

sarah wilson

this blog makes life better, sweeter.



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how i eat my meat

posted on december 12th, 2012

I'm a hearty meat eater. But I'm also a very mindful meat eater. I grew up on a small farm and we raised goats for milk and meat. Early summer, Dad would load us into the car, a buck on each of our laps and we would cart our goats to the local abattoir to be killed and butchered. My brothers and I saw where they were killed, we knew the butcher who then cut them up for Mum and we knew, a week or so later, when we were eating one of our beautiful goats.



image via [Green Foodie](#)

This was the beginning. I was a vegetarian for a year in my late teens, *aswereweall*. It made me hungry, neurotic about food and "heavy". I then worked in the food industry on and off for about 20 years, and developed a heightened respect for meat and how it should be consumed. And today, for a range of reasons, I'm a vocal and passionate meat consumer.

I've recently been appointed the ambassador for the beef and lamb industry's [Target 100 program](#), charged with sharing information about sustainable beef, lamb and goat consumption. This is a paid role, however these blog posts are my own.

Over the next year, I'm going to share a whole bunch of information to help us love our meat more "heart"-ily and "careful"-ly. But today I'll kick off by answering a few questions I get about how I eat my meat. Please ask me more questions below in the comments, and please, if you live in Sydney, join me Monday 17 December from 8am in Martin Place at [Target100's Virtual Farm](#) (see more info below).

do i eat organic meat?

Yes, and no. Put it this way, I don't seek out "organic". Instead I seek out "sustainable". An organic steak can often come from cattle raised in cruel, dirty conditions. Flipside, a lot of fantastic pasture-raised meat doesn't have an "organic" label. Not because the farmer cuts

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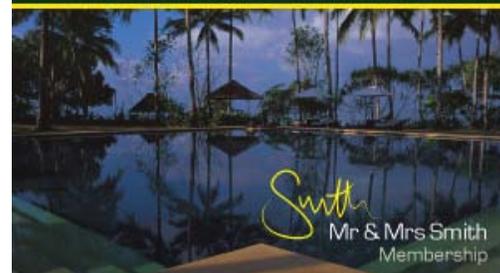


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corners with chemicals, but because they can't afford the expensive organic certification process.

do i go for grain-fed or pasture-fed?

I personally support pasture-fed. That said 70 per cent of Australian beef and lamb is pasture-fed. Much of the brouhaha about grain-fed v pasture-fed comes from overseas where it really is a big issue.

Pasture-raised animals forage on grass and do not tend to be treated with hormones or antibiotics. Grain-fed animals are kept in feedlots and are fed corn, soy and other grains. I know a lot of restaurants actually sell in their steak as "grain fed". Why? Because it produces a fatter, marbled meat (yep, to get fat, eat more grains). I should point out that a lot of so-called pasture-fed beef is often "fattened" up with grain just before slaughter...so the issue is not wholly clear-cut. In Australia the average time cattle spend in a feedlot is between 50 - 120 days, equating to around 10-15 per cent of their lifespan.

Regardless, buying pasture-fed meat is a choice I make bearing in mind my budget, but is one factor that contributes to my sustainable commitment. For now I'll just flag that most research shows it's more nutritious, mostly more ethical and actually renders a mindful meat-inclusive diet far more sustainable than a vegetarian one.

but you rant on about the environment? don't you care?

Yes, yes I do! I've done my research and on all matters generally raised on this topic there is evidence to suggest a mindful meat-inclusive diet is best for the planet. I'll tick off just three of the arguments here:

The farty methane and CO2 argument: A myth. Plus, it's worth noting that atmospheric methane concentrations have remained relatively stable since 2000, despite significant increases in livestock numbers globally.

When holistically managed Australia's cattle and sheep farmers can actually boost the carbon stored in their soil as part of the carbon cycle. A worldwide analysis of the effects of land management on soil carbon showed that there is on average about 8 per cent more soil carbon under well-managed pasture than under native forests.

According to a University of New South Wales study, eating red meat three times a week results in 164kg - 258kg of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions a year - vastly different to figures quoted that claim up to 1.5 tonnes.

The 50,000-litres-to-produce-a kilo-of meat argument: A myth. The accurate figure is 130-540 litres of water to produce a kilogram of beef.

The use of land argument: This is a really interesting one because when folk bang on about meat eating being bad for the environment they're referencing badly managed farming and they're often referring to overseas studies.

In Australia the environment v meat situation is very different.

How so? Well, due to geological, topographic and climatic factors, less than 8 per cent of Australia's land is suitable for crop production, and cattle and sheep farming is the most efficient use of this land for producing highly nutritious protein. In other words, Australian cattle and sheep are mostly raised on arid and semi-arid rangelands that simply can't be used for any other food sources. Plus, Australian soils are frequently unable to sustain cropping on a continuous basis and rotation with cattle and sheep provides an essential environmental break to renew soil productivity.



you can buy my books here



about me

I'm a journalist + TV presenter. I write about how to make life better. If I had a resume it would list the following: editor of Cosmopolitan magazine, host of MasterChef Australia, Sunday Life columnist, host + producer of the Lifestyle YOU channel (under "hobbies" it would say: eating + riding a bike).

I'm on a mission to find ways to make life bigger, more meaningful, nicer, smarter, heartier. [- read more](#)

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A study undertaken by the University of New South Wales has revealed that Australian red meat production is much more efficient than often reported. The three year Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) study has shown that the carbon emissions from sheep and cattle meat production are among the lowest in the world.

Besides, it's been estimated that to substitute the level of protein provided by red meat production in Australia with a vegetarian diet, it would mean finding an area the size of Victoria and Tasmania combined to add to the land currently used for plant-based food production - which we don't have!

do i eat a lot of meat?

I eat meat - a combination of red meat, chicken, pork and fish - most days, but this is how I do it:

- I don't eat huge amounts in a sitting: about 100-200g per meal. Sometimes I use it to merely flavour a dish, via a meat stock for example.
- I eat red meat 3-4 times a week
- I use economical cuts of meat: rather than the fashionable cuts. This makes my meat consumption cheap, but it also means I'm using up the parts of the animal that often get discarded by butchers.
- I support nose-to-tail eating: again, this entails eating the "unfashionable" cuts of meat, ensuring against wastage. I support chefs who subscribe to the same philosophy and look out for Osso bucco and bone marrow on a menu.

For me the greatest food crime is to waste food. Eating the whole animal is the most ethical contribution we can make.

how do i buy my meat?

Where possible I shop for my meat at markets and butchers where I'm able to learn about where the meat came from. Why? It keeps the sustainable dialogue between me and the farmer going (albeit via a third person). I'll share more ideas on this - online supplier etc - in months to come.

want to learn more?

I mean, genuinely? Ask me questions below and I'll get to answering them in various posts over the coming year, including sharing some great sustainable and economical recipes. But also come along on Monday to the Virtual Farm and chat to me and some farmers about what's on your mind via a large LED screen. Target 100 is an education program geared at connecting farmers and consumers to advance sustainable practices and ensure a sustainable food supply. It sets out 100 sustainable practice targets to be reached over the next 15 years. Some of these include conserving and enhancing biodiversity, clean air and clean water, healthy soils and natural ecological processes and providing affordable, safe and nutritious beef or lamb.

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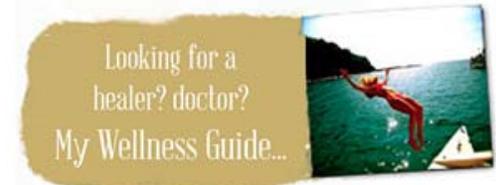
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Ian says:
 I'm constantly amazed how much I learn from your blog, Sarah.

Thank you.

[Reply]

 Sarah Wilson Reply:
 December 12th, 2012 at 9:30 am



my twitter updates

- @aliciaflame @alex_stuart dr lyn tendek is good
13 hours ago
- on my site today: how to heal auto immune disease.
<http://t.co/vlxqmbiyuv>
14 hours ago
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19 hours ago
- rt @unaa_yn: 'paddock to plate' on #worldfoodday at kitchen by mike is set to be an amazing evening with the hon. bob carr, @adamliaw & @sarahwilson_!
1 day ago
- rt @adamliaw: tix to @unaa_yn 'paddock to plate' dinner wed @kitchenbymike with me, @sarahwilson_ and @bobjarr : <http://t.co/5pzysxszng>
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► 2013

pleasure...and glad you read to the end!

