world of law: Instead of society judging which of its actions should be legal or illegal, it makes this determination itself. Is there any wonder that precious little economic loss exists for the benefit of farmed animals?

21 In the mid-1970s, chicken processors argued that in order to keep

up with skyrocketing demand they should be allowed merely to rinse off fecal matter from bird carcasses rather than cut away affected parts. The government gave in to their pleas. A number of studies have since proved that rinsing, even up to 40 times, is ineffective at dislodging the filth. Moreover, the violent motion of defeathering rubber fingers not only works to squirt feces out from the chickens' bodies but can push bacteria deep into crevices of birds' skin where no process is able to dislodge it.

22 Many of the world's mightiest rivers no longer reach the sea, and aquifer levels everywhere are dropping precipitously. For these we can in large part blame the fivefold increase in worldwide meat production that took place over the past half-century, and the trend is far from over. Indeed, meat is a water guzzler. Producing a pound of animal protein requires about 100 times as much water as producing a pound of vegetable protein. As *Newsweek* once put it, “the water that goes into a 1,000-pound steer would float a destroyer.” Seventy percent of the water that is pulled from the world's rivers, lakes, and underground wells goes to agriculture, and 40 percent of the world's grain goes to feed animals for slaughter.

23 Castration makes bulls easier to handle. It makes their meat more marketable also. There are three castration methods, two of which shut off the blood supply so that the testicles either are reabsorbed into the animal's body or simply fall away after a couple of weeks. In a third method, the scrotum is cut so that the testicles can be pulled out. Anesthesia is rarely given before any of these procedures, and sometimes operations are botched. One livestock expert advises would-be emasculators, “Sloppy castration means lower profits.”

24 As many as one person in three in industrialized countries may be affected by foodborne illness each year, with children, pregnant women, the sick, the poor, and the elderly being the most at risk, according to the World Health Organization. Furthermore, Stacey A. Sawel, director of scientific

Veg-abundance: World without hunger through 2050

and regulatory affairs for the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, tells us that “outbreaks of food-borne illness associated with produce are very rare. CDC [Centers for Disease Control] data for 1986–1996 shows 3,227 outbreaks occurred from all food sources, but only 21...were associated with produce. And of those, almost half were due to cross contamination with raw meat products during food preparation.”

25 In 2000, the USDA released its official dietary guidelines, as it does every five years, and as always it told people to eat less meat. Of course it didn't use those words. When it did, in 1979, the meat industry sounded such a hue and cry that the U.S. agency quickly retreated. Reduce “saturated fat and cholesterol” it says now, something that means little or nothing to many people.

26 Birds are cheap and cages are expensive, so battery hens live out their dreary days in space just about the size of their bodies. No hen gets to run, build a nest, enjoy a cleansing dust bath, mate, lift a wing, protect a chick, forage in the sun, perch, or fly. Instead, this creature will spend her time crouching and fending off the frantic feather pulling of cage mates. And every egg that is laid will roll away down the slope of a wire floor, which will also cripple her legs and feet.

27 The senseless waste of the world's growing meat-centered diet is illustrated by a hypothetical statement put forth by the Population Reference Bureau: “If everyone adopted a vegetarian diet and no food were wasted, current [food] production would theoretically feed 10 billion people [65 percent more people than alive today], more than the projected population for the year 2050.”

28 In 1997 a bird virus jumped to a human for the first time in history. The avian influenza strain H5N1 eventually killed six people as well as entire chicken flocks in Hong Kong.

Fearing the strain might be signaling the beginning of a pandemic (see #35), authorities slaughtered and buried 1.3 million poultry-market chickens in the city over a chaotic three-day period. Similarly, a pig virus directly infected 250 people in Malaysia in 1999. As a result, a million pigs were herded



PHOTO BY MICHELLE FORNOF

Such a mural may not take on any particular significance for the everyday person, but a vegetarian may make note of the crazed look in the veal calf's eyes and a vandal's splash of paint above the nose. The air vents above the face add an extra touch of ignobility to the composition. Appropriately, the photographer found this one in the decrepit meat district of New York City.

into pens and shot or beaten to death. Some pigs ended up being buried alive.

29 Gigantic open-air cesspools of urine and feces are invariably situated adjacent to the barns that hold thousands and even millions of factory animals. The stench that they give off is exceedingly more pungent than everyday farm odor—even miles away. It will hammer you, perhaps only intermittently like Chinese water torture. In one Illinois case, assessments on nearby homes were officially reduced by 10 to 30 percent.

30 A male calf born to a dairy cow: What does a farmer do with this by-product of the milk industry? If he is not immediately slaughtered or factory-raised, he is made into fancy veal. To this end, he is locked up in a stall and chained by his neck to prevent him from turning around for his entire life. He is fed a special diet without iron or roughage. He is injected with antibiotics and hormones to keep him

alive and to make him grow. He is kept in darkness except for feeding time. The result? A nearly full-grown animal with flesh as tender and milky-white as a newborn's. The beauty of the system, from the standpoint of the veal industry, is that meat from today's “crate veal” still fetches the premium price it always did when such flesh came only from a baby calf. But now each animal yields much more meat.

