

**Unjustified Justification
Animal Husbandry**

—

**Our Future is
Vegan-Organic!**

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Colophon

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The text uses 'he' when referring to a person because these are masculine words. So, you can also read 'she' instead of 'he'.

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Preface and acknowledgements

It is a great privilege for any concerned author to play a role in spreading knowledge about an increasingly important topic in our society that affects so many people and animals. The aim of this book is to inform a global movement of producers, consumers, researchers, advisers, teachers and supporters about the principles and benefits of vegan-organic farming. In other words, it is intended for anyone who is in any way committed to a fairer world.

However, this book is not an academic text for which strict research standards are prescribed. Instead of academic references in endnotes, there are intermezzi throughout the text for readers who wish to go deeper in a particular topic. Of course, the author is primarily responsible for the content and should also be open to criticism. Because these are generally accessible facts, it is not absolutely necessary to cite sources. This book is about credibility and since it is not a dissertation, it can do without proper scientific citation. The information presented is written with respect for any reader who dares to question the role of livestock farming in our primary agricultural production systems. They deserve it.

First and foremost, the criticism seems to be the work of representatives of the large agricultural industry, whose lawyers claim that the wording damages their reputation and jeopardises their sales. Among those hastily complaining about the book are spokesmen for the meat and dairy industries - a good sign! Perhaps one day, when the majority of politicians and scientists continue to stubbornly believe they cannot free themselves from the grip of big agribusiness and therefore cannot see beyond the influence of corporate financial interests, we will read a similarly hasty protest from the fish and egg associations and other interest groups that exploit us. So, we'd better be prepared!

Instead of remaining silent, the best way to counter such an unethical defamation strategy is to put the legal threat online and refute it point by point. Although the book came under heavy fire even before publication, critics have yet to find any errors in the text. Spokesmen for the meat, fish, dairy and egg industries have not gone into detail, instead condemned the information in general terms and left it at that. In our current legal system, big agribusiness and their lawyers will never be able to make good on their threats, because fortunately, truth is an absolute defence against defamation. So those responsible for this saga to defame a well-meaning author are strongly advised to pick their battles more carefully!

Many have contributed to the preparation of this book. It has come about thanks to the continuous advice, help, encouragement and enthusiasm of many who have been inspired by the ideas presented. The greatest thanks go to everyone who devoted time, attention and energy to this project and made an invaluable contribution by carefully going through the various versions of the manuscript, making thoughtful comments, giving detailed feedback and providing invaluable insights. Last but not least, thanks are due to all the organisations from countries all over the world that answered the research questions and provided the data that can be read on the following pages.

Foreword

Healthy and affordable food is a basic necessity for our existence, but the current conventional agricultural food production system is at a dead end. Food production and consumption are major contributors to the ecological, social and health crisis of our time. Previous governments have shelved these problems or fought them with stopgap measures. At the very least, the way society views food had undeniably changed. More and more people are opting for a plant-based and healthier diet, and there are many initiatives to grow organic food crops without the use of animals or their products. The Dutch Party for the Animals has been the driver of this change since its founding in 2006. The party will continue to fulfil that role. After all, there are great opportunities for a healthy agricultural future that produces affordable food. We are in the midst of a food revolution!

The food revolution comes not a moment too soon. The intensification of livestock farming means that animals pay the highest price, while farmers and citizens are saddled with irresponsible costs. The Netherlands breeds and kills more than 500 million animals annually and the risk of zoonoses such as Q fever and avian flu is life-threatening. Nature and climate, soil, drinking water and public health suffer under the burden of large quantities of animal manure and chemical products such as fertilisers and pesticides. We need to abolish livestock farming!

The livestock industry is our greatest food waster. More than two-thirds of the grains grown in the Netherlands is used as animal feed. If we grow food for direct human consumption, we can feed at least four times more people from one hectare, compared to growing feed for cattle, pigs, poultry and other exploited animals destined for our dinner tables. The huge demand for animal feed also raises world food prices. It is not easy to explain why we use perfectly edible food to sustain the livestock industry, when more and more people cannot afford to consume this precious food. We urgently need to bring a halt to the ‘unjustifiable justification of animal husbandry’!

Farmers are also victims of this food production system. For decades, governments and banks offered them no other choice but to go into debt for prohibitively expensive sham solutions or leave the livestock industry. Not surprisingly, it is not the number of farm animals that has halved since the beginning of this century but the number of livestock farmers. Half of the remaining farmers live below the poverty line, but large agro-industrial companies such as feed suppliers, slaughterhouses and barn builders benefit from the huge number of animals in the Dutch livestock industry. Although the idea of reducing livestock numbers was taboo for decades, many involved in agricultural food production now recognise that a reduction in numbers is inevitable. Our future is plant-based!

