Ingrid Newkirk in PETA's early days (top left); Mollie Katzen at Moosewood Restaurant (top right); Erewhon market embodies the '70's-style natural-food-store aesthetic (middle two photos); Turtle Island Foods founder Seth Tibbot beside his first tempeh incubator, 1980.

From Hippie to Hip

Vegetarianism has moved from the margins to the mainstream, from counterculture to consumer culture. VN travels back in time to chart the course of the ever-evolving veg movement. *By Mat Thomas*

YOUR AVERAGE VEGETARIAN IN 2008 HAS it pretty good. Not so long ago, people who identified as veg were relegated to the fringes of society, and few people even knew what a "vegan" was. Tofu, soymilk, and other staple foods we take for granted were virtually unknown. Back then, the medical establishment confidently extolled the nutritional benefits of a diet rich in meat and dairy, and even most vegetarians still believed complementing proteins was a matter of life and death.

Times certainly have changed—mainly for the better. In the last decade, vegetarianism and, especially, veganism, have become increasingly visible in mainstream culture, while more and better-tasting meatless options continue to show up on supermarket shelves and restaurant menus. There are also more social institutions to support the veg lifestyle today—from vegetarian societies to vegan eateries—as well as an increased awareness and acceptance of vegetarianism among the general public. Though we are still a minority living in a carnivorous civilization, vegetarians now have more resources, an improved image, and a voice.

Comparing vegetarians' day-to-day experiences from previous eras (in this case, since the '60s) with the present is one way to measure our progress as a movement. Though admittedly more impressionistic than exhaustive, this ground-level historical perspective could illuminate the way toward further acceptance of plant-based eating. VegNews has, therefore, invited some of the people who witnessed and helped create vegetarian history to share their perceptions of the past in light of the present day.

The '60s and '70s: The Vegetarian Underground

Freya Dinshah was born into a vegetarian family in England. Her earliest memories include outdoor lunches with a local vegetarian group followed by trips down the River Mole in a rowboat to a picnic site for tea time. "Over the years, the boat began to leak," she recalls. "Some rowed and some bailed."

It seems an apt metaphor for the vegetarian movement during her adolescence in the 1950s, at least in America. Following World War II, unprecedented economic prosperity, suburbanization, and the introduction of factory farming drove meat and dairy consumption to an all-time high.

> "There is properly no history; only biography."
> *—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Aside from the occasional beatnik or "health nut," there weren't many vegetarians around in those days.

A rarity among rarities, Freya Dinshah became a vegan at age 18. This was in 1959, and even *she* was not exactly sure how her health would fare. But that same year, she moved to the United States and married Jay Dinshah, founder of the American Vegan Society, an organization that played a pioneering role in bringing plant-based eating to the States.

Though veganism was still in its infancy in the early '60s, the Dinshahs enjoyed a far-ranging diet—from brown rice and dal to homemade deep-dish pizza with soy cheese—even without all of today's modern culinary conveniences. They made their own almond milk, as well as "ice cream" (by putting bananas and cashew nuts in the blender and freezing the results). The only meat alternatives available at the time came in cans and were made by Loma Linda, a company run by Seventh Day Adventists, although the Dinshahs weren't fans of faux meats and therefore didn't seek them out.

Founded in 1960, the American Vegan Society was one of the catalysts for a vegetarian revival that accompanied the countercultural revolution later in the decade. A growing disillusionment with the established order caused millions in the US and around the world to question authority and explore radical ideas and lifestyles in rebellion against consumerist conformity and political hypocrisy. Hippies, anti-war activists, civil rights advocates, labor organizers, feminists, and others embraced vegetarianism for various reasons, often as a protest against violence and killing—whether it was taking place in slaughterhouses, Vietnam, or the segregated South.

One sub-counterculture in which vegetarianism flourished and had significant influence was the Back to the Land Movement, which sought self-reliance as an ideal, often through communal living. The most famous vegetarian commune was The Farm, founded in 1971 by an acid-dropping English professor/guru from San Francisco State University named Stephen Gaskin. After attending Gaskin's "Monday Night Class" on drugs and spirituality in the Haight-Ashbury district, about 200 of his disciples followed him in a caravan of psychedelic buses to Tennessee, where they created The Farm.

