I hope everyone is finding some good vegan warm winter options!

We recently celebrated Mother’s Day, which always strikes a chord with vegans. If we believe our own publicity, our society worships mothers. Well, mothers in a traditional married partnership, anyway; white yummy mummies with not too many children and not too few, who can pay the bills without public help. Mums with a cute newborn, not a tantrumming toddler or sulky teen monsterling. Mums who drink enough wine to be sexy and carefree, but not end up with a DUI or in rehab. Mums who have their own life while caring about their kids deeply without being a pushy helicopter mum. Those mums.

If society prefers fantasy to reality for human motherhood, how crazy is our Disney fantasy about loving animals compared to the real life of an animal mum? Insects and small mammals any non-native mums are pests and will be trapped or poisoned to prevent them growing families. Dog or cat mums, we love ya, mwah, see our cute Facebook videos? But there are too many of you already and you and your babies will have to be sterilised. Unless you’re a popular inbred variety, who will spend your life being bred for profit. Of course, when you follow the money, it leads right to the backbone of the NZ industry: farm animal mums, who exist only to provide flesh and milk for NZ consumers.

Things could get uncomfortable if you point to that in mixed company on Mother’s Day, over animal food. But there is a bright side. It’s you. Vegans and animal activists like you are bringing these contradictions and cruelties out from dark private corners into the light where they can be seen clearly by the humane in our society. I hope you enjoy the stories in this issue about vegans who are doing just that.

Jessica Parsons

If you have a photo you would like to share with us, please send it with a brief description to editor@vegansociety.org.nz

Letters to the Editor

If you have thoughts to share on what you read in Vegan New Zealand or some other vegan topic, please send a letter to editor@vegansociety.org.nz.

Guidelines

Letters should be 300 words or less (or consider submitting an article). Letters may be edited for sense, style, brevity, or suitability. The Vegan Society reserves the right to abridge or withhold correspondence.
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Alex Davies pouring wine at Gatherings in Christchurch

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History of SHAC

A lot of this feeling grew out of a grassroots campaign run in the UK and USA at the time called SHAC (Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty). The strategy taken by the SHAC campaign shaped the global movement then, and it also shaped me as a young activist starting out.

The SHAC campaign aimed to shut down a company called Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). HLS is the UK’s largest contract animal testing laboratory, testing medical and non-medical substances on approximately 75,000 animals every year – from rats to beagle dogs to primates. Undercover investigations by activists and journalists have exposed horrific animal abuse at the lab since 1989. In 1999, an investigation revealed particularly shocking footage of an HLS lab worker shouting at a beagle puppy, shaking it violently and repeatedly punching it in the head after not being able to insert a catheter into its vein. A small group of British animal rights activists were so outraged by this footage that they started up the SHAC campaign, which spread to the USA and across the globe, reaching New Zealand and lasting for 15 years before ending in 2014.

In the USA

SHAC reached the USA in 2001 and was founded by activist Kevin Jonas after he’d spent 2 years in the UK working with SHAC. SHAC’s strategy was unique in that it involved secondary and tertiary targeting, meaning that the campaign was focused not only on HLS, but on HLS’s business partners, their business partners, insurers, caterers, cleaners, lab equipment suppliers, shareholders, office suppliers and so on. Any company with ties to HLS was considered a legitimate target for the campaign.

Activists engaged in diverse tactics ranging from lawful protests to letter writing to undercover investigations to direct action and everything in between. Every tool in the toolbox was encouraged as long as it didn’t harm humans or animals.

SHAC’s impact

This strategy allowed the SHAC campaign to expand effectively outside of the UK and USA. In New Zealand, the local grassroots groups were running campaigns against companies based here that had ties to HLS. I remember being involved in protests outside various HLS suppliers, doing early morning ‘home demonstrations’ and being part of ‘days of action’ involving sending polite emails to New Zealand-based companies asking them to reconsider their involvement with HLS.

SHAC’s unique and comprehensive strategy proved very successful in bringing HLS to its knees as suppliers and business

Grassroots strategies

Back in the early 2000s, the grassroots campaign strategies and tactics we used were very hard-hitting and uncompromising. We didn’t care about the public; the dialogue was between us and the animal abusers. We were going to shut them down and smash the state at the same time! We were young, we were angry and we believed our radical activism would be enough, without any public sympathy, to stop the animal abuse that we were so enraged and heartbroken about. I didn’t fully realise at the time, but this feeling and approach was typical of the global grassroots animal rights movement approach; it wasn’t just our little group in Auckland that felt this way.
partners severed their ties with the lab. It just wasn't worth it to these companies when they could do their business in peace elsewhere.

Jake Conroy
A key player in SHAC USA at the time was a young man called Jake Conroy. Recently the New Zealand Animal Rights Movement was lucky enough to host Jake and have him speak at the AR17 conference and other public talks organised across the country. In Auckland, the grassroots animal rights group I'm involved with now, Direct Animal Action (DAA), organised a forum for Jake to speak about his experiences with SHAC USA. But there's a lot more to Jake's story than simply being involved in running the campaign!

Success and repression
Because SHAC was so successful, bringing a multi-million-dollar animal abuse corporation to its knees, naturally the USA and UK Governments became very interested in whom they perceived to be the 'leaders' of the campaign. Both Governments chose to take strong action to repress this uprising of people power. In 2005, a US federal jury found six members of SHAC USA, including Jake Conroy, guilty of using their website to incite attacks on those who did business with HLS. In 2009 and 2010, 13 members of SHAC UK were jailed for between 15 months and eleven years on charges of conspiracy to blackmail or harm HLS and its suppliers.

When Jake spoke to the New Zealand movement recently, he told us about the repression he and other SHAC activists experienced from the UK and USA Governments as well as from corporate investigators and the Bureau of Prisons while incarcerated. He talked to us about being the target of a multi-agency terrorism investigation, learning he was on a high-profile prisoners’ list, and how he navigated living a life branded as a terrorist in post-9/11 society. All this he endured to bring about an end to animal testing. Jake and his co-defendants were known as the SHAC 7, and were prosecuted as domestic terrorists under the Animal Enterprise Protection Act, all sentenced to a variety of prison terms. Jake was sentenced to 48 months, which he served in 2 prisons in southern California.

Life after SHAC
In 2009 Jake walked out of prison after spending 3 years incarcerated as a political prisoner. He now lives in Seattle and works for Rainforest Action Network as a designer. Jake's been involved in a wide range of activism since 1995, including various acts of civil disobedience, hundreds of protests, and countless educational outreach events. He currently organizes the Seattle Burrito Coalition, feeding the homeless communities in Seattle, one vegan burrito at a time.

Future activist strategies
Of the SHAC campaign, Jake said he thinks the most important thing we can learn is that our activism needs to be strategic, smart, and creative, while being thoughtful, careful, and calculated. Jake says, "We (SHAC) were happy to push the envelope and support radical ideas and tactics when others wouldn't. We believed in people power, horizontal and autonomous organizing, and supporting and using every tool in the toolbox to enact change. Within months, we managed to gain victories as an all-volunteer organisation where huge national organisations couldn't. We captured the hearts and minds of activist communities and the general public, and we were off and running, bulldozing anyone that got in our way."

