

# 101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian

1996-EDITION

By Pamela Rice

**1** In the official words of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), The Animal Welfare Act, as passed by the US Congress, “specifically excludes animals raised for food or fiber.” With virtually no protection of farm animals (at either the federal, or on the state level), institutional cruelty and abuse have become the norm. In legal terms—which is where it counts in a for-profit environment—cruelty and abuse of farm animals is, for the most part, simply not against the law in the United States of America.

**2** Propped up with the aid of official government policy, farming in the US has been allowed, over the last generation, to grow into a grim corporate monstrosity, the scale of which is hard to comprehend, or even to be believed. Virtually all of the over 7 billion animals slaughtered for food in the US every year are today the product of a highly mechanized factory-like system, incorporating dangerous, unprecedented, and unsustainable methods of efficiency.

**3** Approximately 1.3 billion cattle populate the earth at any one time. They exist artificially in these vast numbers to satisfy the excessive human demand for the meat and by-products they provide. Their combined weight exceeds that of the entire human population. By sheer numbers, their consequent appetite for the world's resources, have made them a primary cause for the de-

struction of the environment. In the US, feedlot cattle yield one pound of meat for every 16 pounds of feed. (Within the 12-year period preceding 1992, the number of chickens worldwide increased 132% to 17.2 billion.)

**4** An animal-based diet is invariably high in cholesterol, animal protein (see #13), and saturated fat, which combine to raise the level of cholesterol in the blood—the warning signal for heart disease and stroke. Due mainly to the meat-centered diet of most Americans, these two diseases account for nearly 50% of all deaths in the US.

**5** It takes an average of 2,500 gallons of water to produce a single pound of meat. According to Newsweek, “The water that goes into a 1,000 pound steer could float a destroyer.” In contrast, it takes only 25 gallons of water to produce one pound of wheat.

**6** The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a group of 3,000 physicians, estimated the annual health care costs directly resulting from the nation's meat-centered diet to be between \$23.6 billion and \$61.4 billion—comparable to similar health cost estimates associated with cigarette smoking.

**7** Feeding the average meat-eating American requires 3-1/4 acres of land per year. Feeding a person who eats no food derived from animals requires only 1/6 acre per year. Recent marginal growth in animal protein consumption in increasingly affluent

developing countries has led to huge increases in the need for feed grains. In 1995, quite suddenly, China went from being an exporter to an importer of grain. World shortages are predicted as both populations and meat consumption rise together—an unsustainable combination. Early in 1996, the world was down to a 48-day supply of grain. According to Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute, the world “may have crossed a threshold where even the best efforts of governments to build stocks may not be enough.”

**8** Pigs in today's factory indoor facilities are likely to be stacked two and three decks high, each solitarily imprisoned in a bin—a cage just a bit larger than a pig's body. Those pigs who live through their stress and fright will adopt coping behaviors—from pacing, to repetitive rocking, to incessant biting of, or banging on, the bars. Industry blames the animals; it calls these behaviors “vices” (see #58).

**9** The passage of local laws favoring massive corporate pork operations in North Carolina recently propelled the state into the number two spot in national hog production, practically overnight. In terms of manure, the state might as well have grafted the human population of New York City onto its coastal plain, times two! Studies by North Carolina State University estimate that half of the some 2,500 open hog manure cesspools (euphemistically

termed “lagoons”), now needed as part of hog productions there, are leaking contaminants such as nitrate—a chemical linked to blue-baby syndrome—into the ground water. In the summer of 1995, at least five lagoons actually broke open, letting loose tens of millions of gallons of hog waste into rivers and on to neighboring farm lands. No mechanical method of retrieval exists that cleans contaminants from groundwater. Only nature is able to purify things again; and that could take several generations.

**10** Worldwide demand for fish, along with advances in fishing methods—sonar, drift-nets, floating refrigerated fish packing factories—is bringing ocean species, one after another, to the brink of extinction. In the Nov., '95 edition of *Scientific American*, Carl Safina writes, “For the past two decades, the fishing industry has had increasingly to face the result of extracting [fish] faster than fish populations [can] reproduce.” Research reveals that the intended cure—aquaculture (fish farming)—actually hastens the trend toward fish extinction, while disrupting delicate coastal ecosystems at the same time.