The collective had about 1,200 acres of arable land, on which they grew soybeans to feed their 1,000-plus residents and made Ice Bean, perhaps the first soy ice cream sold in America. The Farm also inspired the founders

Veg By Numbers

From Crock-Pot stews and church-basement potlucks to haute cuisine and internet activism, vegetarianism has definitely come a long, long way.

1927
The Vegetarian Society of Washington, DC—the nation's first—is formed

1939
Worthington Foods, then called Special Foods, produces the first commercially available meat analogs

1944
Donald Watson coins the word "vegan" and forms The Vegan Society in England

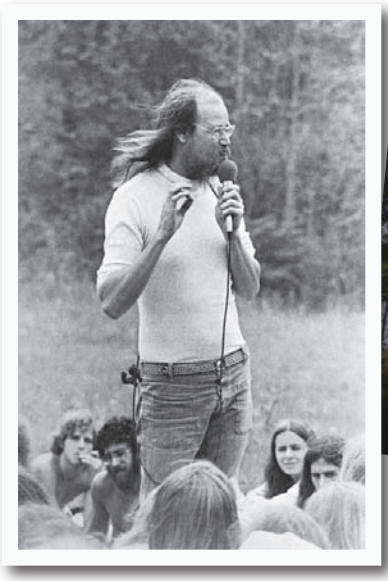
of contemporary soyfood companies—including Lightlife, Wildwood, and others—who had spent time there honing their culinary skills. Many early vegetarians, including Seth Tibbott, founder of Turtle Island Foods and inventor of Tofurky, also credit The Farm for bringing tempeh to the US.

Pure Vegetarian

Tibbott became a vegetarian in 1971 after reading Frances Moore Lappé's *Diet for a Small Planet*, a groundbreaking bestseller published that year. Lappé popularized the argument that a plant-based diet was more resource-efficient than a meat-based one, and that vegetarianism could help end world hunger. She also promoted another theory that vegetarians had to eat "complementary" foods in the right combinations in order to get adequate amounts of protein.

While the protein myth still persists, Tibbott is quick to point out that Lappé didn't start it; rather, she was challenging the conventional wisdom of the day that regarded meat as a "perfect" food associated with strength, health, and vigor. Nevertheless, vegetarians of the '70s (and well into the '80s) spent a lot of time and energy painstakingly preparing their meals for supposed protein completeness. It was partially this exhausting effort which led Tibbott to soyfoods, tempeh, and The Farm.

Tibbott was never a resident at The Farm, but he visited occasionally and learned how to ferment tempeh spores under their tutelage. The American Vegan Society notwithstanding, he remembers that, "The Farm was adamantly vegan, but no one used that word. Back then, people who didn't eat meat, dairy, or eggs were called 'pure vegetarians,' even amongst themselves. I don't think I even heard the term 'vegan' until the mid-'80s."



Steven Gaskin (top left): The Farm founder and bona fide hippie. The Farm today (top right), complete with modern architecture.

The first World Vegetarian Congress held in the US earns front-page status in the *Vegetarian Voice*.

Turtle Island Foods brings faux meat production into the 21st century at its Hood River, Ore., headquarters.

Photos, p.40: Erewhon Market: Courtesy of Erewhon Market; Mollie Katzen/Moosewood Restaurant: J. M. Barringer; Ingrid Newkirk: PETA; **pgs 44-45:** John Robbins: Courtesy of Robbins Family; Carol J. Adams: Bruce Buchanan; Tom Regan: Bryan Regan; **pg.47:** Bruce Friedrich: PETA; Erica Meier: Compassion Over Killing; Nathan Runkle: Mercy for Animals

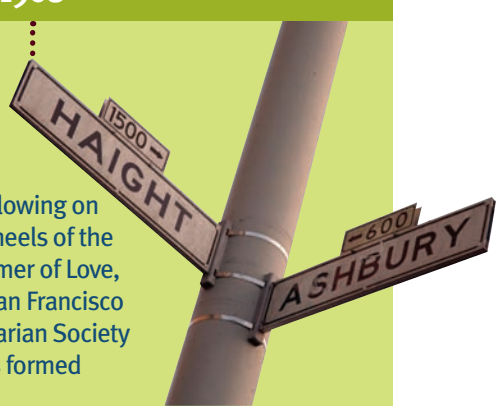
1945
The Toronto Vegetarian Association—North America's largest veg society—is formed

1950s
Factory farming practices are broadly implemented on North American farms, putting meat and dairy consumption at an all-time high

1960
Jay and Freya Dinshah establish the American Vegan society in Malaga, New Jersey

1964
Ruth Harrison publishes *Animal Machines*

1968
Following on the heels of the Summer of Love, the San Francisco Vegetarian Society is formed



Best-selling author and activist John Robbins in the '80s (left) and with his family in 2006 (above).

