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# ARC NEWS

## The Green Issue

Summer 2007

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*A publication of the Animal Rights Coalition to promote a compassionate world*

### Saving the Planet One Bite at a Time

Here's an interesting tidbit for you – according to a recent report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, livestock generate more greenhouse gas emissions than our beloved automobiles!

I'm always amazed when I read statistics about the impact mass agriculture has on our Mother Earth. There is a gymnasium-sized amount of information about global warming and the impact our voracious meat-eating is having on the planet. Yet, in many mainstream news stories about global warming and environmental destruction, animal agriculture isn't even mentioned. Even Al Gore missed this point in "An Inconvenient Truth." The inconvenient truth is, just changing your light bulbs isn't going to save the planet, and perhaps the meat issue is just a little too close to home.

At any rate, I'd prefer to let the facts speak for themselves. Here are but a few environmental reasons why leaving meat off your plate is so important.

- Researchers at the University of Chicago noted that feeding animals for meat, dairy, and egg production requires growing 10 times as many crops as a plant-based diet. On top of that, we have to transport the animals to slaughterhouses, slaughter them, refrigerate their carcasses, and distribute their flesh all across the country. Producing a calorie of meat protein means burning more than 10 times as much fossil fuel – and spewing more than 10 times as much heat-trapping carbon dioxide – as does a calorie of plant protein. The researchers found that, when it's all added up, the average American does more to reduce global warming emissions by going vegetarian than by switching to a hybrid car.
- According to a United Nations report, animal agriculture takes up an incredible 70% of all agricultural land, and 30% of total land surface on the planet. Farmed animals are probably the biggest cause of slashing and burning the world's forests.



#### **Gases produced by animal agriculture are leading contributors to global warming**

Rainforests are incredibly bio-diverse areas, with 90% of all species on Earth. Cutting them down not only creates more greenhouse gases through the process of destruction, but also reduces the amazing benefits the trees provide. Rainforests have been called the "lungs of the Earth," because they filter air by absorbing carbon dioxide while emitting life-supporting oxygen. In Latin America, some 70% of former Amazon forests have been turned over to grazing.

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## Meetings

### **ARC in Action (AIA) Meetings**

ARC in Action meetings are held the second Saturday of every month from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the ARC office. At these informal meetings we work on current projects and campaigns. This is a great way to meet other people who care about animals. The ARC office is located at 3249 Hennepin Ave. S. in the Uptown Office Park Building, lower level.

## ARC Speaker Series

Karen Davis, the President and founder of United Poultry Concerns, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl will be speaking in October as part of the ARC Speaker Series. Watch your mailbox for more details this fall.

## Come Blog with Us!

ARC is now in the blogosphere; check us out at:

**[www.circleofcompassion.typepad.com](http://www.circleofcompassion.typepad.com)**

We look forward to your insights and ideas; your input makes all the difference in this online community.

ARC Web Site: [www.animalrightscoalition.com](http://www.animalrightscoalition.com)

ARC on MySpace: [www.myspace.com/animalrightscoalition](http://www.myspace.com/animalrightscoalition)

## Annual Membership Renewal

Watch your mailbox for your annual membership renewal coming soon.

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**Contributor:** Linda Hatfield, Help Our Wolves Live! (HOWL)



**skinless fashion**

## what's wrong with leather?

no matter how you slice it, leather is dead skin. to keep animal hide from biodegrading, it's tanned with dangerous substances like chromium, lead, arsenic, cyanide and formaldehyde. these toxins pollute regional waterways and cause a disproportionately high incidence of cancer among tannery-town workers and residents.

the leather industry also uses an enormous amount of energy. huge amounts of fossil fuels are consumed in raising, transporting and killing the animals whose skins eventually become leather.

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## The Free-range, Cage-free, Humanely-raised Myth

There is a lot of confusing, so-called “humane” labeling these days. For the majority of people, a “free-range” or “cage-free” label on a carton of eggs conjures up images of happy hens, roaming in barnyards, nesting on cozy straw beds, and pecking at bugs in the dirt. The truth behind these labels is that all they mean is that the birds are *un-caged*. Being un-caged means that they may instead be crammed by the thousands into barns where they live their short lives crowded together on a cement floor, never seeing the outside. Moreover, there is no inspection system for companies that label their eggs “free-range” or “cage-free.”