**11** Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), dubbed Mad Cow Disease because of the apparent mental torture cows display before death, is an always-fatal neuro-degenerative cattle disease caused by incredibly virulent and mysterious infectious proteins called prions. An outbreak in Great Britain had by early 1996 stricken around 160,000 cows. Circumstantial evidence pointed to the British practice of mixing the remains of sheep, including brains and bones, into

cows' feed as the cause of the outbreak. This apparent species-to-species inoculation is what makes all forms of spongiform encephalopathy (known to affect other mammals as well) so alarming. Are cow-eating humans the next victims? At press-time, evidence pointed to a certain strain of Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD) as being the human variant of spongiform encephalopathy. Grim predictions tell of up to 500,000 Britons a year falling to this disease due to their past consumption of BSE-infected cows. Prion-based diseases often have incubation periods in terms of decades, so the saga is sure to continue. In the meantime, since using the remains of dead animals in feed has been integral to agricultural operations in the US for years, BSE, or the chance of some future American version of it, is one more reason to think twice before biting into that char-broiled burger.

**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 will be concerned with the “cost of input and volume of output ... [T]he difference is that in animal factories the product is a living creature.”

**13** According to Dr. T. Colin Campbell, one of the key researchers involved with The China Study (the largest study of diet and health ever conducted), “In the next 10 to 15 years, one of the things you're bound to hear is that animal protein ... is one of the most toxic nutrients of all that can be considered.” Risk for disease

goes up dramatically when even a little animal protein is added to the diet.

**14** A scientist, reporting in the industry publication *Confinement*, calculated in 1976 that the planet's entire petroleum reserves would be exhausted in 13 years if the whole world were to take on the diet and technological methods of farming used in the US (see #7).

**15** Trees are being cut down at an alarming rate in the US, as well as around the world, for meat production. If tomorrow people in the US made a radical change away from their meat-centered diets, an area of land the size of all of Texas and most of Oklahoma could be returned to forest.

**16** So-called “redskins” are those chickens which—on the conveyer belts to their deaths—missed not only the brine-filled electrified stunning trough, but the knife that was to cut their throats. Their deaths occurred in the scald tank where feathers are loosened before plucking. Industry throws aside piles of them every day.

**17** Chicken feed is routinely laced with antibiotics, sulfa drugs and other chemical substances. Only by maintaining the birds on drugs, a practice which began about mid-century, is agribusiness allowed the luxury and efficiency of massive flocks and intensive confinement. Today's medicated feed also pumps out market weight birds in half the time from two-thirds the feed of 50 years ago (see #45).

**18** Meat-centered diets are linked to many types of cancer, most notably cancer of the colon, breast, cervix, uterus, ovary, prostate, and lung.

**19** It is estimated that livestock production accounts for twice the amount of pollution in the US as that produced by industrial sources. Livestock in the US produce 20 times the excrement of the entire US population. Since farm animals today spend much or all of their lives in factory sheds or feedlots, their waste no longer serves to fertilize pastures a little at a time. One poultry researcher, according to United Poultry Concerns literature, explains: "A one-million-hen complex will produce 125 tons of wet manure a day." To responsibly store, disperse, or degrade this amount of animal waste is simply not possible. Much of the waste inevitably is flushed into rivers and streams. Becoming a vegetarian does more to clean up our nation's water than any other single action.

**20** According to the Family Food Protection Act of 1995 (S.515), Section 2: "meat and meat food products, and poultry and poultry products, contaminated with pathogenic bacteria are a leading cause of foodborne illness." The bill also states that foodborne illnesses take approximately 9,000 lives, and cause between 6.5 and 80 million illnesses, each year. According to USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, 500 deaths a year are attributable to E.coli contamination in beef.

**21** In the words of John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America*, a dairy cow living in today's modern milk factory "is bred, fed, medicated, inseminated and manipulated to a single purpose—maximum milk production at minimum cost." She lives with an unnaturally swelled up and sensitive udder, is likely to be kept inside a stall her entire life, is milked

up to 3 times a day, and is kept pregnant nearly all of her life with her young taken from her almost immediately after birth. "Contented" is the characteristic most often attributed to the cow. However, cows in today's factories have to be fed tranquilizers to calm their nerves.

**22** Calorie for calorie, spinach has 14 times the iron of sirloin steak. Iron requires vitamin C for absorption. Animal foods contain no vitamin C.

