

Our Hands | Their Lives | Our Choices

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Welcome and thank you for taking this time to read all about animal liberation and my thoughts on how vegan activism can change the world for good.

Firstly, I would love to introduce myself and tell you a little more about myself and what I aim to achieve. My name is Connor Finch, I am a 23-year-old vegan activist based in Essex, England.

Growing up I loved animals, I have always had a strong connection with all kinds of beings that we are lucky enough to share this planet with. I was surrounded by multiple cats from the moment I was born, I learned to love all animals and respect their needs and lives.

Companion animals such as cats and dogs are widely accepted as lovable, sociable and emotional animals. I have always respected nature and loved watching documentaries about wild predators and the gentle giants of this world. Every animal is capable of feeling emotions such as fear, pain, happiness and love.

This is why people love animals so much, they are compassionate and even become some of the most trustworthy living beings in our lives. We mourn the loss of animals whether it be our beloved pets or animals in the wild becoming the victim of roadkill or even a more natural death. Death is a sad moment for humans and non-humans alike.

The vast majority of people in today's society would deeply despise the thought of animal suffering or becoming the victims of abuse. If you saw a person beating a dog in the street, you would do whatever you could to stop that person from harming an innocent animal, this is simply a natural reaction.

Sadly, growing up we are also deeply conditioned and indoctrinated into believing that we should love MOST animals and accept that animals such as Chickens, Cows, Sheep, Pigs, Fish, Goats, Turkeys or any 'livestock' animals is less deserving of these common values that we give to our companion animals. These animals are subjected to a life of exploitation, abuse, rape and murder. How can we be so easily desensitized and conditioned into believing that the lives of these animals do not matter at all.

All animals currently seen as food share the same abilities as other animals that we would never dream of exploiting. Abilities such as feeling pain, suffering, the desire to live, love and feel compassion. When talking about animal rights I think it is important to clarify that the rights we are fighting for are only very basic such as, the right to not be exploited, used or killed. The right to live their lives without human intervention.

A common argument I hear is that we should not apply human based rights to the lives of non-human animals. We are not fighting for rights such as marriage, driving a car or owning a house, we are fighting for basic fundamental rights that we already grant to most other animals. Why not all?

Personally, veganism is one hundred percent about the animals. Sure, there are very strong arguments such as environment and health to further support veganism but I think that we have to think of the victim first. In any other circumstance of injustice, we would never use environment-based arguments so why would we use this when talking about animal rights.

So, what is veganism all about anyway? 'Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.' – Copied from [The Vegan Society](http://TheVeganSociety.com), [Donald Watson](http://DonaldWatson.com), founder of the Vegan Society, coined the word vegan in 1944.

We are constantly reassured and led to believe that animals consumed by humans live happy, lovely lives. Do you think they are happy to be used, exploited, raped, abused, mutilated, castrated and brutally murdered? Even if these animals did have a good life, how does that justify cutting their throats or forcing them into a gas chamber? Would you rescue a dog, give them a good life and after a few years shoot them in the head?



The world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals 'The Academy Of Nutrition And Dietetics' has announced its position on plant-based diets – and deemed them 'appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood, and for athletes.

These days I hear lots of excuses for not being vegan, but really that's all they are, excuses. I think it is important to go over some of the most common arguments that I hear when out on the streets talking to members of the public or even online. There is so much propaganda that has been spread by government as well as the meat and dairy industry themselves. When you see animal rights activists in the streets, online or anywhere talking about the issues within animal agriculture, we are usually referencing standard legal practices around the globe. Lots of people are led to believe that the industry has the animal's best interests in mind and almost every farmer will tell you they 'love' their animals.

However, there is a lot to undercover behind animal agriculture. Things most people don't know about. The issue with animal rights is mainly down to cruel standard practices that are legal and performed worldwide, there can also be abuse such as kicking and punching but as I said, it's mainly standard legal practices.

So, what are the standard legal practices anyway?

COWS

Big and small dairy farms across the globe forcibly impregnate (rape) female cows whilst holding them down in a rack to keep them constantly pregnant. The calf is then taken away from the mother within 24 hours to maximize profit and to steal as much milk as possible for human consumption, if the calf is male they are either shot, bludgeoned with a blunt instrument, raised for beef or veal. 95,000 male calves are killed straight after birth annually in the UK alone.

Female calves are separated from the mothers, Separation of mother and child is an incredibly traumatic experience who will cry out for each other for days. Never to meet again. Female calves will then be placed into solitary confinement and will face the same fate as their mothers, raped year after year to produce the maximum amount of milk which can be 10X more than they would naturally. They will then also have their children stolen from them.

