

Vegan Prisoners Support Group

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To: All HMPS Catering Managers/Prison Shops

The purpose of this news-sheet is to provide prison staff with up-to-date information on this specialist subject. The information included in these news sheets should enable departments to ensure equal opportunities are provided for strict ethical vegans detained within the Prison System.

It is planned to produce this news-sheet quarterly for distribution to all prisons. It will also be added to our new website www.vpsg.info.

All prisons will have by now received our Catering Information Pack distributed earlier this year which was produced with the co-operation of Alan Tuckwood HMPS – Corby. The information contained in this pack is also installed on our website for prisons wishing to download extra copies for the use of their staff. As the pack contained up-to-date nutritional information on this specialist subject, together with menu examples and recipes, we feel we have provided prisons with

sufficient information in order to cater adequately for vegans.

As our office offer a free information and research service. We are frequently being contacted with queries different prisons are seeking our advice on.

First, we have decided to clarify the difference between vegans and vegetarians:

DEFINITION OF A VEGAN

VEGANISM may be defined as a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

In dietary terms it refers to the practice of dispensing with **all** animal produce - including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, animal milks, honey, and their derivatives.

Abhorrence of the cruel practices inherent in an agricultural system based on the abuse of animals is probably the single most common reason for the adoption of veganism, but many people are drawn to it for health, ecological, resource, spiritual and other reasons.

The above information was obtained from the Vegan Society formed in 1944 as it had recognised the ethical compromises www.vegansociety.com

Note: The wearing of such items as leather, suede etc would not be acceptable to vegans

DEFINITION OF A VEGETARIAN

A vegetarian is someone living on a diet of grains, pulses, nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruits with or without the use of dairy products and eggs.

A vegetarian does not eat any meat, poultry, game, fish, shellfish or crustacea, or slaughter by-products.

TYPES OF VEGETARIAN

- Lacto-ovo-vegetarian. Eats both dairy products and eggs. This is the most common type of vegetarian diet.
- Lacto-vegetarian. Eats dairy products but not eggs.
- **Vegan. Does not eat dairy products, eggs, or any other animal product.**

STUMBLING BLOCKS

Many foods contain ingredients derived from the slaughter of animals. Gelatine is made from animal ligaments, tendons, bones etc which have been boiled in water. It is often found in confectionery, low fat spreads and desserts, and other dairy products.

The term animal fat refers to carcass fat and may be present in a wide range of foods, including biscuits, cakes, and margarines. Suet and lard are types of animal

fats. Certain food additives (E numbers) may be derived from animal sources.

Cheese is often made with rennet extracted from the stomach lining of slaughtered calves. Vegetarian cheese is made with rennet from a microbial source.

The Vegetarian Society has an information sheet listing ingredients which may be unsuitable for vegetarians. Many vegetarians that eat eggs will eat only free-range

eggs. This is due to moral objections to the battery farming of hens. **The Vegetarian Society only endorses products containing eggs if the eggs are certified as free-range.**

Practices in catering

Vegetarians dining out will expect work surfaces and chopping boards, utensils and all other kitchen equipment and facilities to be either kept separate from those used for non-vegetarian food preparation,

or cleaned thoroughly before vegetarian food preparation.

Caterers should also ensure that fryers, grills and griddles used for preparing non-vegetarian products are thoroughly cleaned. Fryers must be filled with fresh, uncontaminated oil before vegetarian food is cooked. The Society recommends that caterers keep a separate set of utensils for the preparation and serving of vegetarian meals.

The above information was provided by the Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom. For more information press the following link to their Web site: www.vegsoc.org

Question: Is Quorn suitable for vegans?

Answer: No

Mycoprotein

Mycoprotein is a food made by continuous fermentation of the fungus, *Fusarium graminearum*. The fungus is grown in a large fermentation tower to which oxygen, nitrogen, glucose, minerals, and vitamins are continually added. After harvesting, the fungus is heat treated to reduce its RNA content to World Health Organisation recommended levels before being filtered and drained. The resulting sheet of fungal mycelia is mixed with egg albumen which acts a binder. Flavouring and colouring may also be added. The mycoprotein is then textured to resemble meat, before being sliced, diced or shredded. Mycoprotein is a source of [protein](#), fibre, biotin, [iron](#) and [zinc](#), and is low in [saturated fat](#).

