

CVVUK NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK newsletter, Spring 2026



Website: <http://www.christian-vegetariansvegans.org.uk/>

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. As always we would be pleased to receive any of the following from our supporters for future newsletters:

- interesting (short) articles;
- news of any local activities you have been involved in to promote the values of CVVUK;
- information about events that might interest other CVVUK supporters; and
- miscellaneous items such as book reviews, recipes and information about useful resources

If you have anything that you would like to contribute to the next newsletter please e-mail it to us at sampsons@dsl.pipex.com by the end of June 2026.

Miriam and Philip Sampson

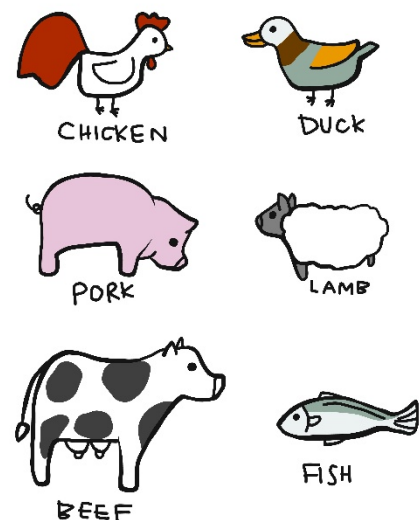
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Students choose vegetarian options when pictures of animals are displayed next to meat

Reducing meat consumption is a priority for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the climate crisis, as well as reducing the suffering of animals. Past research reveals that reminders of meat's animal origins can reduce self-reported willingness to consume meat. Less clear is whether such reminders affect natural, real-world behaviour.

The results have been published this month of a piece of research carried out in a British university, where images of living animals were placed alongside the corresponding meat-based dishes on the student cafeteria menu (e.g., a cow next to beef bolognese, a pig next to pork gyros, and a chicken next to sweet and sour chicken). Unobtrusive sales data were collected across two periods: a baseline period and an intervention period with a matched menu (without photos).



(Image licensed by Shutterstock)

Analysis of 3674 meal sales revealed a significant increase in vegetarian choices, with **the odds of selecting a vegetarian meal 22% higher during the intervention** (vs. baseline) period. Effects were consistent across meat types. The research showed that even simple, neutral, and realistic images of living animals—not necessarily graphic or sad ones—were enough to influence behaviour.

These findings provide behavioural evidence that visual cues linking meat to its animal origins can influence real-world food choices. Consumers frequently dissociate meat from its animal origin. Seeing the animal directly makes it harder to maintain this psychological distance, reducing the desirability of the meat.

The full report can be found here: [science direct research report](#).

Amsterdam becomes first capital city to ban meat advertising

The Dutch capital of Amsterdam has become the first capital city in the world to ban the advertising of meat in public spaces to support the shift to healthier and emissions-lowering diets.

The ban will kick in from 1 May and was introduced under a bill that was jointly tabled by the Party for the Animals and the Green/Left party. It was approved by 27 of the 45 seats on Amsterdam's municipal council.



(Image from 'Black Bikes, Amsterdam')

In 2022, the Dutch town of Haarlem became the first non-capital city in the world to restrict advertising of meat. After that, seven other Dutch cities started work on similar bans with Amsterdam being the third to actually implement one. Research shows that a majority of Dutch consumers are in favour of this shift towards a more plant-based way of eating.

Read more here: <https://proveg.org/press-release/amsterdam-to-become-first-capital-city-to-ban-meat-advertising/>

Sentience and Suffering of Fish

Brenda Ryder writes:

I have heard people say, 'I am a vegetarian, I don't eat meat, I only eat fish,' The term for this is 'Pescatarian' and while we must be encouraging of every move away from the consumption of animal flesh, it is time to reappraise the ethics of eating fish. Accumulating research and evidence require this. Look on the CIWF Website 'Rethink Fish' for an account of studies showing the impressive capacities of fish and the immense suffering inflicted in rendering fish as food products. Following are a few brief examples.

