

Vegan Prisoners Support Group

www.vpsg.info

P.O. Box 194, Enfield, Middx EN1 4YL. 020 8363 5729

info@vpsg.info

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To: all No.1. Governors/Catering Managers/Prison Shops

VPSG/Vegan Society's First Awards



Stuart presenting Wayne's award

The first of our new yearly awards were presented to Wayne Hodges and Stuart Head at the ACM meeting held at HMP Rochester in November.

Stuart Head received a surprise when, just after presenting Wayne Hodges Catering Manager HMP Rochester /Cookham Wood, with his award for, "His outstanding commitment and effort in the proper provision of equal opportunities catering for vegans", Wayne in turn presented him with his own award.

The decision to present Wayne with this award was during a meeting with the Vegan Society, when

we were discussing the efforts that were being made by Wayne [with the help of Linda] to ensure the diet for their vegans was not only nutritionally sound, but varied, tasty and interesting.

The Diet Sheets records completed by one of our test cases listed banana and peanut butter wraps for lunch, tofu satay for dinner, banana ice-cream [made in-house], raspberry & chocolate cake, etc. I sampled one of his risotto dishes - including vegan cheese - delicious. Soya desserts and nuts are available in order to offer equal opportunities too.

The award presented to Wayne will in future be issued, in conjunction with The Vegan Society, on a yearly basis to the person that our organisations feel has contributed the most to the care of vegans in prison during that year.

Stuart received his award from the VPSG for all the invaluable input he has contributed to our work over the past five years.

His input/ideas have been given, mainly in his own time, in order to try to ensure the proper care of vegans whilst detained within the prison system. In addition to ensure Prison Caterers and other Departments have all the informa-

tion they require in order to cater properly for this minority group.

The wording on his award states "2000-2005. This award is warmly presented to P/O Stuart Head for his dedication, time, effort and commitment in assisting and working to ensure that vegan prisoners are offered equal opportunities in all areas".

Catering Information Pack

The Catering Information Pack distributed to every prison was amongst many of Stuart's ideas for information improvement.

However, we are planning to revise this pack in the New Year and are inviting the input of Catering Managers to let us know if there is any information they feel would be particularly useful. Steve Yates, HMP Birmingham, has already made some recommendations which will be taken on-board.

Please send your input/ideas to jo-ann.brown@vpsg.info.

[Note: There are still a few copies available of the present pack if your copy has been lost, or you would like another working copy, just give us a call on 020 8363 5729]

Details of Wholefood/Healthfood suppliers

Marigold Health Food Suppliers

102 Camley Street, London NW1 0PF. Tel: 020 7388 4515. Minimum £100 order. Deliver to London and the S.E. only.

Suma Wholefoods

Lacy Way, Lowfields Business Park, Elland HX5 9DB. Tel: 0845 458 2291. Min £250 order.

Goodness Foods

South March, Daventry, Northants NN11 4PH Tel: 01327 706611. Minimum £200/£300 order, depending on area.

Available through Greenham Trading

Suitable vegan toiletries so far include: Forest "Freshmint" Toothpaste, Hair & Body Wash/ Shave Gel, The Collection Hotel Comps, Liquid Soap, Chilwoods Pampered Blue Ice Deodorant; Sejem Freshmint Toothpaste, Low Lather Detergent.

A Vegan Suddenly Arrives the Week before Christmas



What can I provide – too late to order!

The following quick and easy recipe may just solve this problem. The rest could be frozen in portions.

Nut Roast [serves 4-6]

Medium sized onion or 1 small leek
1 oz [25g] oil
8oz [225 g] mixed nuts [chopped or ground]
4 oz [100g] wholemeal bread [breadcrumbs]
2 tsp [10ml] yeast extract in ¼ pint hot water
1 tsp [5ml] mixed herbs
Salt and pepper to taste

Chop onions and sauté in margarine until soft, not browned. Grind nuts until quite fine [or alternatively use chopped nuts]. Heat the water and add yeast extract. Then combine all of the ingredients together, the mixture may be slightly slack. Turn into an oiled ovenproof dish and bake in oven at Gas Mark 4, 180C or 350F for 30 minutes until golden brown.

What Can I Do - No Vegan Mince Pies?

A Health Shop may be one solution? Village Bakery produces a box of four gluten-free, wheat-free mince pies which are marked suitable for vegans.

Or maybe Provamel Soya Desserts? They come in individual plastic pots and the price of 4 is £1.45. They are available in vanilla, chocolate or caramel flavour and need no refrigeration.

No Facility for Outside Purchase

Prepare a fruit crumble using apple, bananas and sultanas. As long as you have one of the vegan brands of margarine of course for the crumble topping!

