

# Joyful, Compassionate EATING



## Honoring God's Creation

A plant-based diet helps preserve our health and serves God by avoiding the animal cruelty, environmental damage, and human misery associated with factory farms.

# God's Animals

Jesus said that God feeds the birds of the air (Matt. 6:26) and does not forget sparrows (Luke 12:6). In their own ways, God's creatures demonstrate a full range of feelings – curiosity, pleasure, playfulness, love, joy, fear, anger, pain, and suffering:

- Cows play and enjoy each other's company.<sup>1</sup>
- Pigs are intelligent and curious, and they form bonds with one another and other species.<sup>2</sup>
- Chickens have distinct personalities and can learn their names.<sup>3</sup>
- People eat animals who, in many ways, are just like the animals we love as pets.<sup>4</sup>



- Mother cows grieve for days or weeks after their calves are taken from them so humans can drink their milk.<sup>5</sup>
- Today's factory farmers show no concern about individual animals. They embrace any practice that increases profit, regardless of how much animal pain, suffering, and death it inflicts.<sup>6</sup>
- Living in miserable conditions that frustrate nearly every instinctive desire they have, factory-farmed animals never have a good day.

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"Veal" calves can't turn around for their entire lives of 18-20 weeks.  
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And yet, in the United States, nearly all farmed animals live in intensively crowded, dirty, smelly, windowless factory farms, where animals suffer greatly. For example:

- Castration, debeaking, and other painful mutilations are routinely done without pain-relief.
- Egg-laying hens are crammed into cages so small they can't spread their wings.
- Pregnant pigs spend months in cages so small they can't turn around.

## What animal agribusiness doesn't want you to know

Because compassionate people oppose cruelty to animals, the animal agribusiness industry has been doing its best to hide the truth from the public. Animal agribusinesses and their friends in many state legislatures have passed "ag-gag" laws.

***They shall not hurt  
or destroy in all my holy  
mountain.***

***Isaiah 11:9***



These laws make it a crime to photograph or otherwise expose how God's animals are routinely abused on factory farms.



### What does the Bible say about meat?

The Bible does not prohibit eating meat in all circumstances, but most Christians today have ready access to a wide variety of healthful plant foods. The Bible depicts a plant-based diet as God's ideal. In Eden, all creatures lived peacefully, and God told humans to consume only plant foods (Gen. 1:29–31).

Isaiah 11:6–9 prophesied a return to this harmonious world. For a discussion of biblical passages related to meat eating, see [All-Creatures.org/replies.htm](http://All-Creatures.org/replies.htm).

### Does God care for animals?

Genesis 1:21–22 relates that, after God created animals, God blessed them and called them “good.” In Genesis 2:18–19, God made animals as Adam's helpers and companions. The Bible repeatedly describes God's concern for animals and forbids cruelty.<sup>7</sup> Jesus said “Blessed are the merciful” (Matt. 5:7), yet no mercy is shown for nearly all farmed animals. Indeed, can we profess faith that God is good if we believe that God approves of cruelty to animals? Should not the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) – treat others as you would like others to treat you – guide how we treat animals?

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Hog Farm Management advises, “Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory.”

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***When we consume the products of factory farming, we are telling factory farmers: I approve. Do it again.***

***Rev. Frank L. Hoffman***

to a dog or cat, are perfectly legal when done to a pig or chicken. At the slaughterhouse, “humane slaughter” laws are weak and poorly enforced, and they exempt the slaughter of birds.

## **Don’t laws protect farmed animals?**

In the United States and many other countries, “standard procedures” on farms are all legal, regardless of the pain and suffering they cause. Practices such as bodily mutilations, which would warrant felony animal cruelty charges if done

## **What about “humane meat”?**

It is never humane to kill a young, healthy animal. People should know that terms like “farm fresh” have no meaning, and “organic” and “local” do not mean “humane.” “Free range” can and usually does involve intensive confinement and painful mutilations. And, in general, small farms use the same or very similar practices of large corporate animal factories.

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Cattle ranching and feed crops for farmed animals are largely responsible for deforestation in the Amazon.

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## Why do people eat meat?

For many, it is the taste, texture, or convenience of flesh. However, as Christians, we must ask whether such desires reflect Christian values. Is eating meat the right thing to do?

