

## VEGETARIAN NUTRITION

A PLANT BASED DIET can provide humans with all the nutrients necessary for health\*. Studies have shown that vegetarians\*\* live several years longer on average than non-vegetarians. Vegetarians and vegans can obtain sufficient:

**CALCIUM** from soy-beans, dried figs, leafy greens, lentils, chick peas, almonds, etc

**IRON** from lentils, tofu, tempe, beans, parsley, spinach, broccoli, silver beet, whole grains, etc

**PROTEIN** from a wide range of foods including grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits and nuts. The WHO (World Health Organisation) recommends around 37gr protein per day (men) and 29gr (women). An excess of protein in the diet will reduce the amount of calcium the body retains, straining the kidneys and making osteoporosis more likely.

**FIBRE**, which is essential to the health of the gastro-intestinal tract, is totally lacking in animal products. Numerous scientific studies have shown that people who eat a healthy vegetarian diet are less likely to be obese and suffer less heart disease, type II diabetes and some forms of cancer, especially of the colon.

**Healthy vegetarian and vegan lifestyles include enough exercise, rest and a positive attitude.**

\* It is advisable for vegans to check their vitamin B<sub>12</sub> levels, as the bacteria necessary to synthesise B<sub>12</sub> are often insufficient in modern hygienic conditions.

\*\* Few studies, until recently, have differentiated between “vegan” and “vegetarian” participants.

**A VEGETARIAN** is someone who lives on a diet of vegetables, fruit, grains, pulses, nuts and seed with or without the use of dairy products and/or eggs. A vegetarian does not eat the flesh of any animal including mammals, poultry, fish, game, amphibians, insects, shellfish or any slaughter bi-products.

**A VEGAN** is a “total vegetarian” who does not consume any animal products including milk, eggs and honey.

**VEGANS AND MANY VEGETARIANS** also strive to reduce animal exploitation by excluding consumption of all animal products and by-products e.g. leather, bone, blood, ivory from every area of their lives.

**THE VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN SOCIETY (VegSA)** aims, in co-operation with other like-minded groups, to spread knowledge of the advantages of vegetarian/vegan life-style.

VegSA invites membership from any one who is sympathetic to a vegetarian/vegan way of life.

The Society offers information and support to its members through its

**Quarterly newsletter**

**Quarterly national magazine**

**Regular gatherings to share ideas**

**Telephone and e-mail contact**

**Website at [www.vegsa.org.au](http://www.vegsa.org.au)**

**Vegetarian and Vegan Society (VegSA) Inc.**

(formerly Vegetarian Society of South Australia)

**Plant based diet  
and life style:**

**HEALTHY**

**HUMANE**

**ENVIRONMENTALLY  
RESPONSIBLE**

**VegSA**

**PO Box 311 Kent Town SA 5071**

**Phone 08 82602778**

**E-mail: [info@vegsa.org.au](mailto:info@vegsa.org.au)**

**[www.vegsa.org.au](http://www.vegsa.org.au)**



## ANIMAL AND HUMAN WELFARE

Over 50 billion animals are slaughtered each year world wide to satisfy human desire for flesh foods. Most male baby chicks and calves are also sacrificed as redundant. Sows are kept in stalls too small for them to turn round and hens in cages without even enough room to spread their wings.

Around two thirds of all agricultural land world-wide is used for livestock (grazing and fodder production), while about a billion people (roughly 15% of the human population) are undernourished. Around 25,000 people die every day from hunger-related causes, some in countries exporting grain to feed livestock elsewhere.

In USA at least 70% of all corn and soy produced is fed to livestock, but livestock are very inefficient converters of foodstuff for human consumption. A nutritious vegan diet can be produced on about one seventh the area of land needed for the average omnivorous diet.

If every one in developed countries gave up meat one day a week about 100,000,000 additional people could be adequately nourished, especially if, in developing

countries, the current trend (among the better off) to consume more animal products could also be reversed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND DIET

Animal husbandry has an enormous impact on the environment i.e. the amount of land, water and fertilizer used, and the effect of land clearance.

**LAND CLEARED FOR FARMING** causes enormous loss of native vegetation and habitat for native fauna. Around 75% of the land cleared in Australia since “settlement” is used for pasture and fodder production, whilst leaving far less trees to absorb carbon dioxide.

**WATER USE:** Beef and milk production use nearly three times as much water as Australian households. Much of the water for livestock is used to flood irrigate land for pasture and fodder. It takes around:

3,700L (=about 40 baths) to produce 1kg beef  
320L water to produce 1L milk  
110L water to produce 1kg wheat  
100L water to produce 1kg vegetables

Per litre of water use fruit and vegetables also give by far the best financial return

**WATER QUALITY:** Fertiliser, applied at the same time as irrigation, easily gets washed into and contaminates waterways.

**Piggeries and abattoirs** also produce some of the most polluted water in the world,

needing around ten times as much oxygen to biodegrade as human effluent.

## GREENHOUSE GASES:

Cattle, chickens, pigs and sheep are responsible for more greenhouse gas in Australia than coal-fired power stations and worldwide for more than a third of all human-related methane production. Methane is more than twenty times as potent a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide. CO<sub>2</sub> stays around for up to 200 years while methane breaks down in a decade or less. Cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will have no effect on global warming for decades, but reducing methane will have an immediate effect.

**POWER:** It takes more than 11 times as much fossil fuel to make one calorie of animal protein as it does to make one calorie of plant protein. Meat production uses considerable power and, in addition, often requires hours of cooking. In Australia, commercially baked goods use only about half the amount of power to produce as meat and need little further cooking.

**Cutting animal products from our diets benefits the environment, humans and the animals!**

Sources:

- Vegan Society [UK] website
- Animal Liberation SA and Vegetarian /Vegan Soc of Qld: Think you can be a Meat Eating Environmentalist? Think again!
- John Robbins: Diet for a New America
- Australian Vegetarian Soc, NSW: Go Vegetarian pamphlet, available from VegSA for \$2.50 (excellent on vegan diet and nutrition)