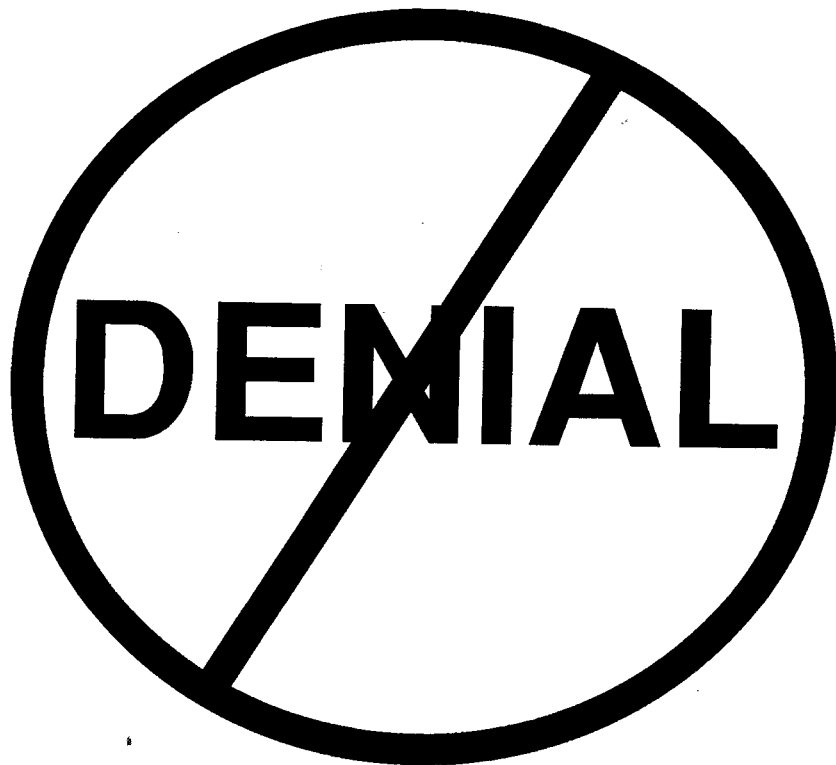


NO DENIAL!

A Handbook for Becoming a Socially,
Environmentally, and Personally Responsible
Citizen of Planet Earth



by Neil S. Cohen
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FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPANDING PUBLIC
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OUR FOOD CHOICES: A CRITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Our power lies in our deepest human responses.
Our power does not lie in looking the other way.*

John Robbins

When it comes to telling somebody what they should or should not eat, food can become a very touchy subject. Our eating habits and food preferences are deeply rooted within cultural as well as emotional factors. Rather than putting out a lot of "shoulds," let's simply explore why our food choices, in this time of environmental crisis, are a new and critical responsibility.

With new medical and nutritional findings, we are finally becoming aware of just how significantly our food choices affect our health. It is coming to light that those same choices also have a considerable impact upon our environment and the balance of global food resources as well. It is time for all of us to understand just how it is that our nation's food choices have such profound repercussions upon our planet, our bodies, and our minds.

How does eating meat relate to the balance of global food resources? Since 80 percent of the corn, 95 percent of the oats, and almost all of the soybeans grown in the U.S. are consumed by livestock instead of directly by people, the habit of eating meat is a factor contributing to the imbalance of our world's food resources. One billion, three hundred million (1,300,000,000) people could be adequately fed by the grain and soybeans eaten by livestock in the United States annually! For the "feed cost" of an eight-ounce steak, 45-50 people could each be fed a full cup of cooked cereal grains. If Americans were to reduce their meat consumption by just 10 percent, it would free over 12 million tons of grain annually for human consumption. That by itself would be enough to feed every human being who will starve to death on our planet this year. Twenty thousand pounds of potatoes can be grown on just 1 acre of land. Only 165 pounds of beef can be grown on that same acre of land! Do you see how out of balance the utilization of our nation's potential food resources are?