**23** Steers are castrated to make them more docile. Castration also promotes a fatter, more profitable, animal. Castration can be done radically, all at once, or over a longer period of time with a ring, causing the testicles to eventually fall away. Drugs are an integral part of today's agriculture, but in the US for this procedure, anesthetics are rarely used.

**24** By concealing a hidden camera on his body, an employee of a Rapid City, SD slaughterhouse was able to obtain a videotape for CBS-TV's 48 Hours. The tape showed how a plant with over 300 employees that processes an average of 50 cows per hour with only 4 USDA inspectors "keeps the line moving." It showed workers taking dangerous shortcuts in cleaning up fluid that had broken out of an abscess from a piece of chuck beef, a severe violation of USDA rules that would require an extended clean-up procedure. Comments from a seasoned USDA veterinarian: "I can say from my experience of nine years and in talking to other food inspectors around the country, this probably goes on on a daily basis."

**25** The National Cancer Research Institute found that

women who eat meat on a daily basis are almost 4 times more likely to get breast cancer than those women who eat little or no meat.

**26** It is not unusual in today's factory henhouse for 4 or 5 hens to be squeezed into a 12" x 18" cage. It is standard for poultry producers to de-beak chicks with hot-knife machines—not a painless procedure. De-beaking is industry's solution to birds, driven to crazed pecking, inflicting harm upon the fellow "product."

**27** At the expense of their own hungry populations, producers in poor countries will choose to export luxury foods such as meat for sale to rich countries. Meat is much more profitable than subsistence crops such as rice, beans and vegetables.

**28** Methane is one of the four greenhouse gasses that contributes to the environmental trend known as global warming. The 1.3 billion cattle in the world produce one fifth of all the methane emitted into the atmosphere.

**29** Meat contains no essential nutrients that cannot be obtained directly from plant sources. By cycling grain through livestock, we lose 90% of the protein, 96% of the calories, all of its carbohydrates, and all of its nutritional fiber.

**30** Acid rain, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), oil spills ... heard it all? Enter: "dead zones." Every summer an area devoid of oxygen develops at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1994, the area was nearly the size of the state of New Jersey. The dead zone, according to an environmental policy analyst at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, "is the end result of

an ecological chain reaction set in motion by ... runoff that ends up in the Mississippi.” The primary cause?—nutrient pollution from animal agriculture.

**31** Two hundred years ago, American cropland had topsoil that averaged 21 inches in depth. Today, only about 6 inches remain. Every year in the US an area the size of Connecticut is lost to topsoil erosion—85% of this erosion is associated with livestock production.

**32** Fish are living magnets for toxic chemicals. According to Consumer Reports (Feb., '92), a notable incidence of unacceptable levels of PCBs and mercury were found in certain species of fish that were tested (see #85). Ingesting PCBs is considered a chief cause of reduced sperm count among American men—70% of what it was 30 years ago.

**33** Farm animals in our factory sheds today are supposed to have their drug intakes stopped at proscribed intervals prior to slaughter to avoid residues ending up in the final consumer product. Withdrawal schedules, however, are not always properly followed. With so many different drugs, the regimens can be complex, with written instructions often not very coherent. Due to the mechanized nature of today's conveyor belt feeding systems, troughs of old, drug-laden feed may not get cleaned away when withdrawal should begin. In addition, since farm animals are often fed animal waste as well as animal flesh, drug and pesticide residues continue to be recycled (see #101).

**34** Harvey Diamond, co-author of the *Fit for Life* books, writes, “the list of ailments

that can be linked to dairy products is so extensive there is hardly a problem it doesn't at least contribute to.” Consumption of cow's milk is linked to colitis, dysfunctions of the thyroid gland, and headaches—even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Lou Gehrig's disease and Multiple Sclerosis. Parent advisor Dr. Benjamin Spock has said that cow's milk, “causes internal blood loss, allergies and indigestion, and contributes to some cases of childhood diabetes.” Dr. Spock even linked milk to the risk for anemia in babies. The common cold, as well as allergies to dust, cats and pollen, are more likely to go away when cow's milk is taken out of the diet.

**35** The human intestine is not designed to digest meat. While a natural carnivore's intestine is relatively short (3 times the length of its body) and smooth inside, a human's intestine is proportionally 4 times longer than that of a carnivore, deeply twisted and puckered. Having no fiber of its own, meat quite arduously inches itself through the long convoluted human digestive tract. Before it gets to the end it has become putrid and toxic to the body (see #18 re: colon cancer, #72).