I didn't know it 15 years ago when I first became an activist, but I know it now. Jake and others like him, along with the SHAC campaign, taught me that people power is what will change the world. You don't need to be part of a big organisation to make change. You don't need to wait for politicians to do the right thing. With co-ordinated, organised, strategic planning and action, ordinary people like you and me can come together and beat Goliath. We can win and we will win for the animals. This is the power of grassroots activism.

And more
For more information about Jake and SHAC please visit jakeconroy.com and www.shac7.com

Check out Jake’s talk From Activist to "Terrorist" here www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgARuabK_x0

We're always looking for new activists and volunteers at Direct Animal Action. Check us out and get involved at www.directanimalaction.org.nz

Photos courtesy of DAA and Jake Controy.
Angel Food Releases Vegan Cheddar

Alice Shopland, Angel Food founder

The vegan cheddar, which we thought we’d be launching in July 2016, was finally launched nine months later, in April 2017. As they say in the Mainland ads, good things take time.

We’ve had great feedback:
“...You guys have killed it with this cheese! I can’t get over how ‘cheesy’ it actually is.”

“The new cheddar is freaking AMAZING!! Enjoyed it with crackers and oh my goodness it tastes SO DAMN GOOD. Just like my pre-vegan times but better!”

“...Bless y’all for the new cheddar cheese.... I can’t believe how damn good it is... This is dangerously delicious.”

The main technical challenge with this product was to produce a very firm block cheese that was liquid enough in the cooking process to make it easy for our manufacturer to handle it. Our food technologist has the patience of a saint, and after a couple of hundred recipe variations, he cracked it!

A week after the launch, the challenges were having enough product made to supply all the stores that want it, and trying to keep up with customer queries about their nearest stockist.

Oh, and simultaneously working on the next three products we’ll be launching.

Reviewed by Jessica Parsons, Vegan New Zealand editor

One tricky thing about vegan cheese packages on the shelves these days is they look so much like dairy cheese blocks that you have to check to make sure you’ve got your vegan cheese. I can’t count how many raves I’ve seen about this new cheddar, and it was time to try it for myself.

I haven’t handled dairy cheese much in recent years, but the feel of this cheddar when cutting it was very convincing.

Our first family adventure with the cheddar was melting it over thin noodles, as we sometimes do with the Angel Food Cheesey sauce. It melted like a dream, just with the heat of the noodles, and it was a thumbs-up from our vegan-cheese-lovers. Our son is a total convert to the cheddar while our daughter maintains her preference for melting the mozzarella or the Cheesey sauce.

For myself, I’ve also been nostalgically enjoying simple sandwiches with cheddar, mustard and lettuce. I very much appreciate the lower fat content of this vegan cheddar compared to many of our cheese choices.

If it’s cheese you’re missing, don’t miss out! Check out all of Angel Food’s offerings at www.angelfood.co.nz

GIVEAWAY!

Two lucky readers will each win a prize pack with 2 blocks of this brand-new cheddar. For your chance to win, email amanda@vegansociety.co.nz with the subject line “AngelFood Cheddar” and your postal address (no RDs or overseas entries please). Enter to win by July 30 (or today before you forget!)

*Open to Vegan Society members only.
“A Vegan Future” Hui
Wellington, 17th and 18th March 2017

by Emma B

“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come” – Victor Hugo

The third weekend in March this year saw the first event of its kind take place in New Zealand with thirty-one vegan advocates and animal rights activists, many of them leading figures within the movement, coming together at a venue in Wellington. The event, entitled the A Vegan Future Hui, was designed to bring together some of the most passionate, committed and experienced voices in the Aotearoa New Zealand movement, with their key focus on the advancement of a very clear, unambiguous and explicit vegan and rights-focused message. In many cases delegates attended as individuals, but several also represented key vegan and animal rights groups and organisations. The attendees came from every region of New Zealand, from as far as Northland in the north to Invercargill in the south, and everywhere in between.

By bringing key individuals together in person to discuss strategy and tactics for such an approach, the organisers hoped to take advantage of what they see as a very noticeable and positive shift in the public perception of veganism in recent years. According to data presented at the Hui that circulated via a 48-page discussion document prior to the event, veganism and animal rights are more topical and popular than ever before. There is an increasing acknowledgement and acceptance of this growing social justice movement and the associated lifestyle choices it entails.

Carl Scott speaks
“This is due, in part, to an increase in awareness of the significant and often severe suffering animals are currently enduring at human hands,” explained spokesperson, Carl Scott. “Animal agriculture has been demonstrated to cause massive environmental damage, including being a major contributor to climate change. Dairy is also a major contributor to water pollution, with 60% of our rivers now unsafe to swim in. Some people say that getting rid of dairy will destroy the economy. But the reality is the dairy industry could destroy tourism”. He also added, “At the same time, the ongoing increase in availability of vegan products and options, and easily available information, means that adopting vegan lifestyle choices has become quite easy in recent years. For all of these reasons, and more, people from all sectors of society, from our new governor general Dame Patsy Reddy, through to celebrities and sportspeople, as well as thousands of regular Kiwis of all ages, cultural backgrounds and ethnicities, spiritual beliefs, political affiliations, and more, are going vegan. It is especially popular amongst young people.”

From the regions
In order to hear the ideas and concerns of as many advocates and activists as possible from all around New Zealand, six smaller, regional mini-huis were held around the country in the month preceding the event. Delegates to the national hui ran local events in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Tauranga and Wellington, which were attended by over seventy people altogether. Their ideas were documented by the regional delegates for representation and further discussion at the national event, making it a truly collaborative and nationwide effort.

Setting the strategy
Discussion focused on establishing key principles and developing consensus on a collective vision and strategy, while also recognising the importance of identifying allies and anticipating resistance from the animal exploitation industries and other sectors of society. Key points raised for discussion also included delivering the message as effectively as possible to generate public, and subsequently, political support, and working together cohesively on a nationwide basis.

While an explicit vegan and rights-focused approach is relatively new in New Zealand, where progressive welfare reform has been the more common approach for some time as it has achieved numerous successes, the organisers are confident that time has come for a change. Veganism...
All-vegan Like Licks

Jessica Parsons

Anyone else remember Lite Licks in the 2-litre carton? Ahhhhh. Apparently this soy ice cream launched in 1986, just before I arrived in New Zealand myself. This must have been one of New Zealand’s first brands of non-dairy ice cream available for us vegans. Well, the non-dairy market is almost unrecognisable now, with a huge range of options from soy to coconut.

In 2016, Lite Licks got a brand-new look: it became Like Licks, with new flavours Almond and Raspberry, Oat and Chocolate, and Soy and Hokey Pokey. Vegans everywhere were raving about the new tastes (apparently the Almond and Raspberry is like a Jelly Tip). We probably thought we wouldn’t need to read the ingredients on our old favourite brand, but somebody finally noticed that there was gelatine in the Soy and Hokey Pokey!

