ISA DOES IT
THE VEGAN COOKING QUEEN REIGNS AGAIN

FOIE GRAS FOES
MFA’S UNDERCOVER AGENT EXPOSES THE DELICACY’S DARK SIDE

WICKED WALMART
INSIDE LOOK AT THE MEGA RETAILER’S PORK SUPPLIERS

SIMON SAYS
HOLLYWOOD HEAVYWEIGHT TALKS AG-GAG, VEGANISM, AND THE FUTURE

+ JANE VELEZ-MITCHELL
MEDIA MAVEN ON A MISSION TO PROTECT ANIMALS
COMPASSIONATE LIVING

DEAR FRIENDS,

Randy Spronk is the president of the National Pork Producers Council—a front group for factory farms across the country. Mr. Spronk spends most of his time pimping pork. This is a man who will say and do anything to sell more meat, including defending horrific and systematic cruelty to animals.

In this issue of CL, you will get a no-holds-barred look inside Mr. Spronk’s very own pig factory farm, courtesy of a shocking new Mercy For Animals undercover investigation. You will read about the miserable lives to which thousands of mother pigs are condemned at this Minnesota hellhole. You will hear about the standard abuses: mother pigs locked in crates barely larger than their bodies; baby animals mutilated without painkillers; and the bodies of dead animals littering walkways. You will also read about the nearly daily beatings that animals endured at the hands of workers who grew desensitized to the needs of the animals whose care was entrusted to them.

After we released our investigation at Mr. Spronk’s house of horrors, he didn’t spring to action to improve life for animals. He didn’t pledge to do better, or change a broken system. No, he defended the atrocities. He deflected. Hid. Ran. And lied.

And while Americans shouldn’t hold their breath for people like Mr. Spronk to make change, they should expect more from corporations that have the power, and ethical responsibility, to demand better lives for farmed animals. Walmart, for example, sells pork from pigs who start their wretched lives at Mr. Spronk’s factory farm. Walmart could, and should, demand changes. In this issue, you will read about our ongoing campaign to get the world’s largest retailer to do just that.

This issue—which sports a fresh new look—also contains uplifting interviews, mouthwatering vegan recipes, health tips, and inspiring activist profiles. You will meet Josh Garret, who hiked over 2,600 miles to voluntarily improve conditions for animals. You will also meet activists of all ages and backgrounds from across the country who have found their unique voices, skills, and talents and put them to use bringing about change on behalf of animals.

As you read the pages that follow, I hope it will inspire and empower you in your journey of making the world a kinder place for animals.

Jane Velez-Mitchell is a modern-day media maven. As the host of her own show on HLN, a celebrated author, and a CNN mainstay, Jane is always outspoken, especially when it comes to animals. This summer, MFA honored Jane with the Compassionate Leadership Award for her groundbreaking farmed animal activism and unwavering commitment to a vegan lifestyle. During the cover shoot for CL magazine, MFA sat down with Jane (and her rescued companions, Foxy and Caba) to get her thoughts on being a vegan animal activist.

CL: How did you first become aware of animals suffering on factory farms?

JVM: When I first saw the video of thousands of pigs lined up in tiny crates called “pig gestation crates” I said: this is not possible. How could a human being design what is clearly a torturous enclosure for another sentient being, intentionally preventing them from ever being able to turn around? It turns out it is possible and it must end.

CL: How do you feel since going vegan?

Have you noticed a shift physically, mentally, spiritually?

JVM: I’ve been vegan about 17 years. I interviewed Howard Lyman, the author of “Mad Cowboy,” which exposes industry secrets. His publicist said: “I hear you’re a vegetarian. Do you eat dairy?” I said yes. She responded: “liquid meat.” I never touched dairy again. I feel highly energized.

CL: What part of MFA’s work resonates with you the most?

JVM: MFA takes us behind the closed doors of industrial farming to speak for the most voiceless, helpless creatures on earth. There is a harsh disconnect between the image of the “farm” and these massive warehouses.

CL: You’ve bravely reported on animal issues for years. What responses have you gotten from your fans and followers?

JVM: Americans are decent people. They want the truth of what’s happening on factory farms. Now they’re demanding change. More major corporations are nixing pig gestation crates. But much more needs to be done.

Jane Velez-Mitchell
Executive Director

COVER SHOOT

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NEWSWATCH

VEGANISM:
THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Hollywood celebrities, from Portia de Rossi to Alicia Silverstone, credit their plant-based diets with keeping them young. And science backs them up. A University of California study found that vegetarianism might actually reverse the aging process, and a Loma Linda University study revealed that vegetarians had a lower risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease, leading to longer, healthier lives.

When Bill Gates proclaims, “The meat market is ripe for reinvention,” you know there are some big changes on the horizon. From the first lab-grown burger to 3-D printers that can create virtually any food, future meat production methods may eliminate raising and slaughtering animals.