**36** Ancestors to the modern bovine evolved in greener, wetter climes than that of our American West—in ecosystems much better able to withstand the abuse that cattle grazing can inflict. According to the General Accounting Office, livestock raising is the primary reason for the elimination or endangerment of plant species in the nation. Western ecosystems are further disrupted with US government help. The so-called Animal Damage Control Program, at the cost of \$22 million per year

in Western regions alone, officially acts to exterminate predators to cattle—a sizable perk for the ranchers, some of whom are far from needy.

**37** The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and the Food and Nutrition Board recommend eating a mere 2.5% to 6% of one's calories as protein. Today's average American excessively eats 40% of his or her calories as protein—28% from animal protein, and 12% from non-animal protein (see #13).

**38** About 98% of all milk in the US is produced using factory methods. Part of factory life for a cow includes dangerous levels of drugs administered to boost milk output. Due to selective breeding, cows already produce at least two and a half times the amount of milk of yesterday's pastured counterpart. Then, as of February, 1994, farmers were given the go-ahead to use the genetically engineered hormone Bovine Somatotropin (BST) on their herds. Designed to boost milk output by an additional 15 percent, milk per cow statistics are already showing the effects nationwide. A cow naturally has at least a 20-year lifespan; today's stressed out cows, however, become hamburger in less than 4 years, as a cow's ability to give milk quickly diminishes under modern conditions.

**39** Today, cattlemen enjoy grazing privileges on public lands at rates of less than a third they'd pay to private landowners. In addition, the federal government pays for maintenance of these public lands. Estimated total annual cost to taxpayers, either directly, or in lost revenues, comes to roughly \$50-150 million. Also, the federal “emergency feed program,”

designed to help ranchers during drought years, costs taxpayers an average of \$26 million every year, drought or not.

**40** Factory-farmed animals contain as much as 30 times more saturated fat than yesterday's free-range, pasture-raised animals.

**41** Nearly half the fish tested in a 6-month investigation by Consumers Union were found to be contaminated by bacteria from human or animal feces, suspected to be the result of poor sanitation practices at one or more points along the fish handling process (see #85).

**42** In today's factory henhouse, certain lighting schedules will be employed to maintain an illusion of eternal spring—a technique that keeps egg production up to speed. When production drops off, the birds may be put through a brutal forced molt, induced by days of starvation and darkness. Some, and often many, of the birds will inevitably die in the process.

**43** Meat contains approximately 14 times more pesticides than plant foods; dairy products contain 5-1/2 times more pesticides than plant foods.

**44** Cruelty can be a regular occurrence at stockyards. Sick and crippled farm animals, called "downers," may lie suffering for days until dragged by chain to slaughter. The downer phenomenon would drastically be reduced if all stockyards refused to allow ranchers to make any money on them. (Slaughter of a living creature affords a rancher a better price than "dead-on-arrival" meat.)

**45** Of all the antibiotics administered in the US to people or farm animals, farm ani-

mals receive over 95% of them—not so much to treat infection, but to make the animals grow faster on less feed (see #17, #101).

**46** Meat industry apologists claim that livestock do not compete with humans for edible food because they live on forage humans cannot eat. In fact, 70% of all the grain produced in the US is fed to livestock.

**47** Animal health on the farm of old came from exercise, sunlight and freedom to peck or root in the soil. Today, animals are packed indoors and kept alive with drugs and vitamin injections. The battle against bacteria in the factory farm shed is a constant concern. Cages are automatically misted with insecticides. Chickens are even fed chemicals which stay active in their droppings, a method designed to kill the larvae of flies that harbor in piles of manure.

**48** The great Ogallala Aquifer, which supplies the nation's breadbasket with water, is being pumped dry, primarily due to agribusiness growing grain to feed livestock. Spanning over 8 midwestern states, this natural blessing from the last Ice Age may be gone within several decades.

