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Subject: SELF-ABS-OR-BED - How Farming Animals Impacts the Environment:

Memo to all VOYEURS:

Marie and I are not quite vegan in our vegetarian diet now going on 18 months that of course improves what was already a very healthy sex life which is all you think, that helped allow us to make the very quick transition from meat eaters, but maybe your children and grandchildren might see this Brown University study as one way to wake you up as it suggests that the world being vegetarian-vegan reduces more pollution than getting rid of all the cars.

How Farming Animals Impacts the Environment: Consuming the Planet Bite by Bite

Global meat consumption has risen nearly 500% since the 1950s.¹ The average American now consumes nearly 900 pounds of animal products every year,² and 10 billion farmed animals are slaughtered each year in the US alone.³ Over 95% of these animals are confined in horrific factory farms like the one pictured at right. This unprecedented consumption of animal products has major environmental impacts. It wastes valuable resources, harms wildlife, destroys vast quantities of ecologically valuable open space, and contributes to air and water pollution and global warming. **In 2006, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) report *Livestock's Long Shadow* stated that animal agriculture is “one of the top two or three significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.”**⁴ For example, it causes more greenhouse gas emissions than even transportation, and is the leading source of three of the six greenhouse gasses.⁵



Wasted Resources: Our Future Squandered

Animal agriculture is an energy intensive, water depleting industry, consuming over one third the fossil fuels and nearly half the water used in the US yearly.⁶ The feeding, housing, transport, slaughter, and packaging of animal products require heavy equipment, complex machinery, and massive amounts of energy and water. **The USDA calculates that it takes nearly 11 calories of fossil fuel to produce 1 calorie of meat, poultry, or fish protein.**⁷ By contrast, soy, a complete protein, is 45 times more energy efficient.⁸ Water use is also extremely inefficient. Beef production alone accounts for more water use in the US than all fruit and vegetable production combined.⁹ China, India, North Africa, and the US all use freshwater for meat production faster than it can be replenished.¹⁰ Because of animal agriculture, we are headed for a catastrophic drinking and irrigation water shortage. Lastly, animal agriculture is the #1 cause of erosion, polluting waterways and depleting soil needed for plant growth.¹¹



A World of Suffering for ALL Animals

Although animal agriculture only provides 17% of the world's calories, it uses 30% of the world's land surface.¹² Globally, every minute, the equivalent of 7 football fields of land is bulldozed to make room for livestock.¹³ In the US alone, over 825,000 square miles are used exclusively for animal agriculture.¹⁴ This use of the land causes forests to be cut, grasslands to be trampled, and water to be polluted, harming native species. In the Amazon, 70% of “previous forested land is occupied by pastures, and feedcrops cover a large part of the remainder.”¹⁵ The world's most diverse ecosystem is being destroyed for meat and dairy production. According to Cornell ecologist David Pimentel, PhD, animal agriculture causes 80% of world deforestation,¹⁶ depriving animals of habitat. Grazing is the leading cause of

endangered species.¹⁷ Millions of coyotes, wild horses, wolves, buffalo, elk, wild sheep, and deer were and are killed in the U.S. to make room for food animals. Fishing causes equal devastation: over 25% of all sea animals caught every year are “bycatch”, non-target animals injured or killed then simply discarded.¹⁸ Fishing kills hundreds of thousands of sharks, dolphins, whales, mammals, and threatened and endangered sea birds yearly.¹⁹

Pollution: Water, Air, Human Disease

Animal agriculture causes enormous pollution problems. **The EPA estimates that the industry causes more water pollution than all other sources combined.**²⁰ In the US, the industry produces 5 tons of manure every year for every person.²¹ The manure, combined with runoff of pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, and other chemicals, regularly overflows into streams and rivers. This water pollution causes miscarriages, exposure to carcinogens, and outbreaks of bacteriological diseases such as pfisteria, giardia, and cryptosporidium. Animal agriculture is the leading cause of ammonia and nitrous oxide emissions, increasing acid rain and global warming, and killing aquatic life.²²



More Trouble Down on the Farm

People living near factory farms suffer a wide range of health problems from respiratory problems to permanent brain damage.²³ Numerous health problems from CJD (human mad cow disease) to bird flu to pfisteria are caused by animal agriculture. **Pesticide use is so common that 90% of human exposure to dioxin, a teratogen and one of the deadliest carcinogens, comes from animal products.**²⁴ And pervasive disease problems have led agribusiness to turn to genetic engineering and irradiation, causing a new set of environmental problems.



University of Chicago geophysicists Gidon Eshel and Pamela Martin calculate that each American meat eater produces one and a half tons more greenhouse gasses every year than each vegan. Eshel and Martin calculate that the reductions caused by becoming vegan outweigh the reductions caused by switching from driving a mid-size sedan to driving a hybrid.²⁵ Overall, animal agriculture causes 18% of all anthropogenic (human-caused) greenhouse gas emissions, and is the leading cause of methane, nitrous

oxide, and ammonia emissions.²⁶ According to Dr. James Hansen, Director of NASA's climate change studies, emissions of these three gases trap far more heat than CO₂.²⁷ Our addiction to animal products is changing our very climate.

Real Solutions Needed

One oft-proposed solution is organic or free range meat production. This will not alleviate the problems—habitat depletion, pollution, loss of wildlife, excess energy and water consumption, and the continuing unnecessary production and death of billions of animals. Ammonia and methane are produced by ALL animal agriculture. Industrialized animal production and increased consumption of animal products have gone hand-in-hand, and it's not feasible to imagine that most consumers will be able to pay the much higher prices often charged for organic/free range flesh. Veganism is the real solution: a 2004 study by the US Department of Energy found that dairy produces 29% of non-carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions, which account for about half of total greenhouse gas emissions, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization stated that dairy produces more greenhouse gas emissions per day than pigs, poultry (meat and egg laying) and sheep combined.²⁸ A Cornell University, New York dairy study proved that over 60% of dairy greenhouse gas emissions come from manure and cattle digestion, which would all be avoided by being vegan.²⁹ Furthermore, so much additional land would be needed that there is simply no feasible way for all farm animals to “range freely.”



Go Vegan—for the Planet, the Animals & YOU!

A plant-based diet offers the only viable environmental solution because it consumes far fewer resources—land, food, water, and fossil fuels. Depending on the type of meat, **it takes 6-17 times more land to feed the average American meat eater than to feed a vegetarian.**³⁰ Brown University's World Hunger Program estimates that switching to a vegan diet could feed twice as many humans as one in which 25% of calories come from meat³¹: US farm animals are fed enough soy and grains to feed the US population 5 times over.³² Being vegetarian also saves 1 acre of trees a year,³³ and soy protein requires half the water needed to produce chicken protein and 1/8th the water needed to produce beef protein.³⁴ **Lastly, a person who lives 70 years as a vegan will save nearly 11,000 gallons of gas³⁵ and prevent over 100 tons of greenhouse gas emissions.**³⁶ We all need to make changes to save our planet. Eliminating animal products is the best, easiest, most humane and cost effective way to do this. Go vegan to boycott cruelty & protect the Earth!