



Insatiable appetites for meat and milk
may ultimately cost us the planet





LAND

25% of the world's land surface is given over to grazing more than 1.25 billion cattle. Grazing is often said to be the only use for such land but, in many cases, a more efficient and sustainable use would be to grow trees for timber, fuel and food – such as nuts and fruits. More than 1/3 of the world's agricultural land suffers desertification through: clearing forests for grazing; overgrazing; overcultivating croplands to feed farm animals as well as people; using poor irrigation techniques. A vegan – who eats only plant foods and products based on them – requires just 1/8 of the land needed to feed a meat-eater.

ENERGY

Farm animals convert only 5 to 15% of their food into meat, eggs, or milk. The fossil energy input to produce a day's food for a vegan is just under 10,000 calories, while it is nearly double for a vegetarian and a massive 34,000 for a meat-eater. Much of the land now wasted in feeding farm animals could be used to grow 'industrial crops' – for example, to make renewable fuels and fibre (hemp, flax, etc)

WATER

Farm animals are voracious consumers of water. A day's food for a meat-eater requires over 15,000 litres (enough to take 300 baths) – compared with 5,000 for a vegetarian and a mere 1,150 for a vegan.

WASTE

Farm animals produce large quantities of urine and excrement – 23 kilograms per day for each cow. The ammonia and nitrates from this waste leach into the ground and surface water, polluting wells and rivers. Such pollution causes algal blooms, removes oxygen from the water and kills fish. Ammonia from farm waste also contributes to atmospheric pollution.

GLOBAL WARMING

This is increased by the carbon dioxide (CO₂) released through burning forests, the methane given off as waste gases from farm animals – especially cows and sheep – and the nitrous oxides released from artificial fertilisers.

HUNGER

Nearly one billion people are under-nourished or starving, despite the world producing enough food to feed twice its human population of 6 billion. Yet 1/3 of the grain we grow is fed to farm animals. Nobody seriously suggests that animal products (eg meat, eggs and milk) are essential for health.

Animal farming represents a squanderous misuse of scarce natural resources and is a major contributor to environmental destruction. Vegan diets use less land, water and fuel and are gentler on the planet and all of its inhabitants.

**For further information on the vegan diet visit www.vegansociety.com
or send an A5 SAE to The Vegan Society, Donald Watson House, 7 Battle Road,
St.Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7AA Tel: 0845 45 88244**

