

# CVVUK NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK newsletter, Spring 2019

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](mailto:sampsons@dsl.pipex.com) by the end of May 2019

**Miriam and Philip Sampson**

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## Vegans centre stage!

'Veganuary' made a big impact this year. We noticed an item about vegans, or a vegan recipe, almost every day in our newspaper during January. The organisers report that over 250,000 people signed up this year, more than the total of the previous four years combined! They also found that 6 in 10 people who take the "Veganuary pledge" say they plan to stay vegan. Chris Packham, the TV presenter who became a Veganuary ambassador this year is one of them.



Supermarkets are now stocking many more vegan foods and food outlets are also catering much better for vegans. Of course this is good news for vegetarians as well. Perhaps the item that received the most publicity this year was the Greggs vegan 'sausage roll' which was flying off the shelves! Many PETA-UK supporters had called for Greggs to offer a vegan item and this product is the result. A lot of chain restaurants have also started offering more vegan options, and popular Italian chains Zizzi, Pizza Express and Ask, now all have vegan pizza options with non-dairy 'cheese' toppings. It's also been reported that specialist vegan cooking courses have recently been launched to enable upmarket restaurants to start offering vegan dishes on a par with the rest

of their fine dining menus: [Restaurants run out of vegan chefs](#) This all suggests that a vegan diet is moving from the margins into the mainstream.

However this development has been meeting with some opposition. In October last year the editor of Waitrose's Food Magazine responded to a suggestion that he should feature some vegan recipes with a quip that he would do a series on killing vegans! He was subsequently sacked. A spokesperson for vegans was interviewed on Radio 4 and asked if vegans are unnecessarily punitive. He replied that vegans hadn't extracted retribution; it was a business decision taken by management because they were worried about harming profits. The researcher Mintel reports that the vegan market was worth £572 million in 2017 compared with £539 million in 2015. It must be worth even more today.

It's not unusual to come across comments hostile to vegans in the media. Perhaps the most highly publicised was Piers Morgan's reaction to the Greggs' vegan 'sausage' roll! Some media commentators treat veganism as a fashion that will pass, suggesting that the rising number of vegans will soon drop again. However in our experience most people have adopted a vegan diet for ethical reasons and do not revert. The main reason that people support CVVUK is their concern about animal welfare but our supporters also wish to reduce damage to the environment and to improve health.

It also seems that a growing number of the British people are consuming less meat. While one survey last year by [comparethemarket.com](#) suggested that there could be 3.5 million people in the UK identifying as vegan, a recent estimate suggested that 22 million people in the UK now embrace a "flexitarian" approach. A study of 30,000 households in Britain in January 2018 showed that 29% of their meals contained no meat or fish: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42973870> This percentage has been steadily rising. The Grocer magazine reports that a quarter of shoppers plan to reduce their meat consumption this year; more than a third of those are in the 18-34 age group. We can be encouraged that there is a modest but steady move away from animal products towards plant-based foods in Britain. And this is also true in comparable developed countries.

Sadly this is not true of countries with a more recent improvement in living standards. In China meat eating is associated with a financially secure lifestyle. Our modest improvement would be negligible compared to the swathes of people embracing a more 'luxurious diet' of increased meat consumption. However, this year Veganuary spread to 13 new areas of the world, increasing its global reach – India, Sweden, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, South Africa, Japan, Iceland and Russia - so the message is getting out more widely.

A censorious approach will not help the progress of veganism. We will need a lot of reasonable and determined campaigning to ensure that the values of a plant-based diet are accepted on an international level for the benefit of the planet, our health and countless suffering creatures. (Some of this information is taken from The Times 31.10.18 and 3.1.19 and some from The Guardian, 31.1.19)

## The Million-Dollar Vegan Campaign for Lent

The team that launched Veganuary have now moved on to a new initiative, the Million-Dollar Vegan Campaign. They have offered to give \$1 million (over £700,000) to a charity of his choice if Pope Francis takes up their challenge to go vegan for Lent. The face of the campaign is a 12-year-old American environmental and animal rights activist, Genesis Butler.