How does eating meat relate to the deforestation problem? In the United States alone, we have converted approximately 260 million acres of forest into crop land which is now being used to produce America's wasteful, meat-based diet style. The clearing and burning of rainforest land for beef cattle pasture is one of the largest factors contributing to the destruction of the tropical rainforests, especially in Central America and Brazil. The beef produced there is much cheaper than domestic meat and is exported to the United States for use in processed beef products such as hamburgers sold at fast-food outlets, luncheon meats, pet food, baby food, sausage, and frozen dinners. Deforestation for the cheap hamburger! Almost 70 percent of the rainforests in Central American countries have been cleared to raise beef. At the present rates of deforestation for beef and other commercial uses, virtually all of the accessible tropical forests of Latin America will be gone by the end of the century. In the United States, it is estimated that in approximately 30-50 years not a single tree will remain standing.

How does eating meat relate to our health and well-being? It is well established by health professionals and doctors alike that eating animal foods (meat, dairy products, eggs) is extremely

detrimental to human health. This cannot be over-emphasized. Very basically, the protein, fat, and cholesterol from animal foods is foreign and toxic to the human system. Eating animals, as well as dairy and eggs, produces harmful metabolic by-products (toxins left over from the digestive process) in the human system. These toxic by-products gradually build up in the body causing numerous health problems and slowly but surely destroy one's health and vitality. Dr. Neal Barnard, President of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, points out, "All the protein, minerals, and vitamins the human body needs are easily obtained from plant sources. The taste for meats and other fatty foods is like a substance abuse to which we are addicted early in life. While we have been struggling - and failing - to cure heart disease and cancer, their primary causes are right under our noses, on the dinner table."

Did you know that anatomically, our human bodies are unlike any carnivorous animal in nature? Our bodies, shown clearly by our type of digestive system and teeth, were simply not designed to handle a carnivorous diet. With all the serious health problems associated with the American diet, with hospitals being full of ailing people and drug companies making profits in the billions, it would seem that the facts regarding the true dietary disposition of human beings would be more widely known and accepted!

The protein in milk (and in most dairy products in general) for instance, is one of the most allergenic proteins known. Because dairy products are pasteurized (heated to high temperatures), they are mostly indigestible to the human system. Twenty percent of white children and 80 percent of black children do not even have the enzyme (lactase) in their intestines required to digest milk (referred to as lactase inefficiency). This causes a number of health related problems. "Good old" pasteurized vitamin D milk has been cited by nutritional and medical authorities as one of the main causes of health problems such as heart troubles, cataracts, serious allergies, asthma, bronchitis, and hardening of the arteries. Think about the strange fact that human beings are the only species who continues to drink milk beyond infancy, and it is not even the milk of our own species!

Another factor in meat and dairy products affecting our health is the drug and pesticide residues they contain. Approximately 14 percent of all meat and poultry sold may contain illegal and obviously dangerous amounts of the drugs which were administered to the animals, as well as pesticides from the foods they were fed. Several known human carcinogens are commonly added to meat. Arsenic is used in chicken feed, and diethylstilbestrol (DES) is used in a high percentage of the feed given to beef cattle and lambs. Eggs can contain the residues of the antibiotics, stimulants, tranquilizers, fumigants, and hormones from chicken feed. Many of the animals eaten by the public are also diseased from the noxious conditions the animals are exposed to on factory farms. Approximately 30 percent of all pork products are contaminated with toxoplasmosis, a disease caused by parasites which can be passed on to consumers! To battle this problem, cattle, pigs, sheep and other livestock are routinely dipped in or sprayed with a chemical called toxaphene to kill the parasites that breed in the unsanitary conditions of modern factory farms. Toxaphene happens to be a deadly poison. Even in microscopic amounts it is capable of producing cancer and birth defects. Despite the fact that toxaphene can be absorbed through the skin of an animal and retained in its flesh, every day in the U.S. this chemical is administered to the animals whose flesh and milk is sold to the public as food!

It is a fact that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tests only one out of every quarter million slaughtered animals for toxic chemical residues. And it only tests for less than 10 percent of the toxic chemicals known to be present in our nation's meat supply. We desperately need to take responsibility for our own health and the health of our families, because it is doubtful that anyone else is going to.

