

Treating Food as a Friend

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In response to the PsyETA call for comments, I would like to make some prompted by the fine article, *We Don't Eat Our Friends: A Report of Research in Progress on Vegetarians* by Amato and Partridge (Spring 1987).

The Animal Rights Movement is justifiably gaining strength around the world and needs to focus its energy so as to avoid needless hostility toward individuals who share concern for other life forms, albeit via different methods of expression other than vegetarianism. For example: in a recent letter to the editor of an animal rights journal one reader wrote, "I am convinced that true enlightenment regarding animal rights cannot be achieved while one is still carnivorous. The eating of meat is both a sign of halted moral evolution and a contribution to the stagnation of personal evolution." The editors replied, "We agree that vegetarianism is essential to the practice of a sane animal rights ethic." Pretty strong stuff aimed at folks who love animals and still eat meat.

Like many other animals. I consume foods that were once alive. I even eat squirrels, rabbits and deer that cars have hit. Deteriorated road kills, of course, go directly to the Lake Village Community's pigs, dogs and chickens, who seem less fussy about what is in their diet than do most humans. Some winters back, Phyllis, an old cow, slipped on the ice. When we determined she would never rise again, I shot her, and nature's recycling continued. My

favorite horse, obtained years back from the Upjohn Company, after they were through experimenting on him, killed himself on a sharp board in our corral. Black was 25 years old and had been living on the commune for 13 years. After he died I lay my head on his and prayed that humans might better understand we are not superior to other life forms. Later, I skinned and put some of Black into a freezer and from time to time took sustenance from his remains. The rest of him lay beyond the pines where the dogs and wildlife ate from him all winter.

We drink milk from our goats and use it also to make cheese. We eat the eggs from our fowl and if one dies we feed it to the pigs. Sometimes we eat bacon with the eggs. Countless creatures are right now making a meal of me and I, like you, will one day die and the process will continue. To remember that all my food represents life, of which I am a part, and to work at not taking more than my reasonable share is, for me, the most important thing.

Life is a question of balance of which we are all a part. We are a maze that we call human and almost all the substance of this maze was once other living bodies of plants and animals obtained by something first causing death. As Alan Watts notes in *Murder in the Kitchen*, "All of us are other life forms rearranged." After seeing the *The Animals Film* at the Chicago Film Festival, I was invited to a vegetarian meal. There on a long table, high above the city, lay once living things grown from the labor of humans and animals; carried, carted, trucked, railroaded, shipped and flown, from all over the globe to Chicago, so that a small portion of the 5% of the world's population that yearly devours 45% or more of all the Earth's resources could eat in vegetarian style.

Humans, regardless of what they consume to keep themselves alive, are the most unabashed wasters that have ever lived. We are fouling the surface of the planet as we burn the fuels to grow and bring us special foods. We are destroying animals, birds, fish, insects, fresh water, air and earth. We convert almost everything we touch into cities, suburbs, sewage, smog, roads, rust and ever enlarging fields upon which big tractors inefficiently roam to grow more things to eat. Meanwhile at schools, churches, scientific and other conventions, we insanely preach of our enlightened sanity and ascendancy over other life forms.

Certainly many people greedily consume far too much animal flesh. Exclusive killing and eating of plants, sometimes promoted by vegetarians, may simply be another form of insanity which tends to mute the screams that accompany the vegetables' trip to richly laden human tables. Most cer-

tainly it alone does not constitute an answer to the very real suffering of laboratory and other animals. There is no way to avoid the fact that life feeds on death. Most importantly, all life forms deserve respect and all forms of energy consumption fall under the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the law of entropy, so well laid out by Jeremy Rifkin.

Therefore, let us look to our total lifestyle as we repair our human faults. Would it not be better to eat more from that which has been husbanded, mothered, cherished and sacrificed within the context of love, be it flesh or vegetable, than to feed exclusively from the stuff purchased in many modern stores, killed, canned, boxed and sacked within the embalming materials listed in chemical jargon on their paper labels?



Sam, Della and Ella with goat kid friends.

We are what we take in and put out, and nothing seems to change as fast in nature as can the computer type these words. The problems of humans are those faced by all life. Greater temperance in our eating habits is a good step for us to take and also to realize that we are hunters engaged in stalking and stocking our food. Some people hunt with guns in places where nature is more similar to times past. Others hunt through the ads on television and in the newspapers and listen to the sounds of voices over the radio—which tell them where to drive to bag the best bargain and how one car with a certain type of tire, oil and gas is better to hunt from if one wishes to look sexy and cool while in fast pursuit of health and happiness. Human hunters should be careful when pointing a finger at other human hunters...after all, each and every one of us is part of the biggest problem on Mother Earth... The Human Race.