RUSSELL SIMMONS
HIP-HOP’S HAPPY VEGAN

PROBLEM AT PERDUE
MFA’S HIDDEN CAMERAS EXPOSE BIRDS STOMPED TO DEATH AT PERDUE FARMS

DOING THE MOST GOOD
HELPING THE MOST ANIMALS THROUGH EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

BYE-BYE BATTERY CAGES
GRASSROOTS MOMENTUM SIGNALS A CAGE-FREE FUTURE

“ I TRANSFORMED MY LIFE ”
HOW GOING VEGAN CHANGED FIVE PEOPLE’S LIVES
Russell Simmons isn’t just a musical pioneer, successful entrepreneur, and selfless philanthropist. He’s also a hero for all animals, often teaming up with MFA to encourage others to adopt a vegan diet. We were honored to talk to Russell about his compassionate lifestyle and new book.

Why do you think otherwise compassionate people continue to eat animals?

Eating animals and abusing animals is one of those practices that, if you understand it, you wouldn’t do it. Most of us can’t even squeeze one chicken’s neck. But you eat it because you’re disconnected from the suffering you’re causing.

What advice do you have for people looking to go vegan?

Pick a day and lay out what you’re going to eat. Realize there’s a lot of fun stuff you can eat, but look for it before you start.

Is going vegan difficult?

It is very simple to go vegan. My daughter told me my book was remedial.

Read Russell’s full interview starting on page 18.
It’s no exaggeration to say that 2016 is poised to be the year of the vegan. NPR reports that vegetables are quickly moving to the center of our plates and Food & Wine magazine has declared 2016 “the year to surrender to vegan cheese.”

The next generation of fast food is here and it’s vegan. Subway is testing vegan subs while Wendy’s tries out a black bean burger and Taco Bell promotes a vegetarian menu. Even Ikea recently introduced vegan meatballs. McDonald’s and other chains should take note if they want to stay in business.

DEAD MEAT

A meatless future could be on the horizon. As millennials drive Americans further away from animal products, the Associated Press heralds cultured and plant-based meat companies for revolutionizing the way we eat. Meanwhile in Minneapolis, the first-ever vegan butcher shop, The Herbivorous Butcher, has opened its doors.

The EPA doesn’t require factory farmers to report greenhouse gas emissions, but impassioned environmentalists are speaking truth to power. After COP21 in Paris, legendary primatologist Jane Goodall proclaimed that she became vegetarian largely to combat climate change.

FAST FOOD 2.0

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Nick Cooney

Nick Cooney is an innovator, speeding the shift in society’s view of farmed animals and plant-based eating. He is the author of three books on social psychology and effective advocacy. As MFA’s vice president, Nick is a leading creative mind behind MFA’s outreach resources and strategies. Moments Nick doesn’t spend protecting animals he spends listening to punk music and working out.

Words to Live By:

“Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.”
—Vince Lombardi

Q: What inspired you to go vegan?

At my college orientation I met someone who told me about animal testing. I’d never really thought about animals before, so when I got home I went to the library and checked out the two available books on animal rights. One was Animal Liberation by Peter Singer, which showed how animals are treated on factory farms and elsewhere. I went vegetarian a few days later, and then vegan shortly after that.

Q: What is something valuable you’ve learned while working at MFA?

I’ve learned that creative new ideas are one of the most important things you can bring to a job. And that creativity is often copying something from one area and applying it to a new one. For example, at MFA we’ve used viral videos and click-worthy blogs to become a sort of BuzzFeed for vegan advocacy.

Q: Read anything good lately?

This might be surprising, but I almost never read vegan or animal rights books. I mostly read stuff from the business field that I hope will make me a better advocate for animals. Most recently that’s been the Harvard Business Review, a textbook on venture capital, and a book on startup companies.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about your job at MFA?

The obvious answer is that the work our donors make possible spares millions of animals a year from incredible suffering. I’ve walked around battery cage egg farms, hatcheries, and veal farms and seen that horrific suffering up close. I’m very grateful for the opportunity to help remove some of it from the world. I also love the intellectual challenge of constantly trying to figure out smarter things to do and ways to help more animals with each donor dollar we spend. It’s a lifelong puzzle that’s enjoyable to work on.

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

At the gym, on a hike, or watching TV (no one likes to admit that, but we all do it!).