Sentience

Intelligence: Experiments have shown that fish have good memories and can learn from experience. Small Wrasse species have surpassed many large primates in solving food puzzles. These tiny fish are among the few species of animals who can recognise themselves in a mirror. Some fish use tools, e.g. Tusk fish use rocks to crush clam shells to extract the meat.

Social lives: It has become increasingly evident that fish are curious and engage in complex social behaviours as well as play. Groupers not only co-operate among themselves but work with eels and octopuses in hunting strategies and then they share the food.

Emotions: Fish and humans show similar physiological and behavioural changes associated with emotions. There is evidence of learned avoidance of places where they experienced electric shocks. Studies have demonstrated that fish kept in miserable living conditions become depressed and pessimistic. Fish kept in good conditions are optimistic about new situations. This type of research is not condoned but it provides evidence of the emotional life of fish.

Pain: Some people think it is acceptable to eat fish because they believe fish don't feel pain. Although the brains of fish are organised differently from mammal brains, studies have shown that they can detect and feel pain and indeed their behavioural response to pain mirrors our own suffering.

Suffering

Rearing, Capture and Slaughter of Fish: All these practices involve much suffering. Most fish farms are concerned with profit and pay scant regard to the welfare of the fish. The fish are kept in confined and barren conditions where the water becomes dirty and polluted, leading to disease, infection and parasites. Ailments are treated with chemicals and antibiotics which are bad for the environment, the consumer and the fish.

Slaughter: Compassion in World Farming states that most fish to be used in the food market have been killed inhumanely. Fish may be killed after prolonged asphyxiation after being pulled out of the water, they may be gutted alive or thrown into 'ice slurries' which slows down the process of dying. Undercover investigations have shown fish in torment, gasping for breath as they are packed in boxes. The World Organisation for Animal Health has called for this cruel practice to end. There are more humane methods of slaughter; stunning before killing is generally practiced on British and Norwegian fish farms. But without mandatory standards most factory farms choose not to buy the equipment needed for a quick death.

Did Jesus eat fish?

It is evident that fishing and consuming fish was a way of life for the disciples and for Jesus. Our Lord was also fully man, born into a time, place and culture and He lived in a poor society without the plentiful food choices available to us. In our affluent society it is impossible to reconcile the suffering inflicted on farmed and captured fish with the Christian message of compassion and mercy - especially when it is absolutely unnecessary.

Diet: Some people believe fish is a uniquely valuable food, rich in Omega fats and iodine. Not only are these available in vegan food sources but fish can contain harmful chemicals as well. The Radio 4 Podcast 'Toxic' explains that the worst dietary source of PFAS (called 'forever chemicals' because they tend to linger in the environment and even in our bodies!) is fish, especially large fish which eat smaller fish. In a US study there was a higher level of PFAS in a small portion of fish than in what one would get from drinking water containing PFAS over the course of a month.

Vegan Omega-3 fats can be found in ground linseed, hemp seeds, chia seeds and walnuts. (You can add a tablespoon of ground linseed to your breakfast cereal or to soups and stews, as well as baking.)

Vegan Omega-6 fats can be found in walnuts, sunflower and pumpkin seeds, and some vegetable oils including sunflower and corn.

Iodine is added to many plant milks. Check the label for iodine or potassium iodide. Seaweed foods: sushi, nori, wakame and kelp contain iodine. The Vegan Society guidelines is not to exceed one portion of sea vegetables a week because the iodine content may vary widely. Alternatively you can take kelp tablet supplements at the recommended dose.

Vegan 'fish' products: Many commercial ones are available and they are getting better. These are some that have been brought to our attention:

Loma Linda Tuno - Thai Sweet Chilli
 Squeaky Bean! Tuna style flakes
 Marigold Soya Bean Tunah
 Niro Banana Blossom fish alternative
 NISH fish sauce alternative
 Thai Taste vegan 'fish' sauce

There are also recipes online to make your own fish substitutes.