As you might presume from the few facts given, eating animal products produced by modern factory farming methods and sold through supermarkets greatly increases one's risk of disease. Numerous studies have proven the fact that animal foods considerably raise one's risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, many types of cancer, and numerous other degenerative diseases. In one year, about 1.2 million Americans die from diseases related to meat consumption. A 21 year study done at the Loma Linda University in California found that rates of prostate cancer are more than 3 times higher in men who eat animal products than in men who are vegetarian. Women who eat eggs daily, have 3 times the risk of breast cancer than women who eat eggs less than once per week. A study at the National Cancer Research Institute in Tokyo indicated that breast cancer rates are almost 4 times higher for women who eat meat daily as compared to women who are vegetarian. If you choose to reduce your consumption of meat, dairy products, and eggs by 50 percent, you will reduce your risk of heart attack by 45 percent! If you do not consume saturated fat and cholesterol (the main sources being meat, dairy products, and eggs) there is only a 5 percent risk of dying of disease caused by clogged arteries.

How does eating meat relate to animal suffering? Let's start with the fact that 500,000 animals are killed for meat per hour, and 5 billion are slaughtered annually in the U.S. alone. One quick visit to a slaughterhouse is all it takes to convert just about anybody to a vegetarian diet! The suffering and slaughter of billions of innocent animals that have feelings just as we do cannot be ethically justified.

The inhumane treatment of the animals in modern factory farming methods is a nightmare. As John Robbins mentions in his book, Diet For A New America, "There are powerful interests today who are profiting from the web of repression about modern farming. It is to their advantage that we not know too much, or be too interested in what goes on in factory farms and slaughterhouses. They don't want us to know what actually happens to the animals whose flesh they sell."

Here are just a few of the "inside" facts. Veal is produced by putting baby calves into a stall no larger than their bodies. For the short time they live, the calves never take a step. This technique keeps their muscles from developing and keeps their flesh soft ("Oh, this veal parmesan is so tender"). Veal calves are force-fed an anemia-producing diet so the meat produced is whitish-pink. Nitrofurazone, a recognized carcinogen, and chloramphenicol, which can cause a fatal blood disorder in humans, must be used to keep the baby calves alive because the animals are so unhealthy.

The average dairy cow on a factory farm is chained for most of her life in a large barn with hundreds of other cows. She is treated as nothing more than a biological machine whose sole function is to eat and lactate. Growth hormones make her udders heavy and swollen, and many times they become bruised or even infected from dragging on the ground. When it is time to be milked, vacuum hoses are attached to her udders and they are pumped dry. When her milk production falls below the accepted level, she is sent to the slaughterhouse to become a fast-food hamburger.

Because most of the meat industry considers it "too expensive" to spend an extra 1 cent to utilize a "captive bolt pistol" which renders the animals unconscious before killing them, they are slaughtered while fully conscious. Please understand that cows, lambs, pigs, and other animals we eat as food are highly intelligent, warm-blooded mammals who feel pain and fear just like humans do!

As for chickens, over 3 billion are killed annually in the U.S. for food. These beings are genetically manipulated and bred specifically for either egg-laying or meat. They spend their lives indoors, crammed tightly into steel mesh cages under manipulated artificial lighting. This type of existence is totally alien to their natural instincts and survival patterns. Because the unnatural and highly stressful conditions in which they are kept tend to invoke violent tendencies, chickens are routinely and painfully, "de-beaked" to keep them from hurting each other. Illness, disease, and parasites go undetected; chronic respiratory diseases are common, cancer is the largest killer, and digestive and liver-related diseases occur frequently. To speed their growth process and to keep them from dying from diseases, chickens are pumped full of growth hormones and antibiotics (which end up in their flesh and eggs). When baby chicks are hatched, the males (who do not lay eggs) are considered waste and are promptly plucked up and plopped into a plastic bag to suffocate and die. The stories go on and on.

If you feel that fish is healthier for your body than beef and poultry, you may want to consider the following facts. People in the U.S. consume about 6.3 billion pounds of fish annually. Because of the rising levels of pollution in our world's oceans and rivers, the risk of food poisoning from eating fish is 25 times greater than from eating beef and 16 times greater than from eating poultry or pork! It is almost impossible to find fish anywhere in the waters of the United States that do not have toxic chemicals in their flesh. It is also common for fish to have cancerous tumors and lesions caused from toxic wastes dumped into our oceans. These "cosmetic aberrations" are simply removed before the fish arrive at the market to be sold.