31 On October 12, 1999, the population of the world hit 6 billion, at least in theory. This number is expected to near 10 billion by 2050. The Green Revolution, which fueled much of the recent growth, appears to have come to an end. Indeed, grain production worldwide has been declining since 1983, and biotech is not likely to reverse the downturn. Today, 70 percent of grain in the U.S. and 40 percent of grain worldwide lavishly goes to feed livestock. And just when the world seems to think it needs more land to cultivate grain to feed to animals

(so more people can eat them), per-capita world cropland declined by 20 percent—this in the 1990s alone. The World Health Organization says 1.2 billion people in the world don't get enough to eat. More meat production is definitely not the answer.

32 Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are highly toxic chemicals, once used widely in a number of industrial applications. Though they are now banned in the U.S. and other Western countries, their residues have become part of the food chain, lodged in the fat of fish, beef, pork, and milk products. Various studies have linked prenatal exposure to PCBs—even tiny amounts—to impaired intellectual development in children. Women who plan to become pregnant are advised to avoid foods containing them, because the chemicals can accumulate in their bodies for years.

33 Some U.S. farmers feed their chicken flocks manure. No, it's

Cows' Milk: Most significant chemical carcinogen

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not illegal, and yes, animals will grow by eating it. According to the FDA, the practice is safe if, during composting, the feces are allowed to reach high enough temperatures to destroy harmful bacteria. The problem is, farmers rarely take all the necessary steps in the composting process.

34 The late parent advisor Dr. Benjamin Spock maintained that cows' milk "causes internal blood loss, allergies, and indigestion and contributes to some cases of childhood diabetes." In the last edition of his famous baby book he recommended that children after the age of 2 essentially adhere to a vegan diet. But dairy milk is not recommended for infants either. According to renowned nutrition researcher T. Colin Campbell, "Cows'-milk protein may be the single most significant chemical carcinogen to which humans are exposed."

35 Because of animal agriculture, the world sees a global pandemic of influenza three or four times per century. Ducks are often the original incubators for a new subtype. In turn, pigs are periodically able to act as hosts for both the avian viruses and the human ones. Within the pigs' lungs, the trans-species viruses swap genetic material, creating a new strain that may be passed back to humans. Historically, the most fertile place for this to happen has been Southern China, where billions of pigs, domesticated ducks, and people all live in close proximity to one another.

36 Beef cattle are best suited to moist climates, like those of Europe, where they evolved. But in the U.S., many are herded in the West on the nation's most arid land. Native grasses long ago were overrun by heartier foreign varieties, inadvertently brought here on bovine hooves. Grazing usually takes place along fragile riparian zones—the strips of land along rivers and streams where wild species of plants and animals concentrate and regenerate. These delicate ecosystems, which serve as natural purifiers of the water, are summarily trampled by cows and contaminated by manure.

37 Adopting one of the popular high-protein diets today may help you lose weight in the short run, but so might other unhealthful practices, such as smoking. Eventually you'll need to learn how to eat. The American Heart Association and other major health organizations have adamantly warned people against the Atkins diet and others, because they can unnecessarily strain the kidneys as well as cause fatigue or dizziness. They've also been shown to cause dehydration, which may remain undetected. Furthermore, upping fat and lowering carbohydrate intake—part and parcel of these risky diets—have been found to impair brain function over time.

38 Genetics through single-trait selection has become as important a component of today's intensive farming as drugs and confinement hardware. The animals themselves, right down to their DNA, must stand up to the rigors of the industrial process, both in life and in carcass form. They must produce at breakneck speeds and do so on as little feed as possible. And ultimately, the particular output they unwillingly give forth must please our final end user, the consumer, in texture, taste, uniformity, convenience, and price. Mutant genes that would not survive in the wild for a minute are cultivated to monstrous ends. Today's hen produces 300 eggs per year; her wild forebears would have laid 2 dozen. Today's cow yields a staggering 9.1 tons of milk per year on the average, whereas 2.3 tons was the norm in 1940. Sows, breeding cows, and hens have similarly been reduced to piglet-, calf-, and chick-making machines.

39 U.S. subsidies to ranchers on public lands come to about \$500 million annually. To eliminate livestock predators—real or anticipated—one government program uses steel-jaw leghold traps, firearms, cyanide, and poison gas to exterminate thousands of black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, and coyotes every year.

40 Though osteoporosis is a disease of calcium deficiency, it is not one of low calcium intake. The main cause of the bone disorder is too much protein in

Talking Fish: Vibratory “calls” sounding a message,

the diet. Excesses can leach calcium from the bones. The typical meat-eating American is eating about five times as much protein as needed.

41 Young women who ingest, on the average, 23 percent of their calories from animal fat—particularly from red meat and full-fat dairy products—are at a 33 percent greater risk of developing breast cancer than those women whose calorie intake from animal fat averages 12 percent, according to an eight-year study. Researchers looked at 90,000 women, ages 26 to 46, and reported in 2003 that the kind of fat, not the amount, was key. Non-hydrogenated vegetable fats, such as olive oil did not affect a woman's risk.