In February Genesis visited the Vatican and spoke with a senior official, Father Ptasznik, who said he agreed with her sentiments and would be her messenger. He took her letter, signed by dozens of celebrities, scientists and influencers, as well as the petition signed by around 80,000 people from across the world, to give to Pope Francis. Genesis also attended a general audience with the Pope at which she asked 'Your Holiness, will you go vegan for Lent?'. Pope Francis is said to be considering the request.

If you would like to sign the petition to Pope Francis you will find it here:

<https://www.milliondollarvegan.com/en-gb/> The website also includes a vegan starter pack.

## US-style megafarms spread to UK – but MEPs oppose them

A recent report on the Independent website (Jane Dalton - 3/3/19) highlighted the growth of US-style mega-farms in Britain and worldwide; you can view drone footage of these farms here:

[Drone footage of mega farms](#)

The aerial film was taken to show the scale of industrial sheds that mostly house farm animals permanently indoors. The UK now has an estimated 800 mega-farms - an increase of at least 26 per cent since 2011. The biggest mega-farms house more than a million chickens, 20,000 pigs or 2,000 cattle.

Two weeks ago, MEPs voted to cut funding for farms that exceed a certain stocking density and for new rules saying farm animals must be able to lie down, stand up, extend their limbs and turn around. The environment committee also voted to block national subsidies for large facilities not respecting basic animal-welfare principles. The agriculture committee will vote on the plans shortly.

A [Greenpeace](#) study has revealed that more than 71 per cent of EU farmland is used to feed livestock. The research claimed that up to €32bn (£27.5bn) in agricultural subsidy payments were encouraging industrialised farming. According to Eurostat, nearly three-quarters of European meat and dairy products come from the largest farms.

Greenpeace EU agriculture head Marco Contiero said: "Factory farms wreck the countryside, heat the climate and put small farmers out of business, but MEPs put forward some solid plans that

could start to change that. Study after study shows the immense damage factory farming does, so Europe's agricultural system must evolve."

In the UK, residents are fighting proposals for new large-scale farms. Opponents of a mega-egg farm with 112,000 chickens in Cornwall are crowdfunding their campaign. Three 130-metre sheds would house 32,000 birds each and a fourth would have 16,000.

## 73 Cows - Film of vegan farmer wins BAFTA



In our last newsletter we reported on Jay Wilde, a farmer who grew up on a beef farm in Derbyshire and inherited it from his father, but as a long-time vegetarian - now a vegan - Jay was very conflicted about raising cattle for meat. We drew your attention to a film that had recently been made about his life changing decision to give away his cows - worth over £40,000 - to an animal sanctuary and to start a new vegan farming enterprise with support from the Vegan Society.

This film was entered for BAFTA award for the best short documentary and it won! This heartwarming film directed by Alex Lockwood is a "must watch". It is currently off-line because of the BAFTA awards but should be available again on the vimeo site from April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Another farmer leaves livestock behind

A Devon sheep farmer, Sivalingam Vasanthakumar, felt he could no longer take his animals to the abattoir to be slaughtered. He said '....it always made me stressed. It would stress the animals too, they knew their fate. They would try to hide in the back of the trailer and wouldn't want to come out.'

This year Mr Vasanthakumar could not face the trip to the abattoir any more. Instead he drove 200 miles to take his lambs to an animal sanctuary and now he is leaving his herd of 60 sheep to roam and graze freely on his farm. Although Mr Vasanthakumar will remain in farming, it will not be in livestock and he has become a vegetarian. (Information from an article in The Times 30.01.19)

## Abattoirs refuse to open their doors

Charlotte Smith of Farming Today investigated British abattoirs in November 2018. She wanted to report from an actual abattoir but was not allowed in. Instead she interviewed a representative of the Meat Processors Association, someone from Compassion in World Farming and a spokesman for the British Veterinary Association. All British abattoirs have an 'Official Veterinarian' to oversee the welfare of the animals and check that the meat meets the required standard.

Some meat eaters feel reassured that they are eating meat from animals that are humanely slaughtered. Peter Stevenson from CIWF says they are lulled into thinking animals are gently put to sleep and are killed while unconscious. People concerned about animal welfare need to be informed and able to counter this mistaken view. In our intensive farming methods the animals are hustled through the process (10,000 chickens per hour, 300 pigs per hour) and welfare is hard to safeguard.