On the ethical side, consider the fact that fish are animals too. Just because they do not show signs of pain in the same ways humans do, it doesn't mean they do not feel it. According to scientists, fish have well-developed brains and nervous systems. It is safe to assume they register and experience pain and fear just as any other vertebrate would!

It should be understood that factory farms producing food for the American public are concerned about profit, not about public health and awareness! This is yet another reason not to trust your personal health matters to anyone else. Take total responsibility for what you eat, because your food choices directly affect your physical, emotional, and mental health for better or worse.

Eating meat cannot be physiologically, ecologically, or ethically justified. At a meeting of the Earth Communications Office (a major Hollywood environmental organization), Dr. Michael Klapper, Scientific Director of the Earthsave Foundation, summed it up quite well: "We have cut down two-thirds of the trees, eroded one-half of the life-sustaining topsoil, and squandered one-half our fresh water supplies - while polluting most of the remaining rivers and groundwater wells with billions of tons of manure, pesticides, herbicides, and other agricultural wastes." He said that the majority of this environmental devastation was and is done to produce a fatty diet based on animal products - "one that has proven itself lethally effective in causing epidemics of clogged arteries, heart attacks, strokes, obesity, high blood pressure, adult-onset diabetes, many forms of cancer, and raising our medical costs astronomically."

Adopting a more vegetarian-oriented diet, or even a completely non-dairy vegetarian diet, is the most potent single act an individual can take at this present time of environmental crisis. This decision alone will help stop the suffering of countless numbers of animals, will radically improve our health and well-being, will reduce our rapid consumption of fossil fuels, will help preserve the precious tropical rainforests and forests, will help stop the mass extinction of the animal and plant

species that live in those forests, and will greatly slow down the destruction of our global environment.

Please don't be afraid to open your heart and mind to the fact that we are destroying our environment and our personal health from eating a meat-based diet. It is much easier to look at the situation now, without denial, and do something about it, than to wait until it is too late! Do not let your heart (or your arteries for that matter) harden any further. Take the next step...stop eating animals.

It is painful to break the shell of repression. It takes courage to see what these poor animals endure. It is painful to see how calloused human beings can become. It can be shattering to see that in our ignorance we have eaten the products of such a system. It takes courage to keep our eyes open to such tragedy, and our hearts open to our deepest human responses.

The feelings that arise when we learn what is being done to today's animals are not signs of weakness. They are proof that there is still hope for us, that we have not totally succumbed to psychic numbing. In a culture that takes indifference and denial for granted, we may fear that our distress at these developments bodes weakness, a signal that we can't cope, evidence that we have a problem. But the distress we feel at what is being done is real, valid, and healthy. It speaks of our commitment to stopping this madness. It is a measure of our humanity.

John Robbins,
from Diet For A New America

Things You Can Do To Make A Difference:

- Try to reduce your consumption of meat and dairy products. They have been directly linked to a variety of life-threatening illnesses, including cancer and heart disease. Add more fresh, raw, enzyme-rich fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, sprouts, whole grains and legumes to your diet. Try to cut down on your meat consumption by 10 to 15 percent at first, then cut down more later.
- Experiment with a few vegetarian meals per week. Try a vegetarian diet style for a few weeks or a month. There are many wonderful vegetarian cookbooks available with creative and delicious recipes (contact Earthsave Foundation, address and phone number given below). Check to see if there are any vegetarian cooking classes being offered in your community.