This process has some hugely negative effects on these innocent mothers, Dairy cows have been modified to produce up to 10 times more milk than they would naturally. As a result, 30 % of UK dairy cows have mastitis, a bacterial infection of the udders. Over 50% of dairy cows also suffer from crippling lameness and pressure sores.

Dairy cows are sent to slaughter after around 4 – 6 years, or when they are too weak to continue producing milk. Their natural lifespan is around 25 years. It is estimated that 150,000 cows are slaughtered whilst pregnant each year. 50% of beef comes from the dairy industry, Veal also wouldn't exist without the dairy industry.

Pregnant cows usually hang on the bleeding line for 5 minutes to make sure the baby inside dies also. Sometimes the slaughterhouse workers are not made aware that the cow is pregnant, in this case the cow does not hang on the bleeding line for 5 minutes and moves to the next stage where they are cut open. In some cases, it has been known for the calf to fall out of the mother conscious and showing signs of life, here is a statement taken from the RSPCA website. 'If, for any reason, a foetus is found to be showing signs of life upon removal from the uterus (i.e. a foetus that has gasped and is now conscious), it must be immediately killed with an appropriate captive bolt or by a blow to the head with a suitable blunt instrument.'

The RSPCA welfare standards also state the following. Calves must only be slaughtered/killed on-farm using one of the following methods:

- a) free bullet
- b) captive bolt and exsanguination
- c) humane killer (a purpose-made, single shot weapon with a chamfered muzzle and vented barrel)

'Calves who are non-viable or unfit must be slaughtered/killed without delay.'



CHOOSE PLANTS NOT PAIN.

We are living in an age where we have easy access to plenty of alternatives, the milk is intended for the baby calves, not humans. Choose plant-based milk, cheese and dairy products to avoid willingly contributing to this animal cruelty.



PIGS

The vast majority of pigs in the UK are raised in factory farms where they will never experience the outside or sunlight. In fact only 3% of pigs spend their entire lives outside. There are around 11,000 pig farms in the UK. Around 1,400 of these units house more than 1,000 pigs and hold around 85% of the total pig population in the UK.

There is no legal definition for free range pig products which means that farmers can use the 'free range' label without meeting any standards or guidelines. Don't buy into these lies!

Regardless of how the animals are housed, factory farms and small local farms have the same legal guidelines and standard practices. Pigs are as intelligent and emotionally complex as a 3-year-old child or a dog. we all love dogs, right?

Mother pigs are artificially inseminated, which is just a fancy word for raped. This is to keep them constantly pregnant.

Farrowing crates are standard practice in the UK, mother pigs are then forced into farrowing crates which are so small they cannot turn around. The mother pigs are kept in these crates for up to 5 weeks at a time, every time they give birth which causes huge amounts of stress, pain and suffering.

Infections, cuts and injuries are common in these environments which is why around half of all antibiotics in the UK are used on farmed animals, 60% of which is used on pigs which says it all.

Piglets that are injured, not growing fast enough / not deemed profitable are killed. This is obviously done as cheaply as possible to keep costs down, this results in piglets being thrown against walls, floors or bludgeoned with a metal pole. Farmers obviously deny this statement, they do 'love' their animals after all.

Those that are lucky enough to make it through are subjected to mutilations such as tail amputation and teeth clipping, all of which is done without anesthetic. Again, this is standard on small local farms as well as factory farming.

Naturally pigs would live for 15 – 20 years. However, pigs are forced to grow as quickly as possible and are murdered after only 6 months! At this point they are loaded onto a hugely overcrowded truck without water and food, these trucks typically carry around 150 pigs each.

I have personally been outside local slaughterhouses and witnessed this myself. The animals are packed in so tightly, pressed up against the rails. Anybody can go a vigil and see the animals before they are killed, looking into their eyes tells such a sad story, filled with sadness and despair. The pigs are absolutely terrified, how can this ever be justified?

According to a 2006 industry report, more than 1 million pigs die each year from the horrors of transport alone.

Pig slaughter is always described as humane and painless, this could not be further from the truth. These poor animals die fighting for their lives, gasping for air.

One of the most common methods of pig murder in the UK is a gas chamber. Multiple pigs are loaded into metal cages and lowered into carbon dioxide gas where they scream and thrash for their lives. It has been documented that some animals have even ripped off their own hooves trying to escape.

A typical slaughterhouse kills up to 1,100 pigs every hour. The sheer number of animals killed makes it impossible for them to be given humane, painless deaths. Because of improper stunning, many pigs are alive when they reach the scalding tank, which is intended to soften their skin and remove their hair.