**49** The agony of life for food animals is only surpassed by the terror of death at the hands of the butcher. Neat and tidy plastic wrapped packages of hamburger and T-bone steak mask the horror of cattle being sent to slaughter: the nauseating stench, the frenetic mooing, the waiting chute, the prolonged electric prodding of terrified victims (who often are allowed to see others who have gone before them), the panic in the killing stall, the stunning and hoisting, the torrent of

gushing blood, and the piercing whine of saw blades cutting flesh and bone. Few people ever see the piles of severed heads, hooves, milk sacks and udders. Indeed, one trip to a slaughterhouse often is enough to transform anyone into a vegetarian.

**50** A US Congressional committee report, published in 1985, charged that there were 20-30 thousand animal drugs in use at the time, and that as many as 90% had not been approved by the FDA.

**51** The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine came out in 1991 with the "New Four Food Groups." They are: fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes (beans and peas). Meat, poultry, and fish were termed "optional" foods, not considered necessary for health. Referring to the USDA's "Food Pyramid," Marion Nestle, the chair of New York University's Department of Nutrition, said: "Why do we have a milk group? Because we have a National Dairy Council. Why do we have a meat group? Because we have an extremely powerful meat lobby."

**52** With every one of their natural instincts restricted and unfulfilled, pigs in today's factories will take to "tail-biting." Insane, bored and frustrated, these naturally intelligent and playful creatures may be driven to gnawing neurotically on one another's pig tails and hind ends. If not prevented, a mauled pig may die from an attack. Mauled pigs cannot be sold, so they become a problem to the producer. The answer? Pig tails are routinely amputated, and pigs are kept in total darkness except for feeding time.

**53** With an annual injury and illness incidence rate of

23.2 per 100 full-time workers, poultry processing is ranked as the nation's 11th most dangerous industry, nearly twice that of coal mining and construction. The high illness incidence exists because workers actually contract diseases from the sick animals in their midst. Workers in the meat packing industry suffer injuries in the workplace at 10 times the national average, primarily due to damage to tendons and nerves from repeating the same motion up to 8,000 times an hour (see #64).

**54** In egg factories all over the country, male chicks are weeded out and disposed of by "chick-pullers." Over half a million chicks a day are stuffed en masse into plastic bags where they are crushed and suffocated. Or they may be ground up while still alive to be fed to livestock or used as fertilizer.

**55** Author and director of The Institute of Nutrition, Education and Research, Dr. Michael Klaper, writes, "The pricetag on the supermarket chuck steak does not include irreplaceable topsoil; yet future generations will pay dearly." (see #99, 31)

**56** At least 95% of all toxic chemical residues in the American diet come from meat, fish, dairy products and eggs. This is because such residues are stored in fat. Each step up the food chain serves to amplify the consumption of toxins. Fish, especially, have very long food chains. Avoiding fish to avoid toxic residue may not be a sufficient preventative measure, however, as one third of the world's fish catch is fed to livestock. Due to the excessive use of pesticides, insecticides and petrochemical fertilizers on cropland, the injection of hor-

mones and antibiotics into farm animals, and the abundance of PCBs and mercury in our oceans, there is toxicity in the flesh of all animals people eat. More than ever, it is wise to eat "low on the food chain," with plant food being the lowest and safest.

**57** Research by best-selling author Dr. Dean Ornish found that a vegetarian diet, when combined with certain other lifestyle changes, can cause heart disease to be halted and even reversed. A diet without meat can also help prevent diabetes, relieve the symptoms of diabetes and can even end the need for insulin treatments.

**58** A major part of the horror of a pig or chicken farm is the noise. Inside a hog barn of a thousand animals, workers wear ear protection against the din of squealing animals banging against their metal cages. To hear what this sounds like, call: 919-549-5100 x4647.

**59** What we have today is a "meat industrial complex." A press release promoting a \$2,000 publication produced by a publisher of high-tech research reports reads like a page out of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Entitled "US Food-Animal Health Product Markets: Consolidation of End-Users Spurs Biotech Development," the report intends to inform readers about emerging markets in support products to the new assembly-line world of corporate farms. The press release stated: "Management sophistication is growing along with the size of food-animal production facilities. Computers have introduced highly technical breeding, immunization and other maintenance schedules into the barnyard. ...

New products will use genetic engineering to increase milk and meat production, produce improved animals and improve vaccines. ... End users are demanding species-specific products and broad-spectrum ones that attack multiple problems with single doses."