Like battery cage hens, “free-range,” “naturally raised” (or any such label!) hens are debeaked with a hot knife at one day old with no anesthetic. They are intentionally starved to shock their bodies into an almost constant laying cycle. When spent, they are violently packed into a semi truck and hauled hundreds of miles to slaughter. Her rooster brothers are brutally killed as baby chicks simply because they can’t lay eggs.

A similar lie is told regarding free-range broiler chickens. Companies are allowed to use this label if they have U.S. Department of Agriculture-certified access to the outdoors. A small opening at the end of a large shed where a few birds may be permitted to go to a tiny area outside at any given time is all the criteria needed to garner this label.

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**“If you go to a free-range farm and expect to see a bunch of chickens galloping around in pastures, you’re kidding yourself.”**

—Richard Lobb, spokesperson for the National Chicken Council

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“Free-range” tells you nothing about the animals’ quality of life, nor does it even ensure that the animal goes outdoors. There is no prohibition in “free-range” poultry farming against using chickens and turkeys who have been bred for fast growth and high feed conversion. As with factory-farmed birds raised for meat, “free-range” birds face the same grueling transport to slaughter, where they are hung upside down, have their throats slit, and bleed to death, often while still fully conscious.

What about free-range, organically raised cows, sheep, or pigs? The USDA defines “free-range” non-poultry meats as coming from animals who ate grass and lived on a range. No other criteria such as the amount of space for each animal are required. “Free-range/roaming” facilities are almost never inspected or verified to be in compliance with these already loose criteria and the USDA relies upon producer testimonials to support the accuracy of the claims.



“Free-range” flock

Even when “free-range” animals are allowed to live outdoors, they are still subjected to excruciating mutilations, such as castration, branding, dehorning, tail-docking, and tooth grinding, without painkillers or veterinary care. Once fattened for market, they are crammed in trucks and sent to slaughterhouses. These animals are slaughtered in the same violent ways as factory-farmed animals; they are pushed through narrow chutes, hung upside down on conveyor belts, and have their throats slit. Some are dismembered while still fully conscious. The largest hog slaughterhouse in the world, Carolina Food Processors, kills 24,000 hogs daily!

So, it’s evident that “free-range” is certainly not cruelty free. But, that begs the question, is a truly “free-range” world possible? Let’s deconstruct:

- More than 10 billion animals are confined and slaughtered by agribusiness each year, the overwhelming majority of them living so intensely confined they cannot turn around or fully extend their limbs. Even with such intense confinement, these animals still take up a large portion of the land mass on Earth. Would it be possible to have 10 billion animals freely roaming about? Very, very doubtful.
- Even if intensely confined factory farming practices were outlawed, it’s highly unlikely producers could supply our nation of 280 million with enough meat, eggs, and dairy products to sustain their typical diet today. With such an enormous and ever-growing demand for these products, completely humane farming and slaughtering methods are not possible.

Just because living conditions might be marginally better or in effect, less cruel, doesn’t make the “free-range” or “cage-free” industry acceptable. “Free-range” or “cage-free” farming of any kind is, above all else, a business. Profit surpasses concern for the animals’ comfort, welfare, or behavioral needs, not to mention the welfare of this planet and every living creature on it. ♡



## Did You Know: Environmental Facts about Dissection and Fur

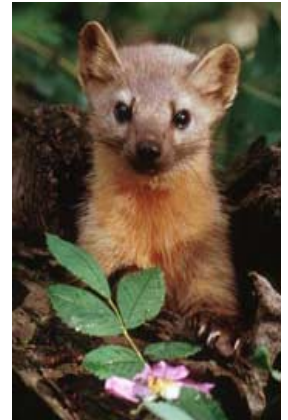
Many people know that dissection desensitizes students and teaches them that animal life is expendable and unimportant. Likewise, many people are aware that fur is just plain cruel. But did you know that there are also compelling environmental reasons to choose not to dissect animals or wear fur?

