

# Answers to Some of Those

# Tricky

## Questions/Challenges



Have you ever been asked a tricky question and not been able to respond coherently? Here are some suggested answers to help you out:

The following questions use some speciesist language as they are presented as they would be asked. We have however, tried to use non-speciesist language in the answers.

**This animal was dead before I started eating it**

But you created the demand for its death.  
If no-one ate meat, no animals would be killed and sold for their meat. We are able to make a moral choice, so let's exercise it.

**Eating meat is natural**

Human beings are omnivores and don't need to kill other beings in order to live healthily - eating meat is no more natural than not eating meat.

**But the Bible gives us dominion over animals**

Most Christians do not believe that everything in the Old Testament is literally true, however, even among fundamentalist Christians, there is a lot of debate over what is meant by dominion, which could equally be a command to care for non-human animals rather than use them as commodities. (Either way, this argument carries no weight with atheists, agnostics and people of other religions.)

**There is nothing wrong with eating meat and dairy**

The meat and dairy industry is a major contributor to climate change, pollution, world hunger and animal suffering, I would say that is wrong.

**Why do you think animals have rights?**

If a being can feel pain and experience suffering, they should not be deliberately made to suffer. A bird has a higher level of consciousness than a new born human baby. If we want to give rights to human babies and want to be consistent, we must extend rights to all sentient beings.

**People are starving in the world; isn't it more important to help humans rather than animals?**

Firstly, humans are animals and it is possible to help both human and non-human animals. Furthermore, a vegan diet requires a lot less land and water to support it than a non-vegan one and therefore veganism could be a solution to the problem of feeding a growing world population with the limited resources that the Earth has to offer.

**I like meat and dairy**

I might like the car my neighbour drives, but that desire isn't a sound moral basis for stealing it. The fact that we desire something does not give us the right to act upon that desire. Most vegans used to like meat too but they decided to boycott this cruel industry.

**What would happen to all of the farmed animals if everyone became vegan?**

We only have high numbers of farmed animals because we artificially breed them.

The world wouldn't become vegan overnight - the meat, dairy and egg industries would gradually decline. This would enable farmers to reduce the number of animals they breed as demand falls. When everyone is vegan, no more farmed animals will be bred for food, and the few remaining ones can be left to live out the rest of their natural life.

**I like to see farmed animals in the countryside.**

In a vegan world, there would be more habitat for wildlife. Wouldn't you prefer to look at healthy wildlife rather than selectively bred farmed animals? In a vegan world, birds and other wildlife would increase in numbers as their woodland and parkland habitat returned.

**What would happen to livestock farmers and the fishing industry if everyone became vegan?**

The economy is constantly changing, and we are always finding new ways to adapt. Typewriter manufacturers lost their jobs when the personal computer became popular - but look at how many jobs the computer industry has now created. If everyone became vegan, there would still be an abundance of jobs for farmers: growing fruit, vegetables and grains, or alternatively, farmers can be offered training in another profession.

**I only eat meat, eggs and dairy from animals that do not suffer as a result.**

Unfortunately, all farming of animals involves cruelty. The animals are selectively bred and even if they are not artificially inseminated, they are deprived of many of their natural behaviours, such as raising their own young. Removing a newborn calf from their mother is distressing for both animals, and the male calf will either be shot as a waste product or killed for veal when he is still very young. Most free-range animals also undergo procedures such as castration without anaesthetic, dehorning, and beak trimming.

**We need calcium for healthy bones and teeth.**

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Vitamins D and K also play a role, as does physical activity.

**Ever heard of natural selection?**

Yes. It is where the living organism that is best fitted to its environment will survive in the struggle for life and pass down its genes to its offspring (whilst others perish); thus continuing those successful characteristics. It is not a moral guideline or framework. If it were, we would not give glasses to the short-sighted, medicine to the ill, or protection to the weak.

**Don't vegans have a very restricted diet?**

Far from being restrictive, vegans can eat mouth-watering foods from all over the world - from India, vegetable curries and dhals; from East Asia, tofu stir fries; from Italy pastas and salads; from Turkey, hummus and babaganoush; and from Mexico beans and tortillas ... the list goes on!

**Isn't it better to eat locally produced meat than imported soya?**

People often think that farmed animals just naturally forage for food in the fields; this is rarely the case. Most are fed on prepared feed often containing imported soya or maize. Small scale, organic, free-range meat production could not feed the world's population; there is simply not enough land for this type of agriculture.