**60** The digestive system of the natural carnivore is designed for flesh. The human digestion system is designed for plant food. From the inadequate amount of acidity in human saliva, bile in the human liver and acid in the human stomach, to the relatively small size of the human kidneys, it is clear that the natural diet for humans is vegetarian.

**61** A male calf born to a cow—what does the farmer do with this useless by-product of the dairy industry? After the calf's birth, if he is not immediately slaughtered, more than likely he'll be taken to a veal factory. There, he will be locked up in a stall and chained by his head to prevent him from turning around for his entire life. He'll be fed a special diet without iron or roughage. He will be injected with antibiotics and hormones to keep him alive and to make him grow. He will be 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 so called "crate" veal will still fetch the premium price it always did when such flesh came only from a baby calf, just a lot more of it.

**62** Agricultural engineers have compared the energy costs of producing poultry, pork and other meats with the energy

costs of producing a number of plant foods. It was found that even the least efficient plant food was nearly 10 times as efficient in returning food energy as the most energy efficient animal food.

**63** Unlike natural carnivores who can eat large quantities of saturated fat without developing clogged arteries, humans, as well as herbivores, predictably develop atherosclerosis with excessive saturated fat in their diets (see #4, #100).

**64** Referring to the book *The Jungle*, Jeremy Rifkin, author of *Beyond Beef*, writes, "Little has changed in the meat packing industry since Upton Sinclair's telling account." Plant conditions are so intolerable and dangerous that even exploited workers with few choices for other employment leave the industry. Along with the high turnover, the array of languages spoken by immigrant employees, serves to minimize meat inspection, the job done more and more by meat packer employees and less and less by USDA inspectors.

**65** Food originating from animal sources, including milk, unlike most foods derived from plants, makes the blood acidic. When this happens, the body withdraws calcium from the bones to make the blood more alkaline. This process balances the pH of the blood, but consequently becomes one of the factors which leads to osteoporosis.

**66** Bacteria in meat and poultry processing is a constant concern, and a very big business. The proliferation of antibacterial rinses (chlorine and saline) and sprays (for cow udders), as well as steam pasteurization (beef), ammonia neutralizers (poultry litter)

and contaminant vacuums—just to name a few, all serve to allow the meat and poultry industries the luxury of cheap and filthy operations. A USDA-approved pilot test of a chemical de-hairing process went into effect in early 1996. The procedure—which will give stunned cattle a burning, bacteri-eliminating shave before slaughter—will probably prove effective in the pilot test. In practice, however, the chance for a percentage of still-sentient animals being chemically burned will most certainly exist.

**67** Foodborne illness related to meat and poultry cost Americans \$2-4 billion each year in medical expenses and lost wages.

**68** Family farmers who sold their chickens independently to processors on the open market only 35 years ago operate nearly exclusively today as "contract growers." If he hasn't yet been squeezed out completely, "Old MacDonald" currently holds a contract with a company in which he agrees to provide his facility and labor to grow company birds, on company feed, to company specifications. He can hardly get out of debt after his investment in the necessary hardware of today's intensive confinement systems. The demise of the family farmer, which is complete in the chicken business, is now well under way in the pork business.

**69** Are humans naturally carnivorous? Generally speaking, it is not common for humans to stalk a wild animal, catch it by sinking claws into its body, bite its neck, and feel comfort in the taste of fresh warm blood and uncooked flesh.

**70** Farming today is fully concentrated in the hands of a few. In the US, eight firms control half (approximately 3.5 billion birds) of the poultry industry, and four meat packers control 90 percent of meat processing. The so-called Freedom to Farm bill, which came into law in early 1996, schedules \$36 billion to be given over 7 years, in essence, to the wealthiest of America's agribusinessmen—regardless of prices in the market, nor with requirements to farm anything at all. The law will ultimately act to shake out small and moderate sized farms once and for all.

**71** A method used to crank up pork production is to take piglets away from their mothers soon after birth. The forced weaning allows the sow to end her lactating period so she can become pregnant again. To prevent piglet death due to the emotional loss, a mechanical teat may serve as a substitute. Tending to the mother's emotional loss has no economic value and so is given no consideration.

**72** The high incidence of constipation, hemorrhoids, hiatal hernias, diverticulosis, spastic colon, and appendicitis in humans corresponds very closely to today's widespread adoption of high fat, low fiber, meat-centered diets.

