

Veganism

Vegans argue that animal farming is not only cruel but also bad for the environment. World Vegan Day, on 1 November, puts the focus on the vegan way of life.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a dairy product
2. a calf
3. a chick
4. a sentient being
5. grain
6. exploitation
7. a nutrient
8. a workshop

Definition

- a. a creature that can experience suffering
- b. cereal that is grown and used as food
- c. a meeting where people do an activity or talk about something
- d. a product that contains milk
- e. treating someone or something in an unfair way and gaining an advantage from it
- f. an ingredient that helps you to grow, have energy and stay alive
- g. a young bird which has just come out of the egg
- h. a young cow or bull

Veganism

'All life deserves respect, dignity and compassion. All life.' – Anthony Douglas Williams

What is veganism and what do vegans do?

Vegans try to live, as much as possible, in a way that avoids exploiting and being cruel to animals. This means following a plant-based diet. Vegans do not eat animals or animal-based products like meat, fish, seafood, eggs, honey and dairy products such as cheese. For many vegans, living a committed vegan lifestyle means not wearing clothes made from animal skins and avoiding any products which have been tested on animals.

How are vegans different from vegetarians?

Vegetarians don't eat meat or fish but they can eat eggs, honey and dairy products, but vegans don't eat any animal-based food products. Vegans argue that suffering is caused in the production of these foods, for example they say that, on some dairy farms, male calves are killed because they are too expensive to keep, and on some farms, cows are killed when they get older and produce less milk. Similarly, on some egg farms, male chicks are killed

because they do not produce eggs. As for honey, vegans say that bees make honey for bees, not for humans, and that bees' health can suffer when humans take the honey from them. Vegans believe that the products they use and consume should be free from not just cruelty but any exploitation of animals.

When did veganism start?

The Vegan Society was founded in 1944, but there is evidence of people deciding not to consume animal products over 2,000 years ago. The sixth-century BC Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras was in favour of kindness to all species, and his diet could be described as vegetarian. There was a tradition of vegetarianism in the Indus Valley, Babylonian and ancient Egyptian civilisations even earlier. The Vegan Society points out that in 1806, the famous romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the first people to publicly object to eating eggs and dairy products on moral grounds.

Why do many people decide to become vegan?

For many people, the main reason for going vegan is probably that they believe that animals and all other sentient beings should have the right to life and freedom. However, there are other reasons. Vegans argue that the production of meat and other animal products is very bad for the environment. They point out that a huge quantity of water is needed to grow grain to feed animals in the meat industry. The enormous amount of grain which the meat industry needs often leads to forests being cut down and habitats being lost. In contrast, much lower quantities of grain and water are needed to sustain a vegan diet. In addition, many vegans say that all the nutrients our bodies need are contained in a carefully planned vegan diet and that this type of diet helps prevent some diseases.

What is World Vegan Day?

On 1 November every year, vegans all over the world celebrate their way of life. There are workshops, exhibitions and public debates on World Vegan Day, and it is a wonderful opportunity for anybody thinking of becoming a vegan to learn more about the subject.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Vegans eat fish and seafood.	True	False
2. Vegans wear clothes made from the skin of an animal.	True	False
3. Vegans do not eat some things that vegetarians do.	True	False
4. More than 2,000 years ago, some people took a decision not to eat animals and animal products.	True	False
5. Many people become vegan because of a concern for the environment.	True	False
6. A variety of activities take place on World Vegan Day.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

avoids	diet	object
opportunity	quantity	suffer

1. Vegans try to live in a way that.....exploiting and being cruel to animals.
2. Vegans say that bees' health can.....when humans take honey from them.
3. Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the first people to publicly.....to eating eggs and dairy products on moral grounds.
4. A huge.....of water is needed to grow grain to feed animals in the meat industry.
5. Many vegans say that all the nutrients our bodies need are contained in a carefully planned vegan
6. World Vegan Day is a wonderful.....for anybody thinking of becoming a vegan to learn more about the subject.

Discussion

Would you consider becoming a vegan? If you already are a vegan, how did you choose to become one?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. h
3. g
4. a
5. b
6. e
7. f
8. c

Task 1

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. True

Task 2

1. avoids
2. suffer
3. object
4. quantity
5. diet
6. opportunity