### Dissection

1. Formaldehyde is a fungicide and bactericide commonly used to preserve biological specimens for dissection in middle and high school science curricula. Formaldehyde is a **confirmed carcinogen as well as a respiratory irritant**. Active ventilation is required to prevent the accumulation of potentially dangerous concentrations of formaldehyde vapors, which are heavier than air and tend to settle near the floor in a classroom. This can be extremely problematic in buildings where the ventilation system is mounted on the ceiling or designed for air contaminants that are lighter than air and naturally rise. (Source: EPA)
2. According to a report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):
  - The detection of formaldehyde odors in middle and high schools suggests that the federal health and safety action level may have been routinely exceeded and exposure limits surpassed.
  - The majority of biological specimens maintained by school departments have been preserved in formaldehyde and therefore represent a potential health and safety concern for the user.
  - Areas where dissections are routinely conducted lack the mechanical ventilation necessary to properly exhaust formaldehyde vapors.
3. Millions of formaldehyde-laden specimens must be disposed of every year. These carcinogenic materials are absorbed into the surrounding environment.
4. The number of animals killed and preserved for dissection each year can only be estimated. The Humane Society of the United States gives a conservative estimate of 6 million vertebrates alone used in high school dissection. Frogs, turtles, snakes, fish, and dogfish sharks are among the species caught.
5. Many species of amphibians and reptiles are declining at an alarming rate; some are nearing extinction. The Connecticut bog turtle has been proposed as a candidate for a state endangered list, and the red-eared slider turtle – one of the most commonly used classroom specimens – has been proposed for inclusion by the International Wildlife Coalition.
6. Over-collection of frogs and turtles has been identified as a major contributing factor to their decline and their collection causes the ecosystems relying on them for survival to further deteriorate. ♡

### Fur

1. Trapping has unique environmental costs. The fur trade has nearly caused the extinction of fishers, martens, and several species of wild cats in North America. Trapping does not promote stable, healthy wildlife populations. Trappers claim they are simply “harvesting” animals who would die anyway. However, there is a strong indication that healthy animals are more likely to be caught by traps because they are more active than diseased or weak animals.
2. Trapping is largely unregulated, and where restrictions do apply, they are poorly enforced. Trap lines are notoriously indiscriminate. “Non-target” animals, including endangered species such as bald eagles or lynx, as well as cats and dogs, are often caught.
3. Turning animals into coats and trim is far worse for the environment than producing synthetic materials. In 1979, the Scientific Research Lab at Ford Motor Company compared the amount of energy required to produce real versus synthetic fur coats. The results: 120,300 BTU (British thermal units – which is approximately equal to the amount of useful energy in one gallon of gasoline) was needed for the synthetic fur, as opposed to 433,000 BTU needed to make a coat from trapped animals. Worse yet, 7,965,800 BTU was needed to make a coat from cage-raised animals. **That’s 66 times more energy than needed for the fake fur!** Unlike most comparisons of real and synthetic fur, this study took into account the feed required for cage-raised animals, transportation, skinning, scraping, drying, and dyeing of pelts.
4. Environmentally harmful products including chromium and formaldehyde are used in processing fur garments to keep them from rotting. In 1991, six New Jersey fur processors were fined more than two million dollars for releasing toxic waste into the environment. Far from being natural, renewable resources, fur products consume more of our irreplaceable energy resources than do those made from synthetic materials. ♡



The almost extinct Pine Marten

## Reaching Out to the Youngest Members of Our Community

Once again ARC has been busy spreading the word about compassionate living. Community education and outreach activities varied from large community events to helping the hundreds of people who called or emailed us for help with animal issues. Among the events at which ARC exhibited were Education Minnesota Professional Conference, DoggiePalooza, Twin Cities Festival of Books, Minneapolis Women's Expo, Twin Cities Pet Expo, Girl Scouts All About Animals Day, and Living Green Expo.

This year we've focused on reaching out to the youngest members of our community – the children and students who will grow up and help decide the planet's future. Every ARC booth contains lots of stuff for kids – the "I Love Animals and Broccoli Coloring Book", the PETA Kids comic books "A Rat's Life," "A Cow's Life," and "A Chicken's Life," and lots and lots of colorful stickers – the "I am not a Nugget" and "Fish are Friends not Food" stickers are especially popular.

ARC provided 30 copies of "Buddy Unchained" to Red Lake Rosie's Rescue on the Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota. The book tells the story of Buddy, a neglected dog who is kept outdoors in all weather on a chain, alone all day – a dog whose owners have forgotten that he's alive. ARC also provided subscriptions to *KIND News* to schools on the reservation. *KIND News* is a colorful classroom newspaper published by the Humane Society of the United States and read by more than one million students nationwide. Each month of the school year, teachers receive 32 copies of the newspaper, enough for every student in a class, and a teacher's guide.