- Instead of fish, try adding sea vegetables such as kelp, dulse, wakame, and nori to your meals. They are high in protein, vitamins, and minerals (including vitamin B-12, which uninformed doctors will tell you "only comes from meat.")
- Take a big step -- order your next pizza with vegetable toppings instead of meat. Better yet, prepare a soy-cheese pizza for yourself and some friends. (Soy-cheese, though it does contain a dairy by-product called "casein," is a wonderful soy-based alternative to cheese when one is transitioning to a vegetarian lifestyle.)
- Make an effort not to eat at fast-food restaurants which buy their meat from South America where rainforests are destroyed for producing that meat cheaply for export to the United States.
- If you choose to eat animal products, make an effort to buy those products from companies/farms that raise the animals humanely, without the use of chemicals and hormones. If you choose to eat eggs, make an effort to buy eggs produced from "free-range" chickens. Most likely available from health food stores, food co-ops, or farmers' markets.
- Speak to cafeteria personnel in your schools or workplace, and urge them to add healthier foods and vegetarian meals to their menu. See if you can influence your school or office to begin a health food snack bar offering alternatives to processed junk foods.
- For questions about raising your children as vegetarians please refer to the book listed below, Pregnancy, Children And The Vegan Diet, or contact the Earthsave Foundation for further information.

For Further Information Contact:

- **Earthsave Foundation** - 706 Frederick St., Santa Cruz, CA 95062-2205 (408) 423-4069 / For membership information (800) 451-0303. The Earthsave Foundation is a non-profit organization providing education and leadership for transition to more healthful and environmentally sound food choices, non-polluting energy supplies, a wiser use of our natural resources, and respect and compassion for all of life. Becoming a member of Earthsave is a positive step toward supporting this work.
- **People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA)** - P.O. Box 42516, Washington, DC 20015-0516 (301) 770-7444. PETA is the nation's largest animal rights group. They believe that animals are not ours to eat, wear, or experiment on.
- **The North American Vegetarian Society** - P.O. Box 72, Dolgeville, NY 13329 (518) 568-7970. This organization promotes a vegetarian lifestyle and its benefits, and distributes books and educational materials. Write for free information about vegetarianism.

- **The Soyfoods Center** - P.O. Box 234, Lafayette, CA 94549-0234 (415) 283-2991. This company promotes soyfoods as an excellent alternative to meat. Send a self-addressed stamped legal size envelope for free tofu recipes and a free catalog of publications.
- **San Francisco Vegetarian Society** - 1450 Broadway #4, San Francisco, CA 94109 (415) 775-6874. Dedicated to educating the public about the many benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle. Send \$2 for information packet on vegetarianism and meatless menus.
- **Kushi Institute** - 308 Leland Road, Becket, MA 01223 (413) 623-5741. An educational facility assisting people in making positive life-style changes and approaching the subject of food as being the base for health and well-being. Call or write for free literature.
- **Vegetarian Awareness Network/VEGANET** - P.O. Box 50515, Washington, D.C. 20004 (800) USA-VEGE. An all volunteer, social service organization working to increase public awareness of the benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle. Networks nationally utilizing assistance, advocacy, and action projects for educational outreach.
- **Farm Animal Reform Movement** - P.O. Box 30654, Bethesda, MD 20824 (301) 530-1737. FARM educates the American public about the destructive impacts of today's animal factory farming methods upon human health, environmental quality, and animal welfare.
- Book: **Diet For A New America** by John Robbins (nominated for a Pulitzer Prize). One of the most excellent and thorough books of its kind, explaining in graphic detail the impact that a meat-based diet has on our global environment and on our health. This book is available from your local bookstore, health food store, or you can order directly from the Earthsave Foundation (800) 451-0303 (refer to the Earthsave Foundation listing above).
- Book: **Vegan Nutrition: Pure And Simple**, by Dr. Michael Klaper. A practical guide explaining how to transition to a healthier non-animal, cholesterol-free diet; recipes and meal plans included. Available from Earthsave Foundation (address and phone number above).
- Book: **Pregnancy, Children And The Vegan Diet**, by Dr. Michael Klaper. A practical guide for having a healthy pregnancy and raising strong, healthy children on a diet free of animal products. Available from Earthsave Foundation (address and phone number above).
- Book: **Diet For A Small Planet**, by Frances Moore Lappe' (Ballantine Books). Available directly from Earthsave Foundation (800) 451-0303, or from your local bookstore or health food store.
- Book: **Old McDonald's Factory Farm**, by C. David Coats, published by Continuum, New York, NY. Available at your local bookstore.
- Book: **The McDougall Plan**, by John and Mary McDougall. New Century Publishers, Piscataway, NJ.
- Book: **Fit For Life**, by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond. Published by Warner Books.