When cattle and other animals are raised for food, they often take over land that was once wildlife habitat. Even though crops such as grains or vegetables also take over wildlife habitats, these crops generally need less acreage than "livestock" to provide food for a given number of people. Cycling grain through "livestock" rather than letting people eat the grain directly is wasteful of land and water.

The 2015 Food and Agricultural Policy of the national Sierra Club states: "Personal dietary choices that minimize or eliminate meat and animal products should be encouraged, due to their many benefits, including reducing greenhouse gas impacts, water pollution, and inhumane treatment of animals."

OUR TAXES PAYING TO KILL WILDLIFE

In the West, much of the land wasted for meat production is public land. Grazing rights are sold at ridiculously low prices to ranchers (some of whom are actually large corporations), thus forcing taxpayers to subsidize their industry. Our taxes are also used to kill wild animals through the federal Wildlife Services at the behest of the ranching industry. Prairie dogs, coyotes, mountain lions, wolves and other animals are trapped, poisoned, burned in their den, and shot. Wild horses and burros are rounded up and sometimes sold for slaughter so they don’t compete with cattle and sheep on public land. The Sierra Club wildlife policy states: “The U.S. Animal Damage Control Program (Ed. Note: now Wildlife Services) should be terminated.”

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Grazing of cattle is part of the reason why land in the Southwest is hosting invasive plant species, which are pushing out native plants. A spokeswoman for Forest Guardians, an organization which is working to eradicate noxious plants and restore natives, says that basic causes need to be looked at. “On our projects, the first thing we do is kick the cows…”

FACTORY FARMS

But the West isn’t the only problem area. Throughout the U.S., there are “factory farms,” where hogs, chickens, dairy cows and other animals are jammed into huge buildings. Typically, the animals never feel sun, breathe fresh air or move outside their tiny cages or stalls. It’s not unusual for an operation to house 100,000 chickens or 12,000 hogs. Some dairy operations in NYS house thousands of cows and calves.

These operations pollute our water and soil with manure, pesticides and antibiotics — and foul our air with the stench from manure being stored in “lagoons” or spread on fields.

RESOURCES

New York Coalition for Healthy School Food
(800) 772-5154 (office)
(631) 525-3650 (cell)
healthySchoolfood.org
email: ami@healthySchoolfood.org
Works through the legislative process to encourage healthy school food.

Book Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 95, Sumtertown, NY 13843
info@bookpublicco.com
(888)260-8458
Includes a section of vegan and vegetarian cookbooks.

THE WASTING OF RURAL NYS: FACTORY FARMS AND PUBLIC HEALTH
272 pages. FREE. Produced by Citizens’ Environmental Coalition and the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club.
Contact Farm and Food Committee Chair Erin Riddle:
(607) 372-5503 or erinriddle@gmail.com

WESTERN TURF WARS: THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING
50 pages. $30 + $4 shipping & handling.
(NYS residents add 8% sales tax) Order at westernturfwars.com or Biome Books.
(607) 380-51
38 Oliver St., Binghamton, NY 13904
(607) 380-0351
email: biomebooksyahoo.com
Government employees and grassroots conservationists reveal the government’s complicity in the ranching industry’s destruction of our public lands.

LIVING THE FARM SANCTUARY LIFE
by Erin Riddle: 29 pages. FREE. Produced by Citizens’ Environmental Coalition and the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club.
Contact Farm and Food Committee Chair Erin Riddle:
(607) 372-5503 or erinriddle@gmail.com

For updates, visit atlantic2.sierraclub.org/conservation/biodiversity

For copies of this brochure, contact the Biodiversity/Vegetarian Outreach Committee of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, LDESTANO@sierrawny.com, (315) 488-2140 (8 a.m. - 10 p.m.).
3501 Onondaga Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215-1403.

AN EARLIER EDITION IS AVAILABLE IN SPANISH.

GIVE A WOLF (AND THE WORLD) A BREAK TODAY…
go veggie!

4th Edition
Fall, 2015

If you eat a veggie burger instead of a hamburger, are you helping a wolf, a polar bear, a wild horse? YES! If you adopt a plant based diet (also called vegan diet), you give a break to wild animals.