42 When faced with a flock of spent hens, an egg farmer knows he can induce production again by way of a forced molt—accomplished with starvation and water deprivation for periods of up to two weeks. No U.S. law prevents this, and in fact most hens are molted at least once in their lives. So cruel is the practice that even McDonald's couldn't stomach it. In 2000 the burger giant announced that it would not purchase eggs from suppliers that employ it.

43 Fish make vibratory sounds with various “calls” that researchers have identified as communicating alarm and aggravation. They possess fully formed nervous systems as well as complex social behaviors. They are also capable of learning complicated tasks. British researchers discovered in 2003 that fish have the cerebral mechanisms to feel pain. As one animal activist put it, “Fish are not merely vegetables that can swim.” It does seem all too convenient for commercial and sport fishers to declare that fish do not feel pain.

44 In any factory-farm operation, a percentage of the animals are sick or crippled. The industry calls them “downers.” Federal law does not protect them in any way. Downers are dealt with conveniently. Veterinary care is not wasted on them. If unable to walk, a downer is likely to be dragged by chain or pushed by a tractor or fork-

lift to slaughter. Such animals may be left to starve or freeze to death. The downer phenomenon would be drastically reduced if all stockyards refused to receive and process them.

45 Over the last century, midwestern farmers drained more than 105 million acres of wetlands, half of all that once were. In Iowa alone, prairies that once took up 80 percent of the state are down to .01 percent of their acreage. Wetlands and prairies allow native species to flourish, cleanse and filter pollutants from the water, and need no artificial fertilizers to exist. Monotonous stretches of non-ecological and polluting feed crops—mostly corn and soybeans—have taken their place.

46 Cattle thrive best on grass and hay. But to give beef its signature fatty marbling and to speed growth, ranchers fatten them with a high-grain diet, mostly corn. Without the use of antibiotics, the rich feed would cause abscesses to form on the livers of 75 percent of the animals. Such routine drug use raises the risk for the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria (see #94).

47 If you like the idea of being welcome at the places where your food is produced, don't count on your local poultry grower allowing you to see his birds anytime soon. Just barely holding onto life in their drugged-up, overbred, and chronically immunodeficient state, chickens and turkeys in today's factory systems must be protected from infection brought in from the outside. If even slightly lax in applying rigorous measures of “biosecurity,” farmers over wide geographic regions can be forced by a mass outbreak to destroy millions of birds at a time.

48 The livestock industry euphemistically refers to football-field-size outdoor manure pits as “lagoons.” But these cesspools of feces

and urine, which percolate with bacteria, wormy parasites, and viruses, essentially need to be defined as sites of hazardous industrial waste and regulated as such. Livestock waste can be 10 to 100 times as concentrated as human waste. The National Resources

Defense Council documented at least 1,000 manure spills and at least 200 fish kills in 10 states from 1995 to 1998.

49 Eating fish from coral reefs is like burning the Mona Lisa for kindling. Reefs are home to 25 percent of all known marine fish species. Yet a burgeoning demand from restaurants for live coral-reef fish has created huge incentives for divers to capture the fish with

cyanide. First they dissolve concentrated tablets of the poison into plastic squirt bottles. Once the prey is stunned, full immobilization tends not to take place until after the fish have had a chance to burrow back into the reef. Divers extract their catch with destructive tools. Some reefs are over a million years old. Yet 20 percent have been destroyed, in large part, by fishing in just the past two decades.

50 According to a European study of 400,000 people, a high-fiber diet can slash the risk of developing deadly cancers by as much as 40 percent. Fiber is also an answer to the obesity epidemic, because it has been proven to satiate. Moreover, if diabetics ate the recommended 50 grams of fiber per day, they would be able to control their blood-sugar levels significantly. Because only plant foods contain fiber, and meat has none, most Americans do not get enough of it to fend off disease.

51 North Carolina today is host to 10 million pigs—animals that individually produce two to four times the waste of a human. A survey found 1,000 abandoned waste pits in the state, the result of a plunge in pork prices in



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1998. A year later, Hurricane Floyd inundated some of the pits and sent waste into the Pamlico Sound. There it contaminated marine nurseries that replenish fish all along the eastern seaboard.

52 Animal agriculture routinely mutilates farmed animals for its own convenience. Debeaking, branding, castration, ear notching, wing and comb removal, dehorning, teeth clipping, and tail and toe docking are ever-present tasks on today's farm and ranch. Not veterinarians, but ranch and farm hands, who learn on the job, perform the surgeries and procedures using restraint only—no anesthesia.

53 Egg producers consider male chicks a liability. Chick sexers will divert them for expedient deaths. Humane methods are not required by any law. Most often, the little ones, chirping wildly for their mothers, are dumped in trash bins to die by crushing, suffocation, starvation, or exposure.