Mycoprotein has been developed by Rank Hovis McDougall, and is marketed under the name of Quorn by Marlow Foods Ltd (owned by Astra Zeneca). Mycoprotein is potentially a very useful food item for vegetarians. Since early 2000 the Quorn deli and ingredients ranges have been approved by the Vegetarian Society since the albumen used as a binder in its manufacture has been changed in those ranges from a non free range to a free range egg source. However at present the ranges of ready meals, burgers, sausages etc still use eggs from a non free range source

Question: Are Vegetable Fingers suitable for vegans as I can't find anything on the label which appears to make this produce unsuitable?

Answer: No

Items below 1% do not need to be included in the ingredients list of any labeling and often such ingredients as egg albumen or possibly lactose are often used to bind the product which may be added below 1%; thus making such items unsuitable for vegans. Therefore, VPSG have contacted N.H.Case and Yearsleys and they confirm the following vegan friendly.

- **N.H. Case**
Realeat Sausages, Nasi-Gorenge Patty, Noodle Patty, Beetroot Grills, Celery Grills, Falafel Nuggets.
- **Yearsley**
Realeat Sausages

We offer a free research facility to the Prison Service to confirm suitability of any item.

Question: Why it is essential a fortified soya milk be provided, and if so how much each week?

Answer: It is one of the main sources of calcium in the vegan diet [see following information]

The average vegan adult requires 700mg/day of fortified soya milk in order to obtain sufficient calcium. Calcium is also important in order for vegans to be able to absorb B12 [one of the most important vitamins in this minority diet]. However, Calcium also requires a source of Magnesium in order to be properly utilised by the body and the easiest sources are: Bananas, prunes or almonds.

Question: What other vitamins are essential for vegans?

Answer: There are a number of essential vitamins vegans require [see Catering Information Pack] In this news sheet we are covering Essential Fatty Acids.

Walnuts are the easiest way to provide essential fatty acid and we recommend three whole walnuts/day which should be provided in their raw state and not heated. Other vegan sources may not be so easily obtained; which are Linseed Oil [unheated], Hempseeds, Tofu, Avocado.

Question: Who supplies specialist items for vegans?

Answer: DBC can supply most of the requirements such as vegan margarine, nuts, seeds etc.

The D-Brand list actually indicates which of their items are suitable for vegans. However, margarine is the most common item we are asked to confirm which are suitable for vegans.

- Astra, Dawn, Bebo, Marquee All Veg. [not the soft] and also all D. Brand Margarines are vegan friendly.

Question: What cereals in the Breakfast Packs are suitable for vegans?

Answer: We are waiting for confirmation of this information from HMPS Catering. Update in next newsletter.

Weetabix Cornflakes and Weetabix Frosted Cornflakes in the 10kg packs are suitable for vegans. [Individual packs [not confirmed as being suitable for vegans](#)]. Chef William Muesli, 12½ kilo is suitable for vegans.

Prison shops

VPSG have been concerned for some time that the majority of Prison Shops do not cater specifically for vegan dietary requirements. However, we met earlier this year with the Contract Catering & Retail Services Team to discuss how this issue could be resolved in those prisons which have been contracted out to Aramark Ltd under the National Contract. This includes the revision of products currently made available to prisoners and the possible introduction of a vegan and reception pack. We will continue to provide updates during the course of these news sheets.

We are also currently investigating what provisions have been put in place for vegans throughout establishments and this information will be eventually added to our website www.vpsg.info.

VPSG feel that in order to meet the specialist requirements for vegans, a special order list must be available to prisons, which is currently under review by the VPSG in consultation with the CCRAS Team

Our next news-sheet will contain testimonials from ex vegan prisoners on how they 'were' or 'not' [as the case may be] catered for at the different establishments where they were held. Amongst them are HMP Highpoint, HMP Holloway, HMP Morton Hall and HMP Rochester/Cookham Wood. This news sheet and future editions will be added to the information on www.vpsg.info.