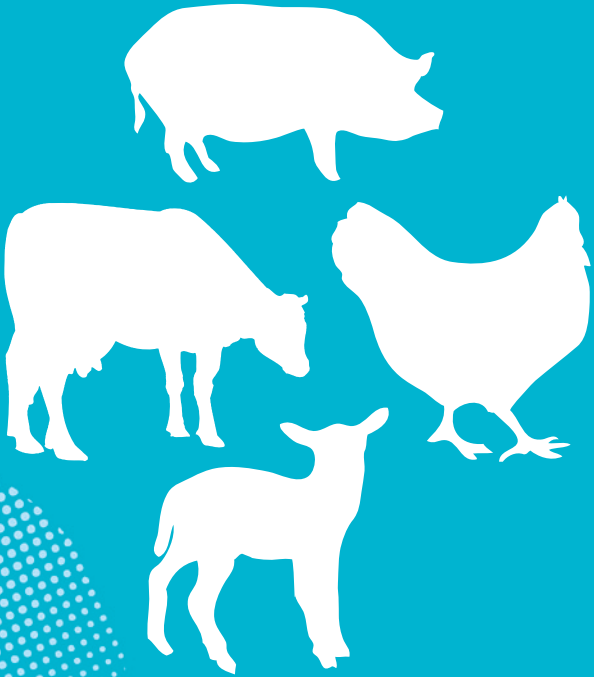


going veggie...

for the animals



Why going vegetarian for animals
is a positive choice



more than **2 million**
land animals are killed in the UK
every day just to satisfy the
population's taste for meat

going veggie...

for the animals

A vegetarian diet is more sustainable and can be much better for your own health, but for many people, going vegetarian is all about the animals.

Millions of people around the world believe it is wrong for animals to suffer and die, just so they can be turned into food. The UK is said to be a nation of animal lovers, but more than two million land animals are killed here every day just to satisfy the population's taste for meat.

Cats, dogs, rabbits and other pets share our lives and our homes, while cattle, pigs, sheep and other farm animals are seen as disposable commodities.

Is that something you feel comfortable with?



although killed at 1-2 years old, beef cattle naturally live around 25 years

cattle

There are around ten million cattle in the UK. Cows naturally live for around 25 years, but those destined to become beef are slaughtered between one and two years old. Veal calves live only a few months. Dairy cows stop producing as much milk as the market demands when they are around five years old, and as a result they are killed.

At the slaughterhouse, cows, bulls and calves are all stunned by a bolt to the brain then bled to death by having their throats slit.



over 70% of the 5 million pigs in the UK are intensively reared

pigs

Pigs are often compared with dogs as they live to a similar age of around 10-15 years, they are both easy to train and love being outdoors. Sadly, of the five million pigs in the UK, over 70% are reared under very intensive conditions, being closely confined indoors for their entire lives. Breeding sows may be kept in metal farrowing crates barely larger than their own bodies.



most pigs are slaughtered at between 4 & 7 months old

They can hardly move, let alone follow their natural instincts to nest and nurture their piglets. Most pigs are slaughtered between four and seven months old. They are electrically stunned before being hung up by the hind legs and bled to death by a cut to the throat.

chickens



20-50,000
broiler chickens
live together
for 6 to 7 weeks
in windowless
sheds

In a natural environment, chickens would live for seven years and would choose to perch, run, walk and stretch their wings. The vast majority of those destined for the table (broiler chickens) live for six to seven weeks in windowless sheds shared with 20-50,000 other birds. In order to produce meat quickly, growth rates have increased 300% in the past 50 years. This causes all sorts of health problems for the chickens themselves.



800 million
broiler
chickens were
slaughtered
in 2009

Almost 800 million broiler chickens were killed in 2009 on automated slaughter lines where the birds are shackled and stunned through electrically charged water before having their throats slit. Research regularly shows that many birds are still conscious when they are killed.



29 million battery
hens are each
given a space
allowance the
size of one sheet
of A4 paper

Another 29 million hens are kept in the UK to lay eggs and almost two thirds live in battery cages where each bird has no more room than an A4 size sheet of paper. Many vegetarians choose free range or organic eggs to avoid supporting intensive farming and the proportion of whole eggs that meet higher welfare standards has increased in recent years. However, it is much harder to be sure what sort of conditions the eggs in your quiche, cake or ready meal were laid under.

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15 million lambs were slaughtered in 2009

sheep

Like pigs, sheep have a natural lifespan of around 15 years, but most of the 15 million lambs killed in the UK in 2009 were less than six months old. They are slaughtered in a similar way to pigs but more care is taken with their skins and fleece as nearly a third of British wool comes from the slaughterhouse.



50% of fish are now raised on fish farms

fish

Fish don't tend to attract as much sympathy, but they have a nervous system and feel pain like all other animals. Whether caught wild in the oceans or among the 50% of fish now raised intensively on fish farms, fish do suffer. Fishing also harms other wildlife, with whales, dolphins, birds, turtles and 'the wrong sort of fish' captured and killed alongside the target species in huge numbers.



why vegetarian?

With all sorts of ‘ethical’ meat on sale, and meat-free days all the rage, why should you bother going veggie?

For many, it’s about commitment – making a clear and conscious statement that you will no longer support the appalling way that the vast majority of farm animals are treated.

For others it’s just wrong to kill, and even organic, hand-reared “happy meat” comes from an animal that was unnecessarily killed long before the end of its natural life.

Some vegetarians go further and vegans avoid all animal products, including eggs, milk, dairy products, honey and wool. But that’s a very big change to make and a positive commitment to vegetarianism is a more realistic option for many.



going veggie...

more information

Whatever your views, find out more about animal welfare at www.vegsoc.org/animals, and check out www.butcherscat.org to consider the differences between farmed animals and domestic pets.

Get all the support you need to change your diet for the better at www.vegsoc.org/goingveggie or by ordering a copy of 'Going Veggie', the Vegetarian Society's guide to going, and staying, vegetarian.

For free resources, recipes and information, visit www.vegsoc.org

www.vegsoc.org

Tel: 0161 925 2000

The Vegetarian Society, Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QG. T: 0161 925 2000 F: 0161 926 9182

www.vegsoc.org

Charity Number: 259358. Registered Company Number: 959115.

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References for the information in this booklet are available at www.vegsoc.org/references

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