While the folks at The Farm were busy experimenting with soy foods that originated in Asia centuries before, the Moosewood Collective in Ithaca, NY, began transforming American vegetarian cuisine through their restaurant and cookbooks. One of the original members of the Collective, Susan Harville, got a job at the restaurant shortly after it opened in 1973.

Harville remembers that, "Around Ithaca at the time, there was only one vegetarian restaurant, Cosmos, which was this big, funky, cavernous room with communal tables, so you never knew who you would be sitting with. The cook would come out of the kitchen and serve the entire group the same meal from a wok. The quality varied and it certainly was a scene, but I liked eating there."

At first, Moosewood was "Worker Managed, Worker Owned," as it said on its t-shirts, and, like The Farm, some members lived in communes. This cooperative spirit infused Moosewood's vegetarian cookbooks, which are different from most others because the recipes are created, developed, and tested by a large group of people instead of just one or two individual authors. There weren't many vegetarian cookbooks then, but the chefs at Moosewood drew inspiration from classics like *The Vegetarian Epicure* and *The Tassajara Bread Book*. They also "Moosewoodized" traditional recipes by removing the meat and, later, lowering the fat content.

The Collective also incorporated many ethnic dishes into its repertoire, both in its restaurant and cookbooks, long before large numbers of Americans had been exposed to foreign foods. Harville recollects that, "When the restaurant first opened, yogurt was still considered exotic, and customers didn't know how to pronounce 'hummus' or 'guacamole' because they'd never heard of them." By the time Moosewood was world-famous, they'd already helped to expand the vegetarian palate and expose Americans to meatless food from around the world.

The Feminist Mystique

Carol J. Adams became a vegetarian in 1974. As a graduate student in the cosmopolitan university town of Cambridge, Mass., she had plenty of ethnic restaurants offering veg options to choose from, including Chinese, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and Indian. Adams gave up eating meat after hunters shot her horse, Jimmy. This traumatic experience made her realize the hamburger she ate later that evening was actually part of a dead animal. But it was feminist theory, which critiqued the unequal power relations between genders in our society, that had already provided the tools of critical analysis she needed to grasp the radical implications of vegetarianism.

"It is said that feminists don't see different things than other people—they see the same things differently," says Adams, who started writing *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, a landmark book for both feminism and vegetarianism, in 1975. She sought out and found other feminists who also rejected humanity's domination of non-human species, and became housemates with two of them to support her new dietary choice. They shopped at natural food stores like Erewhon, which, typical of the time, mainly featured baskets of bulk grains and beans, as well as produce and other unprocessed items, but not many of the packaged vegan foods sold at natural grocers and supermarkets today.

Like the Dinshahs, Adams preferred home-cooked meals made with unprocessed

1971

San Francisco State University professor Stephen Gaskin founds The Farm—a vegetarian commune in Summertown, Tennessee

1970s

The Farm develops Ice Bean—the first soy ice cream sold in the United States

1971

Frances Moore Lappé publishes *Diet for a Small Planet*

1973

Moosewood Restaurant opens in Ithaca, New York

ingredients. "There were still few meat alternatives being sold in the early-to-mid-'70s, even in health food stores," remembers Adams, "and those that were available weren't necessarily appetizing." Soymilk came in glass bottles or gable-topped wax-cardboard cartons, and tasted "very, very beany," says Adams, turning her off of soymilk for years to come.

Adams was immersed in a community just as much as those at The Farm and Moosewood were, but hers centered around feminist activity. "We were vegetarian for socialist, anti-war, ethical, and health reasons. It was a vibrant and exciting community. I felt like Gertrude Stein must have felt when she lived in Paris."