Andrew Kirschner

Whether leafleting on South Florida’s beaches, speaking at universities, or fundraising for MFA through his online $5 Fridays initiative, Andrew Kirschner is an indefatigable champion of farmed animals.

Meghan Smith

From leading a legion of volunteers in the Atlanta Pride Parade to tabling the city’s not-to-be-missed annual veg fest, Meghan Smith would do anything to get Atlanta excited about vegan living.

Carrie Thompson

This summer, 18-year vegan Carrie Thompson will bike 2,750+ miles from Canada to New Mexico along the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route to raise money for MFA’s investigations department.

Become a hero for animals too. MercyForAnimals.org/fundraise
The blockbuster video game series *Grand Theft Auto* is best-known for its world-record sales and extreme violence. But filmmaker and MFA supporter Lee Iovino has edited footage from the game to produce heartwarming pro-vegan viral videos. His videos, which feature cows and chickens on farms and at slaughterhouses—real scenes from *Grand Theft Auto V*—have caused a stir in the gaming world and been viewed hundreds of thousands of times.

On the heels of expansion into Latin America, MFA has hit the ground running in two more giant regions of the world: India and Brazil. With educational staffers on the ground in both nations, 1.5 million combined social media followers, and investigators compiling footage of factory farm cruelty in India, unstoppable major change is underway.

Fast-food giant Wendy’s has committed to phasing out eggs from hens confined in battery cages. The switch, which came in response to an MFA campaign and online petition, will reduce the misery of 34,000 egg-laying hens each year. Now that’s better.
Many of us make health-related New Year’s resolutions. Maybe you set a goal to lose weight or to run your first race. Maybe you want to increase your fruit and vegetable intake or completely remove meat, dairy, and eggs from your plate. Setting and achieving goals can be very rewarding. That being said, a few months into the year, you may find the initial spark of motivation waning, and this may be throwing you off track. So, how do you maintain your momentum for staying vegan? Here are a few tips.

Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to discover new foods.

With a CSA, you sign up and pay to receive a weekly share of fresh, seasonal produce from local farmers. Each delivery is a bit of a surprise because the fruits and vegetables vary by week. This can really encourage you to experiment with new foods. Not sure how to cook the leeks or radishes you received? Find a new recipe and add it to your collection! Participating in a CSA can be a great way to expand the types of dishes you make as a new vegan.

Find a friend who is interested in vegan eating.

Accountability and support are huge factors in reaching goals. So if you’ve been going at it alone, and you’re having trouble staying on task, ask someone to join you in your journey. You can try out veg-friendly restaurants together and share cooking tips. Another option is to seek out groups of like-minded folks, such as a vegan meetup.

Stock your kitchen with easy meals.

We’ve all had those days when we get home from work and just don’t feel like spending a whole lot of time in the kitchen. Be prepared! Frozen bean burritos, veggie burgers, beans and rice, pasta with marinara sauce, and salad fixings can all serve as quick and easy-to-prepare meals. I also love having sweet potatoes on hand. They can be prepared in a variety of ways, and they’re filling and packed with nutrients.

Be realistic and forgiving.

If you find yourself falling off track, ask yourself if the goals you’ve set are realistic. Cutting out meat, dairy, and eggs doesn’t have to be an all-or-nothing approach. Working with clients, I can tell you that some people have rather lofty goals that are simply not fully achievable in the time that they have allowed. Keep your goals SMART (S – Specific, M – Measurable, A – Achievable, R – Relevant, T – Time-Based). It’s easy to beat yourself up. Yet we have to be willing to cut ourselves slack. Refocus, and start fresh at your next meal.
**Roasted Cauliflower and Radish with Mustard, Nigella, and Fennel Seeds**

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place cauliflower and sliced radish in bowl. Add oil. Rub lightly to coat.

Pulse fennel, mustard, nigella seeds, pepper flakes and salt to coarse mixture in spice grinder or blender. Add to vegetables. Toss well. Spread vegetables on parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake 25 minutes or until cauliflower is golden and tender.

Garnish with cilantro and lemon juice.

**Mom’s Chickpea Flour Pancakes**

Combine chickpea flour and 3/4 cup water. Whisk until smooth. Whisk in another 1/2 to 3/4 cup water for thin, lump-free batter.

