NEW ZEALAND Green for Life
Health, Ethics, Environment

Casper the Little Sheep
Black Bean Brownies
Vegan Body Building
Best Beauty Buys

Tom Bailey Talks

Delicious winter recipes!
Winter is coming! Well for some of us, it’s already made its presence known. As climate change creates stronger and more frequent storms, leading to flooding and destruction of property; I am excited for the future of veganism. As animal agriculture is the leading single cause of climate change, here in NZ we are uniquely placed to drop our reliance on dairy and amp up our horticultural exports. This will have the advantage of improving our soils and waterways as growers need to bring land up to usable standards. It’s a long term goal for sure but we have to start somewhere.

Director James Cameron has been making great progress in buying up our dairy farms and turning them over to horticultural endeavours, he shows us what can be done if we put our minds to it. Our gardening column features an interview with Dr Mike Joy, where he expounds on this topic.

This edition brings a great selection of awesome recipes, the issues of bringing up vegan children in omni families, the first of our regular nutrition pieces from our health advisor, the fantastic Dr Mark Craig, based in Auckland; a delicious new range of products from Vegie Delights review, our regular beauty column by the lovely Demelza’s Delights to name just a few.

Coming soon is our Vegan trademark, which will help to remove any doubt as to whether that product is vegan or not. We’ve all seen products marked vegan which actually contain beeswax, or fish sauce, or whey. We’re working towards taking the guesswork out of buying vegan products.

We are here to advise, inform and offer help and support to all those wishing to transition to a plant-based lifestyle. We encourage you to join us, together as individual or business members we can help encourage and increase the vegan offerings throughout New Zealand. Take a look at our business members page for information on where to use your membership card for discounts. We can help dispel the myths that plant-based living is not possible or sustainable, we think it is only a matter of time before we reach the point where we move towards a world where plant-based living is the norm. With 27% of Kiwis identifying as vegetarian or vegan, that world may be closer than you think.

Remember each plant-based meal helps to save the lives of animals, so whether you are trying out veganism for the first time, or are a committed long term vegan, you make a difference.

Claire Insley
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Photos courtesy of yumbo.com, see page 22

See www.angelfood.co.nz for your nearest stockist.
Phone 09 3764623 or info@angelfood.co.nz
Seattle based multinational corporation Starbucks has been listening to consumer demand for vegan food items, not just plant-based milks. In their AGM earlier this year, the company has been discussing how it can start to respond to customer demand for vegan options. The good news for vegans in South Korea is that a banana cake is available from the company, whilst those in the US can look forward to an oat-based macadamia cookie. More vegan options are expected to roll out globally over the coming year.

Our friends in the UK have called upon the UK government to provide vegan alternatives in the canteens of all public sector workplaces. The Vegan Society UK has had a campaign to increase vegan options in all prisons, schools, universities, hospitals, council-run buildings and other public sector settings for a while now. They plan to start working with the International Vegan Rights Alliance to develop a petition to send to policy makers later this year. Veganism has been found to come within the scope of international human rights provisions and vegans in the UK are protected under human rights and equality law.

Thirteen year old Mackenzie Clark from Brandon, Manitoba in Canada was one of 4 youngsters awarded the Manitoba Teacher’s Association Young Humanitarian Award. A keen volunteer for the Brandon Humane Society, Mackenzie has raised over $16,000 for the organisation. Since he was 6 he has organised many different fundraising events, including Pedal for Paws, which makes a return this year after last year’s successful 10km ride. “Sometimes when you’re young, it doesn’t feel like you have much power to do things like that, because you’re just a kid … but you can do a lot,” he said.

Famed Impossible Burger which has been available in the US for almost 2 years now, has launched on the international scene. Three top class Hong Kong restaurant chefs have taken on the challenge of preparing the Impossible Burger, saying it’s just another version of meat. The plant-based burger patty that tastes – and bleeds - like beef has been touted a Silicon Valley disruptor that will change the multi-billion-dollar market for beef. The burgers are now offered in more than 1,400 outlets across the United States, including fast-food chain White Castle.

Vegans in the UK can look forward to their own vegan festival this summer! No Planet B Festival intends to focus more on workshops and demos, rather than music and dancing. To be held in the Cotswolds, over 11th – 13th August, festival goers can look forward to talks by activists such as James Aspey and Earthling Ed, as well as cooking demos and permaculture workshops. Bringing together minimalists, zero waste enthusiasts and vegans the festival hopes to connect like minds.

The largest supermarket chain in the US, Kroger has just launched a vegan recipe competition. In partnership with the brand’s own organic range, Simple Truth, host of the Food Network show “Healthy Appetite” Ellie Krieger, and award-winning vegan chef Mark Reinfeld the competition is sure to inspire vegans all over the country. Kroger has been increasing its line of vegan options over the last few years and has recently brought in Quorn to their frozen food section.
Churros Veganos
by Adrian Hatwell

has been a tradition within his family for generations; he remembers, as a child, waiting with anticipation on Sunday afternoons as his parents would lovingly prepare churros to enjoy together. Beginning a family of their own, Steve and Alex sought to export that tradition to a new home.

“We found that New Zealand was perfect for us: a multicultural place, beautiful views, safe, friendly people,” he says. “In 2011 we moved from Argentina to New Zealand to make all our dreams possible.”

There were risks involved, as there always are when chasing a dream, but the young family’s passion and resolve helped them make it through the challenges of starting out in a new land.

“We thought that maybe it could be quite risky to start a business as there were no churros companies in Tauranga,” Steve recalls. “But New Zealand received us so well, we are selling a new product with a unique taste and everyone loves it.”

Mr Churro has quickly established a name for itself serving crispy churros with a light fluffy centre, dressed in deliciously decadent toppings to scores of happy Bay of Plenty customers. While churro pastry tends to be vegan, the fillings and toppings often are not — but the Mr Churro family wanted to make sure vegan customers didn’t lose out.

“We decided to make vegan options as our menu is based on vegan churros,” Steve explains. “We believe that great food should be enjoyed by everyone.”

As well as traditional churros, smaller churro bites and large deluxe churros, the vendor also offers some less conventional takes on the the tasty snacks. You can order a churro version of an ice cream sundae, or double the crispy pleasure with a sandwich — two spiraled churros with ice cream in the centre. And Mr Churro’s animal-loving customers have been very vocal in their appreciation.

“The vegan customers love us,” he says. “They find that our churros are a great, tasty and fresh dessert to enjoy and share with friends and family.”

Any vegans in the Tauranga area should be sure to stop by the Mr Churro stall, outside the Fraser Cove shopping centre and sample the authentic deliciousness on offer. And check back frequently, as Steve says the vegan menu will continue to grow; they’ve recently added milkshakes to the mix and have more treats on the way.
If you’re looking for some wonderful winter lipsticks, my current recommendations are sure to make you smile. **Inika Organic** have an impressive range of colours to suit all skin tones. Recently I created a video featuring all 12 of their shades, and my favourites were ‘After Dark’ and ‘Nude Pink’. After Dark is the most wonderful sultry shade of red. So, if you’re heading out, remember to pair this with your **Vaute** vegan jacket and you’re sure to turn heads. RRP $44.00 each available at selected pharmacies or online from [www.inikaorganic.com/nz](http://www.inikaorganic.com/nz)

**Nude & Noir Cosmetics** take ethics very seriously. I love their approach to saving animals and the environment by making sure their products are plant based, eco-friendly and made without nasty parabens or synthetic fragrances. Recently I’ve been using their ‘Provocative Palette’ which features 4 beautiful cream shades for all areas of the face. A pink blush, silver eyeshadow, transparent shimmer and their creamy brown contour shade. It’s been so much fun to play with these shades and create different looks from one simple-to-use compact.

My best advice when using this range is to warm the colours with your finger, before applying to areas of the face. Cream products blend easily and are great to travel with. This palette could replace other makeup items you have for a more compact makeup kit. RRP $64.00 available online from [www.nudeandnoircosmetics.com](http://www.nudeandnoircosmetics.com)

**Minimalist Boutique Skincare** changed the way I cleansed my skin each day. It was no longer a boring and mundane task, it instead became something I looked forward to. In my previous review I raved about their ethos and owner, Frankie’s, genius idea to use oils that boost mental clarity. And finally, the wait is over… **Minimalist Man** has arrived. The sleek black bottles would adorn any bathroom with style. I’m quite jealous of the new men’s range, with four great products; Shave, Scrub, Soothe and Solve. Be sure to try them individually or in a bundle pack for smooth skin. RRP from $59.00 Available from their online store [www.minimalistboutiqueskincare.com](http://www.minimalistboutiqueskincare.com)
Designer Brands Cosmetics continue to stay on trend with their new releases for the Australasian Winter season. I know I can always find something great from DB, their entire line is 100% vegan & cruelty-free. To prep your lips and keep them lusciously soft, use their ‘Lip Cocktail’ scrubs on damp lips, using gentle circular motions. This allows dead skin to fall away. A handy tip for our upcoming harsh winter weather. Available in four different flavours; Mint to Be, Butter Up, I Want Candy and Mad for Maple. I want to try them all!