The news raced across vegan social media, and a call to action was declared. The Like Licks producers were inundated with messages to remove the gelatine. They apologised and offered hundreds or probably thousands of free vouchers that we could use on the other two flavours, which were still vegan. But Kiwi vegans love our Hokey Pokey. After hearing from the vegan community and meeting with Vegan Society representatives, it wasn’t long before Like Licks announced that they were definitely investigating how to produce a vegan Hokey Pokey.

And...in 2017, it’s here! All three Like Licks flavours are now vegan (although you must check for the NEW badge on the Hokey Pokey to make sure you have the vegan one).

Here’s to vegans who know what they want, and a happy vegan ending. Happy Hokey Pokey everyone!
Introducing Our New ‘All Day’ Organic Vegan Menu

Healthy Vegan Meals with the Best ‘Vibes’ Available Seven Days

Falafel Platter
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He Appeared Out of Nowhere

Early one morning on Waitangi weekend, whilst camping at a family’s Northland rural property, I was suddenly awoken by my friend Marco’s voice, “Wake up everybody, we’ve got a quest for you.” I checked the time, it was 8AM. I unzipped the tent and peered out.

Next to Marco stood a tiny four-legged brown and white creature. My heart raced when Marco said that he randomly found him in the hills during his morning run, and that there were no other cows nearby. My first thought was, “I will save you my little baby.” I wasn’t sure how, but I knew for sure that there was no way a farmer would ever go near him again.

I clearly remember my first sight of Bobby up close. He was absolutely beautiful, tan and white with big eyes and long lashes. Although on the thin side, Bobby was healthy-looking and clean. I greeted him with cuddles and kisses. Bobby would not stop suckling our fingers, a sign of just how hungry he was.

Where Did He Come From?

The three of us wandered through the hills to look for any cow-herds nearby in order to get Bobby back to his mother. A part of me secretly hoped that we wouldn’t find the herd, because it would be like sending him back to prison. I reiterated to Marco and Marco’s wife Sigrid, who are non-vegans, that if we did find Bobby’s “owner”, he would be worthless to them and would simply be sent to slaughter. Neither of them argued, which meant that there was a chance of rescuing him for a better life.

Bobby was exhausted from a lack of food, but followed us anyway. I don’t know where he got the energy to hike up the hills, as even I was huffing and puffing, but he pressed on.

I phoned my friend Roz, as I knew she would support my idea of this rescue. After receiving a reality check from her, and walking through the hills finding nobody (yes!), we decided to take Bobby down to the cabin. Roz offered to take Bobby in temporarily; it was great to have this option as it allowed me to accomplish my desire to save Bobby.

Marco said that we should name him. I suggested “Bobby” – it was the first thing that came into my mind whilst thinking about all those poor bobby calves who are torn away from their mothers too early. I’d like to think that the farmers forgot about Bobby when they rounded up the herd on the property days earlier. Another possibility is that Bobby’s mother hid him away from the farmers. We will never know.

He Needs Food – Fast

Bobby was starving; he would not stop suckling our fingers, so we urgently needed to find a suitable milk replacement. It was Sunday in rural Northland, so unfortunately the farming supplies and local vets were closed.

We gave him some water from a plastic bottle, which he took. Bobby also gulped down the tiny bit of almond milk that I gave him. My husband Joel, who is also vegan, and I decided to shorten our trip and return to Auckland, with Bobby, first thing in the morning.

Joel and Marco ventured out to Hammer Hardware to find a milk replacement, but were unsuccessful. We were running out of time, as it was almost noon and Bobby was starving. It was likely that he hadn’t eaten for days, so we needed to feed him urgently. The boys said that a lady called Ellie at Hammer Hardware was experienced with calves and had offered to come to us to provide colostrum and a feeder.
Then I realised: SPCA Awanui had milk replacement! My contact there also said the SPCA could take Bobby in, but I kindly declined. Knowing that it was the long weekend and there were skeleton volunteers, I worried about the effects on Bobby being caged-up overnight for a few days.

He Wouldn’t Eat
After picking up the milk replacement, I thought Bobby would be eager to drink. However, even after trying repeatedly, he refused to take it, twisting his neck away. We all tried but he rejected it each time. We were so disheartened.

Roz suggested to have a 24-hour vet come and give Bobby IV fluids and also provide a milking teat. The vet came, but only took Bobby’s temperature which was 38.4°C (essentially normal), concluding that Bobby was well hydrated and appeared healthy. We made it clear to the vet that he wouldn’t eat, but the vet did not have a teat and simply told us to “keep trying”. This wasn’t very useful and Bobby’s exhaustion was really starting to show. He couldn’t stand for long, and it was very sad to watch.

He Still Wouldn’t Eat
Ellie was the last person in this town who could offer something that should, in theory, help Bobby eat. Ellie arrived and tried to use her skills to get Bobby to drink from the teat, but Bobby conjured up all that he had left to “fight” Ellie by twisting his neck and head away, kicking, rolling his eyes backwards and moaning loudly in distress. I didn’t know what was worse: the struggle between Ellie and Bobby, or the fact that Bobby was still refusing to eat. Time was running out, and if felt like he was slipping away fast.

Ellie finally gave up, because she could clearly see that Bobby was not going to eat. There was no more she could do. My heart sank, and we all sat in silence staring at Bobby asking him the same question, “Why don’t you want to eat?”

A Cruel Industry
I remained with Bobby for the rest of the afternoon while he rested. I stared into his gorgeous eyes, patted, rubbed and kissed him, ushering flies away.

Seeing Bobby like this has made me realise just how unnatural it is for humans to try to feed calves as if we were their mothers. That is probably why Bobby wouldn’t drink milk from the feeder. The milk replacement, as a human-made formula, probably also tasted unnatural. I was confident that if Bobby’s mother were there, Bobby would naturally know how to suckle. I thought I knew the dairy industry already, but I had no clue just how utterly cruel it was – both for the mother and their poor babies.

The Wrong Decision?
Evening came, and we took turns watching Bobby and trying to feed him from both the Pump bottle and the feeder, but to no avail. It was frightening to think of Bobby not eating for another night. I thought about Ellie’s offer of a farmer friend of hers taking him, which was the only alternative other than taking him back to Auckland.

Later that night, Ellie texted to ask after Bobby, “I fear that if you can’t get him to drink by the morning he won’t survive the trip.” It was at this point that I doubted myself and my decision to rescue Bobby. Was I doing the right thing given that Bobby still hadn’t eaten? Do we take up Ellie’s offer? It was a scary reality check.

I also felt that Marco and Sigrid were probably questioning my decision, and perhaps saw me as a crazy vegan who couldn’t be realistic. So, I called a team meeting. To my relief, we all agreed that we continue with our plan. Before bed, we had one last shot at feeding Bobby with no success. It was almost 1am so we decided to try again in the morning.
A Sleepless Night
Joel and I slept in the garage to be close to Bobby, who I had put inside the laundry to reduce the chance of him escaping if he was outside. From 1AM to 5AM, I only managed to get about ten minutes of sleep. I had never felt so anxious and worried in my life. It was then that I learnt where the term “worried sick” came from. I got up to check on Bobby numerous times, and stayed with him for most of the night, patting and kissing him. I whispered to him repeatedly, “Please hang in there, my baby.” He didn’t look well, and I was terrified that he would slip away in front of my eyes.