Add salt, turmeric, cayenne, carom seeds, onion, chile, cilantro, and teaspoon oil. Mix well. Let sit 5 minutes.

Heat skillet over medium heat. When skillet is hot, drizzle on a few drops of oil. Spread oil using paper towel. Pour 1/4 to 1/3 cup batter onto skillet. Spread batter by moving skillet to make a 6- to 8-inch pancake. Drizzle a few drops of oil on edges of pancake.

Cook until edges leave pan and bottom is golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Flip. Cook 2 to 4 minutes.

**OUR FAVE FOOD PICKS**

- **What’s sweet-and-sour and ready to devour?** Gardein’s new vegan porkless bites! Non-GMO and cholesterol-free, these are begging for some rice!

- **Introducing the most exciting product since Vegenaise!** Follow Your Heart’s fully scramble-able VeganEgg! It’s non-GMO, gluten-free, and ready to be quiche.

- **Holy cannoli!** Kite Hill’s almond ricotta is sweet, smooth, and perfect for your next vegan pasta dish or cheesecake.
THERE'S A PROBLEM AT PERDUE® A NEW MFA INVESTIGATION
When he first stepped inside the shed, metal-walled with no natural light, he could barely see through the blackness. The air, filled with dust, feathers, and toxic ammonia fumes, burned his eyes and lungs. The beam of his headlamp illuminated tens of thousands of chickens packed together in their own waste. Black beetles swarmed underfoot, and dead, rotting chickens littered the floor.

This was Ben’s first glimpse into the Perdue contract chicken farms in North Carolina where he would work. His job would be to collect the bodies of chickens who had died from injury or disease.

Ben was also on the job for MFA, documenting the conditions at Perdue Farms with a hidden camera.

While Ben endured the toxic air inside the sheds for only a few hours a day, his heart broke for the birds who were forced to live 24/7, and often die, in these wretched conditions.

Ben documented a tragic multitude of birds struggling to walk under their own massiveness. Bred by Perdue for perversely accelerated growth, many lay crippled and deformed, or anguished with broken bones. Others died in agony from heart attacks or “sudden death syndrome” as their internal organs failed to keep up with their growth. Perdue’s flock manager admitted to Ben, “They’re growing so fast their heart can’t keep up with the demand.”

One would expect some animals to get sick or injured. But Ben collected dozens of dead chickens in each of eight sheds every day. These birds had hatched only a few weeks earlier. They were still babies really, and they were dying left and right.

SLAMMED INTO WALLS

Ben watched as his co-worker Danny Miranda brutishly kicked and stomped on chickens and slammed them into the wall to kill them. Ben had witnessed nearly identical acts of overt cruelty at every other facility he had investigated. Sadly, this time was no shock.

“MY HEART BROKE FOR THESE BIRDS...”

- Ben, an MFA undercover investigator
Ben brought the Perdue worker’s brutal conduct to the owner’s attention, but saw no corrective action taken. He called Perdue’s “reporting hotline,” which the company advises employees use to report problems. But the phone number provided was no longer in service. It was clear that the reporting hotline was a farce.

Soon Perdue sent a “catching crew” to round up the surviving chickens for slaughter. The crew workers were as fast as they were cruel. They raced to grab birds by their wings, legs, or necks, usually four to five birds in each hand, and then hurled them into transport crates.

Sometimes frightened birds missed the openings and smacked against the sides before falling to the ground. The heads and other body parts of many birds were often crushed as workers slammed the crates shut.

Ben knew all of the birds were doomed to excruciating deaths at the slaughterhouse. There they would be mercilessly shackled upside down, electric shocked, and slashed at the throat. His only solace was knowing that he at least documented their plights. Now he was eager to tell their stories.

**FELONY ANIMAL CRUELTY: FOUR COUNTS**

Armed with irrefutable video evidence and an extensive legal complaint, Ben and MFA’s general counsel, Vandhana Bala, alerted the Richmond County Sheriff’s Department. The veteran law enforcement officers were so shaken by Ben’s footage they barely kept their composure. One officer shook his head and called the abuser “very disturbed.” The officers immediately obtained arrest warrants and apprehended him.