Author-activist-feminist Carol J. Adams (below) and animal rights activist Tom Regan (right) continue to inspire generations of vegetarians.

Animal Abolition

More than a decade after feminism's second wave swept through the national consciousness, animal rights burst onto the world scene, expanding vegetarianism's appeal and potential. Activists took sporadic action on behalf of animals throughout the 20th century, but the event widely credited with sparking the modern animal rights movement was the publication of Animal Liberation in 1975. In this seminal work, Australian philosopher Peter Singer argued that it is unethical and unnecessary for humans to kill members of other species—even for food—making vegetarianism a moral imperative.

Tom Regan, author of *Empty Cages: Facing the Challenge of Animal Rights* and other books, notes the irony that Singer is often called "the father of the animal rights movement" even though, as a Utilitarian, he is explicitly *against* animal rights. Therefore, strictly speaking, Regan is actually the most prominent contemporary proponent of animal rights philosophy. He advocates veganism because killing animals for food violates their rights as sentient individuals who are, as he phrases it, "subjects of a life."

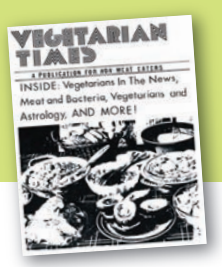
Regan and his wife Nancy became vegetarians in 1973 and, even in Raleigh, NC, they were able to find vegetarian restaurants. "One was a place run out of the Baptist Student Center, if you can believe that, and the other was counterculture all the way," Regan recalls. But vegetarians found each other, holding potlucks in church basements and hosting picnic lunches where they shared food and swapped recipes.

While vegetarians created their own communities for support and camaraderie, becoming vegetarian also alienated the Regans from mainstream society, to a large extent, because many people did not understand or accept their choice. "We lost some friends over our veg choice," Regan recollects. "But we also made quite a few new ones. And family-wise, everyone was tolerant even if they didn't quite get it, so in that way we were very fortunate."

In 1975, the same year *Animal Liberation* appeared, American vegetarian and animal rights activists from around the nation gathered in a much larger sense at the 23rd World Vegetarian Congress in Orono, Maine, a milestone event in movement history organized by the American Vegan Society. More than 1,500 people attended the two-week-long Congress, the first one held in the US, breaking attendance records for conferences of any kind in the 20th century. Many of the most prominent vegetarian and animal rights leaders of then and today met for the first time at Orono, where they discussed tactical strategies for promoting vegetarianism and formed lasting alliances. Newspapers, radio stations, and all three major television

1974

Vegetarian Times magazine goes to press with its premiere issue

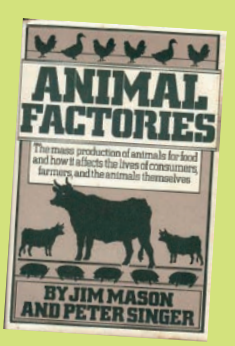


1974

The North American Vegetarian Society (NAVS) is established in anticipation of hosting the 23rd World Vegetarian Congress in Orono, Maine, in 1975

1980

Jim Mason and Peter Singer publish *Animal Factories*



1980

PETA, now the world's leading animal rights group, is founded by Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco

1981

FARM (Farm Animal Reform Movement) is officially organized

networks of the time covered the convention, drawing unprecedented national attention and new adherents to vegetarianism.

Vegetarians also made headway throughout the '70s by finding new means to communicate their message to a growing constituency. Magazines like *Vegetarian World, Vegetarian Voice*, and *Vegetarian Times* (originally printed as a four-page, typewritten, black-and-white newsletter) provided readers with news, information, recipes, product ads, and more, well before the advent of personal computers and the internet. Others were writing books, printing and distributing brochures, and hosting vegetarian festivals as the decade came to a close.

Farm Sanctuary co-founders Gene Baur and Lorri Bauston sold veggie hot dogs at events around the country in the early '80s. In the mid-'80s, the pair founded their first animal sanctuary in the backyard of their rented row house in Delaware.

The '80s and '90s: Life in the Fast Lane

American culture shifted rapidly toward political conservatism and consumerism in the '80s with the election of pro-business Republican president Ronald Reagan. People started buying more material goods and working longer hours, leaving less time for home-cooked family meals and fueling growth in the fast-food industry. Vegetarianism adapted to the changing social environment by entering the marketplace with new products, offering convenient alternatives to meat and other animal products as the pace of American life started to accelerate.

