

**Are your meals costing the Earth? : Are they turning forest into desert? Threatening wildlife habitats? Poisoning the environment? / The Vegan Society ; illustrated by Juliet Breese.**

**Contributors**

Vegan Society.  
Breese, Juliet.

**Publication/Creation**

St. Leonards-on-Sea : Vegan Society, [1992?]

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/qzrucz3c>

**License and attribution**

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

---

# Are your meals costing the Earth?

---



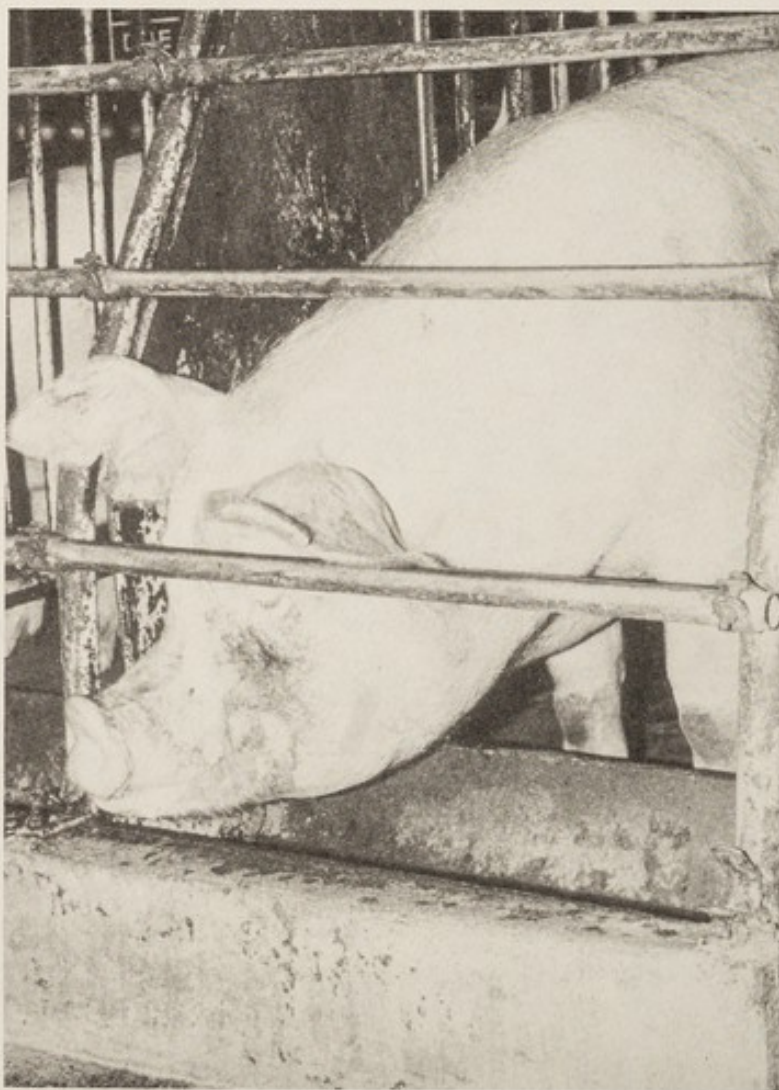
Juliet Breese

**Are they  
Turning forest into desert?  
Threatening wildlife habitats?  
Poisoning the environment?**

## INTENSIVE FARMING

That's the name of today's agricultural game, supposedly in the cause of 'efficient' food production. But, ironically, the truth is that our dependence on animal products represents an appalling waste of resources: farm animals compete with us for land, food, water, buildings and fuel, and their waste-matter constitutes a major source of water pollution.

Yet it would require far less land to feed our population on an animal-free, vegan diet than on a conventional one, because it is far more efficient to eat plants directly than to process them through animals and then eat animal flesh and products. At present some 90% of Britain's farmland is used either for grazing or for growing feed for animals that may never see the light of day. This system exerts tremendous pressure on our countryside and yet, in contrast, it is estimated that a vegan Britain could be self-sufficient in food on around 25% of the land currently farmed.



CIWF



# DISAPPEARING FORESTS



Mark Edwards/Earthscan

As more land is demanded for animal farming, the world's forests are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Yet they play such a vital part in so many ecological processes that they are indispensable to life on earth. They:

- harbour a greater variety of animal and plant life than any other habitat
- help to maintain the levels of oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere
- provide a layer of insulation. Without them the land overheats in the sun and cools rapidly at night, thus disturbing air currents, with far-reaching climatic effects
- control the water cycle and water run-off
- protect the soil.