Fecal Fiasco

A new USDA program that reduces the number of safety inspectors at meat processing plants and increases speeds of the processing lines has led to greater fecal contamination. In other crappy news, exploitive “local food” has suddenly emerged over factory farm manure pits and a recent report by the USDA’s Inspector General reveals focus on pig carcasses that had “already been cleaned.”

From Chipotle’s vegan-positive “The Scarecrow” video, which garnered millions of views on YouTube within hours of uploading, to satellite photos of factory farms and manure lagoons on Reddit and The Huffington Post, to MFA’s own Why Love One but Eat the Other? tour featured on the wildly popular BuzzFeed, veganism is taking over the online world.

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Executive Director
MEMBERS ON A MISSION

Sarah Von Alt

Position with MFA: Western Outreach Coordinator
Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio
Email: SarahVA@MercyForAnimals.org

Words to Live by: “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” - Martin Luther King Jr.

Sarah Von Alt is a devoted defender of animals. As Western outreach coordinator for Mercy For Animals, Sarah recruits and trains activists throughout the Western United States, assists in the development of MFA’s thought-provoking advocacy resources, and serves as the organization’s spokesperson in the greater Los Angeles area.

Q: Why did you choose to get involved with Mercy For Animals?

I first became interested in animal rights in high school. An Ohio-based organization at the time, MFA hosted regular events in the Cleveland area, and I quickly became involved as a volunteer, joining in demonstrations and presentations, and marching in the pride parade (while dragging along a bunch of friends) each year.

Q: Tell us about the moment you decided to go vegan.

After picking up a video on factory farming at a local festival, I immediately swore off meat. After a month of research and investigation, I became vegan and reliable activists in Los Angeles since getting involved as an outreach intern over a year ago.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about working for MFA?

The most rewarding experience is working with all of the great activists I’ve met. It’s wonderful to be in touch with so many passionate people dedicating their time to making the world a better place!

Q: What words of wisdom do you have for people who want to get active, but don’t know where to start?

Why wait another day? Jump right in! Farmed animals make up the majority of animals who are abused and neglected. By spending our time advocating on their behalf, we send a powerful message to animal abusers that cruelty will not be tolerated. We also have the potential to forever change the way our society relates to all animals.

Q: When you’re not saving the world, where can we find you?

In my free time, I can be found working on community building projects, and sharing meals with friends.

Michelle Montenegro

Whether it’s handing out hundreds of leaflets, assisting with research projects or convincing countless people to watch MFA’s powerful documentary “Farm to Fridge,” Michelle Montenegro has been one of our most dedicated and reliable activists in Los Angeles since getting involved as an outreach intern over a year ago.

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Kevin O’Connor

MFA’s Cincinnati outreach coordinator, Kevin O’Connor, went vegan in 2006 and became involved with animal advocacy shortly thereafter. Kevin has reached thousands of people through exhibiting at various festivals, leafleting at schools and concerts, gathering signatures for ballot initiatives and even organizing volunteer trips to a local animal sanctuary.

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ANIMAL HEROES HONORED


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Russell Simmons Billboard Shakes Up Chi-Town

Mercy For Animals teamed up with hip-hop mogul and longtime vegan Russell Simmons to launch a billboard campaign in Chicago, encouraging people to “Live well, Eat well,” and “Choose vegetarian.” Simmons says of his own plant-based lifestyle, “You evolve towards a space where you only want healthy, life-affirming food.”

“I FORTY BILLION ANIMALS EVERY YEAR ARE BORN INTO SUFFERING. IT’S THE WORST KARMIC DISASTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.”

*Russell Simmons

MFA and Mainstream Media Reach Millions

Mercy For Animals was featured in prominent news stories reaching millions of people, including a “Nightline” profile on ag-gag laws, an episode of National Geographic Channel’s “Animal Undercover” about MFA’s hidden-camera investigations, Univision’s feature of our Butterball investigation, and a Fox Latino story about vegetarianism.
What nutrients should I consume to keep my brain healthy as I age?

Brain food—there is such a thing, and it doesn’t involve fish! Taking a look at specific nutrients, the first everyone (vegan or not) needs to make an effort to consume is vitamin B12, which is essential for nervous system maintenance. Deficiencies, even mild ones, can result in symptoms such as memory loss, blurred vision, fatigue, confusion and depression. We often think of these symptoms as common occurrences resulting from old age; however, some health professionals feel many elderly people displaying these symptoms are simply lacking vitamin C or E when the source is food.

As we age, our body’s ability to absorb vitamin B12 from animal foods decreases; hence, vegans who supplement regularly consume fortified foods, such as nondairy milk, meat analogs, nutritional yeast and cereal, are already at an advantage. The Institute of Medicine encourages all people over the age of 50 (omnivores included) to supplement with vitamin B12. The daily recommended intake is 2.4 micrograms for healthy adults.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that helps fight off free radicals—the unstable molecules that promote disease and are implicated in accelerating the aging process. We can easily meet our daily recommended amount of vitamin C, plentiful in fruit and vegetables, by consuming an orange at breakfast and a half cup of broccoli at lunch.

