

An Open Letter to Veterinarians: Why Aren't You Vegan?

[Diana Laverdure-Dunetz, MS, Plant-Powered Dog](#)

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Medical doctors take the Hippocratic Oath, which requires new physicians to swear to uphold specific ethical standards in their practice. Veterinarians also take an oath of ethics. Here it is, as stated on the website of the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#):

Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.

In this Open Letter to Veterinarians, I would like to address the parts of this oath in which veterinarians solemnly swear they will act via “the protection of animal health and welfare” and “the prevention and relief of animal suffering”.

The Veterinarian’s Oath does not specify *companion animal welfare* and *companion animal suffering*, but rather *animal welfare* and *animal suffering*. This includes the protection and welfare of the approximately 70 billion animals who are brutalized and murdered each year by the factory farming industry—innocent, sentient, intelligent animals who are born into suffering, stripped of their dignity, ripped from their mothers and children and forced to give their lives for human and pet food.

So, my question to veterinarians is a simple one: *If you have sworn to protect all animals, then why aren't you vegan?*

Those of us who entrust you with the care of our companion animals know that you are dedicated. You work long, hard hours and perform arduous surgical procedures to save the lives of beloved family dogs and cats.

And yet, many of you return home at the end of the day and consume meals made up of other animal species—cows, pigs, lambs, chickens, fish. You also recommend feeding these species to your companion animal clients.

But these “food” animals who are treated as nothing more than commodities also have families that love them. They also have lives they want to live out in peace.

I’m sure you’re aware of the brutality that occurs inside of slaughterhouses. The very word “slaughterhouse” reveals that these are houses of horror. Yet this cruelest aspect of humanity is all these animals will ever know, simply because of who they are.

In his 1975 book, [Animal Liberation](#), Peter Singer defines speciesism as follows:

‘Speciesism’ is the idea that being human is a good enough reason for human animals to have greater moral rights than non-human animals. ... a prejudice or bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species.

~Peter Singer

I would argue that humans also engage in another, equally insidious and devastating form of speciesism—the bias that certain animal species are superior to others and therefore have greater moral rights. This form of speciesism occurs every day in how society treats animals it views as companions and those it views as nothing more than commodities. It varies from culture to culture, showing how arbitrary it is based upon a society's collective social or religious background.

Speciesism among different types of animals also pervades the practices and homes of non-vegan veterinarians. It rears its ugly head each time a bag or can of meat-based pet food is recommended to a client or a veterinarian dines on a meal that was once a living animal.

Speciesism within the veterinary community is particularly troubling because veterinarians take an oath to protect all animals from harm and suffering.

~Diana Laverdure-Dunetz, MS

In my 10-plus years as a canine nutritionist with a master's degree in animal science, I have had the opportunity to work with clients across the world. When I became vegan several years ago, I transformed my business to formulate only plant-based diets for dogs, a decision that I made after performing a great deal of scientific research. Since that time, I have worked with many vegan clients who want to provide their canine companions with optimum nutrition that is also compassionate toward all beings. However, these clients are afraid to even discuss feeding a plant-based diet with their veterinarians for fear of backlash and ridicule.

That can change. There is a real opportunity for veterinarians to take the lead here. You can guide your clients toward healthy, balanced companion animal nutrition that respects the lives of all animal species, including those not lucky enough to have been born as “companion animals”.

In 2019, I created the [Plant-Powered Dog Food Summit](#), the first and only online summit dedicated exclusively to plant-based canine nutrition. This summit took almost a year to produce and involved sending videographers around the world to interview the leading vegan veterinarians and animal rights activists. These leaders participated in the summit for the purpose of promoting education on plant-based canine nutrition from both an ethical and health perspective and to provide first-hand insight into the animal welfare atrocities that occur within the animal agriculture industry.

I would like to partner with you to help make our world a better place for everyone. If you are a veterinarian who is open-minded to learning more about plant-based companion animal nutrition, I have a gift for you—free lifetime access to the Plant-Powered Dog Food Summit. This includes more than 12 hours of science-based and illuminating video interviews, as well as audio downloads and written transcripts from these leading vegan veterinarians and activists.

I promise you that it will be an eye-opening experience. All you have to do is [contact me](#) and I will grant you access.

According to the [Vegan Calculator](#), the average vegan saves the life of one farm animal per day. By going vegan and recommending plant-based options to your clients, you can save tens of thousands of animals. Imagine how gratifying that would be. According to the [Vegan Calculator](#), the estimated number of animals killed to be human food each year is:

- Wild Fish Caught: 970,000,000,000
- Chickens: 61,171,973,510
- Farmed Fish: 38,000,000,000
- Ducks: 2,887,594,480
- Pigs: 1,451,856,889
- Rabbits: 1,171,578,000
- Geese: 687,147,000
- Turkeys: 618,086,890

An Open Letter to Veterinarians: Why Aren't You Vegan?
Page 3 of 3

- Sheep: 536,742,256
- Goats: 438,320,371
- Cattle: 298,799,160
- Rodents: 70,371,000
- Pigeons and other Birds: 59,656,000
- Buffalo: 25,798,819
- Horses: 4,863,367
- Donkeys: 3,213,400
- Camels: 3,243,266

As a society we must ask ourselves, “Do we want to continue down the dark road of animal abuse and environmental devastation, or do we want to move toward an enlightened world that nourishes everyone with harm to no one?”

This question is even more important to you as a veterinarian.

You do not need to compromise the health and welfare of your companion animal clients in order to uphold your Veterinarian's Oath to protect all animals from suffering and harm.

In the immortal words of Sting: “...nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could.”

So, I ask you again: *Why aren't you vegan?*