He was charged with four counts of felony animal cruelty, the first felony charges in U.S. history for cruelty to factory-farmed chickens. When drafting the arrest warrants, officials pulled no punches, describing how Miranda “unlawfully, wilfully, and feloniously” hit a chicken in the head with a hammer, flung another into a wall, spun others around by their necks, and ground the heel of his boot into the head of yet another.

The Perdue worker pled guilty, and as part of a plea agreement, was convicted of three counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty. He was sentenced to 45 days’ imprisonment and 12 months’ probation. He is also prohibited from working with animals.

Publicity from The New York Times, USA Today, ABC News, and many other major news outlets put the heat on Perdue to cut ties with the facility and agree to meet with MFA to discuss animal welfare improvements.

**THE BIG PICTURE**

Chickens comprise more than 90 percent of the animals raised and killed for food in the U.S. and Canada. Approximately 9 billion are eaten each year. Arguably, chickens have it worse than any other animal. There are no federal laws to
protect chickens during their lives on factory farms and most state anti-cruelty laws specifically exclude them.

Even the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which requires that animals be rendered insensible to pain before slaughter, does not apply to chickens. The grisly consequence? Chickens are often fully conscious and able to feel pain when their throats are cut open and their bodies dunked into scalding feather-removal tanks. In fact, the USDA estimates that as many as a million chickens are scalded to death in slaughterhouses every year.

Perdue isn’t just a bad apple. Perdue is one in a rotten, rancid bunch. MFA has conducted multiple undercover investigations at chicken factory farms and slaughterhouses across North America. These include contract and company-owned suppliers to Foster Farms, Wayne Farms, Tyson Foods, and Koch Foods. Each and every time, MFA investigators have emerged with images of appalling yet routine cruelty and violence. But there’s hope.

AN UNSTOPPABLE SHIFT

In December, Maple Leaf Foods, the largest meat company in Canada, announced new guidelines for all of its poultry facilities. This announcement followed multiple hard-hitting investigations by MFA and the recommendations of MFA’s corporate outreach team.

Citing the “five freedoms,” a set of ethical imperatives for farmed animal welfare, Maple Leaf Foods Commitment to Animal Care states that the company will advocate for improved federal animal transport regulations, mandate annual independent third-party audits of its facilities, and implement video monitoring systems to deter egregious acts of animal abuse.

The policy, which will affect more than 300 million hens, also promises to provide birds with natural lighting, environmental enrichments, better air quality, and pain relief.

Additionally, Maple Leaf Foods has committed to implementing controlled atmosphere stunning at all fresh poultry facilities. This move will eliminate the unspeakable suffering caused by shackling, shocking, and slitting the throats of conscious animals. Maple Leaf Foods is now the first major meat producer in North America to commit to ending the cruel live-shackle slaughter method for birds.

Maple Leaf Foods has set the bar for Perdue, Tyson, and other major poultry producers who still raise and kill chickens in ways that would be illegal if cows or pigs were the victims instead.

The momentum is on our side.

Of course, there’s never a need to kill chickens or any other animal. Millions of compassionate consumers are choosing not to support animal cruelty by reaching for humane vegan alternatives to meat, milk, and eggs.

Workers violently throw birds into transport crates. The birds’ heads and other body parts were often crushed as workers slammed the crates shut.

On factory farms, chickens have no opportunity to explore the world. They are tossed from machine to machine, dropped onto conveyor belts, roughly handled, and destined for a life of pain. But chickens are just as smart as dogs and cats and are incredibly curious.

Chickens are amazing! Just look what they can do:

✓ Learn by observation
✓ Sense the passage of time
✓ Count objects
✓ Remember hidden objects
✓ Understand sequences of events
✓ Enjoy mental challenges

A devoted mother hen looks out for her chicks, even if it means putting her own life on the line. Newly hatched chicks stay close to their mother and find warmth, comfort, and protection under her wings.

Visit ChooseVeg.com to learn how to take chickens off your plate and out of factory farms.
Grassroots Momentum Signals a Cage-Free Future

Victor Hugo once said, “Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

As the barbaric confinement of hens in battery cages comes closer to its end, this sentiment has never rung more true.

For more than a decade, MFA has been at the forefront of the initiative to ban cruel cages, vigorously working toward a day when no egg-laying hen will suffer in their confines. And now, more than ever, consumers are concerned about farmed animal welfare. Surveys show that the American public strongly opposes packing animals into cages so small they can barely move their limbs.