Current Research on Vegan Products

Yearsleys

Vegetable Sausages, Vegetable Samosas, Vegetable Patties, Thai Noodle Burger and **Chestnut, Apple and Cranberry Roast**. Note: Spicy Bean Burgers – Are no longer Vegan as they contain a milk product.

N.H. Case

Breaded Vegetarian Burger, Findus Falafel Nuggets, Nasigorenge Pattie, Noodle Pattie, Vegan Kosher Meals. **Nut Roast**.

DBC Food Services

This company can supply a variety of dried and tinned beans and nuts as well as brown rice, fortified soya milk and other soya items. A full list of items on the D. Brand list was included in our Newsletter No.4. [Additional copies will be provided if you contact the VPSG Office]

HMP Breakfast Packs

Suitable vegan cereals packed for HMP are Frosted Flakes,

Bran Flakes, Wheat Biscuits and Cornflakes are available through the Single Portion Team at HMPS Corby.

Lansdowne Fine Foods

● Mixed Bean Cassoulet

Details follow:

340g x 12 per case. Price £0.35p each.

Ingredients: Tomato (30%), Water, Cannelloni beans (9%), green beans (9%), Butterbeans (9%), onion, red lentils (2%), tomato purée, mixed herbs, salt, vegetable bouillon, rapeseed oil, paprika, parsley, garlic puree, black pepper.

Place pouch in boiling water and simmer for up to 20 minutes.

● Dry nut roast mix

It is important to stress the versatility of the dry nut roast mix. Dried vegetables are contained in the mix, but further vegetables, beans can be added.

The product can also be served hot or cold. It re-hydrates to 1.8 times the dry weight bringing a

100g portion cost down to around £0.20p [£3.75 kg]

A vegan recipe samosa or individual en croute can also be supplied using this ingredient.

● Further vegan friendly products from Lansdowne are:

200g spicy bean pastie
200g vegetable and mixed nut en croute with a soya sauce
1 kg mixed vegetable and nut en croute
1 kg spinach and nut en croute
1 kg mixed nut and apricot en croute

All these are supplied frozen and unbaked.

For further information contact:

Nigel Smith,
Lansdowne Fine Foods Ltd.,
2 Waterdyke Avenue,
Southwick,
West Sussex.
BN42 4DF.
Tel/fax: 01273 594 130.
Mobile: 07956 347 749.

Vegan Talk by Stuart Head 03 November 05

The following talk was given by Stuart Head prior to the VPSG/Vegan Society awards described on the front page.

From a Box to a Real Deal

When I started in the prison service some 12 years ago the policy was that we issued vegan prisoners with a box containing the following:

4 soya milks, peanuts, raisins, marmite and peanut butter, and said "see you next week"!

This was in my mind adequate, due to the limited knowledge we had at our finger tips and so I believe we all felt we had done our best. Oh how things have changed for the better with the link-up to the Vegan Prisoners Support Group [VPSG] and the information they can now provide us with and *all free of charge!*

We have certainly come along way since the year 2000 when I first received a call from Jo-Ann at the VPSG when three strict ethical vegans arrived at HMP Highpoint. Since then with the help of Jo-Ann and her helpers I now strive to give what the customer requires, and if it were not for this flow of information we would still be in the dark.

How many Vegans do we have in prison at the moment, approximately 480. Yes that few and as we discussed yesterday this makes them a minority group. So should we overlook them? I say no. No matter what we do, or how small the group, they still have the right to be

treated with fairness and provided with a diet that is suitable for their needs and also contains the necessary vitamins to enhance their well-being.

This has been made easier since we were all issued with the VPSG's Catering Information Pack [CIP] in 2003 which outlines that we now need to provide the following:

14x250ml cartons of fortified soya milk; *in order to provide sufficient Calcium and B12 in their diet.* Also we need to provide 14 pieces of mixed fruit a week, 1 oz mixed nuts/day and a menu that encapsulates their dietary requirements and nutritional needs all contained in the VPSG's CIP.

The last time I stood in front of you I got shot at and the reason was the cost of all this additional food. I would point out that we can provide for vegans, as we do for other minority groups and at a lesser cost than anyone on any of the other minority diets. This can be done through the meals we provide, as the ingredients are less. So there isn't any excuse, for example Kosher meals cost over £3 each meal and providing a vegan diet costs much less.

The only part of the diet that we cannot supply is the iodine although we can get this supplied through the Medical Centre in a Kelp supplement. However, you do need to contact Healthcare to tell them why.

Any information on this specialist

diet or any product you are unsure about is now available free of charge either from the VPSG, the Vegan Society, or myself as I am the link for the service. VPSG will also conduct any research on any new product to ensure it is vegan; as any item below 1% still doesn't need to be listed on the ingredients.

There are also other avenues that are accessible to the colleagues you work with, the VPSG prison news sheet, their website www.vpsg.info or for internal support via myself, but the best and least used of all, the customer that is in receipt of the food; as they are and have partaken the life style for many years. Obviously although there has to be lines drawn to ensure the customers are aware of the limits we can work within.