Give your lips a little treat for only RRP $12.99. Available from selected pharmacies or online www.dbcosmetics.co.nz

I love summer, bikinis and the beach. I also love my tan during summer – but little do people know my tan isn’t from the sun. I prefer to use a natural, organic tanning lotion called ‘Invisible Tan’ from the brand Eco Tan. This keeps my skin glowing all year round, without harmful UV rays from a tanning bed. Next on my list of vegan beauty products to try, is the Eco Tan ‘Winter Skin’ moisturiser. You guessed it, they have created a body lotion to prolong your tan and keep your skin feeling silky smooth. It gradually builds a natural looking tan to compliment your skin tone. I can’t wait to find this in store at local health food stores and pharmacies. RRP $35.99 You can also buy online from www.naturalthings.co.nz

If you’re feeling the winter blues, why not run a hot bath? No bath? No problem! Try a nice hot shower instead.

Vixen & Co have blended beautiful ingredients together to create their ‘Lavender & Rosemary Bath Salts’. Let it whisk you away to a tranquil island with scents that will also help you sleep better. RRP$13.50 available from www.vixenandco.co.nz

And for a sweetly scented shower, that will leave your skin shiny and new, try using a body scrub. Koko Body create wonderful vegan products and their ‘Vanilla Bean & Raspberry’ Himalayan Salt Scrub, is sure to delight your senses. Perfect for buffing away dead skin cells to reveal your natural supple skin. RRP $15.00 available from www.kokobody.com

Georgette Jackson is a dedicated cruelty free and vegan blogger. Her Facebook page Demelza’s Delights features recipes, giveaways, stockist info and the latest reviews of vegan cosmetics. Check her out on Instagram and YouTube, where she demos products and creates easy to follow tutorial videos. Georgette is also the ambassador for the SAFE – Cruelty Free Cutter App.
Three years ago Moshina Mobeen decided that it was time for her to go vegan, not just for her health as a fitness instructor and competing athlete but for the animals and environment. Since going vegan she can feel the increase in energy and enjoys eating wholefoods for every meal. Sina works at Les Mills as a group fitness instructor where she can be found 5 times a week taking spin classes (feel free to jump on a bike in her class) and now she’s about to go into her first bikini body building competition as a vegan, I spoke to her about that and what it’s like to be vegan in the fitness world.

What has your journey been like as a person in fitness?

I have always been quite active from a young age. I played a lot of sport in high school.

When I moved from South Africa to NZ, I put on about 10kgs! I was def not happy with the person in mirror and the way I was feeling, so I was determined to shed some weight and joined Auckland uni gym when I started university. This is where my fitness journey began. I didn’t know much about training at all – I remember just going to the gym running on the treadmill for 30 minutes followed by using the elliptical machine for another 20 minutes and some stretching, so just cardio. My fitness journey progressed further when I decided to join Les Mills upon getting my first corporate job. I remember falling in love with the Les Mills classes.

After a few months of partaking in classes I found a new passion and love and wanted to become a certificated instructor in Body Attack. Fast forward a few months and I had completed the body attack module and started teaching the program. Now I teach RPM and Sprint (indoor cycling classes) at Les Mills.

Originally, my diet was not good. Very high sugar and I would often have a hot chocolate with added sugar and a muffin for breakfast. I suffered high anxiety for many years and despite being quite slim mainly from doing copious amounts of cardio, I began suffering other health issues. My anxiety got worse, I was almost always bloated, tired all the time and started to lack energy, I often had afternoon slumps and I was moody and reactive. I wasn’t recovering well after training.

In 2014 someone suggested I enter in to a bikini body building competition and I decided to give it a go. It was during this period that I learnt the most about training and nutrition. I incorporated weights into my training regime and removed processed sugars from my diet. I did well in the show, however I was still suffering chronic fatigue, bloating, inflammation and anxiety after this. I felt I looked the best I have in a long time during the competing prep, however following it, even though I may have looked good, I certainly didn’t feel it.

All I wanted was to feel healthy, pain free, recovered and have energy for day to day life again. I met my current partner Sergey, in 2014, accidently bumping into him at the gym. We had a good conversation and I was intrigued by his amount of daily energy. He was vegan and started educating me about wholefoods and the impact meat and dairy can have on your health, let alone the cruelty and suffering for animals and environmental damage. I started by reading The China Study and watching the documentaries Cowspiracy, Forks over Knives and Earthlings. I decided immediately to move to a plant based diet. I did not even transition, I just decided to give up meat and dairy immediately.

I remember being so confused as to what to eat so I read the 80/10/10 book – 80% carb (unprocessed), 10% protein, 10% fat and followed this religiously for about 2 weeks. I remember getting very slim despite eating a lot of unprocessed carbs (I think about 10-15 bananas a day and as well as other foods) but feeling very energised.

After that two week period I became more flexible with my eating and dropped to about 60 -70% carbs, 20% protein, 10% fats. I researched and found lots of easy, quick vegan recipes and have a few that I stick to.

Going vegan was the best decision I made. I have so much more energy, my body inflammation has significantly reduced, I get to eat carbs and remain lean. I’m not harming animals or ingesting their sorrow, hormones and other harmful things added or given to them, I’m helping the environment, plus I get to stay healthy on the inside and outside. I rarely get sick and my blood tests show I’m not lacking
anything which is great.

What’s your latest competition? Is it your first one?

My latest competition was the Counties Manukau show on the 14th April 2018. I was partaking in the Bikini class. This was my first show as a vegan competitor so it was definitely trial and error with the diet this time round. I was happy to be placed second!

What advice do you have for vegan gym bunnies? What should we be eating?

Stay consistent with your training. If you are looking to build muscle ensure you incorporate weights and cardio into your training routine.

Nutrition is the other half of the equation. If you are really serious about getting results, cut out the processed sugary foods i.e. breads, pastas, cakes, biscuits etc. from your diet and move to eating more wholefoods – make this the majority of your diet. It doesn’t mean your food has to be bland or nasty tasting. There are loads of healthy wholefood recipes you can make.

If you feel you really require help and a plan then invest in a good nutritionist. Make it a lifestyle and then the results and health is easy to maintain. Remember it takes 21 days to break a habit or create a change. Stay consistent and be patient. If you fall off the bandwagon, don’t be too hard on yourself, write it off and start again because you can do it!

For more fitness inspiration follow Sina on Instagram @sina.fit

Review: Vegie Delights Food

by Jackie Norman

It’s such an exciting time to be vegan right now! With more and more people embracing the lifestyle, there are literally more fantastic food options becoming available in NZ by the day. When my hubby Gareth and I first went vegan, the choices were far more limited and a lot of the convenient store-bought options turned out to be hugely disappointing. As a result, we resigned ourselves to making just about everything we ate from scratch in our tiny camper van kitchen. So when Editor Claire asked us to test out the new Vegie Delights range of frozen foods, we were more than a little sceptical. Boy, did we get a pleasant surprise!

Introducing the newest vegan friendly stars of the supermarket – Lentil Patties, Smokey BBQ Burgers and Thai Chilli and Lime Cakes. Being still a little apprehensive, we tried the Lentil Patties first, thinking they would be the safest bet. Instantly we were pleasantly surprised! These patties are so flavoursome, you can really taste the lentils. Unlike other store-bought patties, which we have found to be too thick and dry, these are thinner and despite cooking them in oil were not at all greasy. We tried them in burgers and on their own accompanied with mashed potato and vegies and really enjoyed them both ways.

Next up were the Thai Chilli and Lime Cakes, which are stated as ‘the perfect replacement for fish in meals or snacking with dips’. These really surprised us; not only were they really tasty but they could seriously pass for fish! Neither of us had tried any vegan ‘fish’ before and after not eating the real thing in such a long time we couldn’t believe how realistic they were. The flavour is not at all overpowering, making them perfect for families with younger children (they reminded me a lot of fish fingers!) and as the packet says, you could definitely take them along to any social gathering and serve them as nibbles with dips as the ‘cakes’ are quite small. Both hubby and I felt that non-vegans would definitely tuck into these happily, in fact they probably wouldn’t even notice the difference!