Vitamin E, another potent antioxidant, has been shown to have interesting correlations with mental deterioration. Especially rich in seeds and nuts, the more vitamin E consumed, the lower the risk of Alzheimer’s. Correlation does not equal causation, but again, the case for plants, and the nutrients found therein, is convincing.

You need not worry about going overboard in how much you consume of either vitamin C or E when the source is food.

Lastly, Omega 3 fatty acids, in the form of alpha-linolenic acid, also help to keep the brain healthy and can be found in green vegetables, walnuts, and seeds like hemp and flax. Eating whole foods-based fats and decreasing saturated fats is a winning combination for helping your noggin.

Of course, in addition to eating well, it is important to exercise our brains regularly to stay vibrant. Whether it is taking up a new skill or completing a few crosswords each week, put that mind to work. If you need me, I will be in the corner eating a cranberry walnut muffin while playing Mahjong on my laptop.

ASK ANYA | BRAIN FOOD

Vegetarian Pita Lunch Rush

2 vegan whole wheat pita pockets
4 tablespoons vegan mayonnaise such as Vegenaise
2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted, and sliced into 1/2-inch wedges
1 red onion, minced
1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
1/2 cup freshly ground black pepper (optional)
4 tablespoons vegan Parmesan cheese

Halve the pita pouches crosswise. Open them carefully, and spread 1 tablespoon of the mayonnaise into each pocket. Spoon in the avocado wedges, dividing the wedges among all four pouches. Sprinkle the minced onion liberally over the avocados, then divide the diced pepper among the pouches. Finish with pepper to taste (if using) and 1 tablespoon of the Parmesan cheese sprinkled over each pita filling.

Yields 4 pita sandwiches

Earth Balance PB Popps

Peanuts, oats and popcorn rolled together into bite-sized treats make PB Popps your next big salty-sweet snack attack.

Gardein Morning Sandwiches

A warm patty and vegan cheese on an English muffin, the Gardein breakfast sandwich will make you reach for the freezer before you even reach for coffee.

Reuben, the Magnificent

2 cups vegan vegetable stock
2 cloves garlic, peeled
2 tablespoons vegan low-sodium soy sauce
2 shallots, peeled and minced
1/2 pound tempeh, carved into four equal squares
1 cup sauerkraut, drained
1 cup shredded vegan Swiss cheese

Note: Many bottled Thousand Island dressings are vegan, but check the label before buying.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a large skillet over medium high heat, combine the vegetable stock, garlic, soy sauce, and shallots. Bring just to a boil, then add the tempeh squares. Return the stock to a boil, lower the heat to simmer, cover, and cook for 20 minutes.

Toast the tempeh and generously spread one side of each slice with the Thousand Island dressing. Place four slices of the bread, dressing side up, on a baking sheet and top with the sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and sautéed tempeh. Top with the remaining bread slices, dressing side down. Bake for 10 minutes, flipping the sandwiches after 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

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MY NAME IS “SARAH” AND I’M AN UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATOR WITH MERCY FOR ANIMALS.

For a little over two months, I lived a lie to expose the truth while working undercover at Pipestone System’s Rosewood Farms, a Minnesota-based Walmart pork supplier.

Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw. Workers hit, kicked and yelled at pigs in an effort to get them to move. Pigs with severe, bleeding wounds or infections were just left to languish without veterinary care. It was clear that most workers considered these sensitive and intelligent animals little more than bacon- and sausage-producing machines.

Piglets had their tails and testicles torn out without the use of painkillers. Often the dull clippers wouldn’t cut all the way through the piglets’ skin and tailbones, so workers just ripped their tails off. Botched castrations were common and resulted in the piglets’ intestines spilling out onto the floor.

“Once we’re no longer able to see inside these farms, it will be that much more difficult to change our broken system.”
– The Huffington Post

Former MFA undercover investigator Cody Carlson was featured on “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart” in a segment entitled “Blowing the Whistle on Whistleblowers.” In the segment, Carlson said, “Only an industry with something to hide would try to silence whistleblowers and keep cameras out.”

AG-GAG’S MEDIA MELTDOWN

Termed “ag-gag,” bills aiming to make it a crime to simply document and expose animal cruelty on factory farms are popping up across the country—begging the question “what is the meat industry so desperate to hide?” This special feature explains.

“The so-called ‘ag-gag’ laws now being considered by several states … have nothing to do with protecting property. Their only purpose is to keep consumers in the dark to make sure we know as little as possible about the grim details of factory farming.”
– The New York Times

The Los Angeles Times editorial board on the proposed California ag-gag bill: “It would effectively hamper animal welfare undercover investigators and employee whistleblowers who are collecting information on systemic animal cruelty at meatpacking plants, slaughterhouses, livestock ranches and farms. It should be put out of its misery and killed quickly in committee.”

