

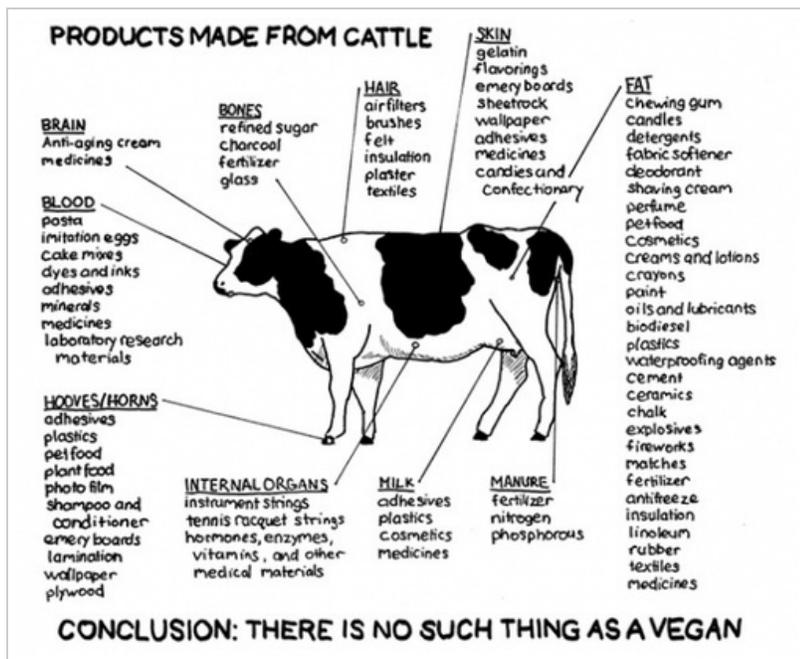
# MY FACE IS ON FIRE

MY FACE IS ON FIRE IS A BLOG (WITH AN ASSOCIATED PODCAST) WHICH FOCUSES ON ABOLITIONIST VEGAN EDUCATION, ANIMAL RIGHTS ISSUES AND THE MISREPRESENTATION OF VEGANISM IN POP CULTURE OR MAINSTREAM MEDIA.

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER, 2010

## No Such Thing as a Vegan?

A friend of mine who likes to play devil's advocate occasionally sends me articles or other materials he stumbles across online that appear to challenge veganism. Last week he sent me a [graphic from the Gizmodo website](#) with the headline "There Is No Escape from Cows" and with the smug sentence "There's no such thing as a vegan" running across its bottom (see below).



The one thing that is certain is that the graphic illustrates quite well how pervasive the use of animal products is in our daily lives. What's not certain, however, is that this is a reflection in any way of whether or not a person can be vegan. The thing is that veganism

QUI SUIS-JE?



MYLENE OUELLET  
CANADA

I am an abolitionist vegan who writes mostly about the ethics of

consumerism. I like to poke around and see how much of the issues surrounding this are (mis)represented in mainstream media.

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isn't about maintaining a state of absolute purity. It's about making informed choices to refrain from using animal products so that you remove yourself as much as it is possible from the cycle that perpetuates a demand for the continued exploitation of non-human animals -- and by "possible" I really, *really* don't mean "convenient".

As most vegans already know, animal-free alternatives to many of the items listed off can be found quite easily (e.g. shampoo, vitamins, cosmetics, deodorant, detergents, candles, candy, fertilizer, pasta, cake mixes, et al.) and many are just altogether easily avoidable (e.g. anti-aging cream, matches, et al.). It may not always make life convenient to look for alternatives or to refrain from using certain products, but veganism isn't about doing what's convenient for us. Veganism is about not using non-human animals as things that exist for our convenience.

In cases where animal-free versions of certain products cannot be found and where the use of such products is unavoidable and necessary (e.g. certain medicines), then we all do what we need to do to stay healthy and alive. It's important to remember that with certain medications contain animal products used as fillers or inactive ingredients (e.g. gelatin capsules) that it is entirely possible to seek out and find versions that do not contain any by simply **sourcing the medication from a compounding pharmacy**. This should always be explored and chosen if it's an option. On the other hand, there are cases where a medication's active ingredients are animal-derived and where the use of this medication is required. In those cases, such use may not feel "right", but it can certainly be excusable (and even justifiable). I have as much interest in continuing my life as any other human or non-human animal, no?

That this is so by no means entails that "some use" of non-human animals can always be excused or justified, of course. Context is everything. Is it possible in this overwhelmingly speciesist world to live a life that is 100% free of the use of animal products? Of course not. Does this mean that it's OK to sneak in the occasional chicken wing for kicks and still call yourself a vegan? Again, of course not. But veganism is a lifestyle that's the hands-on application of an ethical framework where every single day you *need* to inform yourself so that you can assess situations and make the proper choices. Some of those choices we make as vegans when it comes to our own self-preservation end up being very personal ones, but those decisions we take and those choices we make need to be taken and made in good faith.