In the early '80s, however, even tofu was still only available at health food stores and Chinese grocers, and would not show up at mainstream supermarkets until at least the middle of the decade. Soymilk was also a rare commodity throughout much of the '80s. Evelyn Kimber, president of the Boston Vegetarian Society, recollects that, in 1985, only two brands were sold at Bread & Circus, which was then the Northeast's largest natural grocer (later bought out by Whole Foods Market). "One was quart size and frozen. The other was in a soft-foil pouch and sweetened like a milk shake."

The latter was, most likely, EdenSoy, which was introduced in 1983 and cited by several interviewees as the first palatable soymilk they'd tasted. In the late '80s, aseptic Tetra Brik containers were a giant leap forward for soymilk, as they extended the product's shelf life by months and kept it fresher, longer, even after opening and refrigeration. More brands appeared in the late '80s, each with a slightly different taste, giving consumers an increasing number of choices.

Culture Club

While American society at large embraced the status quo during much of the '80s, countercultural values remained an integral part of the veg community. Gene Baur, co-founder and president of Farm Sanctuary, the country's first farmed animal sanctuary, remembers that, when he went vegan in 1985, "The movement was composed of a higher representation of stereotypical crunchy-hippie types" compared to today. Notably, Baur's sociological observations are rendered no less true by the fact that he spent part of the decade selling veggie dogs from a VW microbus at Grateful Dead concerts.

The culture that vegetarians created themselves was an important source of support and networking for those at odds with conventional social norms. Jo Stepaniak, author of *The Vegan Sourcebook* and 15 other books and a vegan since 1981, says that attending the North American Vegetarian Society's Vegetarian Summerfest, an annual five-day festival started in 1974, was crucial to her development as an advocate. "Summerfest brought me in touch—up close and in person—with amazing vegans from around

1981

Charles Stahler and Debra Wasserman form The Baltimore Vegetarian Society, which later becomes The Vegetarian Resource Group

1982

Dharma's Restaurant—originally McDharma's—opens near Santa Cruz, California

1983

The Chicago Diner opens its doors in the Windy City

1983

Keith Akers publishes *The Vegetarian Sourcebook*

1983

Soy Dairy-brand tofu hits mainstream supermarket shelves

the world. Such experiences provided a real sense of global community and the bond of friendship with like-minded people."

But a new type of vegetarian culture also emerged in the '80s—especially concerning the forms of advocacy used to promote it. In particular, the publicity-stunt strategy of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), founded in 1980, reflected an increasingly sensationalized and celebrity-obsessed mass-media environment typified by innovations like tabloid talk shows and MTV. Adapted from the flamboyantly theatrical late-'60s/early-'70s radical activism of Yippies Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, PETA's in-your-face approach to vegetarian action remains controversial today—from parading Playboy models in lettuce bikinis to anti-milk "Got Beer?" billboard ads.

PETA's vice president of international grassroots campaigns, Bruce Friedrich, is one of the group's most eminent and outspoken activists. He was even a contestant on the 2004 reality television show *American Candidate*, which he used as a platform to promote veganism. But he remembers that being vegan at Grinnell College in rural Iowa in 1987 was a mixed bag. "It was pretty easy to eat at the campus cafeteria, though eating out in town was challenging, and the co-ops were small, hole-in-the-wall, often dirty places."

The same year Friedrich went vegan saw the publication of *Diet for a New America*, a book that inspired countless people to take up the veg lifestyle. When its author, John Robbins, went vegan in 1969, he was a student at the University of California, Berkeley, being groomed to take over the family business (the Baskin-Robbins ice cream company). Instead, he blazed his own trail. Robbins remembers that "writing *Diet* immensely altered my understanding of vegan issues. In doing the research that led to the book, I was overwhelmed with the power of how much better our world could be if we were more compassionate and thoughtful in our food choices."

Standing on the shoulders of Frances Moore Lappé and others, Robbins compellingly presented a holistic way of thinking about food that clearly drew connections between the health of people, animals, and the planet. It was a message that many were ready to hear by the late '80s, when economic recession in the US coincided with earthshaking world events like the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Empire. With images of liberation being broadcast around the world and environmentalism a topic of heated debate, the decade ended with a sense that things were changing right before our eyes.