Locked in narrow “gestation crates” barely larger than their bodies, these pregnant pigs can only watch and wait as life goes by.
Sick or injured piglets, or those who just weren’t growing quickly enough, were brutally slammed headfirst against the hard concrete floor—a killing practice known as “thumping.” Many of these piglets did not die instantly and were left to suffer in excruciating pain. Sadly, this is all standard pork industry practice and occurs in the majority of hog farms across the country.

What I found to be the worst form of abuse at this farm was the immobilization of thousands of pregnant pigs in gestation crates so small the animals could barely move, let alone turn around, walk or even lie down comfortably, for nearly their entire lives.

As the world’s largest retailer, it’s high time Walmart implemented meaningful animal welfare policies prohibiting the senseless torture of animals in its pork supply chain.

Walmart likes to tout its low prices, but when it comes to pork sold in its stores, animals are left to pay the highest price of all: lives filled with misery and deprivation. Mercy For Animals has conducted several undercover investigations at Walmart pork suppliers across the country. Time after time these investigations have revealed horrific cruelty to animals, including the following:

- SICK OR INJURED PIGLETS, OR THOSE WHO JUST WEREN’T GROWING QUICKLY ENOUGH, WERE BRUTALLY SLAMMED HEADFIRST AGAINST THE HARD CONCRETE FLOOR—A KILLING PRACTICE KNOWN AS “THUMPING.” MANY OF THESE PIGLETS DID NOT DIE INSTANTLY AND WERE LEFT TO SUFFER IN EXCRUCIATING PAIN.

Mercy For Animals has enlisted the help of actor James Cromwell in a nationwide campaign calling on retail giant Walmart to immediately adopt new animal welfare guidelines prohibiting its pork suppliers from confining pigs in crates so small the animals cannot even turn around.

In addition to narrating the new undercover video, Cromwell, along with Ryan Gosling, Kristen Bell, Zooey Deschanel and others, has signed a joint letter to Walmart’s CEO, urging him to do away with cruel gestation crates. Cromwell also led the campaign launch protest outside a Los Angeles Walmart.

Pigs are considered one of the smartest species of animal and have extremely complex social lives similar to those of primates. Pregnant pigs will find quiet, secluded places to build soft nests where they can care for their piglets. Pigs even sleep in cozy “pig piles” and love to cuddle with each other much like dogs do.

As my supervisor told me, most of the pigs in these crates went crazy and “beat the shit out of their faces.” I saw pigs constantly ramming their heads against their tiny stalls or spending hour after hour, day after day, biting the bars of their cages out of sheer boredom and lack of stimulation.

Even though this investigation is over, the screams of the pigs still ring in my mind. Please join me, and Mercy for Animals, in calling on Walmart to do the right thing and end the use of inherently cruel gestation crates.

See video, sign petition, and take action at WALMARTCRUELTY.COM

PAST WALMART PORK SUPPLIER INVESTIGATIONS

09

number of U.S. states that have banned gestation crates.

25%

amount of U.S. pork sold in Walmart stores.

+350,000

number of people who have signed MFA’s petitions asking Walmart to ban gestation crates.

60

number of retailers that have banned gestation crates, including McDonald’s, Burger King, Costco and Safeway.
UNIFIED OPPOSITION

Over 60 national organizations representing labor, environmental, food safety, farming, civil liberties, law enforcement, human rights, and media interests have voiced their opposition to ag-gag laws.

Ag-gag bills “threaten to virtually eliminate undercover investigations into not just animal abuse, but labor-practices, food safety, environmental pollution, and numerous other consumer and public welfare concerns.”

WE HAVE NO HOPE OF STOPPING ABUSES IF WE CAN’T EVEN BRING THEM TO LIGHT. THIS IS WHY AMNESTY HAS FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS BEEN SUCH A STAUNCH DEFENDER OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, WHICH ITSELF IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PROTECTION OF OTHER RIGHTS.

The main sponsor of Tennessee’s ag-gag bill, Rep. Andy Holt, is a hog farmer who, in 2012, received several “gifts” from the Farm Bureau, including an all-expense-paid trip to Hawaii.

According to “The Des Moines Register,” “Some influential agriculture groups that successfully pushed for Iowa’s so-called ‘ag gag’ bill were also major contributors to recent campaigns of some of the top legislators behind the law.”

The national institute on money in state politics found that the agricultural industry provided nearly 10 percent of Iowa Governor Branstad’s $8.9 million in campaign funding, while another leading ag-gag supporter in that state, Sen. Joe Seng of Davenport, received over 25 percent of his campaign money from agricultural interests.

Founders of Iowa Beef Products topped the Iowa politicians’ donor list, contributing $152,000 to Governor Branstad’s campaign.