The last ones we tried were the Smokey BBQ Burgers. There was a reason for that – I usually steer clear of smokey flavour anything as I find it too overpowering. However these turned out to be the big favourites for both of us! The flavour is insane and the texture is just like a meat Patty! These burgers are so realistic I actually felt guilty! You could definitely get away with taking these to a barbecue and nobody would even know they weren’t meat.

Converting a couple of diehard ‘cooking from scratch’ advocates like us was no easy task and we were confident that we wouldn’t be swayed but we both agreed that we would definitely buy all three of these products again. Living in a tiny
space with such a limited kitchen the way we do, it is wonderful to finally have some really good quality pre-made food which we can rustle up in just a few minutes on super busy days or on those days when you just don’t feel like cooking. Despite being experienced and adventurous vegan cooks, we felt that the lentil patties tasted the closest to something you could make yourself – at a push and with a lot of effort. However the Thai Chilli and Lime Cakes and the Smokey BBQ Burgers we didn’t feel we would be able to replicate. They’re just too realistic!

Another thing we love about all three products is that they are so incredibly versatile. When we read that you could use the Smokey BBQ Burgers as vegan sausage roll filling we thought ‘yeah right’, but having tasted them we can now totally believe it! The only thing we felt wasn’t entirely bang on the money was the suggested portion sizes. If you’re feeding a family of four you would want to make sure you have plenty of vegetables or other accompaniments to go with your burgers, as one patty may be enough for the kids but even myself, as a not very large adult found I could comfortably eat two. The same goes for the Thai Chilli and Lime Cakes; despite there being eight in a pack, it only fed the two of us, being more of a light meal option. However do not let this minor observation put you off trying them for yourself. No longer do we have to watch enviously as our overseas counterparts tuck into ready made foods we can only dream about. Thanks to the guys at Sanitarium, it’s finally here!

Vegie Delights Giveaway

I’m sure reading this review has made you hungry to try the new range! We have 5 vouchers to give away to 5 lucky people so you can try one out for yourself. Simply send your name and address to Amanda@vegansociety.org.nz by 1st August 2018, or now before you forget!
The Little Sheep Who Could

by Jackie Norman

When you live on the road the way we do, the last thing you expect is to become parents of a sheep. It can be challenging enough just having a dog! But this is exactly what happened to us last spring when we returned from a trip to Dunedin. ‘Fancy a job?’ the caretaker grinned, leading us over to a small stable. There, snuggled up together in the hay were two tiny orphan lambs. From that moment on, it was up to us to care for them and feed them every few hours. With all the early mornings and night time feeds it was like having a new baby all over again!

Being an ex-farmer, I had raised many calves and lambs over the year but for Gareth, caring for a baby farm animal was a totally new experience. ‘This one can be my one. I’ll call him Dudley’, he smiled. Dudley was by far the biggest twin and more timid around humans, having been fortunate enough to feed from their mother before she passed away. Sadly the other twin had not been so lucky and was as small and frail as a wee ghost. ‘I’ll call you Casper’, I told him. Despite being so tiny, Casper had a fighting spirit and took to the bottle immediately. Before long the two of them were following us everywhere and as the weeks went by, the other campers were often amused at the sight of us taking them for walks or relaxing under the bright pink beach umbrella outside our van.

One morning however, after their usual feed and morning walk, we were alarmed when Dudley suddenly fell ill. We called the farmer and all three of us tried everything but there was nothing we could do. Just a couple of hours later, poor Dudley slipped away. Gareth was absolutely heartbroken. He had never expected to become so attached to ‘his’ lamb but he had adored Dudley and been such a proud foster parent. However, his loss was nothing compared to that of his twin, who was in total anguish. He could no longer stand to be alone in the little stable at night and would get terribly distressed if he couldn’t see us at all times. For the first week or two we tried to accommodate him as best we could, letting him ‘help’ with chores, but it wasn’t always possible or practical for him to be around us and he became a regular
But as time went on, things began to change. Casper was thriving and growing fast – and this was not a good thing. Other animals in the flock had already begun to ‘disappear’ and the realisation of what was to become Casper’s fate was distressing to think about. Much as I loved going to see him, I would often end up in tears to think that our little man, who had been showered with such love and care and trusted us so completely, would soon end up as someone’s dinner. Someone who didn’t know who this beautiful wee soul and didn’t care. During my years of farming and raising calves and lambs for my children’s school pet days, I had always smothered them with affection, yet never really thought about what would happen to them once they were weaned. It was just the way it was and I never thought to question it. For Gareth, this feeling was even more foreign. He had grown up in Wales, been a keen rabbit shooter and had even thought about becoming a butcher. Although he had always known where meat came from, he had never made the connection as to WHO. Even when he became vegan, he always insisted it was for health reasons, not for the animals. Yet without him even realising, Casper and Dudley had now changed that.

We knew we had to do something, so we plucked up the courage to ask the farmer if we could find Casper a new forever home, offering to pay double what he was worth as compensation. Not only did he agree, he refused to let us pay him! In another amazing stroke of good fortune, Pippa at SOLVE sanctuary agreed to let him join her happy menagerie of animals. We were over the moon. Casper was going to enjoy an amazing and peaceful life – forever. There was just one thing – we had to get him there in our camper van!

As the big day arrived, we lined the van with tarpaulins to protect our ‘house’ from any mess and prepared Casper for his journey. We had been convinced all hell would break loose in the van once we got him in but to our amazement the complete opposite happened. Less than five minutes into the 90 minute journey, Casper sat down and was completely calm for the duration of the trip. In fact, he was much better behaved than the dog, who was a seasoned traveller! Once we arrived, Pippa greeted us and we led Casper through the garden and into the ‘bachelor paddock’ which was to become his new home. We had been worried that perhaps his paddock mates, Laurie and Lewis may not appreciate having a new addition and they were huge in comparison to Casper, who looked so tiny, but to our joy and relief they both began licking him enthusiastically!

The next morning I awoke and went out onto the balcony to see if I could spot Casper. There he was, sitting under a tree, looking out at his new view. I swear I had never seen such a look of utter peace and contentment on his little face. Even when we went to say goodbye he kept moving away from us in favour of his new best friend Laurie, as if to say ‘You’re not taking me back again are you? I like it here!’ There was just one more thing we needed to do and that was to give Casper a new name – one which started with the letter ‘L’ like all the other sheep. After much discussion, we settled on Llewellyn as a nod to Gareth’s Welsh heritage. Llewellyn Casper Jones. A big name for a little sheep, but thanks to his new mum Pippa he will now have all the time in the world to grow into it.

Houdini, miraculously escaping from whichever ‘secure’ place we tried to put him in and turning up at our side within minutes, munching happily on our tiny vegetable garden. There was only one thing for it. Casper was going to have to learn to be a sheep.

We watched on like anxious parents as Casper was introduced to the rest of the flock. All the other lambs had mothers and as he was still a way off weaning we would still have to bottle feed him several times a day in the paddock. We needn’t have worried. Casper took it all in his stride and far from being the bottom of the pecking order, fitted right in straight away. Whatever he lacked in size, he more than made up for in bravery! As summer arrived, Casper was finally weaned and no longer needed us, but we still needed him for a very important job – to be Best Lamb at our wedding! As the summer months passed, we still went and visited Casper most days. The other sheep would look on in amazement as he ran up to us, rubbing himself all around us and in return he would look back at them nonchalantly, as if to say ‘Who, these guys? Oh, they’re just my people’.

But as time went on, things began to change. Casper was thriving and growing fast – and this was not a good thing. Other animals in the flock had already begun to ‘disappear’ and the realisation of what was to become Casper’s fate was distressing to think about. Much as I loved going to see him, I would often end up in tears to think that our little man, who had been showered with such love and care and trusted us so completely, would soon end up as someone’s dinner. Someone who didn’t know who this beautiful wee soul and didn’t care. During my years of farming and raising calves and lambs for my children’s school pet days, I had always smothered them with affection, yet never really thought about what would happen to them once they were weaned. It was just the way it was and I never thought to question it. For Gareth, this feeling was even more foreign. He had grown up in Wales, been a keen rabbit shooter and had even thought about becoming a butcher. Although he had always known where meat came from, he had never made the connection as to WHO. Even when he became vegan, he always insisted it was for health reasons, not for the animals. Yet without him even realising, Casper and Dudley
Interview: Tom Bailey

By Gary Steel

For a year or so in the 1980s his group was the biggest pop act in the world, and you still can’t do your shopping without hearing his perennial earworm hits like ‘Hold Me Now’ beaming out of supermarket PA systems.