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 8:30

Jolene @ Yummy Inspirations says:

Thanks for this informative post. I agree 100%. It's important to know where the meat you eat comes from. I love shopping at farmers markets because you have the opportunity to talk one to one (usually) with the farmer who reared the meat and ask about what they're fed, conditions etc. My favorite lately is grass fed lamb necks (at \$3.99 a kg!!!) from farmers markets around Melbourne - the meat lasts a good couple of meals and the stock I cook it in lasts even longer by mixing it into pumpkin soup etc.

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 9:30 am

lamb neck is great...feel free to share a recipe if you happen to post on your blog?

[Reply]



Jolene @ Yummy Inspirations Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:00 am

Thanks! Basically I make a stock with them by throwing the necks into a pot along with carrots, onions, garlic, apple cider vinegar, salt and pepper, cover it with water and let it sit at room temperature for an hour - this process gives the vinegar time to draw more minerals out of the bones.... after an hour I just turn on the heat and let it bubble away on a low heat for hours and hours.... I strain the stock, keeping the meat for meals and the stock keeps for a week in the fridge. 😊 It's been my weekly ritual the past month - Saturday - visit the markets, Sunday make stock and then there's meat for a few days and stock for the week. 😊

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 5:56 pm

good one. ta x

december 12th, 2012 at 8:33

Nikki says:

Thanks Sarah. It's become so 'trendy' now to be vegetarian, organic, free range etc. Of course I agree with principles that benefit health and the wellbeing of animals- it just seems that some people are mainly interested in swanning around markets wearing organic cotton/bamboo carrying their fashionable hemp bag and spending loads of money.

I appreciate your voice of reason....and that your reasons are based on good motivations rather than just being fashionable.

[Reply]



Emilia Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 12:30 pm

I find it extremely ignorant that you think vegetarians are doing it for the 'trend'

► 2012

► 2011

► 2010

► 2009

what you've been saying:

agreed! on how to heal auto immune disease: 20 weird thyroid symptoms (for your comfort)
3:47 pm this is me! i had graves @ 19 and healed from that, but something has been off with me since. a...

alex stuart on how to heal auto immune disease: 20 weird thyroid symptoms (for your comfort)
3:31 pm welcome rani!

jane on a field guide to dealing with trolls and snippities
2:24 pm okay, you just lost me when you brought david driscoll's wife and children into it. not classy !

hot topics

autoimmune disease bikes Blue Zones breakfast Christmas coconut oil cookbook creativity dalai lama Dan Buettner David Gillespie decluttering detox eating ebook ebooks exercise fat fructose gala darling giveaway gluten-free happiness hashimoto's **I Quit Sugar** love meditation New York Paleo quinoa recipes relationships resources Seth Godin simplifying social media sugar sugar free thyroid **thyroid disease** travel Twitter whimsy **writing** yoga

factor. I am a vegan, and like myself, all the vegetarians/vegans that I know are doing it as a lifestyle choice that they intend to maintain for the rest of their lives. We are proud of living cruelty-free lives, and may be glad to voice our opinions, but this has no relevance to whether it is fashionable or not. You, clearly, are happy to voice your opinion on meat but no one is calling you fashionable or unfashionable. Making references to "hemp bags" and organic clothing just shows how narrow minded and uneducated you are on the topic.

[Reply]



TDMJ Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 12:59 pm

Emilia, there may be many vegans/vegetarians that aren't doing it for the trend but Nikki's point is valid - right now, it's a fad and whether you like it or not, a lot of people are jumping on the bandwagon, people who will jump off again at the next fad comes along, good intentions or not.

The thing that alienates me most from veganism/vegetarianism is this talk of a 'cruelty free lifestyle'. I applaud you for doing your best - as I applaud anyone for doing their very best - but this 'cruelty free lifestyle' is a myth that doesn't contribute to this debate. There is simply no such thing. Land is cleared for soy crops, small animals are killed in the process of grain harvesting, drugs and cosmetics that are tested on animals now probably were at some point - and the biggest environmental problem we have is the use of motor vehicles.

Again, you're to be congratulated for doing your best to minimise your impact - but the one thing I've learnt is that there's no room for self-righteousness - there's always someone on the spectrum doing a better job than you, and a little humility can go a very long way

x TDMJ

[Reply]



Emilia Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 1:55 pm

Quite frankly, clothing or a lipstick colour can be called 'trendy'. People taking a stand to horrific cruelty that is against their moral values should not be called trendy. When slavery was abolished, was it because it stopped being 'trendy', or was it because people realised it was inexcusably wrong? Furthermore, making references to vegetarians wearing 'hemp bags' and organic clothing is like making references to all meat-eaters being red-necks. I respect all opinions except those that are founded on ignorance, or even more so, those that attack a person's/group of people's appearances when they are of no relevance to the subject at hand. If you're going to argue against vegetarianism, fine, but use facts.

I agree that there is likely to have been a rise in people choosing to be vegetarian in recent years. Only time will tell if you are right and people will go back to their previous diets or not, but in my opinion it is the start of a revolution, if you will. People are exposed to more factual information in regards to the benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle for not only their health, but also the environment and animal wellbeing. As stated by Benjamin Zephaniah in the video Making the Connection Vegan Diet (this can be found on youtube), causing suffering should never be considered normal, and just like humanity has (mostly) overcome racism, ageism, and sexism, the same will inevitably occur in regards to speciesism.

In my opinion, vegetarianism is the future for humans. NB: If you believe humans are anatomically made for an omnivorous lifestyle, take a look at the link to the essay written by Milton R. Mills, M.D., "The Comparative Anatomy of Eating", as provided by Potr below. You may find it to be an interesting read.

In reference to drug and cosmetic testing, most vegans/vegetarians will avoid any products that have been tested on animals as far as is possible. I know I certainly do.

And sadly you are mistaken about motor vehicles as the world's largest environmental problem. Cattle-rearing generates more global warming greenhouse gases, as measured in CO2 equivalent,

than transportation. You can have a look for yourself in a report done by the UN (http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?newsID=20772&CR1=warning#.UXyTGI4hL_c). Take note that this is from CATTLE ALONE, let alone all other animal products. The environmental impact does not end at green house gases either, there is also water pollution, huge water consumption, vast land use, the destruction of rain forests... the list goes on. Did you know that it takes 15,000 litres of water a day to maintain one meat-eaters diet, whereas the figure is only 5,000 for vegetarians, and 1,500 for vegans? In fact, "A vegan driving a hummer would be contributing less greenhouse gas carbon emissions than a meat eater riding a bicycle" - Captain Paul Watson, 'A Very Inconvenient Truth - the connection between eating meat and the destruction of the environment'.



Potr Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 5:28 pm

Equally there is no room for misinformation and lecturing of those FAR more informed than you. In making the decision to become vegan, generally people make an effort to research widely and carefully make choices that adhere to utilitarianism principles, such as those suggested by Peter Singer. If you must argue at least understand the principles of veganism which includes refraining from use of cosmetics and drugs which derive and test on animals...large or small. I also assume that you too eat vegetable based foods. It is a choice made based on knowing that deaths from fauna associated with crop farming at least comes with those animals able to exercise free will and that they are not purposely trapped. This is in opposition to the enslavement, genetic modification, environmental manipulation, surgical non anaesthetised intervention and all the pain and suffering and eventual death that ensues. I am insulted that you make so little of so much and use field animal deaths are the reason you choose not only to benefit from crops with unintentional deaths but to contribute to so much disgusting human action. By the way, Emilia, as usual my faith in vegan thinking is enriched by your knowledgeable and careful thought.



TDMJ Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 6:29 pm

Ha ha, oh POTR, I suspect I'm far more informed than you! Though I have no way of knowing that for sure - and frankly, neither do you.

I'm not setting out to debunk any of your links and sources - but as several have mentioned here already, there is a debunk for every debunk - more to the point, if you read my post carefully, I'm not arguing against vegetarianism or veganism. Of course it's the a great outcome for animals! Whether it's ever actually possible or desirable for the majority of human beings, is another thing altogether.

What I feel strongly about is the self-congratulatory 'I'm living cruelty free' rhetoric. Sorry, but if you're living in civil society, you're just not. Which is why many people (including, I believe, Sarah Wilson) advocate for access to information and making the best individual choices you can, without getting all judgey and self-righteous toward others who - believe it or not, given access to the exact same information - have reached a different conclusion.