The weekend before Mother’s Day, “Tim,” a brave Mercy For Animals undercover investigator, seized the opportunity to save four precious lives.

Workers grip ducks by their necks and pump gross volumes of food into their stomachs through metal pipes rammmed down their throats. This brutal process is repeated numerous times a day for several weeks and results in diseased duck livers up to ten times their natural size. “Foie gras” actually means fatty liver in French.

For many ducks, force-feeding is fatal. “Sometimes the duck doesn’t get up and it dies,” said one Hudson Valley worker. This worker admitted that up to 20 ducks per feeding cycle die from force feeding, amounting to hundreds of ducks killed per month by force feeding. Tim documented ducks returned to their cages after force-feeding with bloody beaks and chest feathers due to injuries sustained during the rough handling.

SADLY, THOUGH, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF DUCKS BORN INTO THE FOIE GRAS INDUSTRY AREN’T NEARLY AS LUCKY. ANIMALS WHO WOULD NATURALLY SPEND THE MAJORITY OF THEIR LIVES OUTDOORS SWIMMING IN PONDS AND LAKES ARE CROWDED INTO DARK, WINDOWLESS SHEDS, NEVER GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SUN, SWIM, OR BATH.

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Top Left: Dead ducks are discarded in trash buckets. Top Right: A bloody duck fearfully awaiting slaughter.

At the time it was introduced, one of the main sponsors of Minnesota’s proposed ag-gag bill, Rod Hamilton, was the director of communications for Christensen Farms, one of the top three pork producers in the country and the recent subject of a Mercy For Animals undercover investigation.

Annette Sweeney—a driving force behind the enactment of Iowa’s ag-gag law—is a cattle rancher.
Throughout the facility, ducks feverishly panted. This desperately distressed breathing was the result of the ducks’ grossly oversized livers pressing against their lungs.

The workers at Hudson Valley seemed to view these birds as inanimate production units, leaving ducks with bleeding, open wounds to suffer without veterinary care and callously tossing dead ducks into garbage bins. Ducks who survived the weeks-long force-feeding process were haphazardly grabbed by a wing or the neck, pulled out of their cages, and recklessly hurled into transport crates.

At the slaughterhouse, live, fully conscious ducks were shackled upside down by their legs, slashed at the throat, and left hanging to bleed out.

TRAGICALLY, AMAZON.COM—THE WORLD’S LARGEST ONLINE RETAILER—PERPETUATES THIS BLATANT ANIMAL ABUSE BY SELLING FOIE GRAS WORLDWIDE. IN THE PAST, AMAZON HAS TAKEN A STAND AGAINST CRUEL PRODUCTION PRACTICES BY BANNING THE SALE OF WHALE MEAT, SHARK FIN SOUP, AND ANIMAL FIGHTING VIDEOS ON ITS WEBSITES. IT’S TIME FOR AMAZON TO IMPLEMENT AN ETHICAL POLICY AGAINST THE SALE OF FOIE GRAS TOO.

Force-feeding ducks to produce foie gras is so patently cruel many leading retailers refuse to sell it. Recognizing the cruelty inherent in foie gras production, the state of California and dozens of countries have banned it.

Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland, United Kingdom, Italy, Argentina, Sweden, Austria, Israel, Turkey, Ireland, Luxembourg, Germany

In New York, Sen. Tony Avella has introduced a bill that would ban the production of foie gras in the state. Avella joined MFA at a press conference to discuss his proposed bill and assist in the Hudson Valley investigative release. The bill is currently pending.

IN AN EMAIL THAT MADE HIM THE LAUGHING STOCK OF HIS STATE, TENNESSEE AG-GAG BILL SPONSOR ANDY HOLT REFERRED TO UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATIONS AS “TAPE AND RAPE.”

In 2011, four states (Iowa, Minnesota, Florida, and New York) introduced ag-gag laws. None of those laws was enacted.

In 2012, 10 states introduced and three states (Iowa, Utah, Missouri) enacted ag-gag laws. In 2013, 11 states introduced ag-gag laws. Zero were enacted.

TENNESSEE GOVERNOR BILL HASLAM VETOED HIS STATE’S AG-GAG BILL AS “CONSTITUTIONALLY SUSPECT” AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE BILL WOULD MAKE IT “MORE DIFFICULT TO PROSECUTE ANIMAL CRUELTY CASES.”

Kristen and Emily spend tons of time swimming and love to dive to the bottom of the pond, while Carrie is less a swimmer and more of an explorer.

Ellen, the sophisticated one, prefers to hang out with the older ducks. According to Shelter Director Susie Coston, they are all “very happy-go-lucky little duck gals.”

HE SAID WHAT!?