But there’s so very much more to Tom Bailey than the heavenly pop hits of the Thompson Twins, the band he co-devised with Kiwi ex-wife Alannah Currie, and which is inevitably synonymous with the now nostalgic sounds of the ’80s.

Tom was raised in Manchester, England as a piano virtuoso and still studies the music of Bach. His expertise with electronic keyboards saw him an in-demand session guy whose synthesiser lines can be heard on the likes of Foreigner’s ‘I Want To Know What Love Is’. He’s also a highly adept guitarist, vocalist and creator of sublime dub-oriented electronic music under the name International Observer, and gorgeous Indo-Fusion music with the Holliwast Band. Oh, and an excellent visual artist, too!

Having become disenchanted with the high-velocity world of pop, Tom and Alannah moved to New Zealand to raise their kids in the early ’90s, but these days Tom divides himself between different territories, with London as his work-base.

Vegetarian for all his adult life, eight years ago, Tom went vegan. When was that, and what was it that convinced you in the first place to give up meat? I mean, it can’t have been easy back then.

Tom - I think I must have had a fairly isolated childhood because I didn’t really come across the idea of vegetarianism until I went to college. A few outsider students began to discuss the idea in the cafeteria. I was immediately attracted to the notion and became a lacto-ovo vegetarian. I gave up eggs, too, shortly afterwards, partly because the official response from the college authorities to requests for vegetarian food was “give him an omelette” - and I started to see beyond that.

Gary - Did being into Indian culture and food influence that initial decision at all, or make surviving on a plant-based diet any easier?

Tom - That it is a practicable life choice is demonstrated by the long history of vegetarianism in India. It’s certainly not universal there, but most places have well-established veggie traditions. The principal of non-violence, or ahimsa is one of the ancient ideas brought back to life by Mahatma Gandhi - and this fact became a well-known signature of his philosophy around the world. I hear that veganism is being adopted here and there, most especially amongst the Jain community, but I don’t know the figures. India, like so many places, suffers the retrograde effects of westernisation in this regard. Meat eating has to some extent become falsely symbolic of modernity and progress and that is a pity. But from a personal perspective, the fact that Indian restaurants flourished in the UK, and that I liked the spicy cuisine, made life much easier for me. I eat more Indian cuisine than any other.

Gary - Let’s start when you began this journey to veganism by going vegetarian. When was that, and what was it that convinced you in the first place to give up meat? I mean, it can’t have been easy back then.

Tom - I think I must have had a fairly isolated childhood because I didn’t really come across the idea of vegetarianism until I went to college. A few outsider students began to discuss the idea in the cafeteria. I was immediately attracted to the notion and became a lacto-ovo vegetarian. I gave up eggs, too, shortly afterwards, partly because the official response from the college authorities to requests for vegetarian food was “give him an omelette” - and I started to see beyond that.

Gary - Can you describe your evolution from vegetarianism to veganism? When did you first find out about veganism and start to think about going that one step further to entirely giving up animal products?

One of the reasons that I can now see clearly the delusional power of denial is that I was a committed vegetarian for decades, but never thought it necessary to take it any further. I had drawn the line for convenience and chose not to investigate beyond it. It was only when I helped my wife Lauren with some research she was conducting into animal welfare issues that we became more aware. I realised that, for the maintenance of my own false comfort zone, I had wilfully remained in ignorance of the enormous and irrefutable case against the dairy industry. Once I looked at the shocking evidence, I quickly became vegan. We know that cows are sentient beings who experience pleasure and pain just like us. They are highly intelligent and socially interactive so suffer in many complex ways from experiencing and witnessing cruelty, isolation, abuse and slaughter. Anyone who has lived or worked on a dairy farm and heard the anguished cries of a mother cow whose calf has been taken to be killed knows this. But they remain silent on the subject because it is too much to admit the truth: that the industrial production of cow’s milk practices the equivalent of imprisonment, rape, torture and murder on an enormous, repetitive and mindless scale. And for what? Why exactly are vast tracts of NZ land given over to these practices? The full answer may be complicated, but the short one is that is driven by profit. We are bombarded with propaganda about NZ dairy products being healthy, but the reality is that we flog milk powder to developing countries who have given up breast for bottle. The dairy industry takes its profit - and our rivers are poisoned from the cattle slurry run-off pollution. What a travesty. I can’t honestly apologise for seeming militant on this point, because I really feel that the unacceptable practices of the dairy industry need to be more widely known in order for people to make an informed choice about not consuming milk products. My belief is that it would lead to global changes.

Gary - Have you found it an easy road?

Tom - Having been vegetarian all my adult life made it an easy step to take. Lauren and I took it together as an experiment but it soon became obvious that we had committed to the practice. The fact that she is a brilliant cook helped immensely, of course. We are both fascinated by the continuing adventure of learning about nutrition and healthy food preparation.

Gary - You live part of the year in...
NZ, part of the year in the French countryside, and the rest in London. Can you give your impressions about the differences in these three locales in regards to eating vegan? Do you find that there's now vegan-consciousness wherever you go, or is it still a case of home-cooking 100 percent of the time in some locales? Would you describe NZ as having an increasingly fast uptake of veganism, or in your opinion, is it a little behind the game?

Tom - London has always had an array of choices but these days veganism has become established as a global movement, so there are all sorts of options and initiatives which didn’t exist a few years ago. It's the same in Auckland, I feel. When I went to the Vegan Expo last year expecting to see a few dozen stalls, I was shocked but overjoyed to see thousands of people interested in adopting the diet, many of them young. I think there is a noticeable emphasis on transitional food - the vegan options which might satisfy someone who, last week, was eating meat pies or burgers. If it helps bring change, so be it, for the moment. One of New Zealand’s issues is the self-identification of the nation with meat and dairy farming as well as the cultures of fishing and bar-be-que. This holds us back in a very specific way because we have made it almost a point of Kiwi pride to do these things. This notion has to be disentangled for the good of all. Similarly, France has generally lagged behind because of its strong traditions of formal cuisine which nearly always uses animal products. But even there, the progressive effects of the global shift towards veganism are becoming noticeable. Village fetes which used to roast animals have now started to offer vegan food.

Gary - I remember you telling me years ago about how, when the Thompson Twins performed in Russia in the ’80s, that there was virtually nothing to eat for a vegetarian. Could you give a bit of an insight as to how it was back then in terms of touring and surviving culinarily? Now that you’re back touring your band again, how is the food landscape compared to what you experienced back in the ’80s?

Tom - Back in the day, we always took caterers on tour because it was impossible to depend on local promoters. This was partly out of a concern for our health and energy while on punishing touring schedules. The Russia trip was an exception because we weren’t allowed to take our own chef, but we were warned that veggie food might be hard to find. We took flight cases full of granola bars, which became our life savers because there actually were situations when the only things on offer were unappealingly dry apples, or pickled peppers. These days, promoters are much more aware and, as long as we make our requests very clear, they usually comply. In any case, they are now used to musicians adopting vegan diets. Some are vegans themselves. It’s not such an abnormality any more. That is seen in the fact that every town is the USA now has vegan restaurant options, sometimes many. Twenty years ago that was simply not the case.

Gary - What’s your take on all the competing vegan food philosophies? There seem to be a lot of (mostly young) vegans who don’t care about health at all, they’re just into it for animal ethics alone, so they’re quite happy to eat ‘pretend meat’ or even go to fast food joints like McDonald’s if they can score something vegan there, no matter how processed. Then there are those who are completely health-focused and want to eat fresh and unprocessed.