(a typo in my comment about drugs and cosmetics might have confused the meaning = I meant to say many ingredients that AREN'T tested on animals now, probably WERE at some point ...).

x TDMJ

december 12th, 2012 at 8:51

Justine says:

I think your Dad was very cruel doing that to his own children. Nothing more to say.

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 9:32 am

Oh, I didn't see it that way at all. It was real and honest and special to us. Most kids who grow up in the country are exposed to this kind of thing and really does make you respect the food chain process.

[Reply]



Tahlee Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 10:00 am

I agree, I think parents are responsible for showing their children the ways of life, and I believe knowing where our meat comes from is important to maintain a healthy respect for animals and life around us. I wish my parents had invested more time in teaching me these things!

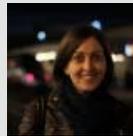
[Reply]



Steph Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 1:08 pm

I agree. Because my mom was raised on a small family farm and killed chickens herself, etc. etc. she exposed me to this growing up. As a result, I respect my food and, like you, understand and eat nose to tail. I often think it is a shame that more people haven't had the experience, because it gives one more clarity in making decisions about one's diet! There's actually a great description in a Jamie Oliver cookbook on Italy, of young children playing while the parents were draining the blood from freshly-killed dinner. It's a normal way of life in many places and certainly was so a couple of generations prior to ours.



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 6:41 pm

Steph, I think perhaps the lifestyle you suggest is much more common throughout the world than our current attitude. Western consumers have the questionable "luxury" of not needing to see where our food comes from. I think sometimes it is easy to forget that our experience is privileged, and most of the world does not live this way.

december 12th, 2012 at 9:12

Sarah says:

Hi sarah,

I'm curious about what kind of pork you eat...organic? Would only eating organic pork be the best way to go or are there other healthy options?

Thanks so much! Great post!

[Reply]



seeker Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 2:05 pm

no penned up pigs please?
i buy free ranging pasture fed bacon and never order it when i'm out ... i've seen those poor piggies in those tiny pens, it's disgusting. 😞

[Reply]



seeker Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 2:08 pm

oh and i buy from bella here: <http://www.thevegetrail.com.au/pricelists.html>
it's very good quality and tastes great plus not too pricey. she delivers it to my work! (sydney)

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 5:57 pm

i go for free range over organic with pork

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 9:18

Lisa says:

Thanks for this post Sarah. Very interesting.

We've just moved to Brisbane and I was so pumped to find that my local butcher sells only organic and chemical-free meats. I went in to have a chat and the butcher could tell me where every piece of meat came from, even offered details of their suppliers because he seemed genuinely proud. Also offered to put together orders of specific cuts of meat, so I'm looking forward to your posts using some of the lesser known cuts.

Also found raw milk at the local farmers market. Loving this town!

[Reply]



Rebecca Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 1:18 pm

Hi Lisa. I am also in Brisbane. Which farmers market?

[Reply]



Lisa Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 3:07 pm

It's the Northey Street farmers market in Windsor - love it! The brand is Cleopatra's Bath Milk (they are not allowed to promote it as a product for human consumption)

<http://cleopatrasbathmilk.com.au/>

[Reply]



Steph Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 2:10 pm

Hi Lisa, I am in Brisbane as well, I would love to know which butcher that was?

[Reply]



Lisa Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 3:10 pm

Hi Steph, it's the Meat-ting Place in Paddington Central. Address is 107 Latrobe

Tce, Paddington. I think they might have another store too...

<http://www.themeat-tingplace.com.au/>

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 5:58 pm

that's exactly how it should be...how nice to have that relationship with your butcher

[Reply]



jan Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 8:56 pm

Lisa could you tell us where the butcher is - I have been looking for one!

[Reply]



jan Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 9:00 pm

Whoops saw the answer further down.

[Reply]



december 12th, 2012 at 10:02

Kate says:

Hi Sarah ...thanks so much for another great post. I didn't realise about the organic meat/cruel conditions issue. Thanks for the information ...and saving me some money!

I'd be interested to hear more about the 'unfashionable' cuts of meat you use (& how you use them) ...I'm in Melbourne so can't make the 'Virtual Farm'

I'm definitely budget conscious as a single mum to a 2 year old ...but I don't want to compromise on nutrition/sustainable food choices

Looking forward to the online purchasing links and more on information on this topic.

Thanks again!

[Reply]



Kylie Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 5:03 pm

Hi Kate,

I raise beef in North Queensland and we are not organic. This doesn't mean we don't care about our animals or consumers, in fact it is the very opposite. Animal Health is our highest cost, we spend thousands per year. This includes things such as vaccinations for disease, medication (we've only had to give one steer some penicillin in the last five years for a swollen gland, only two doses were needed), supplements because our soil is deficient in trace minerals such as phosphorous, and pest control for flies/ticks/lice worms. If we didn't do that we'd cut a huge cost out of our budget, but our animals would suffer terribly.

If you have any more questions, please pop over to Ask An Aussie Farmer if you're on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/askanaussiefarmer>) and ask away.

Cheers
Kylie

[Reply]



Mel Reply:

December 15th, 2012 at 11:06 pm

That's great to hear from a farmer. I agree with the free range over organic. I have chooks and every morning they kick up such a fuss to be let out to peck all day and scratch. As Micheal Pollan says in his books: you shouldn't take away the fundamental thing that makes a chook a chook, or a pig a pig. They need to scratch and peck and burrow. I had free range pigs growing up and they are joyous to own. And we then killed and ate them all done on our own little farm by my dad. The steers too. Don't know if I can eat my chooks tho as an adult. Probably because they come and snuggle up with me on the verandah. I live on a small suburban block.

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 10:05

cait says:

I agree wholeheartedly with everything you have written, thing is I'm not much of a meat eater and my cooking is pretty much limited to things with mince. When the family want something else I leave it up to my partner and it usually ends up being steak.

In saying that could you suggest some recipes to try with the less fashionable cuts that would be great over summer as all I can think of are more stews and casseroles that would be better suited to winter. My family are definite meat eaters and I'd like to make our meat eating more sustainable. Thanks 😊

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 10:12

Roo says:

I'm sorry Sarah, but you have got a few things wrong here. The cows farting methane is definitely NOT a myth! Livestock emissions make up about 12% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions (and 70% of agricultural emissions)- they're our third largest source of emissions and nearly equal to all transport emissions. (See the Department of Agriculture website: http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/australias-farming-future/climate-change-and-productivity-research/emissions_reduction2)

And your land argument is only partly true. Sure, of course we can't grow veggies in Australia's rangelands! BUT its not only the rangelands that we use for meat production, we also use perfectly good cropping land. And importantly, you've skipped over the issue of damage that livestock do to native vegetation, waterways and soils- these are significant environmental issues and the cause of many environmental problems that we city folk don't often see- erosion, eutrophication, spread of weeds, major habitat structure alteration, the list goes on (and unfortunately, being a Conservation Biologist I'm all too aware of these impacts). The Australian environment did not evolve in the presence of hooved animals.

This doesn't mean we have to be vegetarian. Like you said, we can eat our meat in moderation and make the most of the less-used cuts. Better still- eat Kangaroo! It's incredibly healthy and has none of the environmental impacts that livestock do (negligible methane, and no hooves to start with!).

I too was vegetarian for many years, but later realised that blindly following a vegetarian diet will by no means guarantee a lesser environmental impact. But making smart, informed choices on how much meat and which meat you eat will. Unfortunately, we cannot pretend that farmed meat has negligible environmental impact.

[Reply]



Bex Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:01 am

So with you on the Kangaroo!
I know if I buy Kangaroo I dont have to worry about Is it grass-fed? Is it 100% grass-fed?, Is it organic? etc etc.
I can grab and go and appreciate it when eating.

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:03 am

Yep, its a win-win as far as I'm concerned!

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:23 am

Why Kangaroo is good for the environment:
<http://eatyourgreenblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/eating-skippy/>

[Reply]



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:59 am

Agree. Kangaroo is by far the best choice for meat in Australia.

[Reply]



Elle Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 10:27 pm

Thanks for spelling out so clearly and succinctly what I was thinking as I read this article. Unfortunately these are not issues that MLA, and livestock farmers, can so easily deal with. As a conservation biologist Roo, what are your thoughts on wild rabbit as a meat choice?