JOIN MFA IN URGING AMAZON EXECUTIVES TO DO THE RIGHT THING: DON’T LET THEM DUCK THIS ISSUE. IF YOU DISLIKE CRUELTY, TRY TO ORDER AN ITEM FROM AMAZON’S WEBSITE. YOU CAN ALSO TWEET YOUR OMISSION @AMAZON OR EMAIL THE EXECUTIVES AND TELL THEM THE TIME TO DITCH FOIE GRAS IS NOW.

AMAZONCRUELTY.COM
IS THE SECRET INGREDIENT IN MCDONALD’S CANADA’S EGG McMUFFINS BLATANT ANIMAL CRUELTY?

For just over 10 weeks last summer, “Jennifer,” a Mercy For Animals Canada undercover investigator, undertook the dangerous task of documenting the horrific day-to-day reality for egg-laying hens at Creekside Grove Farms in Spruce Grove, Alberta, and Kuku Farms in Morinville, Alberta—factory farms that raise hens who produce eggs for Burnbrae Farms—McDonald’s Canada’s exclusive egg supplier for Egg McMuffins.

Creekside Grove is the first stop on the nightmarish journey these chicks, destined for industrial egg production, make. Here, chicks who are not growing quickly enough often have their heads smashed and are thrown still alive and conscious into plastic garbage bags to slowly suffocate. Others become trapped in cage wire or mangled by factory machinery, and are cruelly left to suffer without proper veterinary care.

When the chicks have reached egg-laying age, they are roughly shoved into transport crates and taken to Kuku Farms where they spend the rest of their miserable lives crammed inside tiny wire battery cages with up to nine other hens. Each hen has less space than a single sheet of notebook paper to live her entire life, unable to spread her wings, walk, see the sun, breathe fresh air, or do nearly anything that would make her life even remotely worth living.

This isn’t the first time a McDonald’s egg supplier has been caught committing unconscionable animal abuse. In 2011, Mercy For Animals exposed horrific cruelty at Sparboe Farms, a major McDonald’s USA egg supplier and the fifth-largest egg producer in the U.S.

MFA’s undercover investigation into Sparboe facilities in Iowa, Minnesota and Colorado revealed conditions disturbingly similar to those uncovered by MFA Canada: live birds thrown into plastic garbage bags to slowly suffocate; hens crammed into filthy battery cages; and dead hens left to rot alongside birds still laying eggs for human consumption.

CRACKING OPEN CANADA’S ROTTEN EGG INDUSTRY

The fact is that McDonald’s Corporation’s lack of meaningful animal welfare policies allows this abuse to continue. This is why MFA and MFA Canada are calling on McDonald’s to end the use of cruel battery cages in the U.S. and Canada as McDonald’s in the EU did 15 years ago.

CAGE CRITICS

Subjecting sensitive and social animals to a lifetime of misery and deprivation inside tiny battery cages is perhaps the worst form of institutionalized animal abuse in existence. In fact, battery cages are so cruel they have been banned in the entire European Union, Switzerland, New Zealand, and the states of California and Michigan. Animal welfare experts and veterinarians from around the world over have also condemned their use.

POWER OF OUR PLATES

As the largest buyer of shell eggs in the Canadian foodservice industry, McDonald’s Canada certainly has the ethical responsibility and purchasing power to prevent the cruelty endured by millions of egg-laying hens. But as consumers, so do we. By rejecting eggs (and meat and dairy), and casting our consumer dollars in favor of humane vegan alternatives, we can reduce the needless suffering of egg-laying hens—and all farmed animals—and help lead our society toward a more compassionate future.

CALCULATING CHICKENS

15+ YEARS

A hen’s natural life expectancy

20+

Number of calls in a chicken’s vocabulary

21

Number of days it takes a chick to develop in the egg, during which time the hen clucks to her developing chicks, who chirp back

100+

Number of individuals a chicken can recognize

75K

Number of people who signed MFA’s petition urging McDonald’s Canada to ditch battery cages

Act Now!

Visit EggMcMisery.ca to sign the petition, watch the video, and learn more.
INTERVIEW | SAM SIMON

A HOLLYWOOD MOVER AND SHAKER

since his early twenties, Sam Simon has produced such hit TV shows as “Taxi,” “The Tracey Ulman Show,” and “Cheers.” Sam is also the co-creator of the wildly funny and popular “The Simpsons.”

When it comes to helping animals, very few people have done more in a lifetime than Sam Simon. It was for his unrelenting and boundless passion for animals that MFA honored Sam last June with our Compassionate Leadership Award.

We recently caught up with Sam after a broadcast of “The Sam Simon Show” and got the scoop on his life’s work and vision for the future.

Tell us what first sparked your passion for protecting animals.

Well, I started as a dog lover. I started the Sam Simon Foundation 10 years ago with the idea of helping dogs and people. By the way, I started the foundation for my dog Lono. He was very important to me. He was my buddy for 12 years and he was a horrible dog. The urn with his ashes says, “Bad dog, good friend.”