Tom - Ultimately, the claim that a plant-based diet is healthier for both us and the environment necessitates the avoidance of the fast-food approach. As I said, it can be an attractive transitional diet for those who can’t begin to change without it, but lots of deep-fried and processed foods are simply unhealthy, so the vegan movement has to lead beyond that. People who are primarily interested in animal ethics may also see the moral advantage in creating a healthier, happier community which not only puts less stress on the environment, but also less stress on health and social services, too. It is seldom discussed how the cognitive dissonance of raising children to live in denial of the cruelties of animal food production has profoundly damaging psychological effects. At the very least it suppresses their natural feelings of compassion and empathy, teaching them that hypocrisy and denial are normal. Conversely, deciding to make a change for the better leads to feeling of well-being associated with having done the right thing - even when it seemed, at first, to be more difficult. Realising that it is simply not necessary to contribute to the suffering of all concerned further underscores the moral value of adopting a plant-based diet. To do this in the context of social affiliation can be even more powerful. On the subject of medical advice, I think it’s a great pity that doctors in training do not usually study nutrition. Later, despite clear evidence supporting veganism (even advice to do so by the WHO, for example), they tend to adopt a “too hard” attitude and decide that it’s too much to point these things out, people are stuck in their habitual ways, etc, etc, even when their patients are suffering from conditions which are often easily improved by a vegan diet. Ironically, this lack of engagement puts more stress on the healthcare system. For this reason, we can see that doctors who refuse to encourage healthy eating are sadly part of the problem which they are ostensibly trying to fix. This plays out in so many conflicting ways. For example: the McDonald’s sponsorship of the children’s Starship Hospital - or the Heart Foundation sausage sizzle fundraisers. The healthcare system must get its priorities straight.

Gary - Do you think vegan food should be an everyday thing that you can get at a fair price, or do you think the
because it’s all too easy for some people to think that vegans look down on them from some presumed moral high-ground. But the fact is that aligning our actions with what we know to be true from the evidence before us leads to a real increase in feelings of well-being. If we do the opposite, acting as if what we know to be true isn’t really important, then we undermine our sense of self-worth. For too long, this has been a characteristic of the human condition. A respect for the importance of ethics is fundamental for a healthy society which raises balanced children.

Gary - Lastly, do you think there’s a place for activism in music - and in your music - or do you think of pop music and your support of animal welfare as two completely separate things?

Activism most definitely has an important role in pop music. Things have recently become a great deal more corporatised - rock’n’roll seems to have lost its rebellious spirit and sold out to the institutionalised and rather controlled version of the industry. This is something of a disappointment to me, but all the current emphasis - especially in NZ - on premium-priced vegan food, is the correct way to go?

It is totally necessary for the requirements of a happy, healthy, well-functioning society that sustainably secure plant-based food supplies which are affordable for all become the norm. It should be a high priority for any government, but these things are often best managed at a local level. For example, farmers’ markets which sell fresh local produce at affordable prices have a democratising effect. The vegan movement is not about a fashion fad for the rich and famous. Of necessity, it goes much deeper than that. We must add to that the massive potential contribution to the economics of sustainability made by the growing vegan movement. And the business opportunities which will appear with every change away from traditional animal-based food production. This movement effects everyone.

Gary - In terms of your veganism and life choices in general, where would you put ethics on your list of priorities?

Tom - This is an unpopular subject, more reason for activism to play its part. Sometimes this is quite subtle, but liberational ideas still underpin everything we do. So I think every vegan has a part to play in spreading the idea, especially by example, and this creates further momentum. Veganism is the best life choice, and possible for all. In so many ways, it makes the world a better place.

Tom is currently back writing, recording and performing pop music for the first time in decades with his own ensemble. Expect an album this year, and you can catch him live with Culture Club and the B52 during their 40-date tour of the USA over the next few months. www.thompsontinstombalied.co.uk

Can you explain to the readers something about your current music project and what this year will bring? Is there a tour, or an album?

I’ve been playing pop music again for the first time in decades. I’m releasing an album and touring internationally this year.
How to Safely Veganise Your Cat or Dog

by Andrew Knight

Cats and dogs are carnivores, right? Not quite. Dogs may be biologically classified as omnivores, due to their ability to subsist on a mixed diet of animal and plant-based material in their natural environments. In contrast, cats are classified as obligate carnivores, because their evolutionary anatomical, physiological and biochemical adaptations to a carnivorous lifestyle prevent them from deriving substantial benefit from the plant-based material available in their natural environments. Both wild cats and dogs do consume plant material, primarily sourced from the gastrointestinal tracts of their consumed prey.

But doesn’t meat allow greater fulfilment of natural feeding behaviour? Once again, this claim warrants closer scrutiny. When wild cats or dogs kill prey, they gorge as much as possible to prevent consumption by competitors. This is followed by uncertain periods of hunger. Yet, commercial meat-based diets comprise assorted body parts from animals such as cows, pigs, sheep, ducks, chickens and fish, animals that cats and dogs never naturally eat, heavily laced with unnatural additives of questionable safety (Knight & Leitsberger 2016). These are dispensed from tins or packets at predictable times daily, with kibble sometimes available around the clock. The result bears very little resemblance to natural feeding behaviour.

Animal guardians frequently microchip, vaccinate, de-worm, de-flea and de-sex their furry companions, and confine them indoors at night, because they correctly believe such steps are necessary to safeguard health. Why then, do so many resist feeding healthy vegan diets to cats and dogs on the basis that it is ‘unnatural’?

After all, cats, dogs and indeed all species, have requirements for specific dietary nutrients, not ingredients. There is no scientific reason why a diet comprised only of plant, mineral and synthetically-based ingredients cannot be formulated to meet all of the palatability, nutritional and bioavailability needs of the species for which they are intended. In fact, a growing number of commercially-available vegan companion animal diets aim to do exactly this and studies demonstrate that animals maintained on nutritionally sound vegetarian and vegan diets can be perfectly healthy (Knight & Leitsberger 2016).

If a diet is nutritionally inadequate – whether vegetarian or meat-based – disease is likely to result eventually. Hence use of a nutritionally complete and reasonably balanced commercial diet or of a nutritional supplement added to a home-made diet, is essential, to prevent disease and safeguard health. Both are available from suppliers listed at www.vegepets.info and elsewhere.

Regular urine acidity monitoring is also important to detect urinary alkalinisation, with its consequent potential for urinary stones, blockages and infections, that may result from a vegan diet, in a small minority of cases. Urinary alkalinisation may be corrected via a range of dietary additives. Further information can be found at www.vegepets.info.

Additionally, some studies have indicated that neither meat-based nor vegan diets are always formulated consistently. Accordingly, guardians may wish to consider gradually transitioning their pets onto different brands or diets, every few months, in the hope that any deficiencies will at least differ between different diets.

As with all companion animals, guardians should also monitor the health of their animals on a regular basis, including through regular checks of bodyweight, activity level and demeanour. Although checks should normally occur at least weekly, this should be an iterative process, with assessments as often as required. Any problems, such as progressive weight loss or more obvious signs of illness such as adverse coat changes, vomiting or diarrhoea, should trigger a veterinary examination; which should, in any event, occur at least annually. Owners should consider routine blood screenings and urine tests during such wellness checks and in the case of illness (Knight & Leitsberger 2016).

Great patience and persistence may be required when transitioning animals onto new diets. Changes are best made gradually, e.g., by feeding a 90%/10% old/new dietary mixture for a few days, then 80%/20%, and so on. This allows an appropriate transition of digestive enzymes and intestinal micro-organisms, minimizing adverse reactions such as abdominal discomfort, flatulence and diarrhoea (Knight & Leitsberger 2016).

 Guardians should clearly demonstrate that they consider the new diet just as edible as the old (without possibly warning or alarming their pet by making a fuss). They should not be concerned if animals eat around new food at first. Simply having it in close proximity will help create the necessary mental association, as will mixing the food thoroughly. The addition of odorous (the sense of smell is very important) and tasty additives, such as nutritional yeast, vegetable oil, nori flakes and spirulina, can all help, as well as gently warming the food. Offered food should always be fresh. Gradual change and persistence are the most important factors for transitioning resistant animals and using tactics such as these, the most stubborn of animals have been successfully transitioned onto vegan diets (Knight & Leitsberger 2016).

Such diets have reportedly been associated with a range of benefits, such as improved coat condition, allergy control, weight control, increased overall health and vitality, arthritis regression, diabetes regression, cataract resolution, and decreased incidences of cancer, infections, hypothyroidism and ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, lice and mites). Few controlled population studies exist, although those published to date confirm the potential for cats and dogs to be healthy and active on nutritionally sound vegetarian and vegan diets (Knight & Leitsberger 2016).

Reference
All Natural Pet Care  by Dawn Jones

All Natural Pet Care is dedicated to offering you products and advice that helps you improve your companion animal’s life without the use of innocent animals or species slaughtered needlessly and used to feed cats and dogs.

We only work with suppliers who have the same values and ethics, those who care about animal welfare and have respect for all living things.

To us it's all about helping you do your bit to reduce the needless suffering of billions of animals produced solely for the function of profit, taste and greed while foremost maintaining cats and dogs on the best possible diet to ensure their nutritional and often unique, individual needs are met.