Through petitions, protests, letters, and social media, millions of people have spoken out, demanding an end to these brutal animal confinement systems.

This grassroots momentum has been building since the early 2000s when MFA investigators first set foot inside an egg factory farm.

OPEN RESCUES

In 2001, MFA sent certified letters to Ohio’s two largest egg producers, Buckeye and Daylay farms, requesting tours of their battery cage facilities. The ignored requests prompted an investigation into the farms, each of which held millions of egg-laying hens.

Six MFA investigators entered the facilities at night, multiple times over the course of a month. They collected hundreds of photos and hours of video footage of the atrocious conditions endured by the hens.

The investigators also provided aid to as many hens as they could, releasing hens trapped in manure piles, offering water to birds dying from dehydration, and taking birds out of the facilities for immediate veterinary care to relieve their pain. The rescued hens who survived lived out the rest of their lives at an animal sanctuary.

IGNITING A MOVEMENT

The investigations revealed unimaginable horror of which the public knew little: hens gruesomely entangled in cage wire or under feed trays left to suffer and die; birds trampled to death; hens angushed by eye and sinus infections caused by toxic ammonia; and dead hens left to rot among live birds still producing eggs for America’s breakfast tables.
Such investigations by MFA and a handful of other animal protection organizations in the early 2000s laid the groundwork for a historic, multi-faceted campaign to end battery cages.

**POWERFUL PROPOSITION**

Significant progress for hens came in 2008 when Californians overwhelmingly passed a proposition requiring that egg-laying hens, pregnant pigs, and calves raised for veal be allowed enough room to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around.

Prop 2’s placement on the state ballot and its passage were the result of a massive grassroots effort that included door-to-door outreach; celebrity endorsements; support from local governments and elected officials; and organizing by leading public health, social justice, and animal protection groups, as well as influential religious and environmental organizations.

Just a few weeks before California voters cast their ballots, MFA intensified public outcry with the release of investigative footage from one of the state’s largest egg factory farms, Norco Ranch.

The investigation sparked a storm of media coverage that was instrumental in educating voters about the cruelty of battery cages.

Prop 2 alleviated suffering for millions of hens in California. It also became one of the most popular ballot initiatives in the state’s history.

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**RIPPED from the headlines**

McDonald’s move to cage-free eggs is a tipping point for the industry.
Meanwhile in Maine, an MFA investigator worked undercover at Quality Egg of New England. The investigation unearthed cruelty that has become standard for egg factory farms: birds suffering from broken bones, bloody open wounds, and untreated infections; and hens confined in battery cages so small the birds are unable to even stretch their wings.

The investigation prompted a raid of the facility by state police. MFA filed an extensive complaint with state officials urging enforcement of Maine's anti-cruelty statutes. In 2010, a landmark civil settlement was reached, and Quality Egg of New England pled guilty to 10 counts of animal cruelty. The company also agreed to pay more than $130,000 in fines and restitution as well as give authority to the state of Maine to conduct unannounced inspections of the factory farm for five years. The fine was the largest leveled against a factory farm for animal cruelty in U.S. history.

Austin “Jack” DeCoster, owner of Quality Egg of New England, pleads guilty to 10 counts of animal cruelty. DeCoster’s company paid the largest fine ever brought against a U.S. factory farm for animal cruelty.

MFA investigation at Quality Egg of New England leads to raid of facility by state police on grounds of animal cruelty.

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HEADWAY IN OHIO

MFA volunteers and supporters joined Ohioans for Humane Farms in gathering more than 500,000 signatures to place a pivotal initiative on the 2010 November ballot. The measure, if passed, would phase out the cruelest factory farming practices in the state, including confinement in battery cages.

During the final month of the signature drive, MFA released a hard-hitting investigation revealing heartbreaking abuse on a factory farm northwest of Columbus, Ohio. The publicity from this investigation, coupled with an expanding, energized base of animal advocates, created a formidable force. The Ohio agribusiness lobby averted a faceoff by agreeing to a settlement just hours before the signatures were to be filed.

In a victory for egg-laying hens, the agribusiness lobby agreed to prohibit construction of new battery cage facilities.