Honest food labelling

Compassion in World Farming is currently running a campaign for honest food labelling of meat and dairy products.



Meat and dairy labels can be very **misleading**. Many show idyllic images of farmyard animals in picturesque fields, accompanied by encouraging phrases like '**farm fresh**' or '**all natural**'. But, as we know, what often lies behind these cheerful scenes is shocking.

People deserve to know how animals are really farmed. While labelling was mentioned in the recent Government Animal Welfare Strategy, there were no clear next steps proposed. **Please email Defra** and call for Honest Labelling.

You can take action here: <https://action.ciwf.org.uk/page/187387/action/2>

Vegan chef proposes incentive for plant based eating

Renowned chef, Alexis Gauthier, who runs three acclaimed vegan restaurants in London, has written to the Prime Minister and the Energy Secretary to propose a new carbon credit system to incentivize a move away from meat and towards plant-based eating.

He recently wrote on his Substack:

I read that Tesla makes most of its profit from selling carbon credits to other auto manufacturers, I am not talking about a few hundred bucks here and there - I am talking billions of dollars. In fact Tesla has a big chunk of its business model in the world of offsetting other companies' vices.

Not to complain, not to provoke—but to propose something practical. A policy idea grounded in data, aligned with climate goals, and already mirrored in other industries. A system that could actually make a measurable difference.

In February 2025, I sent a detailed letter outlining a green credit system for the food industry. The idea was simple. Vegan and plant-based restaurants—because of their significantly lower environmental impact—would earn green credits. Those credits could then be sold to restaurants serving high-impact ingredients like meat and dairy. A market-driven mechanism that rewards sustainability, encourages innovation, and gradually shifts the system without forcing it overnight.

This isn't radical thinking. It follows the same logic as carbon credit systems already used elsewhere. It aligns financial incentives with environmental reality. It gives businesses a reason to move in the right direction, not through punishment, but through opportunity.

The proposal was not based on ideology. It was based on evidence. The environmental cost of animal agriculture is well documented—its role in emissions, deforestation, water use, and land inefficiency is widely recognised. This is not fringe science. It is established, peer-reviewed, and increasingly difficult to ignore.

Sadly, over a year later, Chef Gauthier has received no reply. He contrasts this with a letter he wrote a few years ago to Boris Johnson, when he was Prime Minister, outlining the cruelties involved in producing foie gras. Then he received a reply very promptly!

He has now posted a video on Instagram, drawing attention to this idea and the lack of response from the government. Perhaps readers of this newsletter might like to add their voices to Chef Gauthier's campaign!

New Book on Animal Ethics

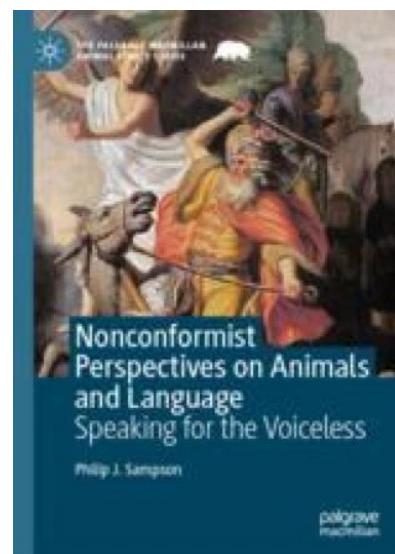
One of your editors, Philip Sampson, has just published a new book on animal ethics with Springer Nature.

Nonconformist perspectives on Animals and language - Speaking for the Voiceless explores how 17th century nonconformist Christian discourse gave animals a voice in public life, challenging dominant anthropocentric narratives.

Drawing on historical, theological, and ethical perspectives, Philip traces a subjugated language of resistance that once shaped institutions such as the RSPCA and continues to offer incisive critiques of contemporary practices including hunting, warfare, animal experimentation, and meat consumption.