Erica Meier, the executive director of Compassion Over Killing, became a vegetarian in that heady year, 1989, when she was a 15-year-old high school student in Syracuse, New York. Four years later, Meier went vegan while attending Clark University in Massachusetts, where she joined the animal rights group on campus. "It was a small and inactive club, but at least I started meeting like-minded people," she recalls. Meier interned at PETA during the summer of 1995, and remembers that "It was amazing to be around so many other vegans and dedicated activists. Knowing there were other vegans out there gave me a sense of belonging."

Another grassroots activist who went vegan as a teenager in the late '80s is Lauren Ornelas, founder and director of the Food Empowerment Project. Ornelas met other vegetarians by attending protests and outreach events, and says, "I felt like the movement

The new guard: PETA's Bruce Friedrich, Compassion Over Killing's Erica Meier, and Mercy For Animals' Nathan Runkle.

1983

EdenSoy introduces what is considered by many to be the first palatable soymilk

1984

Bart Potenza purchases Sunny's Health Food Store and Juice Bar in Manhattan, which evolves into The Candle Café

1985

FARM launches the first annual Great American Meatout

1985

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) is founded in Washington, DC

1985

Gardenburger launches in Portland, Oregon

From modest beginnings, Whole Foods has reached icon status in the natural-foods industry.

community was very close then, perhaps because we were so few in number or just getting started. It was an exciting time when everyone really tried to work together, and the focus was on getting things done and making a difference."

Green Grocers

In the early '90s, most natural grocers were still small, independent, local niche businesses—and few and far between. Whole Foods Market was one of them, having not yet become the corporate dynamo it is today in more than 270 locations worldwide. The original Whole Foods Market opened in Austin, Texas, in 1980 with fewer than 20 employees and the company only had four stores by decade's end. However, it expanded rapidly in the '90s by absorbing health food stores and chains around the country, as well as opening stores in new markets.

With large, clean, well-stocked stores, Whole Foods attracted mainstream consumers to natural foods by presenting it in a comfortable setting that felt both new and warmly familiar. From its earliest days, the company was a staunch supporter of soyfood businesses, giving entrepreneurs national distribution when supermarkets wouldn't touch them, thus playing a crucial role in making vegetarian alternatives available to the general public. It was largely because mainstream grocery stores were losing customers to Whole Foods that they began offering a wider selection of veg (as well as organic) choices in recent years.

As the natural foods industry expanded in the '90s, vegetarianism got a boost from medical and nutritional professionals. Doctors such as Neal Barnard and Dean Ornish published groundbreaking studies showing the health benefits of plant-based diets and, in 1993, the American Dietetic Association released a position paper approving of veganism for the first time in its 90-year history. The US Department of Agriculture followed suit in 1995 with their *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

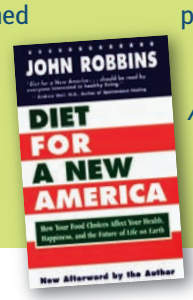
Vegetarianism made its way into pop culture in the '90s with the appearance of vegetarian characters on television sitcoms such as "Roseanne," "Friends," and "The Simpsons." The hit movie *Babe*, released in 1995, made millions of kids see pigs as too cute to eat. It was also in the late '90s that a new form of interactive media—the world wide web—came into widespread use, enabling people to instantaneously access vast amounts of information, shop for hip vegan fashions and personal care products not tested on animals, and create their own websites. By the time Y2K rolled around, the term "vegan" was finally making its way into the American lexicon as people became increasingly health-conscious, and more high-profile personalities took up the lifestyle and the cause.

1986

Farm Sanctuary, the world's first farm animal shelter, is established

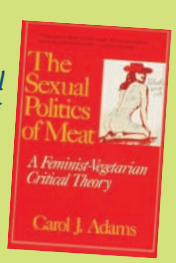
1987

John Robbins publishes *Diet for a New America*



1990

Carol J. Adams publishes *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

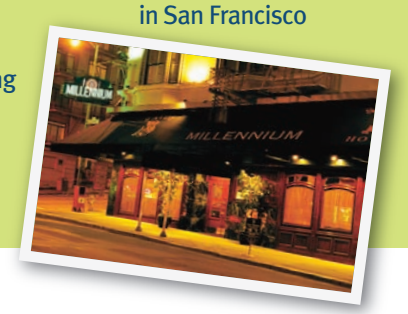


1993

The American Dietetic Association publishes a paper approving of veganism

1994

Millennium Restaurant, with Eric Tucker at the helm, opens in San Francisco



The New Millennium and Beyond: Dawning of a New Age?