**Chickens:** Every year 2,000 million chickens are slaughtered for meat. They are turned upside down and their feet are pushed into tight metal shackles, then sent through an electric water bath intended to stun them. But CIWF has found that sometimes the chickens are immobilised but conscious when they are moved on to have their necks cut with revolving metal blades.

**Cattle:** A World Service presenter, Emily Thomas, visited a family-run farm in Devon to investigate the process of slaughter to make a programme for *Food Chain*. The bullock she was watching did not want to enter the knocking box, and after coaxing failed, was made to go in by the use of a metal prod. When in the cattle crush a slaughterman above the cage shot a metal bolt into the bullock's head to render him unconscious. Then the cage was hoisted and the slaughterman cut the bullock's throat. Even though prepared, Emily found the process distressing.

**Pigs:** Until the present, pigs have been made to lose consciousness by carbon dioxide gas which causes marked respiratory distress and even pain. There is a 2 year pilot study being conducted at Glasgow University, investigating the technique of LAPS, lowering air pressure slowly till the pigs lose consciousness. It was generally agreed that this should greatly reduce the pigs' suffering.

CCTV has now been introduced into all abattoirs. But there was consensus that it will become increasingly hard to find staff for abattoirs and welfare may suffer (70 per cent of the work force is made up of non-UK residents and most 'Official Veterinarians are non-UK citizens, largely from the EU). The religious practice of slaughtering unstunned and lightly stunned animals was discussed and the British Veterinary Association wants this banned on humane grounds.

The representative of the Meat Processors Association thought that meat eaters would be reassured if they witnessed what happened in British abattoirs and referred to the role of the Foods Standards Agency and Quality Assurance Schemes. The presenter pointed out that their reporter had not been allowed in. CIWF thought people should know what happened in abattoirs and that meat eaters would *not* be encouraged in their notion of humane slaughter. (Information from Radio 4 Farming Today 24.11.18)

Many of our readers will know that Animal Aid has filmed inside a number of slaughter houses. You probably won't want to watch the footage but some of your carnivorous friends may need to be made aware of it: <https://www.animalaid.org.uk/the-issues/our-campaigns/slaughter/>

## Vegan Diet Offers Benefits for Diabetics

In the UK almost 3,7 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes of whom 90 per cent have Type 2 which is more commonly found in patients who are obese. Researchers from the Universities of London and Northampton and the East Sussex NHS Healthcare Trust reviewed 11 trials involving diabetics, investigating the effect of plant-based diets (rich in vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds) compared with other diets. Eight of the trials included diets that were fully vegan.

There were good outcomes for patients following a plant-based or vegan diet: they had better blood sugar control, lost nearly twice as much weight as those following other diets and reported improved mood. In six of the studies people on plant-based diets could cut down or discontinue drugs for diabetes and high blood pressure.

Other academics in this field cautioned that the good results could be due to the weight loss rather than the vegan diet (but as the plant-based diet proved so effective in weight loss this caution seems irrelevant) and one warned that vegan diets could be low in Vitamin B12. Please read the next article that deals with nutrients in the vegan diet.

## Essential Nutrients in the Vegan Diet

Vegans have been warned that their diets may lack some essential nutrients by Professor Chris Elliot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Medicine, Health and Life Sciences at Queens University Belfast. He notes that vegans have reported lower intakes of Calcium and Vitamin D which results in lower bone density and that some vegans have lower levels of Omega 3, Iodine and Vitamin B12 which occur in animal products.

Professor Elliot says this can result in tiredness, weakness, poor digestion and a Vitamin B12 deficiency that can cause developmental delays in children that can be irreversible. But he acknowledged that a plant-based diet can reduce chronic disease and is good for the environment. He advised that vegans can prevent deficiencies by including foods with added vitamins and minerals as well as by taking supplements. The NHS website says that a vegan diet is unsuitable for children under 2 years old though it adds that a well-balanced vegan diet can provide all the necessary nutrients needed beyond that age.

Heather Russell, dietician at The Vegan Society, said they work with the British Dietetic Association and it is possible to plan a balanced and healthy vegan diet for people of all ages. (Information from an article by Ben Webster in The Times 10.12.18)

All diets need to be planned to provide the range of nutrients required. The following information may help:

- Calcium, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12 (and sometimes Vitamin B2) are added to plant-based milks
- Omega 3 can be found in vegan margarine (also sometimes Vitamins D, B12 and B2) and in flax seed and walnuts
- Iodine can be found in seaweed products (eg. seaweed flakes to sprinkle on salads, soups and stews) and in iodised salt.