The Breakthrough
Bobby was still with us at 5AM. We got Bobby outside and Marco suggested using the Pump bottle again to feed him – and, surprisingly, Bobby drank from it! We decided to try the feeder. I opened Bobby’s mouth and closed it on the feeder as Ellie had taught us. Initially, Bobby pulled away, but on the second go, he suckled on it. This was the big breakthrough we needed! Bobby finished the full two litres that we fed him. We were so relieved, and my whole mood lifted.

The next worry was the journey back to Auckland, which took over four hours. I was worried about Bobby bringing up all of his breakfast and being terrified of riding in the car. Luckily, he slept comfortably through most of the ride there. It was a tense journey, and Joel and I knew we could not relax until we arrived at Roz’s.

More Relief
When we finally arrived at Roz’s, Bobby was so curious that he stood himself up inside the car! I threw myself into Roz’s arms and burst into tears. The anxiety, fear and worry all came rushing out, and it felt good. I finally descended from the heights of an emotional rollercoaster.

Although the next few days were still a little anxious as Bobby developed diarrhoea, I had confidence in Roz’s expertise and care. Bobby had a warm shed and a paddock to enjoy alongside sheep and chickens. Our intense and anxious weekend had paid off.

Three Months On
After spending a month in Roz’s care in West Auckland, Bobby embarked on a trip down to Ngaruawahia (thanks Anna) to spend the next two months at Kia and Liam’s. This was where Bobby got his first social exposure to other cows. Bobby has now moved on to his forever home at Dapple Hill Sanctuary in Otorohanga, a good 480kms from where he was originally found. He is very happy with his new friends and new bovine BFF, Daisy.

Bobby is now enjoying life and growing up fast. If we had not found him, he would have died alone and hungry. I am very proud of what we’d achieved and I will continue to be proud for years to come.

Thanks Joel, Marco and Sigrid for sharing a challenging but special weekend with me. A big thanks to Ellie, Roz, Kia, Anna @ Paws Awhile, Lynley @ Starfish, and Paul Judge for contributing their love, time, and expertise in helping with Bobby’s rescue and/or finding his forever home. I wouldn’t have achieved a “happily ever after” for Bobby if it weren’t for you amazing souls. On behalf of Bobby, thank you.
James Aspey visits Auckland

Avril McIntyre

When James Aspey posted in the Facebook group Vegans of Aotearoa (NZ), saying he was coming to New Zealand and would like to speak, I messaged him right away to see if he would like to speak at the University of Auckland. James spoke on Monday 24 April, which is appropriately World Day for Lab Animals. I was extremely nervous both to meet James and to host a large event. James was the opposite, perfectly comfortable chilling on the couch outside the lecture theatre. Of course, he wasn’t nervous, having spoken over 150 times all over the world.

James has an amazing story. He conquered leukaemia, drug abuse and bulimia before becoming one of the world’s most well-known animal rights activists. James took a year-long vow of silence to be voiceless for animals, who are voiceless. He was also tattooed for 24 hours to raise money for charity.

I had a front row seat. James has excellent inter-personal skills and a great sense of humour; he could have had a career as a stand-up comedian. My favourite was when James told a particularly enthusiastic audience member that she needed to take a vow of silence. James is very patient and answered every single question asked by the audience and remained afterwards to speak to every person who wished to talk with him or take a photo.

Vegan or not, we can all take something away from James’s speech, such as a recipe for banana ice-cream (blending frozen ripe bananas with almond milk) or that being vegan not only reduces the suffering of animals, but is better for your health, the environment and can reduce world poverty. For those who are not already vegan, James makes a convincing argument for going vegan. And as vegans, we can always do more and be more active. We do not contribute to animal’s suffering, however, simply being vegan does little to prevent it. There are so many ways to actively help animals, for example joining groups such as Save Animals From Exploitation (SAFE), New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society (NZAVS), Direct Animal Action (DAA) and Auckland University Animal Rights Group (AUARG).

Check out James Aspey’s website for more info and to watch some of his prior speeches: www.jamesaspey.com.au

If you would like to view the speech that James gave at UoA, it was live streamed and is available to view anytime on the Facebook page of AUARG at tinyurl.com/aspey2017

Photo credit: Bryce Kehoe
Hugo Hughes
Super Vegan Chef

Hugo Hughes is obviously passionate about healthy, delicious wholefoods. As I enter his Wellington home, I am instantly greeted by the aroma of lunch – a cashew nut curry, prepared from scratch by him and his partner that morning. His warmth and hospitality shine through as he discusses his passion for food, and I can see that he puts his whole heart into the dishes he creates for others.

A first in vegan cooking
This is why he became the first person to graduate from AUT’s Bachelor of Culinary Arts through vegan cooking. He followed the standard curriculum for the first half of the degree, reluctantly using meat and animal products in the dishes he was assigned. The restrictions on what he had to cook made it difficult for him to live by his ethical standards. Exhausted and depressed, he wondered if the only way he could live by his morals was to drop out and finally stop cooking with meat and animal products.

He eventually reasoned that he had worked hard and deserved to see it through. He took a huge risk and told his tutors he would complete his degree but that he would only do it as a vegan. He courageously stuck to his morals and in the end, got the result he wanted. His tutors agreed he could complete his degree focusing on veganism and sustainability of the planet.

Sustainability
As he was fostered in conscious eating, Hugo became a vegetarian at an early age. He transitioned to veganism after Lisa McEwan, his Design for Sustainability tutor at AUT, all but demanded that he and his classmates watch Cowspiracy in 2014.

“After watching Cowspiracy I realised that, as an environmentalist dedicated to protecting the environment, I could no longer excuse myself for eating animal products. After seeing the devastating effects caused by dairy and egg industry, it felt hypocritical to support their production. It just made sense to be vegan.”

Activism and social change
For Earth Week 2015, the creators of Cowspiracy re-released the movie for a $1 download. After unsuccessfully encouraging friends and family to purchase it, Hugo decided to buy the film on their behalf and emailed the link to 50 friends who had interacted with the post he made on Facebook.

“Social media can kill some aspects of activism; people sign a petition and then forget about it, or ‘like’ a post but do nothing to help the actual cause. It felt good to be able to create active awareness and to send this educational film to my friends and family.”

Hugo’s vegan activism continued to flourish, through spreading awareness and educating his friends, through his...
Hugo had to create a menu for a culinary event. They were put into teams, and Hugo pushed for a focus on sustainability and ethics. In the end, his ideas were adopted, and their event was called ‘Food for Thought.’