Around 2000, an increasing variety of soyfoods began appearing on supermarket shelves. New Paltz, NY-based cookbook author and illustrator Nava Atlas appreciates the abundance of meatless offerings. However, she thinks there is an "over-reliance on soy products, mainly because they taste so good and are so convenient."

On the other hand, meat and dairy alternatives are part of a revolution in veg values. Atlas, who was a vegetarian for 25 years before she, her husband, and two teenage sons went vegan in 2002, says, "I don't really remember how this happened, but within the realm of this movement, it seems like being vegetarian is not enough of a stand, somehow. Members of the younger generation seem to understand that. But it's disappointing that there aren't more vegans, or at least vegetarians, when information is so much more widely available on all of the benefits."

Many books and magazine articles have been written about plant-based diets in recent years, but it is innovations in computer technology that drive the Information Age. Bolstered by increasingly powerful processors and proliferating mobile devices, Web 2.0's combination of personal expression and social networking is creating truly global communities of individuals linked by common interests and goals. The internet also enables people to watch videos and even post their own, making online media a powerful vehicle for those trying to expose animal cruelty on factory farms.

Access to information is crucial to raising public awareness of food issues, particularly when it comes to eating animals. This seems to be part of the growth of vegetarianism among those engaged in companion-animal rescue work. The intensified efforts of farmed animal advocates in the last decade or so may account for more humane workers going vegetarian because they have seen that there is no fundamental difference between eating a chicken or pig than a cat or dog.

Christine Dorchak, a longtime vegan, is founder and president of GREY2K USA, the proverbial David to the greyhound racing industry's Goliath. "Since I work in the animal protection movement, most people I meet these days expect that I am at least vegetarian," she says. "I've also noticed that in the general culture, there is a great deal of acceptance now and respect for individual choices compared to years ago."

Bank recently projected that worldwide meat consumption will double by 2020 when the human population reaches eight billion. Pollution, resource depletion, and global warming from industrialized animal agriculture are already threatening to destroy our planet's life support systems, making the vegan mission more urgent than ever before.

Yet there are many signs of hope today. In the last decade, sales of meat- and dairy-alternatives have more than doubled, and the market is expected to grow in coming years. Polls indicate that more than one-third of the total US population is reducing their meat consumption (mainly for health reasons). Clearly the number of occasional vegetarians (or flexitarians) is rising, and some are surely transitioning to a meatless diet, however slowly.

> "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." —*Margaret Mead*

Lee Hall—author, legal director for Connecticut-based Friends of Animals, and a vegan since 1983—has noticed this attitude change in people around her, too. "There are people in my life who aren't vegan, but at least nowadays they understand what it is, and admire my ethical commitment. Sometimes they say, 'Although I'm not there, I'm glad you are. It's a great example.' They eat vegan food when we get together, which not only supports me, but also represents the kind of society in which herbivores can flourish and be respected."

Even though there has been much positive change for vegetarians and vegans since the Summer of Love, the vast majority of people continue to eat animal products. The World

What does the future hold—the next 10, 20, 40 years? It depends on us. Just as vegetarians who advanced the movement in earlier times have affected the choices we have today, our actions and the history we make within our lifetimes will create the world for generations most recently born and those yet to come. History teaches that everyone can do something to help make that world more like the one we wish we already lived in. And, as always, there's no better time to do it than right now. VN

Mat Thomas *lives in San Francisco and works as a staff writer/editor for In Defense of Animals. Read more of Mat's writing at animalrighter.org.*

1996

WhiteWave's Silk soymilk makes a splash when it hits supermarket shelves

1996

Howard Lyman appears on "Oprah" and is subsequently sued by Texas cattle producers

2000

VegNews debuts as a tabloid newspaper

2000

The Toronto Vegetarian Association hosts the 34th World Vegetarian Congress