[Reply]



Mel Reply:

December 15th, 2012 at 11:12 pm

I've always been put off by its intense colour. What is the taste of kangaroo?

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 2:19 pm

Mel- I think wild rabbit meat is a great choice! Decreasing the population of a damaging pest, while at the same time making use of its meat for food and therefore not having to use farmed meat is pretty win-win. Obviously it is a different way of population management than kangaroos, ie. with kangaroos we are looking for a sustainable population level (where we can harvest to a point of the species being at a 'natural' population

level, where it can healthily maintain its population without any risk of extinction, and maintaining its ecological role), whereas with rabbits we are aiming at a downward trajectory- we want to get rid of the buggers!

I think a combination of these types of meat are great. Hey, I've even heard of some dedicated road-kill-arians!

I wonder, does anyone out there know some good suppliers of wild rabbit meat?

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 2:20 pm

sorry, I mean Elle!

Mel, roo has quite a strong flavour, but good. It was the first meat I ate after being vegetarian for >10 years, so I eased myself onto it, but it didn't take long. The key is to not overcook it, as it can become very tough.

december 12th, 2012 at 10:16

Lauren says:

So interesting Sarah, I focus on a plant based diet however have a negative reaction when I eat too many beans and legumes - the main source of vegetarian protein. I am also lactose and gluten intolerant so dairy is out of the question, and I really struggled to find meals based on "protein and greens" that were not hugely calorific (i.e. most people say don't worry, just eat more nuts - but I felt disgusting and constantly hungry!) For my body to function optimally I focus on my greens and vegetables, and incorporate good quality fish and eggs and occasionally chicken along with moderate fat consumption such as nuts, seeds, coconut oil, olive oil, avocado etc. I now try and take the focus off labelling myself 'vegan', 'vegetarian', 'paleo' etc and just eat foods which are unprocessed.



Your articles are always very well written, informative and entertaining Sarah, thank you very much for your insight and opening up about a world in which people do not fit in to specific diet boxes. I appreciate it more than I can say xx

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 10:23

Grace says:

I eat minimal meat because that is what suits my health needs but I think "renders a mindful meat-inclusive diet far more sustainable than a vegetarian one" needs to be rendered to classify the type of vegetarian you are describing. I know many vegetarians with unsustainable eating practices but if you were to remove the meat and dairy and continue on with the rest of the diet, surely your diet would be even more sustainable? I don't mean to criticise, quite the contrary, but that your "vegetarian" should be detailed a little more carefully as you have defined the (mindful) meat eater.

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 11:01 am

Agreed! And when it comes to scientific based arguments such as these, I'd like reference to the sources used. Because, this is how myths start, on either side of any argument.

[Reply]



Victoria Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 2:20 pm

Hey Roo, I'm interested in checking out your blog, can you post the web address.

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 3:02 pm

Hi Victoria,

It's fairly new so there's not many entries yet, but i'd love you to check it out and any feedback would be appreciated. It's called 'Eat Your Green' and it's at:

<http://eatyourgreenblog.wordpress.com>



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 6:01 pm

Hey Roo, I'll check out your blog. ta

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 10:58

Angela says:

Thank you Sarah for your views towards eating meat! I have hashimotos and have been struggling on what is good for me to eat and to be honest I don't want to eat salad and turkey breast every day! Knowing that I can eat red meat and not be fussy about what kind of red meat has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders. Also the way you grew up sounds like something you are very proud of and it has shaped how you appreciate food as an adult and that's a big thumbs up for me! Another great article 😊

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 11:00

Ari says:

Thanks for an informative and balanced post. Whenever I am in large supermarket chain stores the meat always looks so unappetizing. That's why I buy kangaroo meat instead which actually has some taste to it.

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 11:17

Kate says:

Hi Jo,

Sure you're on top of it, but the 100 target link in the footnote appears to be "broken". Cheers.

[Reply]



Jo Foster Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 6:08 pm

Thanks Kate, yes, it was and I fixed it earlier today! Jo

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 11:27

Mia Bluegirl says:

My grandmother grew up on a farm during the Depression era. Can I just say how unbelievably lucky I feel I am to even have a choice where my food comes from?

Sarah, I agree with you and eat pretty much exactly the same way as you, for the same reason. Mass grain agriculture horrifies me, for a number of reasons, so I tend to stick to vegetables and some meat. And I feel very happy and lucky that I can choose this.

For those in Perth, Gregory's butcher in Karrinyup is a lovely place for pastured meat. The butchers are friendly and knowledgeable, and can give you plenty of detail on exactly where the meat was farmed and how.

Also can I just say I think your parents were wonderful to give you an introduction into the circle of life? Our tribal ancestors of long ago would have had a real connection with the land, bonded over the hunt and ensuing feast, and not been so divorced from the process as we are now in our modern urban life. I think something vital has been lost along the way, and now nobody really has any idea what to eat any more.

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 12:41

Emma says:

Hi Sarah,

I'm a strong follower of your blog, and in my role in publishing also promote it when and where I can, but I feel very let down by the misinformation in this post, as Roo above has already outlined.

Please ensure all your facts don't come from what the Meat and Livestock Australia feed you as their ambassador - it's their job to promote heavy meat consumption so of course their facts are going to be skewed to be favourable to eating meat! Trust the many Australian peer-reviewed scientific studies instead please, that outline what a problem eating meat is for the environment (not to mention animal welfare).

Your readers are very loyal and hang on dearly to your advice, so it's a real shame to see so many people misled on this one!

Kindest,
Emma

[Reply]



Kate Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 2:47 pm

Emma, sorry to say but I think you may have missed the point

[Reply]



Serena Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 8:42 pm

I agree with Emma. While I have no doubt in Sarah's passion for healthy living and a protected environment, this article didn't sit well with me as a whole.

The sheer amount of meat eaten and wasted by Australians is already too great, and while this article points out some great ideas (eating nose to tail etc) the information seems very skewed towards encouraging people to eat even more meat.

I'm not for a second suggesting this article is disingenuous however MLA is in the business of selling more meat, not protecting the environment, improving produce standards or (as the live export debacle showed us) focusing on animal welfare. I would honestly like to hear more from you Sarah on why you feel MLA is an organisation you feel resonates with your brand.

That said, the more people who take the time to know where their food comes from, the better.

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 10:51 pm

The MLA is necessarily a propagandist. As is Animals Australia on the other side of the fence.

The importance of critical thinking and checking ones sources, this.

[Reply]



december 12th, 2012 at 14:35

Julie says:

Hi Sarah I was recently introduced to a documentary "forks over knives".

It is an amazing watch & makes you really think about what you are eating.

I strongly suggest you watch / investigate it & although promoting & supporting a vegetarian diet it compliments many of your thoughts, especially in relation to sugar!

This is how I came across your blog as it works so in well.

I have been connected with your blog for about 2 weeks now & am loving everything so far. I also incidentally work in a surgical environment with thyroid & cardiovascular disease as the primary patients I see so have enjoyed promoting you in the operating room!

Keep up the great work, your an inspiration & I hope you find "forks over knives" interesting.

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 10:52 pm

Hear hear.

[Reply]



Grace Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 9:02 am

Forks over knives is incredibly interesting. You should also try Food Matters if you haven't already

Again, all needs to be retaken with a grain of salt as they are all pushing their own agendas, but these two films certainly resonated with my way of eating

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 16:19

K says:

I think it's good to see a program like Target 100 being created (and I would much rather see MLA putting money and publicity into developing sustainable practices etc than those Sam Neil ads!)

Personally, I've tried to eat red meat over the years and it just makes me feel really heavy and generally ill. I have no health problems or allergies...it's just the one food that makes me feel terrible after eating it until it's out of my system. Thank goodness for seafood!

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 19:09

Claire says:

Hi Sarah,

I am very disappointed by your article. It upsets me because you have a significant influence over your readers with what you write and unfortunately a lot of your statements above seem unsupported by scientific research. The argument above seems biased and unfortunately you have not cited the studies you refer to for others to critique themselves. To make such a bold statement in regards to previous stated figures as "myths", would really require a very comprehensive review and analysis of multiple research studies to be conducted.

Also considering your position with Meat and Livestock Australia, I can't help but notice the significant bias in this blog. You even refer to an article that MLA have used to heavily back their industry, indicating you have been fed a lot of the information by them with an unbalanced view.