**It was a 5-course dégustation menu in which each course had a theme and had ingredients which made the eater think about their food in a more advanced way. Many people are a long way from becoming vegan, and we felt that the best way to raise their consciousness was to help make them think about where their food was coming from. I feel we succeeded. Sadly, we did use animal products, but we ensured that we used free range and ‘sustainable’ accredited sources.**

The aim of the project wasn’t to highlight a vegan diet, but to force omnivores to look more deeply into where their food comes from. I was on the design and marketing side of that project, so thankfully didn’t actually have to cook any of the animal products.”

One course had a food scarcity theme, because one in four children in New Zealand go to school without lunch. They served tartlets with one wedge cut out, and one person at each table received an empty plate. This encouraged everyone else to give them their wedge. Hugo’s team’s successful meal project received great praise from his course tutors.

**“I came up with some ideas at the start of the semester and it really grew. It wasn’t vegan, but it had a focus on ethical production and transparency. My class and teachers really supported those ideas, and while I was only one member of my class, I felt like I made a real impact on the project.”**

**Whole food health**

Health and happiness are the foundation of Hugo’s love of cooking. One of his favourite chef is Yotam Ottolenghi. Ottolenghi is not vegan, but his cooking focusses on delicious, wholesome, plant-based meals with an emphasis on legumes, grains, and roots, and with animal products seen only as an occasional extra.

**“I really respect chefs who have integrity in their food and believe in comfort and wholesomeness, not only in the ingredients or in the nutritional content, but also in the environment, the feeling and the mood they create when serving their food. There is a chaos that is intrinsic with the environment of being a chef. It is a high-pressure environment, everything needs to be synchronised and balanced. But cooking is relaxing for me; I enjoy it, it’s a passion. It’s nice to put love into the food you’re making, it shows if you create something with intent and integrity as opposed to something that is just whipped up. I like serving people and for it to be an act of love and sharing.”**

To cover nutrition, Hugo gets blood tests every 6 months (with healthy results) and believes that eating good produce is synonymous with meeting his nutritional needs. With a focus on fresh, wholesome foods, a balance of food types, and an awareness of how he physically feels, he doesn’t let counting nutrients take over.

### The final menu

For their final presentation, Hugo’s class had to create a menu for a culinary event. They were put into teams, and Hugo pushed for a focus on sustainability and ethics. In the end, his ideas were adopted, and their event was called ‘Food for Thought.’

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Future of veganism

When asked about the future of veganism and vegan cheffing, Hugo lights up.

HH “Veganism is trending, it is new, it is now, and because there is an intrinsic element of sustainability in veganism, that trend will be sustained. It is something that is empowering. People reclaim their bodies when they become vegan and it’s unifying; it’s strengthening. I really believe that the movement will grow stronger and stronger; 2017 has already been called ‘The Year of the Vegan.’ This is the development of a movement that has the power to change the world, and it will revolutionise the way that we produce food.”

HH “There are so many potential devastations on our horizon, and it is up to us to ensure that we learn from them and evolve. Veganism is the way of the future, and the sooner people start the transition, the better it will be for all of us. At the end of the day, it’s not only about sustainability, it’s also about rejuvenation, and revitalisation and the planet’s ability to thrive. We can’t rely on the way we make food these days. We need to be more localised and more conscious about what we eat. Even as vegans, we need to be careful about how the foods we eat affect the world around us.”

Hugo’s next steps

At this article’s date of publish, Hugo will be in San Francisco for a 3-month internship at Stanford University Catering. HH “I think the job might be stressful, and I’ll be on the other side of the world with no contacts or resources, but it’ll be an adventure. In San Francisco, there is so much vegan brain power, scientists and filmmakers and physicians - that’s going to be awesome. I’m looking forward to working in a commercial kitchen and seeing how I fit in. After that, I might stay in America for a while longer. And it’s probably a few years away but I definitely want to own my own restaurant at some point in the future, it’s an opportunity to have everything the way I want it.”

At this early stage in his life, Hugo has already done so much for the vegan movement, and he is a shining example of how each of us can do small things in our day to day lives which can have an effect, far more widespread than we might have imagined. We wish him the absolute best in America and will keep our fingers and toes crossed that when he opens his first restaurant, it is back here with us in Wellington.
I think it’s fair to say that we all hate waste. And there’s nothing I enjoy more than taking something that would have been thrown away and giving it one more use (hello to a life spent dumpster diving and browsing the aisles of op shops...). Hugo introduced me to my new favourite delicious, nutritious, waste-saving recipe – Homemade Vegetable Stock. This recipe is so simple and the stock brings a certain oomph of flavour to every dish I add it to. It’s a perfect replacement for frying with oil and it is absolutely free!

**Ingredients:**
- **Use** all of your old veggies, ends of carrots, broccoli stems, beetroot leaves, onion skins, capsicum tops – any parts of vegetables you would normally compost.
- **Avoid** starchy veg like potatoes or turnips as they can make the finished stock starchy.
- Several litres of water
- Large pot
- Ice-cube trays
- 2 Medium/Large ziplock bags

**Instructions**
1. As you accumulate your vegetable odds and ends throughout the week, put them into a ziplock bag in your freezer. Keep adding more vegetables until you have a couple of bags full. 
2. When you have enough, put all the frozen vegetables into a large pot and fill with water until they are covered. More water will lead to a less concentrated stock, to suit your personal preference. Feel free to add any herbs or seaweeds, though the veggies on their own should make a delicious stock. 
3. Simmer on medium heat for about 2-3 hours (or longer if you have time). Stir occasionally. Feel free to add more water if the stock is reducing rapidly. 
4. Sieve through any leftover vegetables and throw them on the compost (they will now compost very easily due to their mushiness). 
5. Pour the leftover stock water into ice cube trays and pop them into the freezer. Now whenever you need stock cubes, you’ve got ‘em!
Timber bamboo windbreaks are a common sight in rural Auckland and Northland; their graceful swaying poles forming agricultural shelter belts. This is the main use of bamboo in New Zealand.

It may be hard to imagine a delicious table vegetable inside the towering timber bamboo hedge down the road or bordering your farm, but this gigantic spreading grass has a tender moment just as it starts out in life.

Eating shoots
How to eat it had me bamboozled for years – the hedge protects my back garden from the fiercest salty nor’westerlies and easterlies off the Hauraki Gulf. Bambusa oldhamii was selected for its clumping nature (non-running), size and its description as a very good edible bamboo.

But new shoots were knotty and resisted attempts to dig out. When the shoots grew long enough to twist off, only a broken band at the bottom was tender enough to cook. And they must be cooked for about an hour in plenty of water, drained once, then boiled again to remove the hydrocyanic acid.

This makes bamboo shoots more challenging than digging up a potato, but here is one roadmap to the provision of mild and nutty bamboo shoots for your vegan stir fries and salads.

The harvest
Gloves are good! Trowel or brush away the layers of leaves around the base of the shoot. Expose as much of the whitish lower stem as possible. Grasp the shoot as near to the ground as possible, then push and twist carefully to break off the shoot as close to the ground as you can. If a shoot is too mature or fibrous to eat, you won’t be able to break it this way.