Many know that the Sam Simon Foundation rescues and rehabilitates dogs, but can you tell our readers about how the foundation feeds homeless families in Los Angeles?

I don’t know how this doesn’t get more attention. We have the only mobile vegan food bank, I think, in the country. We feed about 200 families a day and the reason it’s vegan food is because I’m not going to pay for meat. That’s the only reason. You can live on our food. You can live well on our delicious fresh fruits and vegetables.

We’re the only people that give this stuff away that I know of. And I think that the people that try it, love it. We distribute anti-factory farming videos and we try to educate people on why this is a good choice for them and for the environment and their personal economy.

What do you think is the most pressing issue facing farmed animals today?

You know, this is such a mixed time. There’s so much good stuff that’s happening, but there’s a lot of really scary bad stuff. They’re taking away whistle-blower laws. And these ag-gag laws are terrifying to me. That’s all looming as big problems.

And thanks to Mercy For Animals, because these undercover videos are the most powerful tool we have. There’s nothing like it. There’s nothing that can explain it better than seeing it. People can’t believe it.

Tell us how ‘The Sam Simon Show’ came about and why you decided to focus on animal issues.

I’m a friend of the Howard Stern show and when Howard started his stations on Sirius he brought in another big shock jock named Bubba the Love Sponge and I became a friend of the Bubba show too.

I used to do Bubba’s show all the time and I became friends with his producer, Brent Hatley. He’s very interesting to talk to. So I would just talk to him about this animal rights stuff. And he said this is so fascinating, you should have your own show. I said, “Sure!” I’ve done a lot of radio. I never hosted.

The show came together when Vegan Ari became the permanent co-host. People should listen to it. We bring them great guests that you never get to hear talk for an extended period of time when they do CNN or any of these things. I let them talk for hours.

Can you share some of your observations about the current state of the animal protection movement? What do you envision for its future?

Well, I’m pretty sick and I’ve got cancer that’s spread to my liver. And I always used to think about what I would see changed in my lifetime. I’ve had to revise that just because it’s probably going to be significantly shorter than when I planned on seeing this vegan utopia.

At this moment a lot of stuff seems to be going backwards, so that’s upsetting. I don’t think I could’ve picked a better issue to want to see some permanent change on than the orcas. One thing I see is that people want to rescue dogs. That’s a positive change. So I think there’s good movement there. I get encouraged but then I watch the Food Channel and I go like, what are we doing here?
MUST KNOW

ISA CHANDRA MOSKOWITZ

believes taste buds are a perfect vehicle for change. Put on your seatbelts and get ready for a delicious ride. In her new cookbook, “Isa Does It,” this self-taught vegan mastermind delivers 150 new recipes that are simple, wildly delicious, and perfect for any day of the week.

RECENTLY, WE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF TALKING WITH ISA ABOUT HER LATEST COOKBOOK.

Q You’re an icon of vegan cooking. What can readers expect from your latest masterpiece, “Isa Does It”? Weeknight-friendly recipes that are still creative and full of flavor. I really wanted to create a book that would be great for everyday use. Hopefully it’s just left out on the kitchen counter, because why bother putting it back on the shelf?

Q What was the inspiration for this new book? Moving to the Midwest made me realize what is accessible to most of the country, and it also made me cook a lot more than I used to because I rarely go out to eat. So I hoped to create lots of pantry-friendly recipes that anyone can make.

Q How about tips for people new to vegan cooking? Have fun with it! Find the stuff you love and keep building your repertoire.

Q What are 10 must-have ingredients for every vegan kitchen? Lentils, quinoa, kale, cashews, chickpeas, potatoes, miso, avocados, tofu and black beans.

Q What changes have you noticed since your first book 10 years ago? I think I’m better at recipe writing. The instructions are shorter, and hopefully easier to follow. And the ingredients lists are shorter too!

Q We are all busy these days. What suggestions do you have for people who think they are too busy to cook? If you’d like to prioritize cooking in your life, there are lots of practical ways to do it. Keeping your pantry stocked, keeping your kitchen counters free of clutter, and doing things like soaking your beans and grains ahead of time all help to make your time in the kitchen easier.

Q How can people make delicious, healthy vegan meals on a tight budget? Instead of buying processed foods, keep your pantry stocked with whole grains, beans, nuts and the like. You don’t need to use “chick’n” or “cheeze.” You can get everything you want out of life with whole food ingredients!

ISA’S TOP 5 TIPS

ONE Keep your pantry stocked with the basics—spices that you always use, grains, beans and nuts.

TWO Don’t let mail and magazines and your gym bag pile up on kitchen counters. Keep it ready to be used.

THREE Music! Make sure you’ve got a way to listen to music in the kitchen. It helps keep you motivated.

FOUR Master five recipes. If you’ve got five no-fail recipes in your repertoire, the sky’s the limit! Riff on those and increase your comfort level in the kitchen.