Each of the products we sell has been chosen based on no harm to other animals, it’s cost effectiveness and most importantly the extensive research into ensuring it is complete, balanced and importantly the extensive research into the nutritional needs of the individual animal.

WANT THE RAW TRUTH:
Check out Dr Andrew Knight’s research

It is surprising the number of vegans who miss out on caring for the animals they love, based on many myths around vegan food for cats and dogs. Have you heard “cats can’t live without meat”?

DISPELLED
Have you felt guilty being accused of force feeding a cat or dog a vegan diet?
Not true! Who ever heard of a cat eating something they didn’t like?

When we research the facts and take into account the food that the majority of companion animals eat today, it is neither what they ate naturally nor ordered by a cat or dog but simply placed in their bowl where they only have “your” choice of selection.

Feeding a vegan diet to cats and dogs is no different to feeding a meat based diet, where the important thing to remember is that the food you choose suits the individual needs of the particular animal.

All it takes is requiring the same care you would while feeding a meat based diet: monitor your cat or dog’s health, transition slowly to allow time for the digestive system to adapt to a new diet, note any changes and seek support from the right people.

One major difference is, by feeding a vegan diet you help reduce the billions of animals slaughtered which corresponds to the philosophical attitudes of most vegans and toward better treatment of animals and the planet, as well as offering an ethical healthy food choice to your pet.

Just as no one specific meat-based diet will guarantee health and the needs of different life stages of an animal; like young, old, lactating or cats and dogs with specific or pre-existing health problems, not every cat or dog may be suited to one particular brand of vegan food but with a growing number of complete and balanced nutritional vegan foods available and specifically formulated supplements, vegan pets have complete and balanced food options to live long healthy lives, particularly when guardians are armed with up to date knowledge and support.

Vegan diets for humans and animals correspond to the most planet-friendly option, requiring less resources than those to produce an animal grown for human or pet food consumption.

Without a change in dispelling the myths around vegan diets for our beloved animal family, we inadvertently create another reason to allow the continuation of needless slaughter of innocent animals.

SO WHY NOT GIVE IT A TRY?
For support or more info, tips on transitioning your cat or dog or samples of food:

Txt 021 295 9981
Or send an email to Dawn allnaturalpetcare@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/naturalpetcare

Dawn’s background includes over 30 years of work in animal science vet nursing, in an equine clinic, small animal practice, as an animal health technician working in an animal health diagnostic laboratory, parasitology and food technician work, pet grief counselling and working alongside veterinarian investigation officers as a post mortem technician of animals and livestock.

Past 12 years researching vegan options for companion animals, Director of All Natural Pet Care since 2009 supporting hundreds of vegans with feeding a vegan diet to their beloved animal companions.
Review: Gaz Oakley's Vegan 100 Recipes

by Emily Lewis

Before I was vegan, I loved watching cooking shows. Watching a professional prepare food in an effortless way is mesmerising. However, as a vegan, I rarely get to have that pleasure without it being unpleasantly punctuated by the appearance of dead animals. I was delighted last year to come across The Avant Garde Vegan's YouTube channel. Gaz Oakley is a Welsh former chef and recent vegan who produces innovative and beautiful recipes weekly on his channel. His first cookbook, "Vegan 100" promises to deliver more of this cooking show vibe to your own home kitchen with lavish but easy to follow recipes that will really up your cooking game. Gaz himself is ever-present throughout the book, selling a trendy, laid-back vision of veganism.

The intro to the book is very no-nonsense. You won't find page after page trying to convince you to try veganism. Gaz assumes you're already on that wagon and here for the food. There is a brief listing of recommended equipment and then we're off to the recipes. The first section, Essentials, contains a handy rundown of some vegan staples, some of which are difficult to buy in New Zealand, such as "Butter" Spread, "Cream Cheese," Not-Ella Hazelnut Spread, and Rough Puff Pastry. Following this are chapters on all the categories you expect from a general cookbook, including breakfast, salads, soups, entrees, mains, desserts, and even a section on juices. Most but not all the recipes have a beautifully composed accompanying photo.

Gaz is known for making fantastically realistic faux meats using standard vegan ingredients, and this book contains many new versions I was very excited to try, including Kentucky Fried Chick’n, Quarter Pounders, “Fish” & Chips, and Seitan Fillet “Steak" Wellington. The seitan method he uses produces a final product that is firmer and much more flavourful than any faux meats I’ve made in the past. These are some of the more involved recipes in the book for those nights when you really want to impress, but there are also an abundance of straightforward meals for weeknight family dinners, such as Ultimate Vegan Baguettes, Kentucky BBQ Pulled Jackfruit & Shiitake Lettuce Wraps, and Beetroot Risotto with Candied Walnuts & Beetroot Crisps. I chose to include the...
Gaz Oakley’s Beetroot Risotto with Candied Walnuts & Beetroot Crisps

Ingredients
- 3 raw beetroots, peeled
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked
- 200g (2 cups) Arborio rice
- 240 mL (1 cup) vegan white wine

For the beetroot crisps:
- 1 raw beetroot, peeled
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- sea salt and pepper

For the candied walnuts:
- 250g (1/4 cup) unrefined white sugar
- 1 tbsp vegan “butter”
- 100 g (1 cup) walnuts

To serve:
- fresh rocket

1. Preheat the oven to 180ºC and line 3 baking trays with parchment paper.

2. First up, chop the 3 beetroots into cubes, then spread out on one of the baking trays. Drizzle with 2 tbsp of the olive oil and sprinkle over some seasoning, then bake in the oven for 45 minutes, or until soft.

3. Now make the beetroot crisps: using a mandoline on its thinnest setting, slice the beetroot into a bowl. Add the olive oil and a pinch of seasoning. Give it a good mix until each piece is covered, then lay each piece onto another lined baking tray, making sure they don’t overlap. Transfer to the oven on a shelf below the other beetroot to crisp up – around 15 minutes but check them every 5 minutes.

4. For the candied walnuts, heat the sugar and the butter in a non-stick, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Once the sugar and butter have turned into a golden caramel, carefully add the walnuts. Give them a light stir so each walnut has a good coating, then remove from the pan and transfer to the last lined baking tray, making sure they are separated. Leave to set for 5 minutes.

5. When the beetroot is nearly done, start making your risotto. Saute the shallots, garlic and fresh thyme in the rest of the olive oil, in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Stir often and make sure they don’t catch or burn; just let them soften.

6. Once the shallots are soft, reduce the heat and add all of the risotto rice. Stir well for around 1 minute, making sure the rice is coated.

7. Add the white wine and stir every now and then until it has all been absorbed by the rice. Now start adding around a cup of stock at a time, stirring until it’s absorbed, until you have used up all the stock – this will take about 20 minutes, after which the rice should almost look creamy. If not, add more stock.

8. Once the rice is soft enough to eat, gently stir in the roasted beetroot cubes and the nutritional yeast. Check for seasoning.

9. Serve the risotto topped with the candied walnuts, beetroot crisps and fresh rocket.
Growing our Food with Animal By-Products and Fuel

by Sarah Oliver

In gardening literature and growing circles, I am repeatedly hearing about the need for organic growers to use manures, fish fertilisers and other animal products to grow food. I recently heard a farmer explain that in their view organic growers will need animal farmers to produce the quantity of manure they need. Not wanting to use industrial animal inputs on our land, I thought it would be valuable to explore what alternatives there are. Is non-organic fertilisation a viable future for plant-based agriculture?

TAKING NITROGEN FROM THE AIR

As humans we are always looking at ways to grow things bigger, better and faster and it is no surprise that the invention of synthetic fertilisers has had such a huge impact on our methods of food production. After all plants need some basic components to grow including nitrogen, sunlight, phosphorus, potassium and water and being able to manufacture some of these components provides an opportunity to feed more people.

I recently came across the BBC podcast The Haber-Bosch process on 50 Things That Made the Modern Economy. The story of Fritz Haber is both a fascinating and disturbing piece of science history (spoiler alert, think war and weapons production) and it shows how Haber found a way to use high pressure and a catalyst to react nitrogen and hydrogen gas to create ammonia, a process which was later scaled up by Carl Bosch. It was this process that allowed the huge increase in crop production using artificial fertilisers.

HOW IS THIS RELEVANT TO NEW ZEALAND?

As I was listening to the podcast I became curious to know more about the New Zealand story and just why we are using fossil fuels in agriculture. I also wanted to know why, as of 2016, the agriculture sector was one of New Zealand’s largest gross greenhouse gas emitters, at 49.2 per cent.