**73** Our dwindling supply of good water is directly tied to meat consumption. Over half of the total amount of water consumed in the US goes to irrigate land growing feed and fodder for livestock.

**74** Since so much fossil fuel is needed to produce it, beef could be considered a petroleum product. With factory housing, irri-

gation, trucking, and refrigeration, as well as petrochemical fertilizer production requiring vast amounts of energy, approximately one gallon of gasoline goes into every pound of grain-fed beef.

**75** The Allied naval blockade during World War I of German-occupied territories in 1917 forced Denmark most dramatically into nationwide vegetarianism. The death rate there from disease during the period dropped by 34%.

**76** It is deceptive to measure fat as the percentage of physical weight of foods as the milk industry does. Since milk is mostly just water, by weight the fat comes to only 3% to 3.7%. Fat content by calories, however, is 50%!

**77** Chicken feathers, guts, and waste water, which normally need to be discarded during processing, are routinely “recycled” back to the layer and broiler houses as feed. Industry experts believe that along with unclean slaughtering and processing techniques, this forced cannibalism is leading to the rampant salmonella epidemic in poultry plants (see #11).

**78** Even though organic farming and integrated pest management are viable farming methods, agribusiness continues to use pesticides. Pesticides may take hundreds of years to degrade. Despite huge increases in pesticide use, crop losses due to pests are actually 20% higher today than they were mid-century.

**79** A 1978 study found blood pressure levels of vegetarian Seventh Day Adventists to be significantly lower than blood pressure levels of meat-eating Mormons.

**80** In a March, 1984 cover story, Time magazine reported findings regarding cholesterol and heart disease. It noted that “in regions where ... meat is scarce, cardiovascular disease is unknown.” (See #100.)

**81** There are no laws to regulate transport of animals for food consumption, specifically via truck—so this is the meat industry’s preferred method of transport. That many of the animals are dead after their brutal trip is calculated as a cost of doing business (see #84).

**82** More soot is emitted from grills in LA’s fast food restaurants than from all of the city’s busses.

**83** The American farmer, as our storybook image of him suggests, simply no longer exists. Today, the person who actually gets close to farm animals is just a hired hand of agribusiness. In the broiler or layer shed of tens of thousands of birds, for instance, the main job to attend to is culling dead birds from cages. Through careful calculations, conditions are maintained intense enough to keep costs down, but not so intense that mortality rates cut into profits.

**84** Due to growing commercial specialization in the several developmental stages of cattle production, and due to producers seeking the best price at every step of the animals’ maturing process, your hamburger may have come from a steer that suffered relocation between Mexico and the US. Feeder cattle are shipped to Mexico to graze; Mexican cattle are shipped to the US to be fattened in US feedlots; and US cattle are transported to Mexico to be slaughtered and processed. The

USDA and the financial community hail this animal shuffling as a development which shows how the various “cattle sectors” can “complement” each other with “free trade.” It’s not likely that the steers who suffer the trip would agree (see #81).

**85** Late in 1995, the FDA put into place new rules pertaining to the regulation of fish processing. The rules require the FDA to inspect each of the nation’s 6,000 processing plants, at most once per year and as little as once every three years, at which time a few samples may be taken for later evaluation. Individual fish will continue to not be inspected by any US agency. Though every fish processor will be required to keep ongoing records of safety procedures peculiar to its operation, no regulations whatsoever will pertain to the 100,000 fishing vessels that bring seafood to market. The new system is considered an improvement—from the standpoint of the consumer—over the previous one (see #32, #41).

**86** According to John Robbins’ book, *Diet for a New America*, “The world’s cattle alone, not to mention pigs and chickens, consume a quantity of food equal to the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people.” Hundreds of millions of tons of grain go to animals while only 5 million tons of grain could adequately feed the approximately 15 million children throughout the world who starve to death every year.

**87** The positive health benefits a person may think he or she gets from eating fish can better be achieved through a whole foods vegetarian diet. Fish lacks carbohydrates, fiber, and vitamin C. Also, fish is high in animal



protein, which is hard on the kidneys and high in fat, which increases the risk of cancer and gall bladder disease.

**88**The USDA does not inspect for trichinosis in pork. It is widely known that pork must be thoroughly cooked before eating. Still, about 4% of Americans have trichinella worms in their muscles which can periodically cause flu-like symptoms and even death.