The other certified humane method of pig slaughter in the UK is electrical stunning with the aim to render the animals unconscious before they have their throats slit, however stunning is often poorly executed by rushed slaughterhouse workers which results in an estimated 1.8 million pigs regaining consciousness on the production line each year and being fully conscious as they die from blood loss. – copied from [Land Of Hope And Glory](#).

All for a product we do not need. How can we justify viewing animals as commodities and products? How can we justify what we do to these poor, innocent creatures?

CHICKEN MEAT

In the UK alone we murder roughly 950 million birds for food, Chicken being one of the most popular meats consumed in the UK.

A free-range farmer can legally house 16,000 birds per building or 9 birds per square meter, does this sound free range to you? This is essentially one big cage; free range is simply a marketing scheme used to make consumers feel better about an immoral act of cruelty.

Here is an investigation of a so called ‘free range’ Hoads Farm in East Sussex, UK carried out by [DXE](#). This farm is approved by the RSPCA and British Lion. – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYC06wO7MEU&t=373s>

Over the year’s chickens have been selectively bred to reach the age of which they are murdered in just 41 days. These chickens are essentially still babies when they are killed, this fast process often results in broken bones which can prevent them from standing, unable to reach food or water sources.

Once these animals have reached slaughter age they are caged and loaded into trucks where they will be taken to the slaughterhouse. This process can be extremely stressful for the animals, millions of birds die during transportation each year.

Poultry murder is usually executed by hanging the birds upside down by their legs, then the animals are dipped headfirst into an electrical water bath where they receive a painful electric shock before having their throats cut. Many birds fail to make real contact with the water bath therefore have their throats cut whilst fully conscious.

The next stage involves moving the birds into a scalding tank. This is designed to loosen the feathers prior to plucking, unfortunately it is estimated that roughly 8.4 million birds are still conscious during this process and are practically boiled alive.

EGGS

Naturally egg laying hens would only lay around 10 – 20 eggs per year, due to selective breeding these hens will lay up to 300 per year to maximize profits for the farmer. This means that 10 billion eggs are produced in the UK each year, 51% coming from caged hens whilst others live a life labelled free range just like chickens used for meat.

Male chicks are considered unworthy of life to the egg industry due to the fact that they are unable to lay eggs. This means they are separated and thrown into a blender alive on their first day of life, this is standard legal practice on all farms including free range and organic.

Hens in the industry routinely have their beaks sliced off without anesthetic to stop the birds pecking each other, this is a common behavior shared by birds that are kept in such conditions. This practice is illegal in some countries due to the suffering it causes but is still legal in the UK and is backed by the RSPCA.

Huge amounts of calcium are lost during the egg laying process, this is why the birds would naturally eat some of the eggs to regain calcium. This is what happens at sanctuaries to ensure that the birds live a natural life. Hens that live on egg laying farms suffer a high rate of osteoporosis which leads to broken bones.

Once the hens egg production declines they are taken to the slaughterhouse where they face the same brutal murder as chickens used for meat consumption. The other method of killing eggs laying hens is similar to pigs, gassed to death.

There are many other subjects I would love to cover such as fish, sheep, wool, fur and leather, however I will save this for a future article.

CONCLUSION

After hearing just some of the standard legal practices that are used throughout animal agriculture, how can we ever justify this horrible abuse, rape, and murder of billions of animals every single year. As stated by The Academy Of Nutrition And Dietetics at the very beginning of this article, we do not need animal products to be fit or healthy.

If you are reading this article and have made it this far, how can you justify this? After all, if you continue to purchase animal products you are consciously contributing to the worst animal slavery and suffering on earth.

For now, forget all of this information. Even without these cruel realities, the fact that we view animals as products, food, clothing and commodities is absolutely horrific. Since when did humans have the right to dictate others' lives? Imagine being born the wrong species!

Every animal has the right to life, freedom and happiness. Why is it that we show love to cats and dogs, we admire nature and all wild creatures that inhabit this land but cause such pain and suffering upon others. What values to wild and companion animals hold that farmed animals do not?

Veganism is simply a philosophy, a way of seeing animals as individuals. Individuals that deserve respect and compassion. Animals are not here for us, animals are not something we should look at as a way of personal gain, entertainment or pleasure. After all, what is more important, your taste buds and 15 minutes of pleasure you get from consuming their decomposing body parts or the animal's life? The answer should be life every time.

**COMPASSION IS WITHIN US
ALL.**

**WE JUST NEED TO BE
REMINDED.**

**UNDO THE CONDITIONING &
THINK FOR YOURSELF!**

Thank you so much to everybody who read about my thoughts, views and veganism as a whole, I really appreciate all the feedback and support.

We are living in the year 2020, there is no excuse for animal abuse, we have the choice to eat whole foods, nuts, seeds and vegetables. Everybody has the choice to be kind or cruel, which will it be?