A vegetarian eats no animal flesh — whether fish, fowl or mammal. A vegan eats no animal flesh and no animal products, such as dairy or eggs. See page 4 for all the healthy, tasty foods vegans DO eat.
NEW YORK LAKES CONTAMINATED WITH MANURE

Owasco Lake and a tributary of Skaneateles Lake are just recent examples of water contamination from manure. A 75-by-26 foot plume of liquid manure polluted Owasco Lake after a farmer spread manure on his field. Owasco Lake is the drinking source for about 44,000 people. About 500 gallons of liquid manure contaminated a tributary of Skaneateles Lake after a farmer’s hose leaked. Skaneateles Lake is the drinking source for the city of Syracuse and several other localities. 1

HUNGRY OCEAN MAMMALS

Modern methods of commercial fishing inflict great damage on the ocean and its inhabitants. Industrial fishing operations use rapacious techniques, such as sonar, driftnets, longlines, dredgers and leviathan ships. In the case of longlining, 4.5 million hooks are launched daily. As the number of fish diminishes, sea mammals who depend on fish to survive are in trouble. Sometimes seals and other marine mammals are even shot by fishers in order to increase their own take of fish.

FISH FARM WOES

Ironically, wild fish are sometimes fed to fish in fish farms. In turn, some of the farmed fish are fed to “food” animals. Fish farming offshore involves construction of cages or pens — sometimes with dredging, drilling, sedimentation and bottom habitat disturbance which can displace ocean wildlife. Some fish escape and potentially hurt native fish through disease (farmed fish are crowded, stressed and treated with antibiotics) and genetic changes. That can disrupt natural ecosystems and jeopardize the recovery of endangered species. Water flowing out of the aquaculture facility can be contaminated with excess food, feces, cage materials and dangerous chemicals used to clean the cages. 2

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE’S IMPACT ON CLIMATE

As the planet warms, largely as a result of human overpopulation and over-exploitation of fossil fuels and other resources, all of us — including wild animals — are in danger. One of many examples is the plight of migratory birds, who are trying to adjust to the disruption in their food sources. Animal agriculture plays a large role in creating the greenhouse gases which cause global warming. Methane, more powerful even than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, is produced in large quantities by ruminant animals (cows, goats, sheep and bison) in their normal digestion and elimination. In the Jan.

MAKING CHANGES

A spokesman for the Food Policy Research Institute says he foresees “a stronger public relations campaign in the reduction of meat consumption — one like that around cigarettes — emphasizing personal health, compassion for animals, and doing good for the poor and the planet.” 3

JOHN MUIR WEIGHS IN

John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club more than 100 years ago, said “Surely a better time must be drawing nigh when God-like beings will become truly humane and learn to put their animal fellow mortals in their hearts instead of on their backs or in their stomachs.” 4

WHAT ABOUT GRASS-FED AND LOCAL?

Cattle raised solely on grass actually contribute more to greenhouse gases than cattle who are “finished” on grain. “Buying local food is important to support local farmers and reduce CO2 emissions from transporting food long distances. However, eating a plant-based diet (or even just reducing animal flesh and products) should be added to this strategy. According to Professor Chris Weber of Carnegie Mellon University, buying local doesn’t have as much impact as reducing beef and dairy. Only 5% of the emissions related to food comes from transporting food to market. “You can have a much bigger impact by shifting just one day a week from meat and dairy to anything else than going local every day of the year.” 5

SO WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

A healthy vegan diet includes grains, beans, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and all the foods which can be man’s field (pasta, soups, burgers, desserts, salads, etc.). Vegans are more likely to avoid heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer than people who eat a typical U.S. diet. So consider making toward a plant-based diet (perhaps starting with one day a week without animal flesh or animal products) for these reasons:

1. your health;
2. providing more grain to hungry people instead of feeding it to “livestock”;
3. leaving habitat for wild animals;
4. saving “food” animals from an unnatural, miserable life and terrifying death;
5. reducing air and water pollution and greenhouse gases;
6. saving water and making the best use of limited healthy soil.

See “resources” on the back of this brochure for help in getting started!

For more information, including recipes, and updates, visit the webpage of the Biodiversity/Vegetarian Outreach Committee at atlantic2.sierraclub.org/conservation/biodiversity

1. FOREST MAGAZINE, Winter, 2008, p. 18
5. “Hamburgers are the Hummer of Food in Global Warming: Scientists” by Agence France Presse, Feb. 16, 2009 posted on www.commondreams.org/headlines/2009/02/16-1
6. THE STORY OF MY BOYHOOD AND YOUTH, by John Muir, quoted in the leaflet “John Muir on Animals and Their Treatment” by Mike Hukad
7. “Rethinking the Meat Guzzler,” NEW YORK TIMES, Jan. 27, 2008