Envisioning creation as song, the book reimagines human-animal relations as co-creative and mutually vulnerable, offering a compelling alternative to both instrumentalist and zoocentric frameworks. Engaging with biblical texts and historical voices, it uncovers a rich tradition of animal advocacy rooted in kindness, sacrifice, and restoration.

Although it is priced as a library addition, individual chapters can be purchase for download. More details here: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-032-12158-5>



The CreatureKind Course

About 8 years ago the CreatureKind Course for churches was launched by Prof. David Clough in the UK and his CreatureKind colleagues in Eastern University in the USA. Your editors ran it twice in 2019, once as a Lent course and then again later in the year because the original course was oversubscribed.



This year we are running it again as a Lent course, in our new church, and we wanted to remind other CVVUK supporters of this valuable resource that could help your Christian friends to engage with what the Bible says about how we should treat animals. We have seven participants in our course at the moment; one other vegan, one vegetarian and all the others are currently meat eaters, though we hope that will change. Each evening starts with a plant-based meal, which everyone has enjoyed, and we have already been asked for the recipes!

All the materials for the course can be downloaded from the CreatureKind website, and they include videos, handouts, Bible references and a theological text to reflect on each week.

Sadly, after several years of innovative activity, the CreatureKind initiative has had to dismiss its employees and cut back on its work because it lost a major source of funding last year, but the materials are still available online here: <https://becreaturekind.org/take-action/six-week-course/>

Recipe

Pesto Quinoa and White Bean Bake with Spring Vegetables

Pesto quinoa and white bean bake with spring veg is a light (but still hearty) main course that's naturally vegan and gluten-free.

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES MINS
 COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES MINS
 TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR HR 5 MINUTES MINS
 SERVINGS 4 - 6



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil plus extra, divided
- 1 medium shallot, small dice
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 ¾ cups cooked white beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk
- ½ cup vegan pesto
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- pinch of chili flakes (optional)
- ¾ lb asparagus, tough ends trimmed
- 3-4 radishes
- chopped fresh dill, parsley, or chives (or a combination), for serving
- vegan “parmesan” sprinkle (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Lightly grease an 8×8 inch (or an 11×7) baking dish with olive oil and set aside. Set an additional small baking sheet nearby.
2. In a large saucepan, heat 1 ½ teaspoons of the olive oil. Add the diced shallot and saute until beginning to turn translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and saute until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
3. Add the quinoa to the saucepan and stir to coat in the oil. Add the vegetable stock and stir. Bring the quinoa to a boil. Once boiling, lower the heat to a simmer. Simmer until almost all of the liquid is absorbed, about 13-15 minutes.
4. Take the quinoa off the heat and stir in the white beans, non-dairy milk, pesto, lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste, and the chili flakes (if using). Once combined, transfer the

quinoa mixture to the prepared baking dish. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, or until slightly browned on the edges and slightly firm.

5. While the pesto quinoa is baking, cut the asparagus into 2-inch lengths. Place the chopped asparagus on the separate small baking sheet. Toss the asparagus with the remaining olive oil, salt, and pepper. Bake the asparagus alongside the pesto quinoa bake for about 15 minutes, or until just-tender.

6. While asparagus is baking, thinly slice the radishes and chop some herbs for garnish.

7. Serve the pesto quinoa and white beans bake with the roasted asparagus on top, sliced radishes, and chopped herbs. Enjoy immediately!

Author: [Laura Wright](#)

<https://thefirstmess.com/2020/05/13/pesto-quinoa-white-bean-bake-vegan-recipe/>

And finally.....

An extract from a sermon preached by Professor David Clough on Psalm 104.