I am vegetarian for ethical reasons, both environmental and animal rights. The health benefits are a big plus. I do not feel unwell or crave food all the time like you say you did. Everyone is different so I appreciate it didn't work for you, however, a vegetarian diet is as healthful if not more so than a meat based diet, so it is a shame to put people off the idea when they may not have tried it themselves.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly let's not forget the awful suffering that these animals go through when they are slaughtered in Australia or sent as livestock to inhumane slaughter in other countries.

I agree with Roo in her comments and have studied a degree in Conservation Biology myself. Roo, kangaroo meat is an excellent choice for the meat eater as it is high in iron, low fat and lower impact on the environment, but sadly they are slaughtered in an incredibly inhumane way along with their pouch young. No slaughter is humane. When you buy your meat you don't really know what happened to that animal in life and death, and you never will!!

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 12th, 2012 at 10:56 pm

Well done raising these points, Claire. You took many of the words out of my mouth- or is it away from my fingers?

You're right, "No slaughter is humane".

I'd like to hear Sarah's views on the animal welfare / rights aspect of this matter? The article doesn't yield much in that regard.

[Reply]



Kay Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 12:09 pm

Thank you for that post, Claire.

I am not a vegetarian, but I absolutely believe that some people can thrive on a vegetarian diet (as you say, everyone is different).

I also feel uneasy about blanket statements. I eat lots of seafood and some chicken but would never suggest that the diet of people such as Fauja Singh (the 101-year old vegetarian marathon runner) was completely wrong and that they should stop eating grains and start eating meat!

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 6:04 pm

Hi. Everyone concerned about MLA data and citations... I will be following this post up with more detailed rundowns of the arguments...fear not. I'm glad this discussion is happening here...

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 9:54 pm

Thanks for the response Sarah. I will be glad to read it.



[Reply]



potr Reply:

February 16th, 2013 at 1:22 am

Human beings have the anatomy of a herbivore. Our teeth for example; incisors are broad, flattened and spade shaped (like a herbivore)not short and pointed(like an omnivore or carnivore). our canines are short and blunted (like a herbivore)not long, sharp and curved.(like a carnivore or omnivore) our molars are flattened with nodular cusps (like a herbivore)not sharp jagged or blade shaped(like a carnivore). Our colons for next; long and complex(like a herbivore) not simple and short(like an omnivore or carnivore). How about our nails? flattened not sharp and claw like. Our small intestine is 10 to 11 times our body length(like a herbivore) not 3 to 6 times our body length(like an omnivore or carnivore). Our saliva contains carbohydrate digesting enzymes(like a herbivore), not present in carnivores or omnivores. If you wish I can go into a more detailed explanation of how these facets affect the food we should eat. But you can search for yourself. Why not look out for "The Comparative Anatomy of Eating" by Dr Milton Mills for a start.

[Reply]



Emilia Reply:

April 28th, 2013 at 12:41 pm

Love this, thanks for the link. Looks like an interesting read!



bear Reply:

June 23rd, 2013 at 1:45 pm

I'd just like to raise the point that comprehension skills would be well used here. Sarah clearly! stated that a) she works for the industry and so of course she's going to have a belief biased towards the cause, no sources are unbiased, she's not hiding anything! and b) That she was planning on fleshing out the arguments throughout the year this was just a quick few points to get the ball rolling

"Over the next year, I'm going to share a whole bunch of information to help us love our meat more "heart"-ily and "careful"-ly. But today I'll kick off by answering a few questions I get about how I eat my meat."

Use your deductive/inference skills people!

A last point as well, this is essentially a blog, the opinion of somebody, she can make whatever "blanket" statements she likes, it's up to you to decide what you want to take on board and what not to.

Love your work Sarah.

[Reply]

december 12th, 2012 at 21:16

mary says:

Thank you Lierre Keith's *The Vegan Myth* is also very good on how we need meat production to keep our soils alive and able to grow foods. Meat is part of the life cycle.

After reading her book I started to buy a lot more food locally grown.

http://www.lierrekeith.com/book-ex_the-vegetarian-myth.php

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 10:47 am



I found this to be a terrible book. The quality of Keith's research is poor. She spends many of her pages endorsing the work of her favourite authors, over citing primary sources. And why did she change her ways? Because she was vegan and didn't feel well. I have a friend who did that in fact. He was a lacto-vegetarian-thus, still consumed eggs. He came down sick. Started consuming dairy again, thinking it would make him feel better. I've never heard of anybody resorting to dairy as a health fix.

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 11:36 am



p.s. You said "[W]e need meat production to keep our soils alive and able to grow foods". Why? Are you referring to nitrogen?

[Reply]



mary Reply:

December 15th, 2012 at 5:43 am

Paul the book goes into considerable detail why animal bones are essential for keeping up soil quality. In contrast to you I found Kieth's research compelling and detailed. I've lent the book to so many people unfortunately the last person never returned it ! otherwise I'd make a more detailed response to you. All I can add is that it's transformed how I shop. Err and as I can remember from the book she didn't just change her eating habits because she 'felt unwell' she changed them because her ill health was becoming chronic and permanently damaged.

IMHO the vegans I know have appalling health.

[Reply]



Roo Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 2:27 pm

SOrry, but any argument that livestock helping soil quality are plain unscientific, at least in Australia. For e.g., see this scientific paper on the impacts of grazing on soil compaction <http://www.publish.csiro.au/paper/EA00102.htm>

The nutrients from cow poo hugely raise the amount of phosphorous and nitrogen in the soil. One of the effects of this is eutrophication- where the run off (water running over and through this soil) flows into rivers and streams, and can cause damaging algal blooms, as well as promoting weed growth.

december 13th, 2012 at 3:33

Adriana says:

I grew up in Eastern Europe where my parents and grandparents raised cows, pigs and chickens for our food. I particularly remember the chilly winter mornings when the pigs were killed by my dad/granddad/neighbors and the horrible screeching sounds the poor thing would make. But that's where our food came from and we didn't really have much

choice. I stopped eating pork/beef/lamb about 10 years ago as a teenager and I think it's because I grew up watching these little chicks and piggies grow up and so now it feels like I'm eating a pet of some sort? Sounds strange, I know! But there's something odd about "raising an animal as as humanly as possible" but then killing it so I could eat it?? I feel like there's some bad "mojo" going on there and that's one of the odd reasons why I stick to very little meat in my diet. call me silly...

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 13th, 2012 at 1:47 pm

I agree that it's weird, Adriana. We wouldn't do such a thing to our own species, so why another?



[Reply]



bear Reply:

June 23rd, 2013 at 1:52 pm

Wow haha. I think the answer to that question is blatantly obvious Paul....because that's cannibalism. Don't think for a second if you died out in the bush and wild pigs/boars were around and hungry that they would hesitate to eat you. It's all about heirachy, and respect for the lives of the animals you eat. And also respect where respect is due for those farmers who do it right. I do not at all condone the abuse of animals! But there are those who try to do the right thing and kill as humanely as is possible for sustainable meat.

[Reply]

december 13th, 2012 at 11:43

Alison Jose says:

Hi Sarah, I really value yr approach to eating meat & I was wondering if u have read The China Study by Dr Campbell in the US, I have made a radical change to my life & my 3yr olds to go (mostly 99.9%) vegan from reading the conclusive research & evidence of the diseases we get from eating animal products. & feel blessed that I proved him right by switching to plant-based diet which may have made the "mass on my chest wall" found in feb to actually disappear as he proved in his studies. It's a life changing read & wondering if you have seen it?

[Reply]

december 13th, 2012 at 23:00

Kim says:

Hi Sara, I can't wait to read more of your posts on meat!

Here is my meat question: What happens to the male pigs? I heard recently that most pork we eat is from female pigs because the males have a strong/bad flavour. So what happens to the boys? Do you avoid the strong flavour if they are castrated when they are little? I'd like to know what happens to them on both factory farms and free range farms. I'm very lucky to have several options for buying pastured pork, lamb, beef and chicken at our local farmers markets (macedon ranges), there is a market in a town nearby almost every Saturday! I also am happy to have a rabbit hunter in the family.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 11:36

Wendy says:

For anyone in Sydney check out urbanfoodmarket.com.au - it's about "sustainable produce for sustainable people". I am not aligned to them in any way, shape or form. I just feel incredibly lucky to be able to buy meat that has been ethically produced. Tim Elwin is more than happy to spend time with you discussing where things come from. I feel so blessed he is part of my Saturday morning shopping excursion every week. They also deliver.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 11:46

Naz says:

Interesting topic Sarah! Since having moved to the US I definitely miss the quality of meat that is available in Australia.