ARC had a table at the first ever Girl Scouts "All About Animals" day. The teen and pre-teen scouts were eager to learn all about cruelty-free products and being vegetarian.

At the recent Living Green Expo, ARC sponsored a "Compassionate Kids" workshop in the Kids' Activity Area. Led by Amy Leo Barankovich, this workshop was "A time to learn about the wonders and beauty of animals and the environment." The workshop let children explore different aspects of the natural world through fun, interactive activities using stories, drama, and movement.

As part of ARC's quarterly grant program, we provided financial assistance to Bridges of Respect, a local nonprofit organization that offers educational presentations on animal and environmental issues to grades six through college. The grant was used to help purchase a Great American Bullfrog model to use in their "Animals in Science" presentation in the schools. We also provided assistance to student groups Hamline Animal Rights Coalition for their annual Vegan Food Tasting event and to Compassionate Action for Animals for their college leafleting day. 🐾



**ARC exhibit at Girl Scouts  
"All About Animals" day**



**ARC-sponsored "Compassionate Kids"  
workshop at the Living Green Expo**



**A very young visitor to the ARC booth at the  
Living Green Expo proudly applying her  
"I am not a Nugget" sticker**



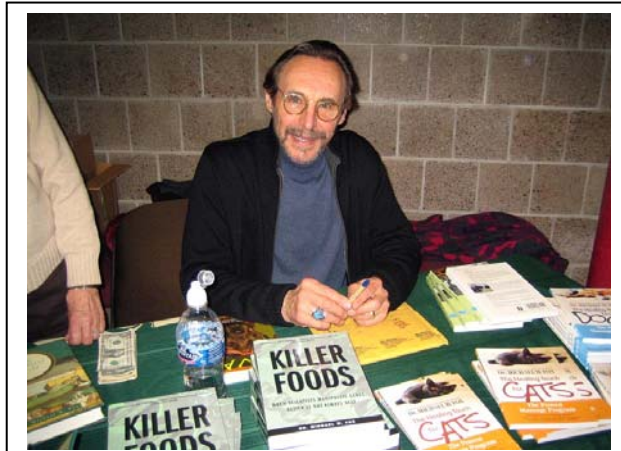
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- Gases like methane and nitrous oxide have 23 to 296 times the warming power of carbon dioxide. Thus, while animal agriculture accounts for 9% of our carbon dioxide emissions, it emits 37% of our methane and a whopping 65% of our nitrous oxide.
- Land animals raised for food make up a staggering 20% of the entire land animal biomass of the earth. We are literally eating our planet to death! Domestic animals bred into existence to be food commodities now outnumber the 6 billion human population by three to one. Even with such disturbing statistics, meat consumption has increased five-fold in the past 50 years, and is expected to double in the next 50 years.
- Animal agriculture accounts for most of the water consumed in this country, emits two-thirds of the world's acid-rain causing ammonia, and is the world's largest source of water pollution – killing entire river and marine ecosystems and destroying coral reefs. Modern American farms churn out 5 million tons of manure a day! This is far more than our land can possibly absorb, creating acres and acres of cesspools stretching over our countryside, polluting the air, contaminating the water, and destroying our planet.
- Even so-called “humane” or “sustainable agriculture” is a serious problem, not a solution. A cow with access to fresh air and a pasture is still a cow, and they need plenty of water and food. In the industrialized world, about 70% of grain is fed to domesticated animals, and they need somewhere to eliminate it all once digested. Animal-based farms use far more land than that used by growing vegetable crops and fruits directly for human consumption.

Overwhelmed with gloom and doom? The good news about all this bad news is that the problem can be alleviated rather easily, **simply by going vegetarian**. We make a difference at every single meal when we leave animals and their by-products off our plates.

Eating animals simultaneously contributes to a multitude of tragedies including animal suffering and death, global warming, deforestation, species extinction, the unsustainable overuse of water, land, topsoil, grain, labor, and other vital resources, the continuation of world hunger and mass starvation, tremendous waste, and on and on and on.