54 Though sometimes considered a panacea for our time, fish and shellfish farming, or aquaculture, is even more disruptive to the environment than fishing the seas. ■ The construction of pens along shorelines is a major reason for the decimation of mangrove forests, where fish reproduce. ■ Some fish will not breed in captivity, so fish farmers must acquire stock from the wild. These species will have less chance to replenish their numbers in nature. ■ Farmed fish often escape into the wild, corrupting the genetic purity of wild species and spreading disease at the same time. ■ Shrimp are fed on a mashed-up aquatic protein mix. So-called *biomass fishing*, used to derive the feed, is done with fine nets. (Normally, nets are wrought loosely to allow juvenile fish to escape and reproduce—thus assuring future stocks.) Biomass fishing extracts fish indiscriminately. The fish that are caught may be endangered or may be the food on which endangered fish live. ■ Huge amounts of nitrogenous waste emanate from fish farms, just as with all intensive animal agriculture.

55 The continued adoption of meat diets in developing nations

threatens to wreak financial disaster on fledgling economies, according to researchers in India. Without treatment infrastructures in place, the inevitable need for high-tech medical procedures puts undue strain on national coffers.

56 A report issued by the National Academy of Sciences in 2000 said that 60,000 children are born in the U.S. each year with neurological problems caused by mercury exposure. Environmental groups later concluded that the toxic threat of mercury in seafood was greater than previously thought, especially for children and pregnant women. Their warning advised that certain ocean fish, not just species of freshwater fish, should be avoided.

57 Hoof-and-mouth disease is rarely fatal for its victims but it might as well be a death sentence. When blisters form on hooves and lips and growth slows because of fever, fate dictates execution and incineration. In 2001, to save its export trade, Great Britain responded to an outbreak by destroying nearly 4 million mostly healthy cattle, sheep, and pigs at a cost of (U.S.)\$4.8 billion. There were only 2,030 known cases of the disease. The rest of the animals were done away with as buffers to contain the outbreak.

58 If you want to find a lawless industry, you don't have to look farther than the people who produce animals foods. In February 2000, *USA Today* broke a not-atypical story about an IBP slaughterhouse in Nebraska. The Justice Department was accusing it of emitted up to 1,800 pounds of hydrogen sulfide a day—18 times the level that is to be regulated. One expert described the poison's effects: "It's this progressive loss of brain," he explained. Also, H₂S corrodes the lungs and destroys a person's ability to breathe. Some of the townspeople walked around with tanks of oxygen, but most were just gagging. The chemical is similarly to blame for the fact that 70 percent of all workers employed in hog barns suffer from bronchitis. Not surprisingly, the *USA Today* story noted that IBP had a 20-year history of environmental misconduct.

Bacterial firewall: Many ingenious antidotes to filth

59 Genetic manipulation through single-trait selection has already created monsters as well as monstrous suffering for farmed animals. Cloning threatens to jack up that misery yet another notch, that is if this perfect monoculture of the most freakish, super-producing specimens takes hold. Cloning for production agriculture is, albeit, a ways off, if it ever becomes commercially viable. In the meantime, as the technique is perfected, cloned animals will suffer premature deaths and deformities, and their meat and milk are all but guaranteed to enter the human food supply.

60 In 1982, *E. coli* O157:H7 poisoning was rare. In 1999, the USDA revealed that the deadly strain may infect half of the cattle that are processed into ground beef. Today's feedlot cattle live in their own excrement, which is the carrier of the bug. Caked-on

manure will aerosol its way to edible portions at the slaughterhouse, where line speeds of 300 animals per hour cause mishaps. Ground beef today is made up of mixtures of hundreds or even a thousand animals, and the grinding process brings surface pathogens to the interior. In 2003 a university study reported that *E. coli* O157:H7 can now also be harbored in the interior of a solid piece of meat.

61 From the animal-feed breadbasket of the nation's midwest, massive amounts of fertilizer, pesticides, and manure runoff travel down the Mississippi River and end up in the Gulf of Mexico. This high-nutrient mix causes an ecological chain reaction that ultimately ends with microscopic organisms robbing the bottom of the ocean of oxygen. Marine life must relocate or die. Slow and nonmobile species will suffocate. The phenomenon is known as hypoxia. Scientists have dubbed affected areas "dead zones." Each summer the Gulf's dead zone grows to the size of a small U.S.

state. If an area so big and devoid of life occurred on land it would be considered catastrophic.

62 In what is still the most comprehensive study of diet and lifestyle ever made, the China Project found that the ingestion of animal protein, even a little, is linked to chronic disease. The findings from this grand epidemiological study are especially compelling because the data collected have allowed meaningful comparisons between populations with similar ge-



PHOTO BY PAMELA RICE

Factory broiler chickens on the Delmarva Peninsula.

netic backgrounds yet with nonhomogeneous diets and lifestyles.