There aren't really any butchers around where I am so my meat shopping is done in the supermarket, I aim mainly to get grass fed pasture raised meat but it can be pretty pricey, which is why I usually stick to mince since its cheaper than other cuts. Often I'll wait for a sale and stock up!

There's a Farmers Market on from May to October in my area so when that's on I try to get my meat that way. I know a lot of people here go into cow shares or buy pasture raised meat online.

If I'm stuck with grainfed meat I remove all the fat and add my own in the form of ghee or coconut oil when cooking.

Anyway I also came across this article recently...

<http://theconversation.edu.au/ordering-the-vegetarian-meal-theres-more-animal-blood-on-your-hands-4659>

Any thoughts?

[Reply]



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 2:45 pm

Excellent article. All those native birds, mice, bees, insects, reptiles and various other creatures died NEEDLESSLY to make that vegetarian meal. At least the animals killed to keep me alive I am being honest about, eating nose to tail where possible, and I am trying to ensure their life prior to death is pleasant. Not ripped limb from limb in a combine harvester, or slowly tortured with neurotoxic pesticides like the mouse on the picture who appears to have vomited up his own stomach. Mass grain agriculture makes factory farming look positively tame.

More animals die to feed someone reliant on a grain-based diet than a meat-based one. I could kill one cow and feed a family for months. How long is that loaf of bread that dozens of native animals died to produce going to last?

But then again, they aren't the cute and fluffy animals, so that makes it ok for some.

There are sustainable and ethical vegetarian AND meat-eating options. Just denying meat does not guarantee you a "cruelty free diet" by any stretch. The only cruelty free diet is eating nothing at all. Even then you would die eventually and deny all the bacteria on your person a home.

[Reply]



Paul - The Kind Little Blogger Reply:

December 16th, 2012 at 5:00 pm

@Mia Bluegirl - Do you eat vegetables?



[Reply]



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 11:51 am

@Paul - do you?



Bex Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 10:53 am

Thank you @Mia Bluegirl for saying this.

I does make me a bit mad when I hear vegetarians talking about cruelty to animals, but they are really only referring to the kind they see - chickens, pigs, sheep, cows etc. So what? the other animals - insects, rodents, rabbits aren't important??

Yes I eat vegetables. And yes some creatures would get killed in the growing and harvesting process. BUT (and I think a big 'but') I don't pretend that doesn't happen.

I don't preach a vegetarian lifestyle on the basis of not hurting animals, then eat grains harvested with a mass slaughter of insects and rodents.

I don't deny that life and death happens regardless of what you eat.

To live ALL creatures need to eat, and other creatures may die for you to do this. That. Is. A. Fact. Of. Life.

What I do try and do is source environmentally sustainable, humanely raised animals to eat. Which usually come from small farms, raised by farmers who care for them.

And also only buy the food my family need to eat, thus minimising the food wastage. Which I think is also just as important for the environment.

This can be costly and hard to do. But I believe this is the best way to eat.

[Reply]



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 11:57 am

Thank you Bex. I've had it up to "here" with vegan and vegetarian hypocrisy, I got attacked by one of those bothersome vegan trolls at a party recently, and I've about had it with being called a murderer and rapist for eating meat and dairy.

For us to live, something must die. Usually many somethings. End of.

We simply have to try to do the best we can. Organic and local veggies where possible (not everyone can afford this, I know) sustainably farmed meat, etc. It isn't black or white and there is no perfect option. As long as we are doing our best to be as conscious as possible of our impact, I think that's all you can ask of anybody!



Paul - The Kind Little Blogger Reply:

December 18th, 2012 at 10:17 am

We all ought to try to cause the least amount of suffering possible. Is that a fair baseline. If so, some people necessarily cause less suffering than others.



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 19th, 2012 at 1:03 pm

What if, Paul, instead of omnivores being the ignoramuses you assume we are... we have made the same considerations as you, put in a hell of a lot of thought and effort and research, just like you - and simply come to a different conclusion?



potr Reply:

February 16th, 2013 at 1:29 am

the difference is purpose. WE mean to kill farm animals for their meat, the others are accidental. WE mean to keep farm animals fenced and/or even to the point of the kill, the others are free to roam and escape if possible. WE mean to kill farm animals for profit, there is no profit involved in accidents.



Rachel Reply:

December 15th, 2012 at 12:41 am

Very interesting blog post. Thanks for sharing.

[Reply]



Naz Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 1:02 pm



Thanks Mia and I completely agree with you and Bex! I find (and this is from personal experience) that it is the vegans and vegetarians that always need to attack with their point of view... I eat meat, I do it the best way I can, just as you said Mia.

I don't go around pushing my agenda onto vegans/vegetarians. Here Sarah is simply just sharing with us how she eats meat and how she sources it... not everyone has to be a vegan or vegetarian!

[Reply]



Maree Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 1:09 pm

Interesting, my experience has always been the other way around! As a long time vegetarian and relatively recent vegan, I have never pushed my opinions or beliefs onto anyone, but I am constantly getting unsolicited 'advice' and judgement from those around me. There are those on both sides of the equation who think it's their right to push their agenda, I think it comes down to personality style - those who are the most outspoken and 'in your face' are those who are outspoken about everything.

[Reply]



potr Reply:

February 16th, 2013 at 1:36 am

I agree with you maree. I did not proclaim it but when people found out, they made it their mission to point out all my sins; standing on ants..killing field mice and rabbits in combine harvesters. It made me so upset. Its provocative and it in the end wears on the patience. Then, you feel the need to refute. All we are doing is making a decision for ourselves to live within our ethics. It doesn't concern anyone else. There is no need to make arguments AGAINST vegetarian or vegan lifestyles. Its the saying... cant see the forest for the trees. If you seek to persecute and aggress then eventually it will be returned. I am at that point.



Mia Bluegirl Reply:

December 17th, 2012 at 2:14 pm

I tend to avoid talking about food in general in public, because it's like religion - too much potential for people to get offended. This dude at the party saw me reaching for the salami on the antipasto plate and attacked me on that basis! Who DOES that?

I wish it wasn't so, cos most of the omnivores I know are healthy veggie-loving types who eat many meals that would qualify as vegan or vegetarian. They just supplement with meat a few times a week for whatever reason. There is plenty of overlap there we could be chatting about instead... give me your mushroom recipes and not your dogma any day!

[Reply]



Paul - The Kind Little Blogger Reply:

December 18th, 2012 at 10:14 am



Fair point, Mia. I'm a vegan and tend to get through to people more with what I cook than what I say. However, many omnivores are blissfully ignorant about the moral considerations vegans make. I think the issue is important and should be talked about. As do omnivores, it would seem. Whenever an omnivore notices that I am a vegan-maybe I decline something, and they ask me why-they are full of questions. If one is willing to ask questions, they ought to be willing to stay around for the answers. Rarely-rarely!-do I raise the point.

december 14th, 2012 at 12:34

Janet says:

Well I must say I am very disappointed in Sarah's views on meat/vegetarianism. I am a vegetarian and have been so all my life (over 55 years), for ethical, animal welfare and health reasons. I also have Hashimoto's but don't seem to have any of the health issues Sarah has and never crave food or have weight issues. Nothing will convince me to eat dead animals. Thank you, Claire, for your views, and when I have more time I will add to this.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 13:48

Kylie says:

Hi Sarah

LOVED your blog, this is exactly the message we are trying to get out there. We have a FB page called Ask An Aussie Farmer where we try and promote "that other side of the story" that often doesn't get out there much! We also encourage consumers to not take information found via google as gospel, but to come and get answers straight from the horses mouth.

Thanks for putting these points across so simply

Kylie

7th Generation Beef Producer, North Queensland

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 16:50

Sarah C says:

It's beautiful to see a dialogue being raised about the issues surrounding eating meat.