I contacted NZ top water scientist Dr Mike Joy, Senior Lecturer in Ecology / Zoology in the School of Agriculture at Massey University. Dr Joy is a well-known for his work on waterways and has courted controversy in his questioning of New Zealand river pollution. Fearless and outspoken, he was recently the recipient of the Critic and Conscience Society Award.

In his 2017 article Our Deadly Nitrogen Addiction, Dr Joy states that “one major driver pushing us over the planetary boundaries is our current food system, especially the livestock sector”. I asked Joy what he currently sees as a major issue with this food system and his reply couldn’t get more to the point:

“I just see how dependent we are on fossil fuels through our food system and our animal-based food system is the main cause of the problem. If you look at our current food system and you took fossil fuels out of it, you’d be lucky to feed 2 or 300 million people, so 2-3% maybe 5% of the population that we have currently.”

He goes on to say that we have become so dependent on fossil fuels in our food production that traces of elements that have been found in the human body are made up of molecules that came from fossil fuel fertiliser. He pulls no punches:-

“The only way we will feed this population in the future is that animals will have to go because they are so inefficient at converting that energy into food energy we can use.”

WHERE IS FOSSIL FUEL USE OCCURRING THAT IS SO CENTRAL TO FOOD PRODUCTION IN NEW ZEALAND?

Fossil fuel use in agriculture is distributed across a range of uses in agriculture, petroleum-based agrochemicals, nitrogen fertiliser production as well as machinery, refrigeration and food distribution.

Joy talks about how the energy used to produce nitrogen-rich fertilisers is coming from gas fields such as Maui and Kupe, but this only produces about 1/3 of New Zealand’s nitrogen; the rest comes from the Middle East. However, the system is becoming more and more energy inefficient. He uses an analogy to explain the concept of EROI (Energy Returned on Energy Invested). Imagine your car does about 600 km to a tankful, and at the moment you have to drive 50-100 km to get the car filled up. As time goes by each year you have to drive further to fill up the car, but your actual range hasn’t changed at all. He goes on to point out that there are now energy companies who are making a loss just trying to get gas out of the ground.

SO WHERE DOES JOY SEE WE COULD GO AS A COUNTRY AND AS CONSUMERS?

Joy says that it is not looking that great for New Zealand because the current pointers are that people will need to buy local and people also want fresh. We are a long way from the rest of the world. There is also a move towards alternative milk products and plant-based and cultured meat. And there is a new generation who are demanding to know their food has not harmed animals and does not have a large environmental footprint.

But with one of our biggest exporters, Joy explains, being milk powder, this calls into question the direction we are taking as it again highlights the problem of energy consumption. There is not only the energy that goes into creating the milk, but also the masses of fossil fuel that goes into getting the water out of the milk so we can turn it into powder to send it overseas.

BACK TO WHERE I STARTED?

So, this brings me back to my original question: Are synthetic fertilisers a way forward to feed our growing population if we don’t want to use animals to fertilise? I went back to Joy, this time from his article Our Nitrogen Addition. One of his conclusions is:

“A switch away from livestock and synthetic nitrogen would mean that we could feed more people a healthier diet, preserve waterways and increase the chances of having a liveable atmosphere. While New Zealand may be relatively immune to many global crises, climate change is not one of them.”

Chatting to him, he reminds me that if we go back 40 years we fixed all our nitrogen...
with clover and didn’t need to get it out of fossil fuels. We can do that naturally with plants. One amazing advantage Joy sees for NZ is our high rainfall and sunshine; while the rest of the world is making food out of fossil fuels we’ve got the massive advantage of our nitrogen-fixing white clovers.

WHAT ABOUT USING RUMINANTS TO SEQUESTER ALL THAT CARBON?

One last question arises. What about the use of ruminants to sequester carbon as a solution to some environmental problems? The Food Climate Research Network report Grazed and Confused² investigates some of the assertions of this theory but also says there are gaps in the research. It is difficult and confusing for the lay person with so much contradictory data and research. Can this work, I asked Joy?

“Undoubtedly there will be parts of the world that are not suitable for growing crops or trees or something and there’s always range bits where animals will do a good job of just converting, but that’s still going to be a very, very, tiny amount. It’s not going to fix any problems… the reality is to feed the bulk of the people you can’t have animals in it”.

SO BACK TO WHERE I STARTED.

As a vegan I guess I have a bias as I really want to agree with the argument to take ruminants out of our system and to employ growing practises that don’t use industrial animal by-products. It is always tricky to figure out fact from fiction and as I am not a scientist sometimes makes it difficult to know how to decipher, amongst all the specialist language and marketing, what the situation is regarding our future food production. Dr Mike Joy was great to talk to and I find there is so much more to know from our conversation, cadmium in soil from phosphate use being one, but that’s a whole topic for another issue. If you want to know more check out the website: www.waterqualitynz.info

In the meant time for us it is back to our organic growing methods using cover cropping, rotational planting, composting and nitrogen-fixing using plants. I will talk more about this in the next issue.

¹ BBC. 2016. 50 Things That Made the Modern Economy. www.bbc.co.uk
² Science History Institute. 2017 Fritz Haber. www.sciencehistory.org

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**Mediterranean Crock Pot Baked Beans**

*Jackie Norman, Campervan Cook Book*

*These are just a little bit posher than your average can of baked beans and are not as sweet. Don’t expect them to taste like the tinned ones; these are far richer and as the name suggests, are full of herbalicious flavour but don’t let that stop you from giving them a go as they are truly delicious and so easy to make! You can bake them in the oven if you like but seeing as we don’t have a proper oven we just throw everything in the crock pot for 2 - 3 hours. You don’t have to save them for breakfast either, they are perfect for a filling, nutritious lunch or even for dinner over baked potato. The longer you leave them, the more the flavour develops, making any leftovers awesome. Too easy not to try!*

**Ingredients:**

- 1 x 400g can butter beans (or you can also use cannellini beans if you’re more of a traditionalist, we just like big, fat ones!)
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 onion, finely chopped (we use red onion)
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp oregano (this gives the beans quite a herby flavour, you are welcome to leave it out if you just want a plainer sauce)
- 1 tsp cinnamon (yes, you read right!)
- Large pinch of chilli powder
- 2 tsp maple syrup (or you can use brown sugar)
- 1 tsp salt
- Generous sprinkle of pepper
- Parsley to garnish

**Instructions:**

1. Drain and rinse the tinned beans.
2. Throw all of the ingredients except the parsley into the crock pot.
3. Stir well to combine, then cook on high for 2 - 3 hours.
4. The sauce should go nice and thick. That’s it!
5. Enjoy over potatoes, pasta or on toast for the perfect hangover breakfast. Hey, even vegans get hangovers!
The French Cheese Exceptions

By Flip Grater

Author, musician and activist Flip Grater has been one of the leading voices in the New Zealand indie and dark-folk music scene for over 13 years and now has two great vegan businesses going. Check them out here: Yumbo (www.yumbo.nz), a lunch box service based in Christchurch, suitable for children and adults alike and if you would like to try vegan cooking yourself, she has another new venture (www.plantcurious.nz), delivering NZ’s first masterclasses in plant-based cooking.

I married an omnivorous Frenchman - a risky move for a vegan. But this particular Frenchman is incredibly supportive of my vegan lifestyle, of our vegan home, of plant-eating in general - he just wants to eat delicious food, he doesn’t care what that food is made of. And he has never, ever uttered any kind of ‘where’s the meat-type sentiment,’ a fact I am very grateful for. All was very harmonious in our mixed-culture, mixed-diet household… until our half omni-half-vegan offspring arrived.

There were many long-winded conversations and negotiations in the lead up to our child’s birth (long conversations were one of the things we had time for back then!) about the various ways we hoped to parent. In the diet department, the following compromise was reached - our daughter would be raised vegan. Except for good French cheeses. Exactly what constitutes a ‘good’ French cheese and who would make that judgement was left unexplored, as was the grey area of ‘very good French-style cheeses made in NZ’. Basically I gave in to the idea that there were certain tastes and experiences I knew my husband wanted our daughter to share with him, that he saw those things as important and essential parts of the human experience… and that this idea may, at times, carry over to ‘very good” patisserie. I assumed this would be a rare indulgence and we agreed to the terms.

But of course in practice it’s more complicated that that. Of course it is. Everything to do with parenting is more complicated than one expects, so why would this be any different?