CORPORATIONS CRACK

Nearly all hens in the U.S. were confined in battery cages. This industry standard seemed insurmountable. The industry itself seemed just too powerful to take on. But the might and determination of our volunteers and supporters cannot be overestimated. They never gave up on hens. Now the end of battery cages is in sight.

Legions of passionate advocates and growing consumer sentiment have already spurred nearly 100 major restaurants, retailers, and foodservice companies to commit to eliminating battery cages from their supply chains, sparing millions of hens the torment of life packed together behind bars.

MFA’s efforts have helped convince Nestlé, McDonald’s, Wendy's, and Tim Hortons, four of the world’s largest food companies, to do away with cages. Nestlé’s policy, affecting U.S. egg suppliers, is an expansion of the broader Nestlé Commitment on Farm Animal Welfare established with MFAs guidance. McDonald’s commitment, affecting U.S. and Canadian egg suppliers, follows two undercover investigations and two petitions bearing the combined signatures of nearly 200,000 concerned consumers. Wendy's policy follows a petition that gathered more than 150,000 signatures.

The majority of the top 50 foodservice companies have committed to switching to cage-free eggs, including the world’s largest, Compass Group. Major food manufacturers Kellogg’s, General Mills, Mondelēz, and Campbell Soup have followed suit. Top restaurant brands, including McDonald’s, Burger King, Starbucks, Subway, TGI Fridays, Panera Bread, Taco Bell, and Dunkin’ Donuts, have also decided to ditch cages.

THANKS TO YOU

By coming together for hens, you have created an insuppressible, unignorable force that has proven no industry is too powerful to change. Because of you, there is no future for battery cages.

While freeing these magnificent birds from cages will not free them from all suffering, it will ease some of their pain. Because of you, the future is brighter for hens.

SECOND-LARGEST GROCER GOES CAGE-FREE

Albertsons, the second-largest grocer in the U.S. and parent company to Safeway, has announced its entire supply chain will switch to 100 percent cage-free eggs! The commitment, which comes after an aggressive campaign by MFA, will affect all of the company’s stores and affiliates, including Safeway, Vons, Pavilions, Jewel-Osco, Shaw’s, Acme, Tom Thumb, Randalls, United Supermarkets, Star Market, and Carrs.

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You signed the petition targeting Albertsons and Safeway executives. You shared the petition on social media and you made the calls. You protested outside Safeway’s stores and corporate headquarters. Because you spoke up, countless hens will be spared a life of suffering in a tiny wire cage.

Together, we’re making history.
MEAT: THE NEW SUV

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS DRIVING CLIMATE CHANGE
As world leaders in Paris debated climate change strategies, Chatham House, a respected independent policy institute in the U.K., confirmed what many of us already knew: The best way forward is a global shift toward plant-based eating.

Chatham House’s findings are clear: It’s time to switch the focus of the climate change crisis from SUVs to hamburgers.

With beef and milk production the leading culprits, animal agriculture creates more greenhouse gases than all methods of transportation combined.

The industry also emits 65 percent of all human-produced nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas with 296 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide, and 36 percent of all human-produced methane, another noxious greenhouse gas.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has called livestock “one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.”

The destructiveness of animal agriculture to the planet became an “inconvenient truth” Al Gore could no longer ignore, and as a result, Gore has been vegan for years.

“There is so much more that can be done. While other industrial sectors are required to report their greenhouse gas emissions, livestock producers in the U.S. get a free pass.

Animal agriculture has also used its influence to keep environmental sustainability factors out of the federal government’s dietary guidelines. Revised every five years, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans provides nutritional information and advice. The guidelines direct nutrition policy and help shape national school lunch programs.

2015’s guidelines didn’t factor in the threat of meat, dairy, and other animal products to the health of the planet. This omission flies in the face of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, which advised that a diet high in plant-based foods promotes good health and is more environmentally sustainable.

Fortunately, we don’t have to wait on world leaders to take action. We can combat climate change ourselves. By choosing plant-based foods and educating others on the environmental effects of eating animal products, we can each significantly reduce our own carbon footprint.

Chatham report’s authors. “Governments must do more to influence diets.”

There’s so much more that can be done.

“Intensive cattle grazing is turning forests to woodland, to scrubland. And food in one end, gas out both ends, that’s methane. And that’s an even more potent greenhouse gas than CO2. It’s about 36 percent of all methane emissions come from this intensive farming.”