63 One by one we're hearing of people downed by the very mysterious *new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*, a brain-eating affliction that experts say is the human version of *bovine spongiform encephalopathy* (BSE), or mad cow disease. At press time, the number of definite or probable nvCJD cases since 1986 (dead and alive) is 137—a relatively tiny number. The worldwide horror about the disease arises from the hideous nature of it. Over a prolonged and ghastly period, victims display involuntary movements and appear insane. The theory is that these people became infected with the brain-wasting disease after eating beef from cows who had been fed brain and nerve tissue of scrapie-infected sheep. Evidence confirming the transspecies link gives credence to the notion that the disease, which has an undetermined though apparently long incubation period, may someday become much more wide-

spread. Projections run as high as half a million human victims over time. Though feeding ruminant remains back to ruminants was outlawed in the U.S. in 1997, the imprudent practice of recycling animal parts back to livestock had been going on for decades.

64 Though considered more healthful than beef (not the best endorsement), fish is still a high-fat, high-calorie, fiberless food imbued with artery-clogging cholesterol. More than a quarter of the nation's lakes

post advisories warning consumers that fresh-caught fish may be contaminated (see #32 and #56). But according to one expert quoted in a 1992 *TIME* article, you could drink water from a polluted lake over a lifetime and not absorb the chemical contamination you would get from just one fish meal.

65 When researchers employed videocameras in the kitchens of 100 homes to watch residents prepare

designated pathogen-prone dishes, they were shocked to find the study participants undercooked the meat 42 percent of the time, risked cross-contamination of deadly pathogens to raw foods numerous times, and even put their young ones in danger—in one case returning a baby bottle to the mouth of a child after it had been dipped in raw egg. The meat industry claims it does not have to provide pathogen-free products, despite the fact that bacteria in animal foods have become increasingly deadly.

66 From farm to table, animal foods are a filthy business. Antidotes to the many pathogens they harbor are an ever-burgeoning industry. ■ On the farm, there are ionizing systems to reduce pathogen-laden dust. ■ In the slaughterhouse, there are steam, saline and acidic solutions, irradiation, ultrahigh pressure, competitive exclusion (which adds benign bacteria to crowd out the lethal kinds), electrolyzed water, liquid nitrogen, and ozone gas. ■ In the supermarket, detection tabs monitor food temperature. Other detection

Global Warning: Belching ruminants threaten climate

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devices include scat scanners and fiber-optic pathogen sensors that use vibrating quartz crystals. ■ In the kitchen, a silver-coated cutting board kills food bacteria. ■ Then, if you still get sick, you can take a drug to absorb the toxicity. What'll they think up next!

67 Cows tend to want to be milked—to unload their burden—and, when in heat, to receive a bull naturally. Still, according to the *Handbook of Livestock Management*, “Two or more people may be needed to force her into the [milking] parlor.” Similarly, the book notes, “A cow in heat may require two or more persons to move her from her group.” Once she is pried away, she will be tethered in a stall with a swinging gate behind her rear end allowing it access to a bull pen. Stock men designate the stall as the breeding rack. Animal activists call it the rape rack.

68 Today the poultry industry is a vertically integrated oligopoly, meaning that a few giant chicken companies control production, from chick hatching to grocery-store delivery. Squeezed into the arrangement is the contract grower.

The big company owns the birds; the grower supplies the farm hands and the factory confinement hardware. The situation often appears good to the grower when she signs her first contract and goes into debt by several hundred thousand dollars. It's not long before she finds that the multi-billion-dollar corporation she's dealing with is now calling all the shots, and that the debt she's incurred has reduced her to little better than indentured servitude. And now, as federal manure-handling regulations begin to be instituted, their burden is likely to fall solely on the growers, allowing the giant chicken conglomerates to slough off any responsibility.

69 About 22 percent of human related emissions of methane is re-

leased by the world's 1.2 billion belching ruminant livestock. This adds up to 80 million tons per year of a potent greenhouse gas associated with global warming. Meanwhile, ranchers contribute significantly to the clearing of the Amazon rainforests, which naturally release oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. At the current rate, these wondrous “lungs of the world” are projected to be gone in 80 years.

70 Up against the powerful meat industry, inspectors are more and more facing hostile and even violent working environments. A 2000 survey of 6 percent of the U.S. meat-inspection force revealed that almost half chose not to report animal feces, vomit, metal

shards, and other contaminants, weekly or monthly. A Freedom of Information Act finding revealed in 1998 that seven meat plants were allowed to operate, even after each had received more than a thousand citations.

71 Turkeys today have been selectively bred to such an extent that their huge breasts make it impossible for them to accomplish the sex act on their own. The industry

must artificially inseminate them. The job is nearly as dehumanizing for the workers—who must work rapidly for long hours and low wages—as it is deplorable for the tortured breeder birds, who are essentially raped once or twice a week for 12 to 16 months until they are sent to slaughter.

72 In most large commercial chicken slaughter plants the inverted heads of doomed birds are first plunged into an electrified brine bath. The electric current is set at a voltage just high enough to immobilize the birds and to promote bleedout without hemorrhage. The birds not only are sentient during slaughter but must also suffer the excruciating shock. The current serves to minimize inconvenient



Pamela Rice holds a sign in midtown Manhattan as part of a spirited demonstration of 25 activists. The target? Big Red, a \$100-a-plate “celebration” sponsored by 31 red-meat and red-wine restaurants and purveyors.