If you have more than one to choose from, the thickest stems (10-12 cm in diameter) that are no more than 50-60 cm long deliver the softest and tastiest quality.

Cooking materials
• A pot with lots of water heating up
• A medium sized sharp knife
• A large cutting surface
• A big bowl or plastic sack for discarded stems and sheath

Cutting secrets
Here is the trick to getting the most food from your harvested shoot: take advantage of how the bamboo stem, or culm, grows from a band just above each joint. This magic section is soft and cuttable.

The green sheaths wrap tight layers around the stem to protect the new growth. These must be removed with a sharp knife and great care taken to cut and peel away the sheath to expose the soft band. If you wash the broken end, there will usually be a soft portion there to cut rings. Cut from the broken end until the soft stem becomes...
resistant and fibrous, and put the rings in the pot of water. Then start cutting the sheath at the lowest internode (the section of stem between two joints).

1. After an internode layer of green sheath is cut away and peeled back, the bare joint section is exposed.
2. Look for the narrow white ring just above the peeled joint and the greenish yellow section above it – cut through the stem on the white line just above the peeled joint.
3. Discard the portion with the joint and position the remaining shoot on your cutting board.
4. Start with the newly cut stem portion and slice thin rings (3-5mm) until the stem begins to resist and become fibrous.
5. Put soft rings in pot of water.

Then cut and peel above the next joint as before to expose the next section of stem, and repeat the steps above until you run out of new joints on the bamboo shoot.

A nice thick 1-metre-long shoot will yield a potful of rings – enough for several meals if you put in a container in the fridge. Last summer I discovered that on a hot day you can make a refreshing salad from nothing but chilled bamboo shoot rings sprinkled with salt. Light, slightly firm, cold, with a mild, refreshing flavour.

**Bamboo Anatomy**

Bamboo is a grass and the jointed stem is called the culm, which is the vertical, vegetative axis. The bamboo culm consists of three parts: the stem, the stem base and the stem petiole.

The stem base is the lower part of the bamboo that extends into the soil and connects to the rhizome and root system. The stem petiole, the lowest part of the bamboo stem, has degenerated leaves, no buds and is a solid structure composed of tens of short sections under the soil.

**Nutrition**

One cup of cooked bamboo shoot contains 13 Kilocalories, apportioned as 49% carbohydrate, 34% protein and 17% fat (dry weight). One cup also provides 18 mg of omega-3 fatty acids and 99.6 mg of omega-6 fatty acids plus 1.2 g dietary fibre.

Minerals include: Potassium, 640 mg; phosphorus, 24 mg; iron, 0.3 mg; calcium, 14.4 mg; magnesium, 3.6 mg; folate, 2.4 μg; with traces of zinc, copper and selenium.

Note: Phyllostachys bambusoides (giant timber bamboo) has huge edible shoots with very little hydrocyanic acid.

**Eco bamboo**

- Bamboo shoots absorb CO2 and release 30% more O2 than an equivalent mass of trees
- Fast growing: some are clocked at >90 cm/day
- Reaches maturity in 1-5 years and is a renewable resource
- Very hardy to pest and diseases, contains natural anti-bacterial substances, and root systems prevent erosion

**Bio**

Pam Parsons has a B.S. in Technical Communications and has worked as a technical editor and writer for about 15 years, including 3 years as editor of Food Technology in NZ. She also earned a BSc in Human Nutrition, and her articles have been published in Organic NZ, Healthy Options, Vegan New Zealand, Lifestyle Farmer and a number of US trade publications.
Hectors Restaurant - The first hotel restaurant in New Zealand to be approved by the New Zealand Vegetarian Society.

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WWW.HERITAGEHOTELS.CO.NZ/HECTORS

Enjoy Hectors’ commitment to celebrating flavour
Winter Comfort Food  

Green Lasagna

Winter time is a great time to get spray-free dark leafy greens and all sorts of brassica veges. This baked dish offers a different & delicious way of sneaking them into a meal. You can also use the ‘filling’ in a pasta or potato casserole.

**Ingredients**

- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2-3 tablespoons water
- 3 tablespoons rice flour
- 1/2 cup cashews
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- some chilli flakes or powder (optional)
- salt to taste
- 100g (or more) dark leafy greens (e.g. silverbeet, kale, spinach, collard greens etc.), finely chopped
- approx. 5 lasagna sheets

**Instructions:**

1. Heat a good non-stick frying pan. Add water and cook/roast onions until golden.
2. In the meantime, blend the cashews with some of the water (about 3/4 cup) in a powerful blender until smooth. Preheat oven to 200°C.
3. Sprinkle the golden onions with rice flour and stir well. Pour in the blended cashews, remaining water and mix well.
4. Add ground nutmeg, chilli flakes and salt to taste.
5. Once the sauce is simmering, add the finely chopped dark leafy greens. Stir occasionally until they are wilted. Then stir in the chopped broccoli.
6. Using an oven-proof baking dish, spread some of the sauce on the bottom of it. Place a lasagna sheet onto it. Then repeat those steps until the sheets are finished and the top is covered with sauce.
7. Bake covered in oven for approx. 45 minutes. Let cool down a little before serving.

Chocolate Brownie Cake Slice (Gluten-free, Low-Fat)

Who doesn’t love a home-baked chocolate treat on a cold winter’s day? These slices are somewhere between a brownie and a chocolate cake and they taste amazing when still warm and fudgy. 

**Makes a 20 x 20cm cake tin.**

**Ingredients**

- 1 cup rice flour
- 1 cup dates, pitted and diced
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons FAIR-TRADE cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1-2 pinches salt (optional)
- 1/3 cup chocolate drops if desired (I recommend TradeAid’s)

**Instructions:**

1. Soak rice flour, dates and water for at least a few hours prior to blending and baking (I soak them overnight).
2. Preheat oven to 200°C (top-/bottom heat). Sift cocoa into a bowl, add baking powder, baking soda and salt. Mix well.
3. Blend rice flour, dates and water until smooth. If it gets warm while blending, let cool down a little.
4. Add mixture to bowl with dry ingredients, add half the chocolate drops and stir just long enough to combine.
5. Line baking tray with baking paper and spread dough evenly. Drop remaining chocolate drops on top.
6. Place in oven and bake covered with a sheet of baking paper or aluminium foil (which can be reused several times) for 35 to 45 minutes. Test with a wooden skewer. If it comes out clean, the brownie slice is ready.

You can find more vegan & gluten-free recipes on Jana’s blog www.theveganmonster.com/en
Newly opened Christchurch restaurant ‘Gatherings’ is paving the way for plant-based, sustainable cuisine in New Zealand.

Gatherings is set in the iconic Carlton Courts building, where a simple yet stylish fold-out street sign alerts passers-by that there is a restaurant within. When you step through the doors, the naturalistic decor welcomes you: handcrafted, one-of-a-kind wooden seating and wall weave art with white sparkling crystals catching the low light. The restaurant is a work of art in its own right, reaching the pinnacle of dining ambience.