“On the personal front, I’m a committed vegan for various reasons. If more people had vegetarian or vegan diets, especially in the developed world, the environmental impact would be significant.”

“The single biggest thing that an individual can do to combat climate change is to stop eating animals.”

“Raising awareness about the health and environmental impacts of meat is an important first step, but on its own it will not lead to significant behavior change,” stated Laura Wellesley, one of the Chatham report’s authors.
Hip-hop mogul, philanthropist, and New York Times best-selling author Russell Simmons is once again topping must-read lists.
The Happy Vegan: A Guide to Living a Long, Healthy, and Successful Life shares Russell’s journey toward conscious eating and touts the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of a vegan diet. Russell not only relates his own experiences, but dives into the science behind cutting out animal products.

An avid MFA supporter, Simmons took time out to talk to us about the book and his hopes for the future.

Q: What inspired you to write The Happy Vegan?

People don’t realize what factory farming is doing to them. They don’t realize that the planet is becoming uninhabitable or that they’re poisoning themselves. They have no idea how bad it is. I want to expose some of what is not common knowledge and give people a choice.

Q: After transitioning to a vegan diet, what did you first notice?

After a short period of time I lost 20 pounds. Then I just felt better about myself. I did it for karmic reasons, so I also felt the freedom and happiness of not contributing to this karmic disaster. I always say the worst karmic disaster in the history of the world is this manufacturing of life—up to 10 billion American factory farm animals per year and 100 billion worldwide.

Q: What do you think are the biggest misconceptions about going vegan?

People think it costs a lot. You can go to a Chinese restaurant in the hood and get curried tofu, eggplant curry, or eggplant garlic sauce with broccoli and spinach. Right there in the hood, cheap. You can also cook at home and save thousands of dollars per year. So it’s a misconception that it’s only for affluent white people. In fact, black people are adapting quicker cause they have the most heart disease, the most diabetes, the most horrible kind of diseases associated with eating animals.

Q: What tips would you give people who feel like outsiders when they hang with family and friends?

Sometimes we do shit as an individual. Be proud of it. Take pride in not destroying the planet and poisoning yourself.

Q: You seem to consider veganism an essential part of happiness. Can you elaborate?

As you wake up to the suffering you’re causing you don’t want to contribute, cause you get what you give. We can’t be happy and be selfish. I don’t believe in the full spiritual evolution, the idea of raising the vibrations to a place where you have stable, lasting happiness, without respecting life.

Q: What gives you the most hope?

I see companies like Beyond Meat really studying the 40,000 plants and trying to find alternatives to the animal products people are eating. I’m very hopeful and very excited about the new developments. The guy told me at Hampton Creek that you don’t need horse and carriage once you have a car. That’s the way animal product is. It’s so abusive to the planet and the people that once you find the fun alternatives that make everybody happy then it’s the end of the meat industry.

You can get your copy of The Happy Vegan: A Guide to Living a Long, Healthy, and Successful Life at these retailers:
Doing THE M GO
IN 1975, PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR PETER SINGER PUBLISHED THE BOOK ANIMAL LIBERATION. HIS PREMISE WAS SIMPLE BUT PROFOUND: THE FACT THAT ANIMALS ARE DIFFERENT SPECIES DOESN’T GIVE US THE RIGHT TO USE AND ABUSE THEM. ANIMAL LIBERATION HELPED LAUNCH THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. AND TO THIS DAY INSPIRES PEOPLE TO GO VEGAN AND GET ACTIVE FOR ANIMALS.

Flash forward exactly 40 years. In 2015, Singer—whom TIME magazine calls “the world’s most influential living philosopher”—released a new book on another simple but profound idea: effective altruism. This new approach to doing good inspired two other books released that same year, one by Oxford professor William MacAskill and one by MFA’s own vice president, Nick Cooney.

So what exactly is effective altruism, and what can it teach us about creating a better world for animals?

The Most Good for the Greatest Number

Imagine the next time you donated to an animal protection charity you were given a choice: “How many animals would you like to help: 1, 10, or 100?”

You might laugh out loud. Why even ask the question? Of course you want to help the most animals you can, especially with your hard-earned money.