Okinawan Longevity: Not a chance in meaty U.S.

flailing that would interfere with the slaughter process.

73 Legally, the term *free-range* is virtually meaningless. The federal government has only the vague requirement that the animals from which such meat is derived have access to the outdoors. This could mean one small opening for thousands of birds. There is nothing in the law to prevent these “free-range” animals from receiving the same kind of cruel treatment imposed on any other factory-farmed animals. Moreover, *Consumer Reports* found free-range poultry actually more contaminated with salmonella and campylobacter than other poultry.

74 In 2000, New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation and its Department of Health released a flyer called “Eating Sport Fish.” The advice speaks for itself: No one should eat more than one meal of fish per week from any of the state’s fresh waters; chemical contaminants may be a problem; trim all fat; don’t consume cooking liquids. On the other hand, if you still want to enjoy the “fun” of sport fishing but don’t want to contaminate yourself, the flyer suggests “catch and release.” But don’t tear out the hook, “cut its leader.” Also avoid playing fish to exhaustion, the flyer advises.

75 Okinawa has the healthiest and longest-lived people in the world, boasting the highest percentage of people who live to 100 years old. The super seniors found there also tend to retain their mental keenness, and few need to live in nursing homes. Surprise: Okinawans eat very little food of animal origin, according to a 25-year study on the island. Genes could take some of the credit, although researchers believe that many of the centenarians would not have made it even into their 80s in the meat-laden U.S.

76 As markets for animal-based foods become more global, “carnivore conflicts” increasingly threaten international peace. In just the first month after a “mad cow” was discovered in Canada, the beef industry there estimated that import bans

cost it (U.S.)\$410 million. In 2001, hoof-and-mouth disease (see #57) instantly resulted in countries all over the world severing trade with the entire European Union, although the disease was mostly confined to England. Meanwhile, the hormone-in-beef dispute between the U.S. and the European Union continues to simmer, as do disputes about safety standards in meat that vary from one nation to another. In 1997 the United Nations reported that over 100 countries were involved in fishing disputes.

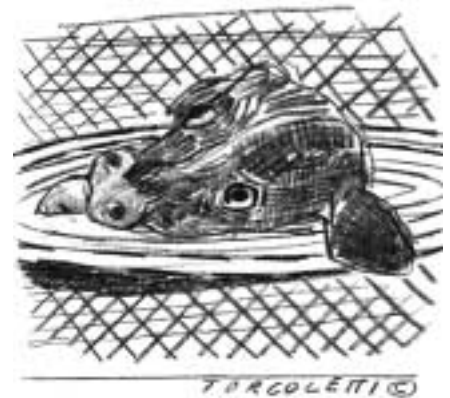
77 The population explosion should not be thought of exclusively in terms of people—not when the combined weight of the world’s 1.2 billion domesticated cattle exceeds that of the entire human population. Cattle disrupt ecosystems over half the world’s land mass. In the past half century alone, more than 60 percent of the world’s rangelands have been damaged by overgrazing, the most pervasive cause of desertification.

78 It is estimated that 40 to 50 percent of U.S. dairy cows are infected with mastitis at any one time. The painful udder infection is considered a man-made condition. Cows get it by improper care, poor milking procedures, overmilking, and improperly functioning milking machines. Add to the misery the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone *Bovine Somatotropin* (bST), which boosts milk yields: Its use is also linked to mastitis.

79 Animal foods are high in sodium, which causes the blood to retain water. They also cause plaque to build up in the arteries, narrowing the flow area for blood. Combine these phenomena and you have a recipe for a disease that afflicts about 50 million Americans: high blood pressure. You can take calcium channel blockers and diuretics to control it, but studies warn that you risk losing intellectual function if you do.

80 In the early twentieth century man learned how to extract nitrogen from the air, cheaply and in large quantities. The discovery has allowed 2 billion more people to inhabit

the Earth and given humans the luxury of feeding crops to livestock. Yet what gives the world abundance has, by way of runoff, poisoned waterways from the China countryside to the Ohio Valley. (Excess nitrogen causes algae to grow, robbing waterways of oxygen.) Even human sewage has become more nitrogen-rich, especially with the many more meat eaters that the world can now support. Waterways in North America and Europe have 20 times the nitrogen they did before the Industrial Revolution. To produce a gram of meat you need over 15 grams



of nitrogen; to produce a gram of wheat flour, only 3 grams.

81 Food animals are transported in all weather. When it is cold, animals may freeze right to the sides of trucks or become frozen in the urine and feces that build up on truck floors. In hot weather, heat stress kills many. Losses, however, are figured into the cost of doing business. According to swine specialist Kenneth B. Kephart, “Even with a zero death rate that might be associated with providing more space on a truck, the hogs that we save would not be enough to pay for the increased transportation costs of hauling fewer hogs on a load.”