**And just think – you can provide the antidote to all of these horrors simply by not eating meat! ♣**



**ARC SPEAKER SERIES: DR. MICHAEL FOX**

During 2007, ARC is bringing in nationally recognized speakers to reach a larger audience with the animal rights message. Dr. Michael W. Fox spoke at Normandale Community College in Bloomington in early spring on the topic, “The Politics of the Plate and the Power of the Fork: Eating with a Conscience and the Bioethics of Food.”



ARC invited many local groups to have tables at the Dr. Fox speaking event. Here's the Minnesota Primate Freedom Project table.

## Petting Zoos: Dangerous to your Child's Health

Driving along I-94 recently – between Minneapolis and Moorhead – I spotted a large, roadside petting zoo. It is baffling to me why anyone would frequent one of these cruel sideshows. Caged animals, including traditionally domesticated animals like goats, sheep, pigs, and donkeys, suffer from boredom and disorientation. Separation from their natural environment and confinement in small spaces can make animals destructive and dangerous. In addition to ignoring the animal's social and behavioral needs, they are often deprived of shelter from wind and sun, and may be given limited access to fresh water.

Besides the inherent cruelty of petting zoos, a well-kept industry secret is the health issues they pose. Petting zoos are absolute hotbeds of serious pathogens like E. coli and salmonella. Each year, numerous children are sickened as a result of visiting animal displays like petting zoos, and some children have died from these deadly bacteria. Children, the elderly, and pregnant women are especially at risk. Infections can spread through direct or even indirect animal contact; the area surrounding an animal's cage can be teeming with bacteria, and children can even bring it home on their clothing.

In 2005, an outbreak of E. coli bacteria in Florida was definitively linked to animals from petting zoos at three fairs. Twenty-six people were confirmed with E. coli infection; 23 of them were children. Those who come in contact with E. coli can develop bloody diarrhea, anemia, chronic kidney failure, or neurological impairments such as seizure or strokes. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), kidney failure can occur and dialysis and transfusions are sometimes necessary. In 2002, Pennsylvania passed a bill requiring petting zoos and other animal exhibitions to provide hand-washing facilities and to post information about the more than 75 diseases humans can contract from contact with animals. The impetus for the bill was an outbreak of E. coli in visitors, most of them children, to a petting zoo. The CDC reported that 55 cases of E. coli were confirmed, and 16 people were hospitalized. One four-year old child required a kidney transplant.

For more information about the diseases that can come from contact with animals at petting zoos, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/healthypets/browse\\_by\\_diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/browse_by_diseases.htm)

## Gray Wolves Delisted

Hundreds of thousands of gray wolves once roamed the U.S. until federally funded eradication programs, bounties, poisoning, trapping, and aerial shooting nearly eliminated them. Even after bounties ended in 1965, the wolf was unprotected in Minnesota until 1973, when the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) was passed and wolves were classified as Endangered throughout the lower 48 states and given complete protection. Today, about 5,000 wolves are found in the lower 48 states – 3,000 of those wolves are in Minnesota.

After years of trying to remove the wolf's protection, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service succeeded in delisting the gray wolf population in the western Great Lakes in March 2007. Delisting is the biggest threat to the wolf today as wolf management is now in the hands of the state, and the Minnesota DNR has stated that they do not wish to manage the wolf unless they can have a sport hunting or trapping season.

The Minnesota Wolf Management Plan may allow removal of nearly 50% of the current wolf population by a variety of means including hunting and trapping. The plan divides the state into two management zones. Zone A, the NE part of the state where 80% of wolves live, brings back the bounty, a \$150 reward paid to trappers and disguised as a predator control payment program. Trappers will not only collect \$150 from the state, but will also be able to sell the wolf pelts on the fur market. Zone B, the remaining part of the state, allows liberal killing of wolves. Farmers, ranchers, and "pet owners" will be able at anytime, without a permit, to shoot or destroy a gray wolf on land they own or lease when they determine that the wolf is posing an immediate threat.

It is likely that the DNR will support having a sport hunting or trapping season on wolves, for which there is no justification. Data show that killing wolves for sport is not an effective method of depredation control. Sport trapping is a winter activity designed to obtain prime pelts; summer trapped wolves have low quality pelts. However, it is during the summer months that most depredation occurs.

While the wolf population has recovered, putting the wolf in the hands of the state does not inspire confidence as the wolf has been returned to the same management that endangered the animal in the first place.