Unfortunately, the reality is most charities (in the animal protection world and in general) don’t make decisions based on what will help the greatest number of individuals. Instead, they base decisions on what they’re personally interested in or what’s popular with donors.

Effective altruism is the simple idea that when making charitable decisions, we should try to do the most good for the greatest number of individuals. It’s an idea that has always been at the heart of MFA’s strategy and focus on farmed animals, even before the term was coined. It’s also the standard by which Animal Charity Evaluators ranks animal protection groups. For the third year in a row, ACE has named MFA one of the most effective in the world.

Your Money at Work

By taking an effective altruist approach, MFA is able to benefit a great number of animals with each dollar donated.

For example, last year MFA helped persuade some of the world’s biggest food companies, including Walmart and McDonald’s, to phase the worst factory farming practices out of their supply chains. Such practices include tail docking and confinement in battery cages and gestation crates.

These changes will improve the lives of 30 million animals per year, and MFA achieved them with just 1 million dollars in investigation and corporate outreach costs.

The bottom line: MFA spent just a few pennies for every animal it protected from the worst factory farming abuses.

Similarly, MFA’s pro-vegetarian online advertising campaign led 650,000 people to pledge to go vegetarian last year. If even a small fraction of them stick with the change, more than 2.5 million farmed animals will be completely spared—all on an advertising budget of half a million dollars.

The bottom line: MFA spent less than a quarter for every farmed animal it spared from a lifetime of suffering.

This is your financial support in action. And beneath all of the math and jargon is a simple truth: Thanks to MFA’s calculated approach, your donation will spare dozens, hundreds, or thousands of animals from a life of misery.

What could be greater than that?
We all know that replacing meat with tasty vegetarian dishes is a powerful way to reduce animal suffering. But did you know that it can also bring relief to the severely depressed? Free us from the drudgery and dangers of endless medications? And prevent or even reverse deadly chronic diseases?

Indeed, a vegan diet can totally transform your health and quality of life. Here are five people whose stories are proof.

KEN STONE

After suffering a heart attack at age 53, Ken’s doctor gave him an unexpected diagnosis: severe heart disease. Facing a quadruple bypass, he decided to embark on a plant-based diet as a last-ditch effort to stave off the risky surgery.

And he succeeded! After just one month on a vegan diet, Ken’s cholesterol dropped, he shed 25 pounds, and he no longer needed surgery!

Quick Tip:
Pack in the nutrients early! Start your day with a fruit smoothie. Toss in some spinach or kale for a protein punch.
Each of these inspiring individuals was greatly impacted by the acclaimed documentary *Forks Over Knives*, which details the incredible health benefits of a whole foods, plant-based diet.

**Milan Ross**

Morbidly obese and struggling with depression, Milan knew it was time for a change when his size began affecting his relationship with his then six-year-old son.

After joining a weight loss program offered by his employer, Milan was introduced to a plant-based diet. He soon lost 33 pounds and gained the confidence to keep the weight off.

Two years later, he’s lost 225 pounds and is off all meds and loving life!

**Natalia Constantine**

At 450 pounds, Natalia was an out-of-control diabetic. Suffering from high cholesterol and high blood pressure, she was taking a slew of pills each day and found herself ready for a change.

Since discovering a healthy vegan diet, Natalia has shed more than 200 pounds and 15 medications. She also no longer suffers from neuropathy in her legs and feet.

**Somer McCowan**

Eight years ago, Somer was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis; she was put on prescription steroids and went from a healthy weight of 125 to more than 200 pounds in just nine months. Upon learning about the power of plant-based eating, she made the switch. She is currently off all prescription drugs and her ulcerative colitis is in full remission. Follow Somer on her blog: VedgedOut.com.

**Bobby Anderson**

Overweight and battling high blood pressure and depression, Bobby knew he had to do something. After 22 years on the job, this long haul truck driver from Mississippi became yet another shining example of the transformative powers of a vegan diet.

Bobby shed weight, lowered his blood pressure, and no longer needed medication for his clinical depression.

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Quick Tip:

Connect with others interested in improving their health. Join meetup groups, online forums, or cooking clubs to share plant-based recipes.
LEAVE A LEGACY OF COMPASSION

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MercyForAnimals.org/will
Phone: 866.632.6446

WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD AND MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE. IT IS IN YOUR HANDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

—NELSON MANDELA