

Enhancing the Lives of Animals  
Through Ethical Decisions



## One Possible Future: A Roadmap to Animal Liberation

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Matt Ball with his wife and daughter,  
Anne and Ellen Green

With cruelty rampant in factory farms, and vegetarians currently a small minority, it is easy to dismiss as naive the hope for a vegetarian world. "My Uncle Dick hunts, and my cousin Jeb is always mocking me for being vegan -- you're crazy if you think they will ever change!"

These are legitimate concerns. However, it is nevertheless possible to achieve our goals -- and much more quickly than we imagine.

If we look at the long arc of history, we see how very much society has advanced in just the last few centuries. It was over 2,000 years ago that the ideals of democracy were first proposed in ancient Greece. But it was only during the eighteenth century that humanity saw the beginnings of a truly democratic system.

Not until late in the nineteenth century was slavery abolished in the developed world. In all of human history, only in the last 100 years was child labor abolished in the developed world, child abuse criminalized, women given the vote, and minorities given equal rights.

It is hard to comprehend just how much society has changed in recent history. Prejudices we can hardly fathom today were completely accepted just decades ago. For example, if we read what was written and said about slavery -- fewer than 150 years ago -- the defenders were not just ignorant racists, but admired politicians, civic and religious leaders, and learned intellectuals. What is horrifying to us now was once respected.

However slow the progress may feel, we are advancing at lightning speed compared to past social justice movements. A century ago, almost no animals received any protection whatsoever from abuse. Now, according to a recent Gallup poll, 96 percent want to see animals protected from abuse, 62% want strict laws regulating the treatment of farmed animals, and fully one-fourth believe that animals deserve "the exact same rights as people to be free from harm and exploitation." Until 1990, there was one ballot initiative to protect animals that had passed at a state level -- just one! Since 1990, animal advocates have passed more than 20, including several directly abolishing some of the worst abuses on factory farms.

Today the vast majority of people are now opposed to cruelty to animals; thus, the discussion now must focus on helping people see that eating meat violates their own principles. This effort is only just beginning. Twenty years ago, most animal advocacy in the U.S. was focused on fur and vivisection, nearly ignoring the ~99% of animals butchered for food. Only recently have more groups and individuals focused on this 99% by exposing the cruelty of factory farms and promoting vegetarianism. The first systematic national effort to reach the best audience - the Adopt a College program -- was launched fewer than four years ago!

In large part because of this shift in advocacy, factory farms -- unknown to most people only a decade or two ago -- are now commonly vilified as ethical (and environmental) abominations.

Twenty years ago, few people had heard the word "vegan." Mock meats and soymilk were rarely found in mainstream grocery stores. According to market research by Mintel, "Until the mid-1990s, change was slow in coming to the world of vegetarian foods, and many average consumers relegated 'vegetarian products' to a counter-cultural movement, not a mainstream trend." Today, even cousin Jeb doesn't need "vegan" explained to him; you can find soymilk, veggie burgers, and various other vegetarian convenience foods in most grocery stores. According to Mintel, "In 2003, the vegetarian foods market in the U.S. topped \$1.6 billion in sales. This represents a constant-price growth rate of 111.3% since 1998." They estimate that the market was up to \$2.8 billion last year.

Forbes reports: "[M]arket research shows that the number of consumers who lean toward some sort of vegetarianism is increasing across all age groups. The Vegetarian Resource Group estimates that 2.8% of adult Americans consider themselves vegetarian, up from 2.3% in a 2000 survey. Another 6% to 10% of the population said it was 'almost vegetarian' and another 20% to 25% are 'vegetarian inclined,' or intentionally reducing meat in their diet, according to VRG." According to Food Systems Insider: "Ten percent of 25- to 34-year-olds say they never eat meat."

As we continue our efforts, more vegetarian products arrive on the market every month. Having convenient vegetarian options available is vital, as it makes it easier for new people to try and stick with a compassionate diet. As more people sample faux-meats and other vegetarian products, competition will continue to increase the supply and varieties, improving quality and driving down prices. This cycle of increasing numbers of vegetarians and the increasing convenience of vegetarian eating is self-reinforcing. Essentially, the technology of vegetarian meats and other foods is both driven by and a driver of moral progress.

If we continue to expand our advocacy, the growth of vegetarianism will accelerate to a tipping point, where opposition to factory farms and vegetarianism become the "norm" among influential groups. Legislation, as it



usually does, will continue to follow these evolving norms, and we'll see more of animal agriculture's worst practices outlawed and abolished (something that has already begun). Corporate practices will also continue to adjust to the demands from an increasingly aware market.

At the same time, powerful economic forces will kick in because meat is ultimately inefficient. It is more efficient to eat plant foods directly, rather than feeding plant foods to animals and then eating the animals' flesh. Of course, people aren't going to substitute tofu for meat, but that is not the choice they'll be making. Food science has advanced such that the best vegetarian meats are able to satisfy even hard-core carnivores. Deli slices from Tofurky, burgers from Boca, Gimme Lean sausage and ground beef, Morningstar MealStarters, Gardenburger's Riblets and Chik'n -- all of these dismiss the notion that giving up meat is necessarily a deprivation.

The faster the growth in people eating vegetarian, the faster vegetarian meats will improve in taste, become cheaper, and be found in far more places. (Compare a 2006 Boca Burger to a 1986 Nature Burger, and imagine how good a 2026 veggie burger will be!) In addition, in vitro meats become more viable each year. In meatro can also be more efficient than actual animal corpses, and can be engineered to have the same benefits as vegetarian meats: no cholesterol, good fats (omega-3s), no factory farms, no slaughterhouses, no manure ponds, no greenhouse gas emissions, no food poisoning, no mad cow, no avian flu. These technologies will also be accelerated by the growth of vegetarianism.

Our challenge now is to expand the vegetarian market by explaining to more meat eaters the reasons for choosing vegetarian meals, while exposing them to new -- though similar -- products. The more rapidly we do this, the sooner cruelty-free eating will be widespread.

After his first heart attack, Uncle Dick will shift over to vegetarian meats that have no cholesterol or saturated or trans fats and are high in omega-3s. Cousin Jeb's second wife -- a vegetarian since getting an Even If You Like Meat booklet from Jon Camp in 2003 -- will use that as an excuse to only cook vegetarian meals -- and Jeb will hardly notice the difference! Their daughter Barbara will grow up as a vegan activist, and will oversee McDonald's shift to non-animal chicken in their sandwiches.

Despite all the current horror and continued suffering, if we take the long view and are willing to commit to the work that needs to be done, we should be deeply optimistic. Animal liberation can be the future; as The Economist concluded, "Historically, man has expanded the reach of his ethical calculations, as ignorance and want have receded, first beyond family and tribe, later beyond religion, race, and nation. To bring other species more fully into the range of these decisions may seem unthinkable to moderate opinion now. One day, decades or centuries hence, it may seem no more than 'civilized' behavior requires."

With our efforts, de facto animal liberation could be achieved with a whimper, not a bang. Change will not come by revolution, but through person-by-person outreach progressing hand-in-hand with advances in technology, leading slowly but inexorably to a new norm that, to most people, hardly seems different. But an unfathomable amount of suffering will be prevented.

**It is up to us to make this happen.**

**Go Vegan**  
it is the single most  
important thing YOU can do to

- ✓ Save our Environment
- ✓ Free the Animals
- ✓ Heal your Health

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