82 When meat, fish, or poultry is barbecued, dripped fat over the open flame sends up plumes of smoke that coat the food with carcinogens. Other unhealthful chemicals are created just by extended cooking times. Chemists are telling meat eaters today to keep those grill times down. Even environmentalists are saying that restaurant grilling is a major source of

Exotic & Endangered: Conduit for deadly pandemic

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soot and smog. But you still need to cook your meat thoroughly: How else are you going to kill all of that deadly bacteria?

83 As a result of the introduction of cattle to this hemisphere, major forest fires in the American West occur today at the rate of one every three years, where earlier they may have occurred only once in a century. Historically, ranchers suppressed "cool" grass fires on the bovines' behalf, allowing tinderboxes of dense foliage to build up below taller trees. Factor in cheatgrass, a nonnative plant that would not have had the opportunity to take root in America without the overgrazing of cattle. This prolific weed provides dry, papery kindling in early summer, perfectly conducive to massive forest fires.

84 Negotiating truck on- and off-ramps can be a cruel challenge for large mammals bred for muscle without attendant skeletal strength. Broken bones are common. Likewise, the bones of egg-laying hens are especially fragile, weakened by a life of intense egg production. Industry research has revealed that by slaughter time, over one in four will have broken bones. And since chicken catchers—the laborers who gather up birds into transport cages—are poorly paid by the job, not the hour, they are invariably swift and brutal on the birds.

85 Clog up your arteries on a diet loaded on saturated animal fat year after year and you risk a heart attack or stroke. Of course, you can opt to avert these afflictions with a now-routine operation known as angioplasty, which may have to be performed repeatedly. The \$12,000 procedure is performed with a balloon-tipped catheter, which flattens plaque against artery walls, thus opening up passageways for blood flow. A whole-foods vegetarian diet—along with regular exercise—can, however, have the same effect.

86 More than half of the nation's seafood companies do not follow federal food-safety guidelines. Regulators from the Food and Drug Administration visit processors only once a year to oversee essentially voluntary com-

pany sanitation measures. Inspections often entail nothing more than an overview of the company's paperwork. Moreover, three-quarters of all fish consumed in the U.S. are imported. Only a few of the largest foreign processing plants are ever seen by U.S. inspectors.

87 Joel Fuhrman, M.D., who has cured hundreds of people from chronic diseases with no-nonsense vegetarian diet plans, says that it is impossible to devise a diet that conforms to the recommendations in the scientific literature about food and health if animal foods are included in significant quantities. Sure, meats contain nutrients, but plant foods give you more nutrition for your calorie.

88 Just as smokestack emissions result in acid rain, toxic fumes from decomposing livestock waste on factory farms become poisonous to fish when they are returned to the Earth via rainfall. The errant ammonia also ravages terrestrial ecosystems because plants that thrive on nitrogen are favored over species that don't. Fallout can degrade environments as far away as 300 miles.

89 Pursuing food from animals must be considered highly risky behavior, as humans more and more catch diseases from animals: Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Nipah virus, influenza, and now SARS can all be counted as examples. Exotic and often endangered animal cuisine, increasingly provides the conduit for a potentially deadly pandemic (see #35 and #28). In China, so-called wet markets display caged and often sickly creatures, such as cobras, civet cats, and anteaters, for consumers who want that "taste of the wild." In Africa, bush meat is all the rage and likely to wipe out species of our closest relatives, the larger primates. Contemporary air travel and trade promise to speed up the process.

90 Even if meat eaters are spared the big killers (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer) that can end life, they may be robbing themselves of good health just the same. A meat diet can also lead to nagging conditions and ailments. A whole-foods,

Feedlot Fish: Strange sex characteristics downstream

high-fiber vegetarian diet, full of grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, is just the ticket to ease arthritis pain, cool irritable-bowel disorders, mitigate common back pain, relieve cold and allergy symptoms, and lower risk for gallstones, kidney stones, and heartburn. And perhaps the most immediate relief that vegetarianism can bring is its ability to cure constipation!

91 Drains and sewers at slaughterhouses often become backed up with guts and coagulated blood. The pools that develop may rise to workers' ankles—whole heads of shackled animals may even be dragged through them. The muck may splash up onto the animals, spreading contamination.

92 As fishers find that their usual catch has been diminished by overfishing, they are likely to turn to species lower on the aquatic food chain to fill their nets. Knowingly or otherwise, people today are putting fish that would normally be food for endangered fish on their own dinner plates. If the trend continues, experts predict, marine food webs will collapse in 25 to 35 years. (see #4).

93 In nature, swine avoid filth and will trek and root over 9 miles in a night. Yet factory internment brings a breeding sow cold, strawless floors, noxious filth, deafening noise, and space barely bigger than her own body. This highly intelligent creature will be driven insane as she endures repeated pregnancies via artificial insemination. Her body will be pinned in place to expose her teats to her piglets. When her productive capacity wanes, she will be sent to slaughter.

