

XVII. CONCLUSION

"Vivisection is the killing of animals to find cures for the diseases caused by eating animals."

-Victoria Moran

In reviewing the preceding chapters, it becomes apparent that what started out as an exposition of vegetarianism became a diatribe against government policy. Not much was said about the transition to vegetarianism, but for that, there are many fine books and cookbooks readily available.

The American Vegan Society has a comprehensive book and video tape list including the original articles from which this book was taken plus three extras:

The American Vegan Society (AVS)
<http://www.americanvegan.org/>
56 Dinshah Lane, P.O. Box 369
Malaga NJ 08328
Phone: 856-694-2887

The Vegetarian Society of Honolulu (VSH) has a large online book list and the VSH newsletter carries recipes as well as a calendar of local vegetarian events.

Vegetarian Society
Of Honolulu
<http://www.vsh.org/>
info@vsh.org
P.O. Box 23208
Honolulu, HI 96823-3208
808-944-VEGI (944-8344)

Many of my own articles are scattered about online at <http://www.vsh.org/newsletter.htm>

There are a number of ethical considerations that I have not covered at all. There is no rational defense for the continued use of animal food and certainly no excuse for the government using tax moneys to subsidize it. Government support of the meat biz is like a huge ammo dump with no anti-aircraft guns in place; one well-placed rocket and it goes up in smoke. By contrast, consider other animal rights concerns such as vivisection. It's probably indefensible too, in the long view, but attacking it first is like dive-bombing a solitary hand grenade, hidden in a concrete bunker, manned by amiable scientists all poised to trigger a battery of SAMs. Pick off the ammo dump first. Then the grenade, the bunker and the ack-ack wither away and the scientists wander off to other areas of investigation.

The ethical problems of animal food can also be put into game theory since questions of ethical behavior invariably boil down to value judgements.

Briefly there are two Options:

- 1.) It really doesn't matter whether we kill and eat animals.
- 2.) It is wrong to kill and eat animals.

If one bets on Option 2.) but it turns out that 1.) is correct (by some as yet undefined ethical calculus), then no real harm has been done. One merely gives up fatty food and improves one's chances for health.

If, on the other hand Option 2.) is correct but the bet was on 1.), then an irreparable moral error has occurred. If the animals were in charge of cosmic justice, the graphs in Chapter VII would be the court records.

Game Theory and Vegan Ethics

Is Eating Animals Right or Wrong?

(assume true answers currently unknown)

	<i>1. It Really Doesn't Matter</i>	<i>2. It Really Does matter</i>
Non-Vegan	Only health and environmental errors	Major ethical errors
Vegan	No error except reduced food choice	No error at all

One comes next to the question, “Are plants really conscious, too?” This one was serious enough that I developed my favorite recipe, on line at http://www.vegsources.com/harris/smoothie_fruit.htm forty years ago not as the result of nutritional insight but rather of ethical concern. I reasoned that while plants and trees may suffer when they're chopped up, certainly they could not object if humans were to eat something they were going to discard anyway, namely fruit and seeds. That this recipe has turned out to be the nutritional mainstay of my personal health is an almost eerie confluence.

The idea of plant consciousness took off in 1963 as the result of a book *The Secret Life of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, Harper and Row, New York, 1963.

Some of the chapters: *Plants and ESP*, *Plants Can Read Your Mind*, *Plants That Open Doors*, *Plants Will Grow to Please You*, *Force Fields*, *Humans and Plants*, *The Mystery of Plant and Human Auras*, and *Dowsing Plants for Health*.

A nice run down on the defects of the initial investigation upon which the book was based is up at <http://skepdic.com/plants.html>

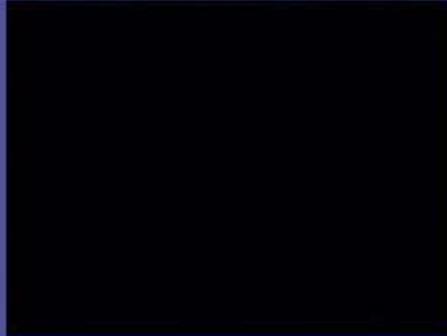
I have found no academic plant physiologist or botanist who recognizes either a nervous system or consciousness in plants, however animals clearly have brains and their human-like responses supported a \$38.4 billion pet industry in 2006. http://www.appma.org/press_industrytrends.asp

My own take on plant consciousness is up at <http://www.vegsources.com/harris/flake.htm>

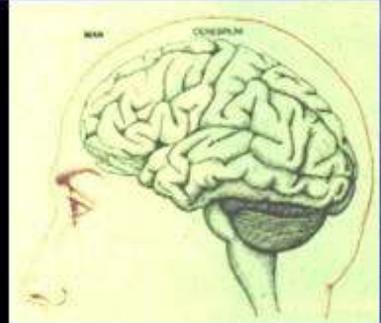
Are plants conscious, too? Comparative Neuroanatomy



Brain of a cow



Brain of a plant



Brain of a Human

Omnivores are fond of bringing up the idea of plant consciousness as a hedge, however while it's true that vegetarians do indeed take the lives of plants it's helpful to remind them of some of the similarities and differences between the word "life" as applied to plants and "life" as applied to animals:

LIFE

Things that are alive exhibit:

- **Plant Life**

- **growth**
- **metabolism**
- **movement**
- **reproduction**
- **response to stimuli**

- **Animal Life**

- **growth,**
- **metabolism**
- **movement**
- **reproduction**
- **response to stimuli**
- **nervous system**
- **consciousness**

Perhaps the AVS Sanscrit motto "Ahimsa" sums it all up: "Do no harm." It's a moral concept that requires constant awareness of action, but it is a feasible and practical substitute for our usual baroque hodgepodge of inconsistent moral laws; eventually it becomes second nature.