**89**Hens are starved for 30 hours before their slaughter. Any food given during this time would not be converted into flesh.

**90**According to William Castelli, M.D., Director of The Framingham Heart Study, vegetarians outlive other people by about six years.

**91**A person sitting down to a meal of animal foods will consume, in the aggregate, much more than just the animal product on his or her plate. The disposal of male chicks (see #54), predator control for ranchers (see #36), fish fed to livestock (see #56), controlled levels of animal mortalities (see #83), and even forced cannibalism (see #77) in today's agriculture add up to animal-per-plate ratios higher than what may meet the eye. So, due to today's modern methods of agriculture, phantom animals are an automatic ingredient in the recipe of death at dinner time when animal foods mar the menu.

**92**According to the United Nations, "slight, moderate or severe desertification" affects 29% of the Earth's landmass. The destruction is largely due to the demands of livestock raising around the world. With two-thirds of the earth's population subsist-

ing primarily on a vegetarian diet, it is the meat-eating rich countries, such as the US, which are driving this trend with their imports of beef. To supply demand, Third World exporters drive indigenous populations, who have tilled the soil sustainably for generations, off their land. The uprooted rural refugees are currently flooding overburdened urban centers all around the world.

**93**Trade in animal food puts needless pressure on world governments straining to get along. For instance, the US allows the implantation of hormones into beef cattle. For this reason, since the late 1980s, the European Union has banned all imports of US beef. With the advent of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the USDA has vowed to step up pressure on the EU to force it to accept US beef. The controversy could possibly even have to be settled by the Geneva-based World Trade Organization's dispute settlement body. A similar scenario between the US and Russia with respect to poultry was being played out at press-time. Intense pressure from the poultry industry was put on the USDA and even Vice President Gore to intervene when all poultry imports were rejected outright by Russia due to safety concerns.

**94**More than a third of the veal calves tested in a 1995 undercover investigation done by the Humane Farming Association came up positive for clenbuterol—an acutely toxic and illegal animal drug. Subsequently it was found that many veal producers in the US had knowingly purchased and used the drug for their herds over a five-year period. This in itself is frightening; but worse is the

revelation that the FDA and the USDA worked to protect the veal industry from scandal by maintaining a coverup about the clenbuterol use of which it became aware.

**95**In a seven-year study of washed-up marine debris at Padre Island National Seashore (located on the southeastern coast of Texas), the US Department of the Interior found that the shrimp-ing industry was far and away the biggest contributor of ocean litter.

**96**Poultry processors are not required by the USDA to check for salmonella bacteria in poultry. A 1978 USDA rule still in effect accepts a "chill tank" bath for bird carcasses as a sufficient counter-measure. Dunking a chicken carcass through this bath, now known as the "fecal soup," has been likened to a rinse in your toilet. According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, 25% of all chicken sold in the US carry the salmonella bacteria—a conservative estimate. The USDA says that salmonella poisoning may be responsible for as many as 4 million illnesses and 3 thousand deaths per year.

**97**To produce foie gras, a duck or goose is force-fed huge quantities of grain three times a day with a feeder tube. This torturous process goes on for 28 days before slaughter, causing stomachs sometimes to burst. Livers, diseased and swollen to several times normal size by this process, are considered a delicacy which sell for about \$12 an ounce. About 7,000 tons are produced worldwide per year.

**98**Though milk gives temporary relief to ulcer sufferers because of the calcium content, acid production in the stomach

eventually results and the stomach lining is eroded even more.

**99**The direct and hidden costs of soil erosion and runoff in the US, mostly attributable to cattle and feed crop production, is estimated at \$44 billion a year. Each pound of feedlot beef can be equated with 35 pounds of eroded topsoil.

**100**According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, cardiovascular diseases caused 954,000 deaths (42% of all deaths) in 1993. Total direct cost to sufferers added up to \$126.4 billion. Seventy-two per-

cent of the deaths were due to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), a disease strongly linked to a meat-based diet (see #63, 80).

**101**The treatment of human disease with antibiotics is showing signs of being hampered by the flagrant overuse of antibiotics fed and injected into the animals people eat. Meat-eaters are exacerbating the trend toward human immunity to medicinal drugs just by eating cow's milk, hamburgers and chicken. This ultimately affects everyone, vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike.

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To obtain references, send SASE (self-addressed-stamped envelope) to:

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