To learn more about going vegan and about the abolitionist approach to animal rights, check out the [Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach](#) website and stop by its [brand new discussion forum](#).



By [TwitterButtons.com](#)

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[Veganacious](#)

(Note: Edited to clarify a few potentially confusing points.)

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POSTED BY MYLENE OUELLET AT 9:56 AM 

LABELS: [ANIMAL RIGHTS: THE ABOLITIONIST APPROACH](#), [EXCUSABLE USE](#), [VEGANISM](#)

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## 7 COMMENTS:

Abby said...



Another thoughtful response makes an incredible post.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 1:25:00 PM

Eric said...



Another fundamental point here is that if the property status of nonhuman animals was abolished, none of these items would ever be permitted to come from cows (or other nonhumans) again.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 1:38:00 PM

Annabelle said...



Excellent post. Thank you.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 1:39:00 PM

one said...



Great post. Unfortunately, the misguided conclusion in that illustration seems to originate from the general public's misunderstanding of what veganism is.

We [wrote a post about it](#) too

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 2:41:00 PM

affectioknit said...



Awesome post! I often get things like this from my animal consuming friends...

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 2:57:00 PM

Stephanie said...



You need to show that friend the movie "Earthlings." :)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 9:22:00 PM

[Visit to a Texas Vet](#) - Finding a new vet can be a trial; finding one that seems both competent and gentle is even more challenging. Do they have to be progressive, too?

3 hours ago

## Quotes on Slavery

As an activist, I know change is coming - (Antislavery) As a vegan, I understand the need for humans to understand the value of non-human life. I understand the utmost importance to end speciesism,...

14 hours ago

## Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach

[Abolitionist Approach Discussion Forum Now Open!](#) - Dear Colleagues: I have received numerous requests (more than 200n since the site was originally launched) to open a forum attached to the site where peopl...

1 day ago

## On Human-Nonhuman Relations

[The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation?](#) - [image: Columbia University Press] Two preeminent thinkers working on a key debate in the study of the moral status of animals. [image: The Animal...

2 days ago

## NZ Vegan Podcast

[NZ Vegan Podcast Episode 67 - Reflections, updates and the repressed memory of my first animal-use-showing video!](#) - LISTEN HERE Revelations! Now I am wondering if that WAS indeed my first exposure to a video showing animal use, or have I repressed other memories from m...

3 days ago

## Unpopular Vegan Essays

[On Advocacy Media Preferences](#) - Absent any comprehensive studies on what media are most effective for persuading people to go and stay vegan, we are left with searching for reasons why ...

adam said...



I think a) the definition of vegan has yet to be reworked so this objection is no longer an issue, b) that the focus should be on veganism as an anti-oppression praxis rather than vegan as an identity that can be bought into, and c) that veganism not be defined as an abstention.

Also, the Animals Film is (in my opinion) much better than Earthlings despite being almost 25 years older. It views less like a powerpoint and with greater sociopolitical context. In general, though, I'd prefer to show someone the film Man vs Animal: To Love or Kill.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010 10:42:00 PM

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2 weeks ago

#### **The starting point. Le point de départ.**

**Meet my feline family: EssPee, part 1** - Today (well, approximately, could be a day or two off) is my little boy EssPee's fifth birthday! He'll always be my little baby boy though. He's been wit...

3 months ago

#### **Vegan Abolitionist**

**Recent Interview** - M Butterflies Katz, a 31 year vegan who writes at "Veganism: A Truth Whose Time Has Come", recently interviewed me. Most of the questions deal directly wit...

4 months ago

#### **Derechos Animales Humanos y Nohumanos**

**Calamarismo y Exveganismo** - Las vergonzosas declaraciones del músico Andrés Calamaro a favor de la utilización (tortura y muerte) de toros como espectáculo público, también llamado "tau..."

4 months ago

#### **brockway hall**

**Avatar** - Watching Avatar last night for the second time, I realized that it was one of the most fascinating movies I've ever seen, not merely for its cinematic sple...

4 months ago

#### **Abolitionist Agenda**

**Agenda: Abolition** - Hi! I'm Rod Stephensen. I'm a middle-aged teacher in New York, a companion to many rescued non-human animals, an avid (though unaccomplished) cook, a p...

4 months ago

#### **Abolitionist Animal Rights**

**Welfarism and Vegetarianism: a Vicious Circle** - The idea that we must promote vegetarianism and welfarism instead of veganism and abolitionism is pernicious nonsense promoted by corporate welfarist organiz...

5 months ago

#### **We Other Animals**

**Is the invisibility of animal**