

STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY!

Animals raised for meat, eggs, and dairy are the victims of profit-driven industries. These animals feel pain and have their own interests and intrinsic value, yet each year worldwide over 55 billion land animals and over one trillion fish are exploited and killed for food.

Ninety percent of all land animals killed for food in the U.S. are birds. Chickens, turkeys, and ducks raised for meat live crowded by the thousands in filthy warehouses filled with their own excrement where they grow to slaughter weight in a fraction of their natural lifespan. The large number of birds makes a pecking order impossible, so fighting and cannibalism are common. Birds are bred to grow so large so fast that their hearts, lungs, and legs cannot keep up, causing heart attacks and crippling leg deformities. Many deformed and injured birds die of starvation or dehydration because they cannot get to food or water. For transport to slaughter, chickens are roughly thrown into wire cages, causing broken wings and legs. At slaughterhouses they are dumped out of the cages like gravel from a dump truck, shackled by their legs, and have their throats slit. Birds who aren't killed by the blade are scalded to death in the feather removal tank.

Most hens used for egg laying spend their lives in cages too small for them to spread even one wing. To reduce loss from stress-induced fighting, their sensitive beaks are cut off with a hot blade. Their feathers and feet are often worn raw by the cage walls and floors. They live in tiered (battery) cages or crowded warehouses that reek of ammonia and excrement. When no longer profitable as layers, the hens (be they free-range or caged) are sent to slaughter. Chicks are hatched to replace the slaughtered hens. The males, unable to lay eggs and of the wrong strain to be profitable for meat, are considered trash and are killed when they are just one day old by being ground up alive or tied up in garbage bags to suffocate. Baby male chicks have even been found alive in hatchery dumpsters, left to die of exposure and starvation. Males hatched to replace slaughtered hens at free-range, cage-free, and organic egg farms meet the same fate, as they also cannot lay eggs and thus have no value to the industry.

Most cows used for dairy live the majority of their lives in concrete stalls and attached to milking machines that pump them for milk 2 or 3 times a day. Cows are repeatedly impregnated to make them produce the maximum amount of milk. Once a year, female cows are either "serviced" by a bull or artificially inseminated on what the dairy industry commonly refers to as a "rape rack." Calves are stolen from their mothers just days after birth, causing great distress to both mother and baby. One female calf will replace her mom in the milking herd; the other calves are usually sold to be raised for veal. On veal farms calves are chained by the neck in small stalls or crates and fed an iron-deficient formula to make their flesh pale, making them weak and anemic. After only 3 to 4 months they are slaughtered for veal. Without the supply of calves from the dairy industry, the veal industry would not be possible. After 4 to 6 pregnancies the mother cows are slaughtered, though cows have a natural lifespan of over 20 years. Many cows are so sick after 4 to 6 years of commercial milk production that they cannot even walk. These "downers" are literally dragged or pushed into slaughterhouses by forklifts or simply left to die. Much of the hamburger sold in the U.S. is made from slaughtered "dairy" cows. Most of this is true for organic milk as well.

Cows raised for meat live in muddy, feces-filled enclosures called feedlots. Most pigs are raised in sheds. They live their lives in crates stacked on top of or next to one another, or in crowded group stalls. During pregnancy, mother ("breeding") pigs are confined in gestation crates that do not allow them to turn around or lie down comfortably. Nursing mothers are kept in cramped farrowing crates, which allow almost no movement and prevent them from nurturing their piglets. Piglets' and calves' tails are cut off and cows' horns are cut or burned off. Pigs also have their teeth pulled out or ground off to reduce injuries from fighting caused by stress or boredom. Male pigs, cows, and sheep are castrated without anesthesia, and cows' flesh is painfully burned with an orange-hot metal brand. Pigs often suffer from pneumonia and burned or infected sinuses caused by the ammonia from their own urine. Cows, pigs, lambs, and other mammals killed for meat are packed into transport trucks for often long trips to slaughterhouses. In winter, animals may freeze to the sides of the trucks; in summer, they may die from dehydration or heat stroke. At slaughterhouses most cows and pigs are shot in the head with a captive bolt gun. Some pigs and most sheep are shackled by their hind legs, hung upside down, have their throats slit or are stabbed with a knife and are left to bleed to death. If the gun or blade doesn't kill them, mammals are skinned and dismembered while still alive.

Fish, proven to feel pain in similar ways to humans, are dragged from the sea and suffocate on ship decks. Decompression can cause their eyes to pop out of their heads and their swim bladders to be pushed out of their mouths. They are pulled from the water into a foreign and terrifying environment. They suffocate on the deck of a ship or are crushed to death by their fellow fish packed in ice in the ship's cargo hold. Forty percent of fish are now raised in ocean or land-based pens called fish farms. They are forced to spend their entire lives in cramped, filthy enclosures where most of the fish suffer from parasitic infections, diseases, or debilitating injuries. To increase profits, fish on farms are severely crowded, causing them to run into each other and the sides of the enclosures, resulting in painful sores and injuries to their fins. Some fish, especially farmed fish and larger wild-caught species, are skinned and dismembered while still fully conscious.

HELP THE PLANET!

Raising animals for food—whether it's for their flesh, milk, or eggs—is an assault on the Earth. Millions of acres of rainforests are burned every year to create grazing land for animals raised for meat, much of which is imported into the U.S. Over half of the water used in the U.S. goes towards raising animals for food, and the waste from factory farming and fish farms pollutes more water sources than all other industries combined. According to a U.N. report, animal agriculture contributes more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere than all forms of transportation combined. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, going vegan is one of the best things you can do to help the planet. So if you care about the Earth and want to be a true environmentalist with the smallest possible ecological footprint, you must be vegan.

TAKE ACTION!

Go Vegan! Living a vegan lifestyle is the best thing you can do to help animals. On average a person switching from the standard American diet to a vegan diet will prevent the exploitation and killing of over 100 animals every year!

If you are not already vegan, please work to cut all meat, egg, and dairy products from your diet and remove leather, wool, fur, and down from your wardrobe. If you don't feel you can go vegan overnight, try reducing your animal product consumption by a set amount every week. Going vegan in a way that lasts is more important than going completely vegan right away. It's easier than ever to be vegan and the longer you are vegan the more you learn and the easier it becomes. Don't give up; most vegans don't get it right the first time, and we all make mistakes. What is important is that you stick with it!

Parents making it difficult? Visit afa-online.org/literature.html and print out the "Tips for Parents" flyer to share with them, or request a free Vegan Starter Pack, which includes that flyer and other tips, resources, and recipes. We also have several veg starter kits in PDF format on our website that contain vegan recipes, health and nutrition information, suggestions for alternatives to meat and dairy products, and more.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

--Visit afa-online.org to request a free vegan starter pack!

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--Read the PDF versions of all our flyers at afa-online.org/literature.html. Post links to the flyers online, attach them to e-mails, and print them out to distribute on school campuses, at concerts and festivals, or in other busy locations.

--Join or start an animal rights group. Contact us for advice and resources.

--Post information and write about animal exploitation and cruelty and other issues related to veganism in blogs, on message boards, and on social networking websites.