Small amounts are also found in beans and cranberries

We strongly advise everyone to scrutinise the food values in the products they buy to ensure all the nutrients are covered. You can also take food supplements. If you want more information on planning a well-balanced diet, contact The Vegan Society: [info@vegansociety.com](mailto:info@vegansociety.com) Address: Donald Watson House, 4-35 Ludgate Hill, Birmingham, B3 1EH



## Products to look out for

**Soya Milk Sachets** : These soya milk sachets are the vegan alternative to commercial-style long-life milk sachets. They do not need refrigeration and are easy to carry with you if you are going to

an event where tea and coffee will be served and only dairy milk is likely to be available. Available online from Amazon.

**Bakery and Confectionery Treats:** It is becoming easier to buy vegan cakes and biscuits in the supermarket. These are some that are widely available in supermarkets:

*Co-op - Fruit Cake Bites*

*Sainsbury's - Flapjacks*

*Asda - Free From Chocolate*

*Mr Kipling - Mince Pies*

*Morrisons Free From - Mince Pies , Shortbread, Flapjacks*

All the above are also gluten free

McVities make a wide variety of delicious vegan biscuits, including *Ginger Nuts, Fruit Shortcake, Fig Rolls, Hobnobs, Chocolate Chip Hobnobs*. Oreos are also vegan.



## Vegan Clothing

There is an ethical dilemma for vegans in choosing clothes made without animal products as they may contain plastic which is not good for the environment. This issue was discussed on the radio consumer programme 'You and Yours.' However as a vegan spokesperson pointed out, apart from cruelty to animals, the leather and fur industries are amongst the most polluting on the planet - they are certainly not pure natural products causing no environmental damage.



Vegan clothing companies are working to develop largely plant-based materials for clothing. One of these is Bourgeois Boheme ([www.bboheme.com](http://www.bboheme.com)) which produces eco-vegan shoes - they currently have a sale with much reduced prices. At the moment plastic-free vegan attire is a niche product and too expensive for many of us but as the market expands vegan clothing will become more affordable. An innovation we need to follow. (Item on Radio 4 'You and Yours' 11.01.19)

## Ethical Pet Food

Pet owners sometimes face the criticism that pets consume up to 20 per cent of the meat produced. This has been refuted because pet food is often made from offal and meat discarded from the human food chain. In a previous newsletter we have commented on pet food from ethically sourced meat (eg. Lilley's). On the Radio 4 Today Programme it was reported that there is an innovative venture to produce nutritionally-balanced, environmentally-friendly dog food from insects.

Vegans would not want any creatures to suffer unnecessarily but in this world of relative ethical choices, we can opt for doing the least harm possible (at least to the environment) so this is also something to watch out for. (Information from Radio 4 Today Programme 10.01.19)

A variety of vegan pet food can be bought from the Ethical Pets website:

<https://www.ethicalpets.co.uk/vegan>

## Vegan Rights

If you are being discriminated against or having difficulties asserting your vegan rights, for example in the workplace. [Email: KnowYourRights@vegansociety.com](mailto:KnowYourRights@vegansociety.com)

Tel: +44 (0)7482 363922 Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm.

## Feedback from readers

One of our readers, Chris Seal, has drawn our attention to an unusual initiative on an estate in Sussex. Knepp is a 3,500 acre estate just south of Horsham, West Sussex. Since 2001, the land – once intensively farmed - has been devoted to a pioneering rewilding project. Using free-roaming grazing animals as the drivers of habitat creation, and with the restoration of dynamic, natural water courses, the project has seen extraordinary increases in wildlife. Extremely rare species like turtle doves, nightingales, peregrine falcons and purple emperor butterflies are now breeding here and populations of more common species are rocketing.



