

FOOD

The number of land-based animals killed in the U.S. each year for food is more than 10 billion. Many of us have grown up in meat-eating families and have learned that meat and other animal products such as eggs and dairy are appropriate food. But times are changing and more and more people are questioning these food choices.

Studies have shown that vegetarians (people who consume no flesh) and vegans (people who consume no flesh, eggs, dairy or other animal products) live longer and have less heart disease, diabetes and cancer than non-vegetarians. Humans have flat molars and a long intestine designed for grinding and digesting plants. Animals that are designed for meat consumption have fangs and a short intestine that allows meat to pass through quickly before it has time to rot and create toxins.

Cow's milk is a secretion intended to meet the special dietary needs of baby cows, not humans. Human baby expert Dr. Benjamin Spock said that cow's milk slows iron absorption and may cause respiratory problems and childhood onset diabetes. A Harvard University study that followed 78,000 women over a 12-year period found that those who consumed the most dairy foods broke the most bones. Vegan athletes such as 20-time Olympic and world championship track and field medal winner Carl Lewis are thriving examples of the strength, endurance and vitality that can result from exercise and a vegan diet.

One of the most effective steps you can take to help the environment is to stop eating animal products. Animal agriculture requires a lot of water and energy and significantly contributes to deforestation, soil erosion, global warming and water pollution. According to the United Nations, the meat industry generates more greenhouse gases than all the cars, trucks, ships, and planes in the world combined. In addition, common practices in meat, dairy and egg production are unconscionable and cruel.

Grocery stores such as Whole Foods Market carry vegan items such as meatless chili and spaghetti sauce, vegetable pizzas and bean burritos without cheese, rice milk, veggie burgers, non-dairy ice cream and non-dairy chocolate chip cookies.

ENTERTAINMENT

Many people are veering away from animal-based entertainment because of concerns about the treatment of the animals and because of enthusiastic interest in similar forms of entertainment that do not involve animals.

Municipalities such as Boulder, Colorado and Pasadena, California have banned circuses, rodeos and other animal acts. The popularity of non-animal circuses such as Cirque du Soleil has soared in recent years. Modern life has sparked interest in the capabilities of machines and their drivers while Gallup polls show that interest in roping cattle, riding bulls and other rodeo events is dwindling. Stock car racing, for example, is now one of the largest spectator sports in the U.S.

Dogfighting and cockfighting are illegal in every state and are a felony in most of them. For people who want to watch or participate in fighting matches, boxing, martial arts and wrestling are available. Numerous types of racing are available in lieu of horse and dog racing including skating, swimming and skiing. For those attracted to the gambling aspects of animal fighting and racing, casinos and state lotteries are available.

Safaris to photograph wild animals are replacing safaris to hunt and kill them. Activities such as target archery, laser tag, paintball, video games and clay pigeon shooting give people the opportunity to perfect their coordination and aim without harming animals. Alternatives to fishing include outdoor activities such as kayaking or other types of boating, kite flying, birdwatching, snorkeling and scuba diving.

Zoos protect animals from poachers, but the close confines of captivity cause many animals to develop abnormal behaviors such as self-mutilation, pacing, swaying and other repetitive behaviors. Many fish in aquariums interact with transparent boundaries, spin around imaginary objects and repeatedly turn on one side and rub along the floor of the tank. Ways to observe the natural behavior of animals include traveling to protected areas in the animal's native habitat or watching IMAX productions or movies such as "March of the Penguins" that are highly educational and make you feel as though you are right next to the animal in their natural environment.

CLOTHING

Once considered a status symbol of the wealthy, fur coats are considered by most to no longer be fashionable. This change is partly due to increased awareness of the fur industry's cruel treatment of animals. Leather, down, hair, skin and feathers also come from inhumanely treated animals, and interest in alternatives to these materials is growing.

Popular shoes in recent years have been made of synthetic materials instead of leather. Crocs are made of plastic, Teva sandals are made of nylon and most running shoes are made of synthetic materials. Vinyl dress shoes are hard to distinguish from leather ones. Non-leather boots made with Consoltext Commander and Radiantex, for example, are both warm and waterproof. Eco-friendly shoes made of hemp or jute are also available.

Many man-made materials are less expensive and easier to clean than animal-based ones yet they are still very warm and protective. Polartec and Primaloft are examples of synthetic fibers that provide high levels of warmth even after they are wet when materials such as goose down are less effective.

A link to a list of stores and manufacturers who sell clothes, shoes and accessories that are made from non-animal sources can be found on the Wear Kindness page of ChooseKindness.com.

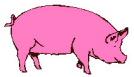
The mistreatment of workers in many overseas clothing factories has motivated people to research the personnel practices of the brands they wear. More information can be found at Coopamerica.org.



SUMMARY



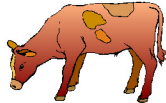
As our understanding of animals and nutrition has progressed and as our technological capabilities have expanded, our interest in non-animal food, clothing and entertainment has exploded. Many supermarkets now carry a variety of vegetarian and vegan prepared foods, most clothing stores contain numerous non-animal materials and options for entertaining ourselves without harming and exploiting animals are abundant. As more people explore and experience these options, their popularity will continue to increase and both humans and animals will benefit.



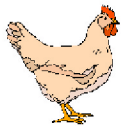
Pigs

- ◆ Pigs do not sweat so they bathe in water and mud to keep cool.
- ◆ Unlike dogs, horses and humans, pigs will not dangerously overeat when given unlimited access to food.
- ◆ Pigs have shown a target hit rate of 80% when playing video games (they use their snout to move the computer joystick).
- ◆ Pigs are smarter than dogs and have intelligence beyond that of a 3-year-old human child.

CATTLE

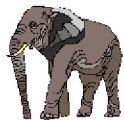


- ◆ Cattle perceive higher and lower frequencies of sound better than humans.
- ◆ Cattle have 320-degree panoramic vision.
- ◆ Cattle select herd leaders based on intelligence rather than size and strength.



CHICKENS

- ◆ Chickens have more than 30 types of vocalizations.
- ◆ A hen will cluck to her unborn chicks who will chirp back to her and to each other.
- ◆ Chickens understand objects still exist after hidden from view, a level of cognition beyond that of a small human child.



ELEPHANTS

- ◆ Elephants are the largest of all land animals.
- ◆ Elephants communicate via infrasound which humans cannot hear and which can carry for distances up to 100 miles.
- ◆ After a long separation, elephants joyfully greet family and friends by flapping their ears, spinning around and making loud trumpets, rumbles and roars.

ABOUT CHOOSEKINDNESS.COM

ChooseKindness.com is a compilation of resources for alternatives to the use of animals in food, clothing, entertainment and other areas. It includes information on alternatives and their manufacturers as well as career descriptions written by individuals working in these fields.

"Nothing will benefit human health and increase the chances for survival of life on earth as much as a vegetarian diet."

--Albert Einstein

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be measured by the way its animals are treated."

--Mahatma Gandhi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gretchen Chlebowski has a Bachelor of Science degree in Ecology, Ethology (animal behavior) and Evolution as well as Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has worked or volunteered for entities involved with animals or animal alternatives for over twenty years.

Many thanks to the organizations and individuals who created the lists and other information referenced on the ChooseKindness.com website. 1/10

Trends in Food, Clothing and Entertainment

What They Have in Common and How They Affect Your Future