These two last points deserve further explanation. Forests encourage rainfall, both by releasing water vapour and by forcing saturated air to rise over them and condense. When rain falls it is checked firstly by the leaves and then by the roots which regulate the rate of run-off into streams and rivers. When tree cover is removed rain attacks in torrents, washing away precious topsoil, which has taken centuries to form. Afterwards, the earth is soon baked dry again. A pattern of flood and drought becomes inevitable. *In hot climates once-fertile land is turned into desert, bringing the misery of famine.*

Nearer to home, wooded upland areas have been cleared for sheep grazing, which has increased soil erosion and reduced the variety of plant life, as new shoots are continually eaten. Lowlands face the additional pressure of intensive crop-farming, which takes more from the soil than can naturally be replaced, thus damaging its quality.

At the root of these problems lie deforestation, overgrazing and overcultivation.

## THREATENED WILDLIFE

Many people care about the disappearance of wildlife habitats and about pollution, but how many realise that their own eating habits are contributing to these problems?

The worldwide destruction of forests has been described, but here in Britain half of our semi-natural woodland has been lost since 1945, and much heath and downland has come under the plough. Wildlife is now living under siege conditions, and lack of space is not the only enemy; farmers, traditionally 'guardians' of the land, are systematically poisoning it. Due to over-farming, often the result of misguided and short-sighted government policies, crop yields can only be maintained by massive applications of chemical fertilisers; and by planting only one crop over large areas year after year ideal conditions are created for 'pests', to which farmers respond by spraying ever-increasing doses of pesticides. These chemicals are harmful not only to wildlife, but to each one of us consuming the food.



Mark Edwards/Earthscan



## Enquirer's Pack

If you would like to know more about the many aspects of veganism, please send for our Enquirer's Pack. In return you will receive leaflets on the following topics:

**HEALTH:** Answers any doubts as to whether a vegan diet can supply all our nutritional needs.

**ANIMAL RIGHTS:** Explains why veganism is the logical conclusion to any commitment to animal rights.

**WORLD FOOD PROBLEM:** Explains the link between animal farming and human famine.

**DAIRY INDUSTRY:** Exposes the cruelty inflicted on cow and calf to produce totally unnecessary foods.

You will also receive a booklist of recommended reading on these subjects and details of Vegan Society merchandise. Please send a large (9" x 4") SAE marked 'Enquirer's Pack' to The Vegan Society, 7 Battle Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN37 7AA

You may already be convinced of the strength of the vegan case. If so, please join the Society and add your voice to the growing chorus of concern over the appalling violence inflicted daily on all forms of life. A new, more caring way of living is not only possible, but is made a reality by all those already committed to veganism. Please stand up and be counted – join us now, and help to reduce the suffering in the world, of both humans and non-human animals.

---

## Membership/Enquiry Form

Why not support – or perhaps just find out more about – those working positively towards an end to *all* animal abuse and the widespread adoption of a more ecologically sound way of life? Simply fill in the form below and return to: *The Vegan Society, 7 Battle Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex,*

*TN37 7AA*

*Please tick as appropriate:*

☐ PLEASE SEND ME A FREE VEGAN INFORMATION PACK –for which I enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

☐ I WISH TO BECOME A MEMBER of the Vegan Society Ltd and undertake to abide by its rules as set out in the Society's Memorandum and Articles of Association. I declare that I am a practising vegan (no animal products).

☐ I WISH TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE of the Vegan Society Ltd. Although not a practising vegan, I agree with the Society's aims and would like to support its work.

I enclose payment as follows (*please tick as appropriate*):

*Cheques/POs should be made payable to: The Vegan Society Ltd*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual £15.00         | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Joint £20.00         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unwaged individual £10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Unwaged family/joint £14.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior (under 18) £8.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership £250.00     |

☐ I WISH TO SPONSOR your work, for which purpose I enclose a donation of  
☐ £5.00 ☐ £10.00 ☐ £25.00 ☐ £50.00 ☐ £ .....

Title (*please delete as appropriate*) Miss/Mr/Mrs/Ms

Name (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Profession/Skills \_\_\_\_\_

## SEEDS OF HOPE

The Vegan Society favours smaller-scale agriculture, using crop rotation and green manuring with shelter from food-bearing trees. In such conditions artificial fertilisers and pesticides are unnecessary. Vegan agriculture conserves the soil, and requires *much less land*. Large areas could be freed for wildlife and recreation, and for replanting with native deciduous trees. Sensible 'farming' of timber – removing no more each year than is replaced by new growth – would drastically reduce huge imports, and so relieve the pressure on forests abroad. The Society has also funded biofuel projects such as wood-burners to generate electricity, and organic fermentation to supply gas. Such techniques will reduce our dependence on more harmful forms of energy.



Juliet Breese

The essential message of ecology is that everything is interconnected. This obliges each of us to take responsibility for the world around us. Vegans have chosen to dispense with animal produce, and thus do something practical to reduce the damage our species is causing to the environment, our fellow animals and ourselves. In the present ecological crisis the practicality of such a life-style must become common knowledge. Therein lies our hope for the future.

THE  
**Vegan**  
SOCIETY

The Vegan Society Ltd, 7 Battle Road,  
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7AA  
Registered in England No. 1468880 Registered Charity No. 279228