In April 2007, HOWL (Help Our Wolves Live!), The Humane Society of the United States, and the Animal Protection Institute filed suit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over its decision to remove ESA protection from gray wolves in the western Great Lakes region. 🐾

## What You Need to Know about Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

**P**oultry factory farms and transport methods, added to live bird markets, cockfighting, and the wild-caught bird trade, have created the conditions responsible for the spread and mutations of avian influenza viruses capable of infecting birds and humans alike.

Poultry producers would like people to think that the highly pathogenic avian flu currently infecting migratory waterfowl and domestic fowl is the result of birds running wild in the fresh air and open skies. Avian flu viruses have lived harmlessly in the intestines of waterfowl for millennia. Shed in sparsely populated outdoor settings in the droppings of birds whose immune systems have evolved to accommodate them, these viruses are kept in check. Flu viruses are killed rapidly by the sunlight and tend to dehydrate to death in the breeze. But industrialized poultry production practices have vastly increased the potential for these viruses to mutate into highly pathogenic strains.

Every day 100,000 chickens are brought into densely populated Hong Kong to be sold alive in more than a thousand “wet” markets. In these live animal markets, chickens, ducks, geese and quails are crammed into small plastic cages. The cage-stacked birds defecate on one another amid feathers, feces, blood, intestines, and live slaughter. Highly concentrated poultry and pig farming, in conjunction with these live animal markets, provide optimal conditions for increased mutation, reassortment, and recombination of flu viruses.

Thousands of chickens are crammed into filthy, football field-sized sheds lying beak to beak in their own waste in the U.S., Asia, and around the world. The air is choked with ammonia and fecal dust, which irritates the birds’ respiratory passages, further increasing their susceptibility in already stressed conditions of confinement. Since the birds are standing in their own excrement, the virus need not develop true airborne transmission via nasal or respiratory secretions. Rather, the virus has an opportunity to be excreted in the feces and then inhaled or swallowed by the thousands of other birds confined in the shed, allowing the virus to rapidly and repeatedly circulate.

Traditional farming practices in Asia include feeding poultry droppings directly to pigs and fish. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, chicken feces are commonly used as food and fertilizer in fish farms in China. This method of feeding excrement to farmed animals mirrors the way farmed animals around the world are really fed, and how much of the world’s plant agriculture is fertilized. Animal-based fertilizer and waste-water runoff from animal farming operations

explain why crops such as cantaloupe and spinach can infect people with bacteria like salmonella and E. coli.

As a result of bird flu, hundreds of millions of chickens, turkeys, and ducks have been and continue to be gassed, kicked, beaten, electrocuted, burned alive, sliced to death in woodchippers, and buried under blankets of firefighting foam. In 2003, when the USDA destroyed more than 3.5 million chickens to halt the spread of a virus, workers dumped thousands of live egg-laying hens into woodchippers.

In 2007, *Consumer Reports* reported that tests on 525 chickens purchased in 23 states found 83% of chickens contaminated with salmonella and campylobacter (can cause a paralytic disease with fatal nerve damage) bacteria – a substantial increase from their 2003 study.



**Thousands of “broiler chickens” raised for their flesh are packed into sheds**

Like all contagious intestinal and respiratory infections, avian flu viruses are density-dependant with a penchant for darkness, dampness, dirt, and weakened immune systems. These are perfect conditions in which to mutate and infect birds and humans alike. The poultry and eggs one buys at the store came from birds who lived, day in and day out, in excrement and breathed nothing but noxious ammonia fumes. These poisonous gases can penetrate eggshells and invite disease and bacteria into their bodies.

Without a major shift in people’s eating habits, factory farming will continue to expand around the Earth. Whether an avian flu pandemic is imminent, consumers and handlers of poultry and eggs will continue to get sick, or perhaps die, from contact with these products. By contrast, a wholesome plant-based diet would eliminate this core contributor to disease, suffering, and environmental destruction. It’s the kindest and most reasonable thing that anyone can do to prevent bird flu.

All this information and more can be found at United Poultry Concerns’ web site at: [www.upc-online.org](http://www.upc-online.org) 🐔



## Keep the Seafood off your Plate

I keep hearing about the health benefits of fish – a lot of people say they've quit eating meat, but continue to eat seafood. When I walk into a supermarket, I'm stunned by the amount and variety of fish accessible at my fingertips. So, I'd like to examine these two issues; first, is fish healthy? And second, how is its availability in abundance and variety affecting the environment?