94 It's the high-energy starch of corn that makes beef cattle grow to slaughter weight so fast—14 to 16 months today, versus 4 to 5 years early in the twentieth century (see #46). In fact, as food energy goes, cattle might as well be gaining their weight on Snickers bars. Feedlot manure is not only too rich with nitrogen to be used as fertilizer, it is so laced with hormones and other pharmaceuticals that fish downstream can be found with strange sexual characteristics.

95 Except for a single decade from time to time, the climate above America's Ogallala aquifer is bone-dry. Thanks to titanic amounts of water tapped from this ancient underground lake, however, for the last fifty years the land has been blanketed with thirsty feed grains. Farmers in some years have irrigated their land with more water than the annual flow of the Colorado River. Since this aquifer was originally the gift of a glacier in another age, today's rainfall has essentially no recharging effect. Consequently, the experts give only fifty years before this phenomenal creation of the natural world is gone for good.

96 A 25 percent decline in heart disease in Poland in the early 1990s coincided with the country's switch to a market economy that ended government subsidies to meat. A switch to primarily vegetable fats and the increased importation of fruit were also seen as factors in the decline, according to a report made by a team of multinational researchers. The authors of the report noted that the decline was "apparently without precedent in peacetime."

97 To produce foie gras, male ducks are force-fed 6 or 7 pounds of grain three times a day with an air-driven feeder tube. This torturous process goes on for 28 days until the ducks' livers, from which the pâté is made, bloat to 6 to 12 times their normal size. About 10 percent of the ducks don't make it to slaughter: They die when their stomachs burst.

98 Every year, 24,000 fishers worldwide die on the job, making fishing the most dangerous occupation in the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of

the U.N. In the U.S., a fisherman is 16 times as likely to die on the job as a policeman or fireman. On one day in 2003, more than 200 fishers were drowned after nearly 60 Bangladeshi fishing boats sank in the Bay of Bengal during a storm. As fish become increasingly scarce, thanks to unsustainable fishing, fishers must take more and more risks to get to the places where fish are.

99 Every day 600 people in the U.S. die so suddenly from cardiac arrest that they don't even make it to the hospital. Of the victims, 90 percent have two or more arteries narrowed by atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), a disease inexorably linked to a meat-based diet.

100 Vegetarians are believed to be less likely to suffer from certain cancers, stroke, and hardening of the arteries because their blood tends to contain high levels of salicylic acid, the active ingredient in aspirin. A Scottish study found vegetarian subjects to have levels of salicylic acid 12 times as high as meat- and fish-eating subjects. The chemical is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent found in abundance in fruits and vegetables.

101 A symposium of scientists predicted in the mid-nineties that energy shortages, exhausted land, scarce water, and a doubling population will impose more of a plant-based diet onto America's dinner tables by 2050. They acknowledged that this diet, born of scarcity, would "actually be a healthier

one." Surely the sooner we all learn to enjoy it the better!



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101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian



Photo by Ted Teisler

This document, which you now hold in your hands, is all about ethical choices. Once you are aware of these "reasons," your conscience will never be able to ignore them, even if you never become a vegetarian.

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The marketers behind animal-derived foods are calculated in their quest to hide the things that I reveal here. It is their mission to keep you disconnected from the realities behind your food. They are particularly intent on having you see animals as nothing more than abstractions.

If I've done my job, however, "101 Reasons" will reconnect you by making it clear that in exchange for a moment of personal pleasure, you not only bring misery to some corner of the world, your survival has nothing to do with it. There is, in

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But enough about deprivation. If you take my words to heart and adopt the vegetarian diet, you will discover that this way of life is in fact a wonderful creed to live by, which will actually open doors on foods, rather than shut them.

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—PAMELA RICE

History of the VivaVegie Society

The VivaVegie Society is a non-profit, 501(c)3, organization, dedicated to public education about vegetarianism. When the group was formed in 1991, its objective was vegetarian street advocacy—reaching out to New York City pedestrians with the group's hallmark publication, "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian." Then, as now,

founder Pamela Rice would wear a signboard—created by her sister, Julia Fauci—which reads "Ask Me Why I'm a Vegetarian."

Thanks to a gift from costume designer Janet Bloor, the group has enjoyed the use of a giant "pea pod" suit (see left) to draw interest from pedestrians. VivaVegie makes appearances at street events in New York City where it knows it can find great numbers of people. At the Easter Parade, 2002, VivaVegie achieved a record: handing out—to willing, inquisitive recipients—2,000 copies of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian" in only three hours.

VivaVegie regularly enjoys coverage of its activities—in the past, most notably from CNN, *The New York Times*, WNYC-Radio, *The New Yorker*, *Time Out*, and New York 1.

Since 1992, VivaVegie has published its own magazine, *The VivaVine*. And in 1999, the group opened a vegetarian center, which it maintained for four years.

Founder Pamela Rice is an expert on vegetarian issues. She gives lectures on government subsidies to the meat industry and the environmental impact of society's meat-centered diet. She has organized and emceed numerous vegetarian events in New York City.

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