Menu and food

After being captivated by the décor I turned to their menu. The tasting menu was full of alluring food suggestions such as Bellbird bread, Hazelnut sauce and Daikon steak, all of which I had never tried or even heard of before. This was the obvious option for me: five courses for $60 or $100, which included matching wines to complement the flavours.

The dishes were tastefully presented, alongside the parade of wines – each more exciting than the last to taste. The Beet Tartare with Rye Crackers was rich, fragrant and had the perfect amount of heat. The crisp crackers offered a subtle, welcoming flavour that perfectly accompanied the matching wine – the Ekleipsis 2nd Skin, a textured, skin-fermented Chardonnay/ Pinot Gris mix, one of the ‘Living’ wines that Gatherings have on offer. Although it may sound offensive to drink a ‘Living’ wine, be assured it is not offensive to the palette. The term is fitting: nothing has been added or taken from the organic New Zealand-made wine.

Presented by

Alex Davies, Head Chef and owner of Gatherings, is a modest restaurateur with a vision of creating sustainability through food and respect for nature, using the best, locally sourced, seasonal produce for his culinary creations. The menu changes almost daily and is based on what is available, catering to any foodie wanting to enjoy the varied menu on a regular basis. Although there is no mention of ‘vegan’ or ‘vegetarian’, Gatherings is a meat-free restaurant with a vegan option on every dish.

Alex and his team beautifully match the atmosphere; they are unpretentious, welcoming, and extremely passionate about their food and drink selection. It is not unusual to have a pleasant conversation with one of the staff, including the head chef himself, who is more than happy to tell stories about the wine being fermented in a barrel at the bottom of a lake.

Every detail has been co-ordinated to perfection: the locally sourced food, the wine, the décor – even the aprons that the staff wear – are handmade and in tune with nature. The food is fresh, original, naturally colourful and beautifully presented. I couldn’t fault any of the aromatic flavours I tasted or any part of the relaxing environment.

Gatherings is not just for foodies. The seats at the bar are perfect places to enjoy a craft beer, a wine and a chat over a Lupo Atelier nut cheese board. The intimate setting has a capacity of 25 so the restaurant could easily be filled with friends and family for a celebration of modest proportions. Meat-eaters may be so impressed that they might not realise the food is plant-based. The new standard of sustainable dining has arrived in Christchurch and can be experienced at Gatherings.

Tasting menu on the day:

• Bellbird Bread with Carrot Paste and olive oil
• Artichoke and Hazelnut Sauce with Autumnal Vegetables
• Beet Tartare with Rye Crackers
• BBQ Miso Daikon Steak with Shiitake Mushroom and Fermented Kale
• Fennel Granita with Quince
• Lupo Nut Cheese Board

Photo credit: Michael Cullen
MEAT starts off with a hunter’s observation of how New Zealanders no longer have a tight connection to hunting and killing animals. “We are predators, we have two eyes in our head that face forward. We were designed to harvest meat.” The forwards location of our optic nerves is nature’s permission to eat animals.

But with the observation that we can kill, Josh mentions a moral qualm: he believes we should fatten and kill animals in a humane way, and that perhaps children shouldn’t see what happens inside slaughterhouses. They might not appreciate knowing what we do to the animals inside...

“...I don’t know if we need to shove it in their faces, look at the chickens, look at these pigs, I kind of struggle with people who eat meat, and they’re quite happy to eat meat, but they don’t realise, the process that a farm animal goes through to get from the farm to their plate.”

Thankfully, “MEAT” is just the documentary to reveal this process.

Independent filming
Without funding from animal rights activists or our nation’s large animal industries, director David White brings us a neutral documentary with an honest view of how animals live, and are killed for their “meat”. It’s invigorating, as White himself mentions the biased nature of both “farming propaganda videos”, and footage captured in the dead of night by vegan “activists”. Taking a path through the middle, “MEAT” shows the warts and all nature of our primary industries, a hunter and three farmers themselves sharing their story and thoughts on life.

Meeting the meaty characters
We see pig farmer Ian artificially inseminating a straddled sow with an IV bag of semen, followed by his subsequent joy as mother pigs give birth. “Hi World, I’m out!”.

Hunter Josh has thoughts on mindless consumerism and children demanding new presents. “I’ll buy you a tool or a weapon, but not a toy.”

Sheep farmer Jill shares how in a previous life, she worked in the police force. As a woman, the male officers expected her to make their cups of tea! We learn throughout “MEAT” what a strong, staunch character she is, working from sun up to sun down on her sheep and pig farm.

Chicken farmer Tony adds perspective on life - and what to do post-retirement. His farm and slaughterhouse setup are staffed largely by retirees - “retired people are experienced, not likely to get pregnant, they would like to do something to distract themselves.”

Last moments
The subjects all have thoughts on the animal’s last moments alive. Before his gun goes off, hunter Josh whispers to camera “stay there ya #ckers”. One of the chicken slaughtermen expresses being bothered by sleepless nights imagining “buckets with little heads.”

The hunter admits that he too was initially bothered by killing animals. “I used to get sad, shed a few tears over my first deer, on the deer’s behalf.” He still finds arranging their deaths to be unpleasant, “but lots of meat makes up for the sad part.” His four months working in a slaughterhouse are remarked upon as being depressing, with “that smell of death, that feeling of death, the sound of death” being overpowering.

The sheep farmer works incredible hours and through rough conditions, but also...
fesses up to having a soft heart, crying while watching animal films. “I can bawl my eyes out, and keep on going, and just go out and kill a sheep or pig.” Her philosophy is that she’d fight against overseas terrorists to stay alive, but “when your numbers up, your numbers up.”

In their own words

One of my favourite scenes is of Tony the chicken farmer reflecting on his own eventual passing.

“I want to be remembered as a nice guy. Everyone I meet, I’d like to imagine afterwards the feel the meeting was worthwhile.” All four people come across as having a genuine life philosophy, that they want to do good in the world. It reminded me that New Zealand’s animal farmers are real people, fundamentally no different than the 85% of New Zealanders living in well-developed cities like Invercargill!

My friends, my family also work in these industries, “MEAT” does them a great service by showing the humanity of those who (currently!) kill animals.

As Sting reminded about those on the other side of the Cold War, “we share the same biology, regardless of ideology.” The Freezing Worker still shares a lot in common with the vegan animal rescuer.

The owner of a chicken slaughterhouse reminisces on world peace. “If everyone’s first object in life was to be nice to people they meet, we would probably lose our armies, navies, air forces. That’d cure a lot of ills, I think, I would love that.”

Vegan viewpoint

As a meddling animal activist, I’d link kindness, an end to war with rescuing animals. Humans and the other animals in our slaughterhouses, we all bleed the same colour. I can imagine a world without bloodshed, which would start with how we treat animals. Perhaps seeing how the sausage is made will empower New Zealanders towards veganism?

In our interview, the director mentions how one crew member stopped eating animals, having seen and learnt more about these industries. However, another of David’s friends actually started eating pigs again. She said she thought pig farmers were the worst people in the world, but she had only one source of information.”

“I’d never been on a farm. The film asked me, not explicitly, to think about where I got my information. So I went and found out more. You know, bacon is delicious.”