The question of what is available and sources of supplies we can use for specialist products, for example Suma Wholefoods, as such companies can provide specialist vegan products in order to try to offer equal opportunities, although they are expensive.

One of our own has gone above and beyond the guidelines and I have honour and privilege of presenting him with the award on behalf of the Vegan Prisoners Support Group and The Vegan Society, and the award is for Wayne Hodges, whose menus reflect a diet that is full of thought and use of proteins and nutrients that we could all learn from.

Stuart Head

Vegan Daily Requirements

A vegan diet is based on fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, pulses and cereals.

Recommended Daily Requirements:

100g [4 oz] vegetables [*including broccoli, cabbage, carrots, dark greens*]

100g [4oz] whole grains and root vegetables [*wholemeal bread, pasta, brown rice, corn, potatoes*]

100g [4 oz] pulses [*lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans,*

baked beans, soya products]

25g [1 oz] mixed nuts [*peanuts are not a nut, but a legume*]

3 large pieces of fruit

In addition

3 ½ litres of fortified soya milk in order to provide calcium and B12

Iodine [*Kelp Supplement*]

Prison Shop Issue

Prisons shops under the Aramark contract at the moment still offer very little for vegan prisoners. Approximately 18 confectionary items, but not one suitable for vegans.

However, finally, after constantly highlighting this lack of equal opportunities, since we were established in 1994, Glyn Jones at Prison HQ has advised Aramark that they now need to provide one vegan item in each section. The new Canteen Listing should be up and running early in 2006 – 10 years after we first brought this to the attention of June Henderson who handles the prison contract at Aramark.

We will be closely monitoring the progress of the availability of vegan items through our questionnaires provided to vegan prisoners throughout the prison system.

We plan to bring these new items to the attention of all Governors/Prison Shop Managers in

the New Year, which we are assured will include mixed nuts, dried fruit, Provamel soya desserts, flavoured soya milk [chocolate, stawberry and banana], one chocolate bar, braised tofu and nuttolene [protein sources which come in tins for those prisons allowing them in], soya icecream [again for those prisons having refrigeration facilities] and a vegan Kelp supplement. Still a very limited selection, but an improvement on only crisps and sometimes peanuts!

In addition we have been advised that Governors will also be issued information on the facility for mail order for vegans via Honesty Cosmetics [a company already used by many prisons]. This company are a totally ethical vegan company and meet all the requirements of a strict ethical vegan on their list of bodycare/hygiene products. Their details are: *Honesty Cosmetics, Lumford Mill, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1GS.* Tel: 01629 814888
www.honestycosmetics.co.uk

Prisons in the Private Sector

Recently I was asked to help two of our test cases at UKDS establishments. I felt it was 1994 again, I then realised how far we have travelled in our relationship with prisons not in the private sector.

The kitchens were cautious about my enquiry and they also appear to use different products and some different suppliers.

However, we have no information on our data base on their purchased-in products and have requested the necessary information to confirm which are suitable for vegans.

This means at meal times strict vegans can only accept items they can clearly see are vegan, due to the present labelling rules regarding items below 1%.

What slows progress up is that everything needs to be in writing and their response time is slow.

However, the prison shop at UKDS HMP Bronzefield [not being confined to the Aramark contract] is far ahead and have already requested samples and recommendations of which vegan items we feel would be worthwhile for inclusion on their canteen sheet. *Jo-Ann Brown*

New Year Prison New-sheet No.6. will include:

- Update on prison shop issue
- Progress on prisons in the private sector
- Five a day
- Nuts & Seeds

Food Standards Agency

Our input was recently sought regarding the new labelling regulations under discussion at the moment.

One of the recommendations we made was that any product produced on a milk-run should be marked accordingly as the first run will have cross contamination in vegan products.

Importance of the provision of Iodine in the Vegan Diet

After many discussions with Alan Tuckwood, we have reached the conclusion that it is impracticable to provide an iodine source in the prison kitchen for this minority group, and therefore would need to be provided in a supplement.

Both The Vegan Society and VPSG have written to every Healthcare Department and the Director of Prisoners Health on this issue. The Prison Service Guidelines clearly state: *"Herbal dietary, or food supplements of a vegetable or synthetic origin may be a requirement, this being dependent upon the state of health and particular needs of the individual".* **However, it doesn't state whose budget pays for them?**

As iodine is important to ensure the proper functioning of the thyroid gland, until this matter is resolved internally we will continue to offer, free of charge, iodine in the form of a Kelp Supplement to vegans who contact us for assistance in this matter.

However, the help of Catering Managers would be welcome in approaching their Healthcare Departments to try to assist any strict vegan under their care.