O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures
~ Psalm 104:24

Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the Lord!
~ Psalm 104:35



(Detail from 'The Peaceable Kingdom' by Hicks)

As you are well aware, this call to praise of the God who is creator and sustainer of all is by no means unique to Psalm 104. Other psalms call the whole creation to praise God in response to God's grace. Elsewhere in the the Wisdom literature, in the closing chapters of Job, in Proverbs, and in Ecclesiastes, we find similar themes. The creation narratives in Genesis 1-2 shares much of this vision. The prophets lament the plight of humans and other animals subjected to God's judgement, and look forward to the time of the Messiah when all creatures will dwell peaceably on God's holy mountain. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that not a single sparrow is forgotten by God and that birds and lilies are good models for Christian discipleship. Paul laments the groaning of all creatures subjected to the labour pains of the new creation, and looks forward to the time when all creatures will be released into the freedom of the children of God. And the opening of the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians express a faith in Jesus Christ that is nothing short of cosmic: making peace and gathering up all things in heaven and earth. Psalm 104 is therefore a particular instance of a vision of God's gracious dealings with creatures that is a key theme of biblical texts.

Later Christian traditions also celebrated God's providence and care for creaturely life. We find particularly striking examples in the stories told of the saints. We may smile at these stories, but we should not only smile: they are attempts to envision what it might look like for true holiness to be expressed in the way we live with other animals.

And how do we respond? In the first place, we will want to rejoice with the Psalmist in God's astonishing creative and wondrous work: the magnificent beauty and diversity of creaturely life of which we are but one small part, the intricacy of the particular mode of life of every creature, the abundant grace of God in provision for all creatures, the vision that all this life, compromised in its flourishing in these days, will be gathered up in the fullness of time in a new creation in which every creature will attain fullness of life. Amen to that.

But there must be a second note to our response, one that recognises that the ways in which we treat other creatures is at fundamental odds with this theological vision. I recently came across a statistic that summed this up more starkly than anything I had seen before. Over time, we have taken more and more of God's world under our control, including the lives of other creatures. By 1900, the biomass of all domesticated animals exceeded the biomass of all wild land mammals by three and a half times. That means by then we had already taken habitat away from wild animals on a tremendous scale, depriving them of an environment and replacing them with domesticated animals given life only to provide us with food. But in the last 100 years, we have gone much further. We increased the number of domesticated animals by four times, which was a major factor in reducing the population of wild land animals by half, and meant that by 2000 the biomass of domesticated animals exceeded that of wild land mammals by 25 times. It's no better in the sea: during the same period we reduced the population of fish in the oceans by 90%.

The big picture is that we have not been content to live as one among many of God's creatures, as pictured in Psalm 104. Instead, we have attempted to take a god-like power over their lives, monopolizing the earth to provide for our greedy wants, subjecting our fellow creatures to the horrible cruelties of industrialised agriculture and aquaculture which have also resulted in a mass extinction of wild animal species.

Reading Psalm 104 in the knowledge that this has how we have responded to the magnificent diversity of God's creaturely life is deeply uncomfortable. How can we praise God for providing a place for the storks to build their nests when we have since destroyed it? How can we praise God for an open hand to provide food for every creature when we have so frequently acted in ways that take their food away? We worship a God who creates and provides; in response we have destroyed and deprived. It seems to me that we are in danger of reading the Psalm in bad faith, and in so doing failing to recognize that our actions place us among the wicked that the Psalmist condemns.

Now thank God, we worship a God whose nature is always to have mercy, and who through Jesus Christ offers us today and every day the chance to confess our sins, turn from our sinful ways, repent, receive forgiveness, and begin again in newness of life. Thanks be to God!

You can read the whole sermon here, where David explores the implications of genuine repentance for the way animals have been treated, for diet:

<https://christiansforsocialaction.org/resource/finding-place-world/>

David Clough is Professor of Theology and Applied Sciences at the University of Aberdeen. He was previously Professor in Theological Ethics at the University of Chester. He is the Co-Founder and Co-President of CreatureKind and founder of DefaultVeg. He is also a Methodist local preacher.