### Your Health

According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, fish oils have been popularized as an aid for just about everything from arthritis to heart problems. Omega-3 fatty acids in fish oils are highly unstable molecules that tend to decompose and, in the process, unleash dangerous free radicals. Research has shown that omega-3s are found in a more stable form in vegetables, fruits, and beans.

As a result of widespread industrial pollution, fish are accumulating toxic mercury. In water, mercury is converted to methyl mercury by bacteria and other processes. Fish absorb methyl mercury from their food and from water as it passes over their gills. Mercury is tightly bound to proteins in all fish tissue, including muscle. **There is no method of cooking or cleaning fish that will reduce the amount of mercury in a meal.**

According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, consumption of fish and other sea animals is the sole source of human exposure to methyl mercury. Eating even small amounts of fish can have a big impact on the level of mercury in our bodies. A study by the Environmental Protection Agency revealed that women who ate fish just twice a week had blood mercury concentrations seven times higher than women who hadn't eaten fish in the previous months. Further, a study reported in *USA Today* showed that a 140-pound woman will be 30% over the EPA cutoff for safe mercury levels if she eats just one 6-ounce can of white tuna each week.

Chemicals ingested from eating fish become more concentrated as they move up the food chain. Big fish (such as tuna and salmon) eat little fish; humans eat the big fish, absorbing chemicals from all the fish that have been eaten along the food chain. Fish flesh also stores contaminants, such as PCBs, which cause liver damage and nervous system disorders, and dioxins, linked to cancer. These toxins are stored in the body fat of humans who eat fish and remain in their bodies for decades.

### The Environment

Even if you're not convinced by the fact that there are documented poisons in fish, the environmental factors surrounding our insatiable appetite for fish are frightening. Our oceans are no longer the boundless resource we thought they were, as the overwhelming

body of evidence points to the reality that marine life is rapidly dwindling.

The long-term sustainability of our ocean's sea life is vulnerable to a variety of threats, most notably overfishing, habitat loss, and bycatch. These practices must stop if we want our oceans to thrive with an abundance of life.

**Overfishing:** Fish populations decline at a rapid pace if they are caught at a faster rate than they can reproduce. The smaller the population of a fish stock and the slower it reaches maturity, the more vulnerable and less resilient it is to human interference



**Over 70% of the world's fish species are either fully exploited or depleted**  
– UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimate

**Habitat loss:** Some fishing gear, primarily devices dragged along the ocean floor, destroy essential marine habitat. This type of degradation must be stopped to prevent the collapse of fish populations, coral, and other sea life. The viability of juvenile fish is directly linked to the health of their habitat.

**Bycatch:** Some fishing practices kill or injure non-target species. This occurs when marine creatures are hooked or netted along with the intended species. The bycatch of large amounts of animal and plant life compromises the overall health and integrity of marine ecosystems.

Americans alone eat roughly 17 billion aquatic creatures annually. Global commercial fishing annually takes over 180 billion pounds of fish and shellfish from our oceans. This number does not include the millions of other sea creatures killed and discarded as bycatch. An estimated 85% of animals caught in commercial fishing are thrown back into the sea, dead or dying. This results in a massive waste of marine life, at a time when unprecedented pressures from climate change, pollution, and development are exerting their own enormous toll. Just a year ago, a report in *Science*, one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals, warned that if current fishing trends continue, **the world's fish supply could be depleted by 2048.**

*continued on page 10*

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As *Satya* magazine so eloquently stated, “despite the impending collapse of our aquatic ecosystems, marine conservation groups, seafood purveyors, and guilt ridden fish eaters are still finding ways to embrace seafood consumption.” Just notice the surplus of handy-dandy wallet sized cards and pocket guides outlining “sustainable” or “ocean-friendly” seafood consumption. Let’s not forget, purveyors of seafood will continue to make money and empty our oceans in the process unless we stop demanding and consuming all this seafood!

Here are a few points to ponder if you’re planning to swallow any aquatic animal:

- Over-exploitation of the cod fishery in New England caused annual landing to decrease 88% between 1990 and 2000. Despite such warnings, many other species in U.S. waters appear destined for the same fate. According to statistics from the National Marine Fisheries Services, about 60% of the commercially important U.S. stocks were “overfished,” meaning their populations were severely depleted.