This year I began to eat meat again after 15 years vego (its my second year of study to be a nutritionist and i couldnt deny any longer how nutritionally dense animal products are!) and feel so much different now that there is minimal soy, gluten, and empty grains I used to fill up on in my diet. The only challenge I find confronting is talking to people about my choice of meat. My ethics around meat consumption isn't that I believe humans weren't supposed to eat meat - it can be a beautiful supplement to the diet of some constitutions - its that I oppose high density farming and medicating animals. So my meats of choice are kangaroo, chicken from a free range farm who hand-process, sustainably fished tuna, wild salmon, and local fish caught in the canals here. But at social occasions, I don't want to come across as a food snob or a wanker, so it's just easier to say "I'm mostly vegetarian" or "Im eating vegetarian tonight, thanks". I love eggs from my friend's chickens, raw milk for making paneer from the lady at the markets who loves her jersey herd to pieces, barambah cheese - tastes like happy cows! - and even in the supermarket, 5am yoghurt is an ethical choice - they said on Facebook that they keep their male calves! It's really admirable that people are starting to have some awareness around how we use animals and what appropriate raising and consumption of animal products can look like, and how it can make us feel 😊

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 18:03

Pip says:

Interesting. I've often thought that 50,000 l of water story must be a load of rubbish.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 20:49

Michelle Ellis says:

I can totally understand everyone who recoils at the thought of raising and killing one's own meat. It's definitely right up there in the 'challenging' stakes for those of use used to Western norms! I think, though, that it's ideal.

Here's my dream, towards which I'm actively working: buy a small acreage, grow vegies and fruit, keep a dairy cow, raise her calves for meat, and keep chickens for eggs with the occasional one becoming Sunday dinner. I know, right! I can hear the groans. What a hippy trippy dream! But the thing is, my parents have been doing this for as long as I can remember, so I know the realities.

I find it lovely to raise my own meat, beacuse I can control so much of the animal's experience in life. I can leave the calf 'breastfeeding' with its Mum until its natural weaning age - she still has enough milk for our household as well. The calf is free range, grass fed, organically raised, happy, loved, secure. It has the nice life and quick death that I believe most people would like their meat-giving animals to have. And when the calf is slaughtered, the whole thing is eaten. It's eaten reverently, thankfully. No scoffing or taking anything for granted!

The sad fact seems to be that modern conventional farming methods don't prioritise a 'happy life and quick death' for the animals, nor do they prioritise the animal's overall health (I understand that many animals live sick and suffering lives, a situation that many farmers won;t address as long as it doesn't affect the animals' 'productivity' and the farmers' bottom lines. Many egg farms are a case in point). Factory farmed animals often can't express their natural behaviours or follow their instincts. It's such a sad situation. And the fact that most people won't 'look their meal in the eye' allows this situation to continue virtually unchallenged. I'd much prefer to deal squarely with the reality that I'm killing and eating something, and by staring that reality in the eye, do what I can to make those animals' lives as lovely, and their deaths as quick and painless, as possible.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 20:59

Kathryn says:

Hi Sarah

I love what you write about in relation to health and really appreciate your down to earth, simple and genuine approach. I don't agree with your oppinions on meat eating though. I don't eat meat, although I do eat a small amount of seafood. I'm currently completing an Adv. Diploma in Nutritional Medicine and whilst I don't believe that people need to completely give up meat in retaliation to their health, based on my knowledge through my study as well as my own research i do believe most people (particularly in countries like Australia) need to massively cut down on their consumption of meat. There are many studies that have proven links to chronic western diseases such as cancer and heart disease and I'm sure a big reason why respected nutritionists like Rosemary Stanton (through Meatless Mondays in Aust.) are recommending that people need to reduce their meat consumption and cancer organizations are now recommending moderat meat consumption. Also I think that your your serving sizes of 100-200 grams are way to high, and in fact the Aust. Guide to Healthy Eating only recommends 65-100 grams per serve. All of this doesn't even take into account the health impact of the use of things like antibiotics as well as insecticides and pesticides in aimal feed, all of which is then taken into our beautiful bodies.

I have chosen to take a stand and not eat meat not so much for health reasons and not not to be 'trendy' as suggested by another contributor, but rather because I am very worried about the impact on our beautiful planet as well as the ethics around the treatment of animals in the proccess.

In relation to the environment I think that you can quote so many different opinions in relation to the carbon emissions etc in order to support your argument. I support the argument that meat production is enormously more damaging to the earth (water use, feed for animals, slaughter process, storage, transport etc) than the production of plant foods. Part of the process for most meat these days involves feeding animals food that largely consists of corn and soy product which is not as easily digested as grass in the case of cows, and one of the reasons for increased level of methane in our environment. Even more concerning however is the fact that land is being cleared and forests are being cut down in order to produce this animal food. In some cases this is happening in countries where there is barely enough food for the people in that country, and the soy and corn is then shipped to countries like Aust. I don't buy into the argument that this is a problem for other countries, this is a global problem that is the responsibility of all of us.

Animals world wide are mis treated in the process of producing meat and animal food products, this is especially the case I believe with animals such as chickens and just think about what ducks have to endure for people to eat pâté or foie gras. Australia is no exception to what goes on in factory farms around the world. Paul McCartney has often said "if slaughter houses had walls everyone would be vegetarian", and I think to really say you eat "mindfully" is to really understand all elements of how your food has been produced. It is up to each of us individually to really research und FULLY understand where our food comes from.

Sarah thank you so much for everything you do and everything you write about. I feel in two minds about

disagreeing with you but I really needed to put my point forward. MLA are a very big organisation who have a lot of marketing spend and in this case I have to say I'm not sure whether having a commercial agreement with them is going to result in you giving your readers the best possible health advice.

[Reply]



Kathryn Reply:

December 14th, 2012 at 11:19 pm

Correction Paul McCartney's quote is obviously "if slaughter houses had windows everyone would be vegetarian" - apologies.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 22:02

Sonia says:

Thank you for a well researched, easy to read article.

Appreciate your clarification on ethical vs purely organic.

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 22:07

Karen says:

I did the teenage vegetarian thing too and have been a 'pescetarian' for around 20 years but I've recently been considering returning to meat as I find the paleo type of diet really suits me - does anyone have any tips for starting to eat meat after so long? It feels quite daunting and a bit exciting..

[Reply]

december 14th, 2012 at 23:41

Rachel says:

You know an article is great when you find yourself reading through its' entirety, plus links, plus all the comments, and contributor links. Thanks Sarah for being so informative and creating such a healthy discussion! Looking forward to more of this series. Only wish that it could be tailored for us Canadians! 😊

[Reply]

december 15th, 2012 at 0:45

Lisa says:

In Brisbane if you want organic meat at a very affordable price you can't go past ALLSOP & ENGLAND on Old Cleveland Road at Coorparoo. They've been selling organic meat for over 20 years.

As far as organic pork goes my understanding is that due to the "medicines/vaccines" imposed on pig farmers here in Australia, the pork is unable to be certified, so free range is the best you can get here.

[Reply]

december 15th, 2012 at 9:12

TDMJ says:

Hi Sarah 😊 just popped in to your blog after not reading for quite some time and very pleased to have stumbled upon this post.

As someone who cares about animal welfare immensely, I have spent a great deal of time over the years mulling over my decision to eat meat - wondering if it is the 'right' thing to do - but somehow, vegetarianism or veganism never sat that well with me either. I'm so glad to read the comments of someone else who believes it's possible to include meat in a mindful, ethical, responsible diet.

Following on from your comments, I would just like to re-emphasise to other readers, a reminder that 'organic' is a production method that has little to do with animal welfare. If you care about animal welfare choose free-range or an accredited product such as RSPCA eggs, chicken and pork. Of course,

many people who choose to produce organic animal products tend to have a greater care for animal welfare as well; but as you've mentioned, it is possible to produce organic meat, eggs etc in horrible conditions that are terrible for animals.

As always, educating yourself and using common sense are key 😊

x TDMJ

[Reply]

december 15th, 2012 at 10:23

Maree says:

I wonder how many people are aware that no matter what eggs you buy, whether they be cage eggs, free range, organic or RSPCA approved, there is still a horrific price to pay.

In the hatcheries that supply the hens for egg production farms, the male chicks are considered wastage...and what happens to them is truly disturbing.

[Reply]

december 16th, 2012 at 12:52

Dan says:

The MLA?? Really. Have you watched the Four Corners program "A bloody business"?

The difficulty I have with the paleo diet and its focus on meat eating is that it seems to prescribe to the attitude which seems to dominate western society, which is 'its all about me'. We even choose our politicians based on what is best for us, rather than what is best for the society we live in.