The vision of the Knepp Wildland Project is radically different from conventional nature conservation in that it is not driven by specific goals or target species. Instead, its driving principle is to establish a functioning ecosystem where nature is given as much freedom as possible. Their grazing animals include Longhorn cattle, Tamworth pigs, Exmoor ponies, red deer, roe deer and fallow deer ,all roaming freely across pastureland and woodland. Clearly the animals here have a much better life than those in intensive farms, but some animals are culled each year and face slaughter, and their meat is sold from the estate. However this is probably the most “ethical” meat available

today and it may be worth bringing to the attention of your carnivorous friends. It’s also possible to visit the estate. Full details here: <https://knepp.co.uk/>

## Events

**Summer School:** The sixth annual Summer School organised by the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics is taking place in July, and booking is open now. The theme this year is *Humane Education: Increasing Sensitivity to Humans and Animals* .Full details and booking form can be found here: <https://www.oxfordanimaethics.com/what-we-do/summer-school-2019/>

**Vegan Fairs:** There are so many vegan events taking place across the country these days that it’s hard to highlight specific ones, but if you want to know what’s happening near where you live this is the best place to look: [VegFest events](#)

## Recipe - Curry and Coconut Potatoes with Cashews and Peas

Spring is the season for new potatoes and this curry recipe uses them in an interesting way. It is both vegan and gluten-free.



### Ingredients

- 10-12 new potatoes
- 1/3 cup cashews, soaked for 10-15 minutes and then chopped
- 1 cup green peas (frozen works best)
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

- 1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
- 1 14-ounce can coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- A handful of basil, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### **Preparation**

1. Place cashews in a glass of water for 15-30 minutes to soften. Boil potatoes until they are soft.
2. In a large pan, add the cashews and allow them to gently roast. Add the steamed potatoes and toss them to coat. Add a 1/2 cup of water and the tomato paste into the mixture.
3. Add in the cherry tomatoes and simmer them for 5-8 minutes. Add all the spices.
4. Stir the mixture well to coat the potatoes.
5. Simmer the dish until the cherry tomatoes are cooked through. This should take 3-5 minutes.
6. Add the coconut milk and peas. Simmer them until the sauce begins to thicken. Add salt and pepper to taste.
7. Add the chopped basil to the top and serve the dish immediately.

### **And finally.....**

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware has written a remarkable reflection on compassion for animals in the Orthodox Church, which is featured on the website [Panorthodox Concern for Animals](#). It is well worth reading in its entirety but here are two extracts to whet your appetite.

*On the Orthodox understanding of time, as in Judaism, the new day commences not at midnight or at dawn but at sunset; and so Vespers is the opening service in the twenty-four hour cycle of prayer. How, then, do we begin the new day? Throughout the year, except in the week after Easter Sunday, Vespers always starts in the same way: with the reading or singing of Psalm 104. This is a hymn of praise to the Creator for all the wonders of his creation; and in this cosmic doxology we have much to say about the animals:*

*'You make springs gush forth in the valleys they flow between the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.'*

*The psalm continues by speaking of cattle, storks, wild goats, badgers and young lions, and it concludes this catalogue of living creatures with a reference to Leviathan, who must surely be a whale:*

*'Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and there is the great sea monster which you formed to sport in it.'*

*In this way, embarking upon the new day, we offer the world back to God in thanksgiving. We bless him for the sun and moon, for the clouds and wind, for the earth and the water; and not least we bless him for the living creatures, in all their diversity and abundance. with which he has peopled the globe. We rejoice in their beauty and their playfulness, whereby they enrich our lives: 'How marvellous are your works, O Lord! In wisdom have you made them all.'*

*As we stand before God in prayer, the companionship of the animals fills our hearts with warmth and hope.*

.....

*We humans are bound to God and to one another in a cosmic covenant that also includes all the other living creatures on the face of the earth: 'I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground' (Hos. 2:18; cf. Gen. 9:15). We humans are not saved **from** the world but **with** the world; and that means, with the animals. Moreover, this cosmic covenant is not something that we humans have devised, but it has its source in the divine realm. It is conferred upon us as a gift by God.*

*A striking illustration of this covenant bond is to be seen in the custom that once prevailed in the Russian countryside; perhaps it still continues today. Returning from the Easter midnight service with their newly-kindled Holy Fire, the farmers used to go into the stables with the lighted candle or lantern, and they greeted the horses and cattle with the Paschal salutation 'Christ is Risen!' The victory of the risen Saviour over the forces of death and darkness has meaning not for us humans alone but for the animals as well. For them also Christ has died and risen again. 'Now all things are filled with light' (hymn at the Easter matins).*