## The Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet

**Your Health - your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)**

Eating right and exercising help us feel more vigorous and alert, as well as attain and maintain a healthy weight. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, America's largest organization of food and



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Vegan ultramarathon champion Scott Jurek and other top athletes credit their plant-based diets. See [ScottJurek.com](http://ScottJurek.com).

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nutrition professionals, notes that well-balanced vegetarian and vegan diets reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and other conditions.<sup>8</sup> The Mayo Clinic Health Letter similarly promotes a plant-based diet.<sup>9</sup>

Our bodies, including our teeth and digestive system, are best suited for plant foods.<sup>10</sup> For other important plant-based nutrition information, see [ChristianVeg.org/nutrition.htm](http://ChristianVeg.org/nutrition.htm).

## Our Planet - being a good steward

In Genesis 2:15, God instructed Adam to “till” and “keep” the Garden of Eden, and we may see caring for God’s Creation as our sacred task. Humanity’s appetite for flesh is depleting essential land, water, and energy resources. Further, worldwide livestock production might be the leading cause of climate change.<sup>11,12</sup> The most important thing people can do to reduce their contribution to environmental damage is to reduce their use of animal products.

***Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.***

**Luke 6:36**





## Hunger and Food Security

Close to a billion people suffer from malnutrition, killing tens of millions annually. Meanwhile animals raised for slaughter consume 37% of the world's harvested grains; in the United States the figure is 66%.

Only a fraction of what chickens, pigs, and other animals eat turns into edible flesh – most is needed to simply keep them alive or to grow body parts that people don't eat. Consequently, farmed animals consume much more food than they produce. Converting plant foods to meat wastes 80-90% of the protein, 89-99% of the calories, and all the fiber.<sup>13</sup>

Because land, water, and other resources are limited, the world can support many more vegans than meat eaters. As worldwide demand for meat has grown, the world's poor have become increasingly unable to afford food of any kind.

## Antibiotic-Resistant Germs

Farmers routinely add antibiotics to their feed because stressed, overcrowded animals are vulnerable to infections. This promotes the development of antibiotic-resistant "superbugs" that threaten humanity.

## How Can I Take the First Step?

If you're thinking of moving toward a plant-based diet, good for you! And, this is a lot easier than most people think. There are many tasty, convenient, and nutritious non-animal foods. You will feel better as you gain energy and shed unwanted pounds. Local vegetarian and vegan groups are everywhere, offering social events, encouragement, support, and advice.<sup>14</sup>

***Blessed are  
the merciful.***

***Matthew 5:7***

## Footnotes

Go to [ChristianVeg.org/footnotes/htm](http://ChristianVeg.org/footnotes/htm).





## What to Eat?

It can take a few weeks to fully appreciate the rich flavors of whole foods such as beans, grains, and nuts, after eating high fat, high salt, highly processed foods for years.

Nearly all grocery stores have vegan and vegetarian main course options. Similarly, restaurants of all types routinely offer plant-based meals – just ask!



## Substitution Guide

You can continue to prepare your favorite dishes and avoid animal products by making simple substitutions:

**Meat** There are many options, such as tempeh, tofu, or vegetarian meats (such as Beyond Meat, Gardein, and Boca) in the frozen food section.

**Dairy** Use milks, cheeses, creams, yogurts, and frozen desserts made from soy, rice, coconut, or nuts. Nutritional yeast adds a cheesy flavor to foods. Replace butter with olive oil or trans-fat-free margarine.

**Eggs** In baking recipes, use egg substitutes.<sup>15</sup>







*Peace by William Strutt*

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## Resources

Christian Vegetarian Association:  
[ChristianVeg.org](http://ChristianVeg.org)

Contact:  
[cvaemail1@gmail.com](mailto:cvaemail1@gmail.com)

Nutrition guide:  
[ChristianVeg.org/Nutrition.htm](http://ChristianVeg.org/Nutrition.htm)

Recipes:  
[All-Creatures.org/Recipes.html](http://All-Creatures.org/Recipes.html)

Simple meal ideas:  
[ChristianVeg.org/SimpleMeals.htm](http://ChristianVeg.org/SimpleMeals.htm)

Restaurant Guide:  
[HappyCow.net](http://HappyCow.net)

Ten Weeks to Vegan:  
[www.10weeks.org](http://www.10weeks.org)

*...and what does the  
Lord require of you but  
to do justice, and to love  
kindness, and to walk  
humbly with your God?*

***Micah, 6:8***

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