I'm sure meat is nutrient dense and good for you. I'm sure animals can be raised happy and healthy free-ranging on pasture. What I cannot reconcile is the sheer terror of the slaughter house, and it is for this reason I am vegetarian.

The meat that is on your dinner plate may be best for you, but it comes at the price of another.

Perhaps it is time that we cared a little less for ourselves and a little more for others (of all species).

[Reply]



Kathryn Reply:
December 16th, 2012 at 6:25 pm

This is so right. We all have to take responsibility for how the increased consumption of meat around the world is impacting our environment, and for the terrible treatment of animals so that people can eat meat. The lack of responsibility and care is very worrying.

[Reply]

december 16th, 2012 at 14:20

deb britenbaker says:

Please unsubscribe me. I don't eat meat and would rather read about lifestyles I would relate to.

[Reply]

december 17th, 2012 at 11:00

tone says:

great post, and as usual well informed and fair opinions.

the more we respect the food that we eat, the more we respect ourselves, and the more we respect the planet.

after reading 'the vegetarian myth' and researching the works of JC Bose and the actual emotion and pain plants go through whilst being poisoned and cut, i realised that this respect needs to extend across ALL forms of life, not just the ones we see on TV or documentaries.

[Reply]



Paul - *The Kind Little Blogger* Reply:

December 19th, 2012 at 10:38 am



I don't know about this "actual emotion and pain plants go through". I've not seen any good evidence to suggest this is the case. And it's certainly not supported by the scientific community.

[Reply]



potr Reply:

February 16th, 2013 at 1:41 am

yep. no brains, conscious state, nerve endings, pain receptors in plants...pretty sure thats been proven.

[Reply]

december 17th, 2012 at 18:54

Sam - *Bubble n Squeak* says:

Thanks Sarah. It is an issue I have been thinking about a lot lately. I like your fair and balanced arguments and how informative it is. Food for thought, for sure.

[Reply]

december 19th, 2012 at 8:43

Jill says:

Hey, could you email me? I'd LOVE to ask you just a few more questions that are resting on my mind about all this. I'm in a bad location and kind of lost. Oye. Also, any exact meal plans on any website? I cannot afford to lose weight, but desperately need energy and zest back.

[Reply]

december 19th, 2012 at 10:26

Clippy says:

Hi Sarah, I'll be following your blogging on "meat" with interest. Being a paid representative of the MLA will mean you can't help but be careful with how you depict the meat industry as a whole....if you're negative then they'll stop paying you. However, I couldn't be happier that we're having a public conversation about this industry. Let's hope that everyone will speak up about EVERYTHING; fling those doors open to all aspects of raising, slaughtering and consuming meat.

[Reply]

december 19th, 2012 at 12:50

Leonie says:

Good article on the destruction of native Australian animal and plant life in the production of wheat and other grains...

<http://theconversation.edu.au/ordering-the-vegetarian-meal-theres-more-animal-blood-on-your-hands-4659>



Ultimately, much less animals die in the production of pasture fed beef.

[Reply]



Sarah Wilson Reply:

January 2nd, 2013 at 10:53 am

Love this. Thank you Leonie

[Reply]

January 2nd, 2013 at 9:01

best of the blogs: December « One Good Thing says:

[...] is cites her recipe disasters from 2012. Happens to us all. Got granola? Now you do.

How to eat meat mindfully. I should have made these Mexican chocolate earthquake cookies for our NYE Mexican [...]

January 2nd, 2013 at 18:52

Adele says:

Could you please provide the sources of your claims about meat production and the environment?

[Reply]

January 21st, 2013 at 22:29

Good Reads January - My power animal, NSFW photography, and letterpressing. | says:

[...] We're a meat-eating family. Usually, JHubbs does prefer the vegan General Tso's from Whole Foods. [...]

January 23rd, 2013 at 11:06

crueltyfree says:

How much are MLA paying you? I challenge your readers to ask any farmer, abattoir truck driver, abattoir to let them visit to see how their chickens, pigs, cows are raised in factory farms, not your family farm where your dad kills your pet scenario, but the mass way. Your views are biased and do not give the full story. Look up feed lots for a start and the inherent cruelty there alone for calves ie. Veal. No food shelter or water as the law dictates is o.k. for 72 hrs after being taken from their mums the milk producers, hours after birth. Dairy farming is cruel. I'm also intrigued with yr idea that vegetable farming is more damaging than animal farming to the environment?! So tell yr readers how much corn, soy, wheat and WATER it takes to grow one head of cattle. Tell them how much grain costs because of increased production of animals that the poor ppl overseas can't afford it now. The facts speak for themselves.

[Reply]



Kay Reply:

March 22nd, 2013 at 11:02 am

I noticed on Sarah's Instagram that she did visit an abattoir recently.

I'm with you on the bobby calves though 😞 although there are some producers that are more ethical than others (eg. Barambah etc).

(There's a blog post that lists some of them here if anyone is interested:

<http://www.themindfulfoodie.com/2011/06/28/the-complex-world-of-dairy-part-3-animal-welfare-bobby-calves/>)

[Reply]

march 22nd, 2013 at 9:02

Sustainability in Food - Using the Whole Chicken | All Chefs Great & Small says:

[...] Now, back to that chicken - again, with thanks to Sarah Wilson for the inspiration. You might like to read about her approach to conscious meat-eating here <http://www.sarahwilson.com.au/2012/12/how-i-eat-my-meat/>. [...]

April 12th, 2013 at 10:16

ibika says:

Im sorry, but , sarah has a conflict of interest as she is being paid by the industry to be an ambassador of the so called "sustainable" target 100 initiative...

thats not an opinion its a reality.

We have to get away from opinions on this.

and try together to find the facts.
do higher animals suffer?. do any animals or other life forms suffer or feel pain and fear?. or do they have a wish to live/survive..or are they indifferent to danger or harm.? are they intelligent?.
is killing anything a violent act?.
do humans wish to continue doing this(killing) even when killing animals is no longer required for survival.?

the key to all this is an ethical question about violence and killing.
Im also sorry but the supporting environmental arguments that sarah makes a severely flawed. I have studied and worked in the "sustainable" farming sector(not greenwash sector) for 15 years and while i of course dont know everything about the field..as that would be impossible. I know enough that ultimately we have to significantly reduce the amount of cattle, pigs and other livestock we eat to even approach some form of "one planet living" and sustainability for the 7 billion humans present. this does not even factor in the ethical dimension of killing animals when we no longer need to maintain adequate nutritional levels. and im sure we can all see the fallacy of comparing the deaths of earthworms and soil microathropods and biota when we till the soil to the deaths of mammal with developed brains and nervous systems...that is not ideal..but it seems unavoidable in some form.. but killing a protozoa while harvesting a cabbage(or the death of the cabbage) does not equate with the death of a pig..

[Reply]

may 3rd, 2013 at 15:01

John Newton says:
Sarah - a couple of points



You write, with absolutely no proof (you're a journalist?) that 'An organic steak can often come from cattle raised in cruel, dirty conditions.'

I'm a journalist. i have visited many organic and biodynamic farms. Never have I seen cattle raised in cruel,dirty conditions.' Indeed, the very point of certification is to stop this, and if a farmer is found to be raising beef in 'cruel and dirty conditions' then that farmer can be fined and de-certified.

Secondly you do not make the distinction between grain-fed and grain-finished. Just about all of the beef you buy in the duopoly (Coles and Woolworths) has been grain-finished for between 70 and 100 days.

Can I suggest you address these issues in the near future?

[Reply]

may 6th, 2013 at 17:44

Vlad says:
Don't know if anyone else is with me but I really think Paul: the [nosy] little blogger should shut up and mind his own business. His fancy logo isn't fooling anyone; his dumb ass comments lack substance and are devoid of real facts! I love how he contradicts himself when you read through the gazillion posts he has made. He could actually do something productive with his time and form a consistent opinion.
Sorry if this offends but I could resist! I was reading the interesting and valuable comments of other posters and was irritated by the ignorance of Paul the [nosy] little [bogger]. My enjoyment was ruined by his constant trolling.

[Reply]

may 25th, 2013 at 17:43

leave a comment

name

email address

website

notify me of followup comments via e-mail

yep, please sign me up to the free friday newsletter!



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