- A 2003 study by Canadian researchers found that industrial fishing has reduced worldwide populations of large predatory fish, such as sharks, swordfish, and tuna by 90% in just 50 years.
- A study by the American Fisheries Society of marine fish in U.S. waters identified 53 species as endangered (at high risk of going extinct in the immediate future), and 35 as threatened (at risk of extinction in the near future). Even more disturbing, only a quarter of these species are protected from further depletion by the Endangered Species Act.
- Overfishing affects other ocean life. Populations of marine mammals such as sea lions, sea otters, whales, and several species of birds have dropped significantly due to overfishing. 🐋

## Factory Farming in Aqua-land

**D**ue to the decrease in wild fish stocks, farm-raised fish production is expanding world-wide. Factory fish farms are commercial facilities raising aquatic animals in controlled systems, such as cages, net pens, ponds, raceways, and tanks. These controlled environments are similar to the confinement practices used in land animal food production. According to the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center, “operating a fish farm is similar to operating a cattle feedlot. High density aquaculture has been described by the USDA as the most intensive form of agriculture practiced on a large scale in this country today.”

Some facts about farm-raised seafood:

- The weight of farmed fish now exceeds the amount of beef produced globally.
- Coastally farmed salmon are raised in single pens of 15,000 to 90,000. Living conditions such as this are equivalent to keeping this strongly migratory fish in a two-foot long bathtub.
- A salmon farm of 200,000 fish releases an amount of fecal solids roughly equivalent to a town of 62,000 people.
- According to SeafoodWatch, the construction of shrimp ponds in mangrove forests has destroyed more than 3.7 million acres of coastal habitat important to fish, birds, and humans.
- Discharge of untreated wastewater from fish farms can pollute the surrounding environment and contaminate groundwater.
- Antibiotics are often used in these overcrowded conditions to control disease. A fact sheet from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy states that there is no rigorous monitoring of on-site antibiotic drug use on fish farm feedlots. It has been documented that antibiotic-laced fish have been sold in U.S. markets.
- There are over 100 species of aquatic organisms produced in U.S. aquaculture alone. Seafood eaters today are more likely to be consuming salmon, shrimp, trout and other marine life from an inland factory farm than from the ever-depleting supplies in the sea.
- Farm-raised fish must be fed 5 pounds of wild-caught fish in order to produce just 1 pound of meat, making aqua-farms worse than commercial fishing enterprises for the depleting of our oceans. There is nothing sustainable or environmentally friendly about that!

So, what’s the moral of this story? **If you care about the environment, our oceans, and all the creatures in them, keep the seafood off your plate.** 🐟

## Memorials

In memory of **Slugger**,  
missed for one year by Coco,  
Waldo, and Kate

In memory of **Iona Velasco**,  
from Gina Cardamone-Rayne



## Tributes

### John Thomasberg

In honor of his birthday, from Richard Ostby

In honor of **Lisa Ray Boesen** and **Charles Calderale** who love animals. From Lisa's brother, sister-in-law, and niece Bret, Elizabeth, and Karin Boesen

## Paté à la Tempeh

Serving size: 6 to 8

- 6 oz. multi-grain tempeh
- 4 oz. cremini mushrooms
- 1 cup shallots
- 2 Tbls. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tsp. dried, crushed rosemary
- 2 Tbls. tamari (or soy) sauce
- 2 Tbls. red wine
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper
- Sliced baguette or crackers



Crumble tempeh into a small bowl. In a non-stick skillet, saute tempeh, mushrooms, and shallots in the olive oil for 5 minutes.

Add the garlic and rosemary. Saute the mixture an additional 2-3 minutes or until the tempeh begins to brown around the edges. Add the remaining ingredients, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 5 minutes or until all of the liquid has been absorbed.

Remove the pan from the heat and set aside to cool for 10 minutes.

Transfer the mixture to a food processor and blend for 2 minutes or until smooth. Transfer the pate to a small dish, cover, and chill for 1-2 hours to let the flavors blend. Serve pate on a platter with slices of bread or crackers.

Store covered in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. 🐾

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*For over 25 years ARC has been dedicated to ending the suffering, abuse, and exploitation of non-human animals through information, education, and advocacy.*



**ARC and the Minnesota Primate Freedom Project marching in the annual May Day Parade in Minneapolis**