While I find it unfathomable that someone could see a pig farmer straddling mother sows and squirting a bag of pig semen graphically into their vaginas and consider this tasteful, this documentary really doesn’t force you down a predetermined conclusion.

With viewers encouraged to make up their own minds, “MEAT” provides food for thought.

“MEAT” hits cinemas further north May 4th, currently without release plans for Inverc...

AR17 Animal Rights Conference

In early April, over 100 animal rights activists gathered at Camp Wainui (in Wainuiomata, Wellington) for AR17, the first national animal rights gathering in over three years. Since the last conference in 2013, a lot of new people have joined the animal rights movement, and several new groups have formed around the country. We felt we were overdue a big get together, to meet each other, learn, share and plot.

Face-to-face

In the age of the internet and social media, face-to-face meetings, planning and physical action is becoming rarer. We thought if we want to tackle animal exploitation effectively, we need a mass movement, and internet activism and vegan potlucks are not enough. With AR17 we aimed to get people connected in real life, to inspire them with ideas for action and to see the start of a mass movement building. Through AR17 we promoted the idea that to do this we needed to look to cooperation between animal rights activists and campaigners from other causes, such as the environmental movement. We believe that the animal rights movement can learn a lot from other social justice movements and that unity makes us stronger.

Mike Joy on ecology

We arrived on the night of Friday 31 March, starting with a vegan barbeque
and a short talk on the history of the animal rights movement in New Zealand. The conference itself began on Saturday morning, and our first keynote speaker was Mike Joy, senior lecturer on freshwater ecology at Massey University. He has been very outspoken about the water pollution caused by intensive dairy farming, and he talked about the horrendous impact that current intensive farming systems are having on the environment. He gave a very detailed talk that showed that the current intensive animal agriculture used around the country is completely unsustainable and has been for years. Mike is a great speaker who does valuable research, and we were very pleased he could speak with animal rights activists from around the country.

Mojo Mathers

Green Party MP Mojo Mathers joined us on Saturday afternoon. She spoke to us about how we can be more effective in bringing ideas of animal rights to Parliament. She also co-ran a workshop for those of us who were interested in lobbying and working with politicians.

Laura O'Connell-Rapira

Laura O'Connell-Rapira is the director of campaigns for ActionStation, a digital campaigning platform. She spoke to us about campaigning and the use of the digital media as a tool in our campaigns.

Jasmijn de Boo

Jasmijn de Boo has been involved in vegan campaigning around the world for many years, including working as CEO of the UK Vegan Society. Luckily for us she moved to Wellington recently to take on the role of CEO for SAFE. She gave a talk on pragmatic vegan advocacy and the importance of making animal protection a mainstream issue. She talked why it is important that we use communication and messaging in a way that brings us mainstream support.

Jake Conroy

Another highlight of the conference was American activist Jake Conroy. He has been involved in a range of animal rights and environmental campaigns in the United States and served four years in prison for his part in the campaign against Huntingdon Life Sciences, a notorious animal testing company. Jake spoke about the lessons he learnt from his twenty years in the US animal rights movement and about why he thinks the movement needs to focus on campaigns against animal abuse rather than just education and outreach.

Workshops

The talks by visiting speakers were interspersed with small group workshop sessions focused on movement building, skills and strategy. We ran two or three parallel sessions with workshops and training sessions organised by local activists from Invercargill to Northland. Topics covered included grassroots campaigning skills, knowing your legal rights, political lobbying, and working with youth. We also had sessions on avoiding burnout, staying positive and maximising your potential as an activist.

We also had a range of different strategy workshops. We heard from the organisers of the Vegan Future Project, from someone who had attended a recent event organised by the Centre for Vegan Advocacy, and from an Effective Altruism trainer. We also had a workshop on the importance of intersectional activism and the need to acknowledge differing forms of oppression.

Hanging out!

One of the best parts of any conference is the social time between formal events, and of course the eating. We planned a lot of breaks and spare time as we knew this would be where most people made connections, networked and planned future activism. Of course we probably needed even more time for this because somehow the conference felt busy the entire weekend. The food was great, and our catering team was the best. Thanks to all the volunteers who missed parts of the conference to help out in the kitchen too!

We hope to have another national conference in a year or two and we will see you there.
Best New Zealand Made Vegan Beauty Brands

Minimalist Boutique Skincare

Let’s start minimal with scents of Apricot & Neroli for pure bliss. If you’re looking for a range of local handmade skincare products, which actually work, then look no further! I have fallen in love with ‘The Super Serum’ from Minimalist Boutique Skincare. Try their entire range (including new men’s products) online. RRP From $49.00
www.minimalistboutiqueskincare.com

Bonbon Vegan

If you love desserts and fun filled bath products then you’ll love ‘Bonbon Vegan’ from Whakatane. To unwind after work use a generous scoop of their ‘Relax Bath Salts’. This blend of epsom salts with cedarwood, lavender and ylang ylang will leave you feeling completely stress free.

Stardust lovers try their ‘Unicorn Fluff - Body Wash & Shave Mousse’. This fun and colourful body whip has a fun bubblegum scent with swirls of purple, blue and pink (did I mention the sparkles?) It will brighten your day and leave your skin silky smooth.
Buy Bonbon from local spas / salons or online www.bonbonvegan.com

So Simple Skincare

Natural, effective, simple and non-toxic are the core values of So Simple Skincare. They are handmade in NZ with no parabens or sulphates, with beautiful and innovative products. Over the past few months I’ve enjoyed using their ‘Double Better - Moisturising Face Oil’.

Usually when you think ‘oil’ you automatically think of grease and shine, but not with this wonderful hydrating moisturiser. In summer, for great SPF protection, I use a few drops in the palm of my hand and mix with sunscreen then apply. This small bottle of beautiful oil helps to stimulate the cell renewal process and cancel out redness, leaving you with glowing skin.

Check out their whole range (including natural deodorants & face masks) online www.sosimpleskincare.co.nz

Giveaway!

Enter to win by July 30th (or today before you forget!)
You could win the So Simple ‘No Regrets’ Cellulite Eraser Body Cream For your chance to win one, email amanda@vegansociety.co.nz with the subject line “So Simple” and your postal address.

*Open to Vegan Society Members only
Show your support in one of our funky tees!

The Vegan Society of New Zealand aims to raise the profile of veganism, as well as support new and existing vegans. We facilitate a vegan lifestyle and plant-based eating by creating a vibrant, visible, and influential community, and by providing information and resources.

We offer individual and business memberships. Go to our webpage www.vegansociety.org.nz and choose Join to sign up today!

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Our products are made from proteins which come from grains and legumes. These are complete proteins and contain all 8 essential amino acids. Our award winning secret family recipe of natural spices and seasonings make our products absolutely unique and delicious.

In the interests of trees, we prefer not to print recipe books, but have made our ecookbooks available online. Please go to www.frysvegetarian.co.nz to download yours.

Look for our Green Boxes in the Frozen Food Section of Leading Retail Outlets!