It started with her friend’s 1st birthday cake. It wasn’t vegan. Anaïs didn’t care - didn’t even know what cake was back then. But her Papa suggested she try a bite, because well, “it’s a birthday, it’s rude not to!” And so it began… birthday cakes, wedding cakes, then any special occasion food, basically he had amended our contract to state that she would be raised vegan. Except for good French cheeses. And party food.

“I don’t want her to miss out!” Is a common call. As is, “it’s just a little bit.” But it’s a slippery slope isn’t it? Our daughter is now almost two and a half - not yet old enough to understand veganism or even feel left out of shared food events, and she still doesn’t give a toss about cake.

The parenting contract sub-clauses continue to be amended, relaxed and then reigned in again. I find myself equal parts infuriated at the situation and grateful that my family is cruelty free day to day, and that the party food doesn’t (and never would) include non-negotiables like meat.

For now I continue to feed my family delicious, healthy plant foods every day and talk to my daughter about kindness to animals, and I’m working on distraction techniques for myself for when my Frenchies start heading for the food table!

The life of a vegan in a world that consumes animal products is complicated. There are compromises and exceptions, and our values are ever-changing - they have to be. I decided a long time ago (while shouting at a stranger at a protest) that compassionate behaviour needed to cover humans too, and learning that we can’t control what other humans do and eat is an important and difficult lesson. So my plan is to be kind, love my family, inspire others to eat plants and to always take an awesome plate of black bean brownies to a party (and spread the word that they’re vegan as soon as they’re all eaten)!
Black Bean Brownies

**Ingredients**
- 1 tin black beans (I like Chantal)
- 1 tablespoon black bean aquafaba (liquid from can)
- 1 chia (or flaxseed) egg (1 teaspoon seeds and 3 tablespoons of water)
- 3 tablespoons oil (coconut ideally)
- 1/3-1/2 cups agave syrup (sweeten to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cups cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- pinch salt
- 1/3 cup vegan chocolate chips

**Instructions**
1. Drain black beans, reserving some liquid. Add beans and 1 T bean liquid to a good processor or blender (I use a bullet and do half at a time because I like the texture super smooth).
2. Add all remaining ingredients except choc chips and mix until smooth. Add a little water if it’s super thick.
3. Spoon into greased muffin tray or brownie tin, sprinkle with chocolate chips and bake for 20-25 mins at 170 degrees. Take them out when they smell ‘baked’ and the edges pull away from sides slightly.

These brownies are super soft when just cooked so don’t freak out. Leave in the pan until cool or else it’s a nightmare to get them out of the tin. If you use a brownie tin, cut when cool and store in an airtight container.

Makes 24 mini muffins or 1 brownie tray (brownie tray is way easier to get out of the pan! :)

Recipe inspired by Minimalist Baker

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Medicine and Plant Based Diets - my Accidental Journey from Pill Pusher to Plant Based Doctor

Dr Mark Craig

I now work as a GP in central Auckland working with a strong interest in helping people improve lifestyle factors which are detrimental to their health, and particularly that of their diet. As is often the case in life, I had no interest in this area when I went into medicine. Initially I wanted to work in ‘third world medicine’ as the greatest need seemed to be there, but spending time in India and Malawi I came to appreciate that what they needed most was basic public health measures and fairer distribution of resources rather than another isolated person on the ground chipping away. I then trained for a few years in surgical specialties in the UK, mainly Ear, Nose and Throat surgery, with the intention to do Mercy visits overseas. While the work was fun I found the over specialisation of just treating one body part or organ quite restrictive, often they had much bigger or competing health issues going on too.

On becoming a General Practitioner I found the more holistic approach much more satisfying, feeling like a real ‘all-round’ doctor, and how important this approach is to helping people get on within the context of their lives - physical, psychological and social. The frustrations became obvious after some time, though – there is never enough time in a 15 minute appointment (10 in the UK or less) to address much more than simple issues properly, and the treatment of chronic diseases, which have become the overwhelming burden of every western society and are sinking their health systems financially, felt very unsatisfactory and often unrewarding. People rarely got any better and needed increasing number of medicines to keep their conditions under control.

The main 2 chronic diseases which kill or cause illness of most of us prematurely (younger than we should die at compared with other populations) are cardio-vascular diseases (heart disease, strokes and similar) and cancers. The first is mainly dealt with by primary care (GPs and other non-hospital health professionals) unless it becomes severe or an emergency while the latter is mainly dealt with in hospitals. However, as I have come to appreciate, the well informed GP probably has as much to offer as the hospital specialist for many types of
common cancers such as breast, colon and prostate. The other main chronic diseases and causes of premature death are Type 2 diabetes; dementias like Alzheimer’s disease; kidney diseases; lung conditions like ‘COPD’ (emphysema/bronchitis) and asthma and so on. This list of our most common premature causes of death and illness also includes the harm done by medications for the above conditions and procedures given to help the other conditions listed above. Most of these conditions are known to be caused by, or strongly influenced by, lifestyle factors, with diet being central to this. The other main factors include smoking, excessive alcohol or drug intake, stress and social isolation, and lack of exercise.

There are also large number of non-life threatening conditions which we consult health professionals for regularly, whether young or old, from the relatively ‘minor’ (depending on if you have it or not) like acne, sinusitis, IBS, severe period pains or heavy bleeding, acid reflux, haemorrhoids, to more serious ones like autoimmune conditions (e.g. Inflammatory bowel conditions, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid conditions). We see these much more often in modern style western societies than places where the lifestyle and the diets are better, such as those in the ‘Blue Zones’ where people live the longest healthy lives with much lower incidences of disease and reliance on medications. We spend billions of dollars and vast amounts of time and effort trying to address these lesser and more serious conditions.

There is actually quite a lot of appreciation of the need to improve lifestyle factors such as diet in the guidelines in modern medicine, but it is often inadequately dealt with due to lack of time available (prescribing pills doesn’t take long while taking a dietary history from someone and discussing possible changes they can make does), lack of knowledge of what is the optimal diet, or a reluctance for health professionals to recommend to patients what to eat as it feels like we are being dictatorial and taking away their pleasures, whilst not following the recommendations ourselves. From experience, facilitating lifestyle changes can be hard. Food can be a very personal, emotional and social thing, and some people don’t take well to being advised to change what they’ve always eaten, what they enjoy and what their families and friends eat.

I always felt like dietary advice was given lip service when in fact it is known to be central to treating most of these conditions, and there is still a perception, which I in my ignorance had also felt, that a lot of it was fate or your genes, which in the vast majority of cases is not true. I suppose therefore I was relatively open to suggestion when I saw that a very ‘holistic’ colleague who I was working with, and who I had a lot of faith in, was taking a rather different and more positive approach to these conditions. Initially I was very sceptical as I felt, well, if this is correct then surely we’d have been told this by the powers that be (the College of GPs, national medical guidelines and so on). The sources she followed and cited seemed to be mainly doctors based overseas (US) with slick websites, some of whom sold supplements, which always makes one suspicious.

My colleague also walked the walk though - bringing in for lunch huge salads of greens with nuts, pulses, grains I sometimes hadn’t heard of, in contrast to my standard cheese and ham sandwiches or pita breads and hummus’ often sometime of poor quality constituents (I hadn’t learnt to read nutrition labels so well then). I gradually became interested though as I started to read or watch the links and evidence for benefits of what foods were and weren’t associated with health. I recall well one night I watched the whole of Dr Michael Greger’s ‘Review of the Year’ video (2012) on his nutritionfacts.org website, where he lists the most common diseases we see and then shows how much is due to diet. www.nutritionfacts.org/video/uprooting-the-leading-causes-of-death

This was a jaw dropping eureka moment in my medical and career, and personally: The realisation that there was so much good evidence already in the medical literature going back decades and that what we were told to tell patients fell well short of what was the optimal diet. I felt quite disorientated as this changed so much - in my realisation of how I should treat patients, and also that it differed from what the Powers That Be recommended. The reasons for this became clear as there are so many conflicting interests affecting dietary advice that are not to do with good health – industry lobbying, governments looking for votes, and big Pharma holding research and purse strings to name a few. It’s not easy to go against the flow in medicine, a traditionally conservative profession, but that is what I’ve done over the past few years in following the truth – encouraging a whole foods plant based diet (with minimal oil!). Of course the penny then dropped like it does for many others and I also realised the importance of supporting vegan issues for ethical and environmental reasons.

Next time –
What are the main pieces of evidence for health and whole foods plant based diet I should be aware of?
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