

Thanks to the CT for its article, "Why plant-based is more palatable than vegan" (4/12/18). It is worth making a few more points about the meaning of "vegan".

The word was coined about seventy years ago. Because eggs and dairy products do not require animals to be killed, many vegetarians still eat these foods. The vegetarians who eat only plant products wanted their own word.

Over the last seventy years, the public have learned that commercial layer hens are forced to live short lives in barbaric housing systems, baby roosters are slaughtered in their millions, and baby calves are wrested from their distraught mothers and killed so that humans can use all the milk. Consequently, many former egg and dairy-eating vegetarians now try to be vegan.

I say "try" because even a vegan diet in today's society is far from cruelty-free. In plant agriculture, as in animal agriculture, water is hijacked, habitat destroyed, 'pests' shot or poisoned or killed in harvesting operations.

There is, however, another reason, even more compelling than direct animal suffering, for ending our global consumption of animal products and increasing our consumption of plant products. We now know that animal agriculture, more even than fossil fuel use, is killing our planet, through a combination of livestock greenhouse gas emissions and destruction of greenhouse gas sinks.

If changing one word will help humanity transition away from animal agriculture, so that the planet can survive, it is a change that cannot come too soon.

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