

Why vegetarian?

Why do people choose to stop eating meat? For some it can be because they simply don't like the taste of meat or that they feel that a meat-free diet is healthier, others are concerned about animals suffering and being killed for food, and nowadays more and more people are changing their diet because they recognise the environmental impact of animal and fish farming.

For your health? - We don't need to eat meat to stay fit and healthy and a meat-free diet can be great for your health. An animal-free diet is in fact the best as plant-based foods contain all the nutrients we need and are naturally low in fat and high in fibre. Meat contains saturated fats which are a main cause of heart disease, stroke and cancer.

For the animals? - Every year in the UK around 1,000 million animals are bred and killed for food. Most of these are reared in factory farms and slaughtered when they are just a few months old. Modern factory units are designed to produce meat and dairy products as quickly and cheaply as possible. Many birds and animals are barely able to stretch their wings or legs and they never roam freely, breathe fresh air or see natural daylight.

Trawlers don't just catch the fish they need. Many types of sea creatures including dolphins, whales and turtles get hauled out in the nets and die. Fish, such as tuna, are speared on hooks and slowly dragged to their death.

For the environment? - More than 70 per cent of farmland in Britain is used to graze animals or grow animal feed and if the same amount of land was used to grow crops more than ten times as many people could be fed. Also 1,000 litres of water is used to produce one kilogram of wheat, compared to 100,000 litres to produce one kilogram of beef.

In some parts of the world millions of people are dying of starvation while crops are grown to feed animals. Intensive animal farming leads to land degradation and the methane gas from livestock contributes to global warming.

In Central America an area of rainforest the size of Wales is being cut down each year to make space for cattle ranching and to grow the crops to feed the farmed animals. In the UK since 1945 approximately 300,000 miles of hedgerow has been cut down to increase the space available for farming.

Trawling the seabed has destroyed entire ecosystems and killed off some species of sea life. World governments recognise that our oceans are on the brink of environmental collapse.

Meat-Free Monday!

Undoubtedly cutting out meat is the right thing to do and the Meat-Free Monday campaign is encouraging everyone to start by having one day a week as Meat-Free? If everyone in the UK adopted Meat-Free Monday, the resulting carbon savings would be equivalent to taking more than five million cars off the road. Reducing the amount of animal products in our diets will also help to boost our health and, of course, help to end animal suffering. More information about the Meat-Free Monday campaign is available from www.meatfreemondays.co.uk. And don't forget to tell your friends and family!