FIVE Have an amazing knife and cutting board that you love. Those two things will make your kitchen life so much easier.

Q You reorganize a lot of classic recipes. What are your secrets? Just keeping in mind flavors and textures. I love creating vegan translations. They don’t have to be exact replicas.

HOW ISA DOES IT

COCONUT FRENCH TOAST

Preheat a large nonstick pan or griddle over medium heat.

In a wide bowl, mix together the flour, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk the milk in the milk until relatively few lumps are left. Mix in the extract.

Spread the shredded coconut onto a dinner plate. Dip each slice of bread into the batter and let the excess drip off. Then, press each side of the bread into the shredded coconut, to coat.

When the pan is hot enough, add a thin layer of coconut oil (about a tablespoon) and use a spatula to evenly coat the bottom of the pan. Cook the coated bread for 4 minutes on each side, until brown and toasty. Add extra oil when you flip the toast. Serve hot.

Makes 6 toasts.

Q How can tips for people new to vegan cooking?

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon organic cornstarch
1 1/8 teaspoons salt
1 cup almond milk (or your favorite non-dairy milk)
1 teaspoon coconut extract or pure vanilla extract
¾ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
6 slices of your favorite bread
Refined coconut oil, for the pan

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Makes 6 toasts.
There are so many different ways to help animals. We hope seeing what these dedicated changemakers did will inspire you to help animals in ways you’ve never thought of before!

**JOSH GARRET** spent an incredible 59 days, 8 hours, and 14 minutes hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, which extends from Mexico to Canada. In the course of setting this new world record, Josh not only raised awareness for farmed animals but almost $27,000 to support Mercy For Animals’ work. According to Josh, he wanted to “show that a vegan diet gives us everything we need for health, strength, and endurance” and “hopefully to inspire others to support Mercy For Animals.”

Josh hiked an average of 45 miles per day for a total of 2,655 miles through deserts and over mountain ranges while tweeting about his journey. “I think about these Mercy For Animals videos when I hike and train. They make me angry and as a result, they motivate me and spur me on to keep hiking.”

**CHRISTINA HESSEE** resolved to get more active for animals after attending an MFA demo at a Walmart store in Louisville, Kentucky—and boy, has she! From organizing Paid-Per-View screenings and tabling events to delivering humane education presentations and performing a vegan cooking demo on television, Christina has become a fierce force for animals.

**JAMEY SCOTT** has almost single-handedly turned Dallas, Texas, into a vegan hotspot. Jamey started DallasVegan.com, which highlights veg-friendly restaurants throughout DFW, and plans a monthly Vegan Drinks Night at rotating bars that have become increasingly vegan-friendly with each visit. He also organizes the phenomenal Texas State Veggie Fair, which is in its fourth year and drew over 7,000 attendees this October.

**SYLVIA ELZAFON** has organized the Mercy For Animals Dallas Pride Parade contingent for the past three years, reaching thousands of people with a message of compassion. As a professional photographer, Sylvia has also volunteered her talent and expertise to shooting photos of MFA’s fundraisers and local outreach events, as well as images for our new “Vegetarian Starter Guide.”

**ELIZABETH DRU** is MFA’s go-to animal advocate in Seattle where she tirelessly runs outreach events of just about any type you can think of. Elizabeth even used her lunch break from work to join us outside Amazon’s headquarters to protest the company’s cruel sale of foie gras.

**ALANA WILLIAMS,** just seventeen years old, started a vegetarian club at her Chicago high school and set a goal of expanding the vegan offerings in the school cafeteria. The club just achieved its first big success: the foodservice provider has stopped putting meat on the cafeteria’s pre-packaged salads.

**CHRISTOPHER KISER** is a successful high school wrestler from Florida who dons veg message shirts to debunk myths about plant-based eating and athleticism. At meets he often overhears people predict he’s going to be weak and easy to defeat. Then they watch as Christopher beats his opponents.

**ILANA PORTNEY-PRESTON** from suburban Detroit recently ordered our “25 Reasons to Try Vegetarian” brochures for her own personal leafleting and has this to say: “My first leafleting experience was seriously awesome. Being 14, I know not every adult will take me seriously, but since I love what I do I know what I’m talking about. I got some positive, some negative, some smiles and some frowns, but in the end it was such an amazing experience. I loved it because I knew that I was doing something good for the world, and that’s what I want to do every day!”

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**Ari’s Activist Assignments**

MFA’s director of communications, Ari Solomon, serves up his easy activist tips:

1. **Write a letter to the editor** when you read stories about farmed animals. Remember: keep your letter short and on point.
2. **Leaflet** at your local college or university and inspire thousands. Get literature at MercyForAnimals.org.
3. **Share** and retweet undercover investigations and stories about farmed animals on all your social media.

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**THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS.**
WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE

Shop for T-shirts, Hoodies, Bags, Posters, DVDs, Stickers & More at ShopMFA.com