The aim of the Party for the Animals is to solve problems related to agriculture and food in context. Artisanal farmers need to cooperate with nature and therefore benefit greatly from clean water, healthy soil and air. Instead of fewer, we need more farmers to produce healthy food in a healthy soil within a healthy earning model. It has been proven that a future-proof revenue model in agriculture no longer exploits animals. The Party for the Animals encourages farmers to switch to livestock-free and future-proof agriculture. First of all, this requires an answer to the question: ‘How to grow vegan-organic crops?’

Only in the choices we make about our food production and consumption do we gain much for animals, nature, climate, environment, farming community and public health. Only if we move in the right direction will we give everyone access to healthy, animal-free and affordable food. Growing less animal feed means huge amounts of farmland become available. We can use these to grow more food for direct consumption, to regenerate or to build the houses we so desperately need in the Netherlands. We will also solve the current nitrogen crisis by greatly reducing the number of animals and taking adequate measure on industry, aviation and road traffic. By ensuring that farm craftsmanship, food quality and the human touch become the norm in agriculture again, we can reverse the biodiversity and climate crisis. At the heart of the Party for the Animals' mission is this systemic change in our primary agricultural production system. The time to make a final choice is now!

“The time is now. Our agricultural system shows poignantly what goes wrong when growth is the holy grail. With disastrous consequences for animals, people, nature and the environment. We can turn the tide by a fundamental change: it must be smaller-scale, plant-based, more sustainable, pesticide-free, fertiliser-free and without large-scale exploitation of defenceless animals.”

- Party for the Animals (www.partyfortheanimals.com)

Introduction

This book is controversial. It may make some people angry and even resentful. And why? Because it challenges today's entrenched conventional farming methods. In many cases, plant growth and crop protection experts, farming industry representatives and journalists will disagree with its philosophies. In other words, while this book is ethically correct, it is not politically correct. It is written to encourage readers to think outside the box and deepen their thinking, and because doing so is good for everyone's mind, body and soul, and for our planet.

A writer's goal is to inform, to teach and to be taught. But every work is a journey of discovery that ends in success or failure, in which he can only promise to do his best. The aim of this book is to address the limitations of convention, stimulate debate and accelerate the search for truth. Opposition – sometimes unethical – only encourages a writer to continue on his path in search of the real truth. There is a wonderful, hopeful message that needs to be heard. Inevitably, showing it to the world will upset people; this is not a popularity contest.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this fuss is that even the inclusion of information about 'farming without intentionally bred animals' seems too much for many. The message shown here has generated great controversy and provides a unique case study of the many challenges and opportunities for the vegan-organic farming movement and our society. When this information was shared at lectures and public appearances, it proved fascinatingly controversial among those who prefer to stick to the status quo.

The fact that you have decided to read this book shows that you are not a passive-accepting person, but rather an intelligent and aware person who likes to have some control over how healthy plants can be produced in the soil. Congratulations, then, because the health of soil and plants is our greatest asset and we need to be vigilant and protect it well. Many people often do not know how plants are grown and have never bothered to look up the possible side effects of animal substances. We prefer a quiet life and don't like to question experts and disturb the status quo. Many of us are also just too busy to do the extensive research necessary to get all the facts straight and recognise our blind spots. The endless amount of information available today can be confusing and contradictory. This is especially true if the information provider has an interest in you buying a product.

This book provides the reader with accurate and irrefutable facts to gain a proper understanding of the subject of vegan-organic farming. The hard work is done for all concerned. The subject of growing healthy soil-based crops without the use of intentionally bred animals is very complicated and has been treated in an overly simplistic and superficial manner for the past 20 years. It is also a subject associated with the fear of being ridiculed because people have very clear and strong emotional views about the role that animal husbandry plays in our society.

There are many unwritten rules and expectations about your behaviour, your attitude, the words and phrases you use, and so on. A fearless approach will earn you many enemies. The 'truth' disappears behind the smoke of an inflated establishment. The promise to end the livestock industry will inevitably be discredited. You are doing something wrong if you don't have enemies. If you have enemies, it is a sign that you are doing something right, that you are effective, that you are successful. Even family and friends can be hostile. If you condemn animal husbandry practices you may feel marginalised.

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Standing up for autonomous and self-determined ethical beliefs means making enemies, facing social sanctions, being ignored. You won't find like-minded people if you just say no and take a stand. People often fail to resist peer pressure, to be different, to go against established social norms, to resist subtle sanctions. It takes an outspoken character to resist deviating from what is considered normal. The dissenter is also always an outsider.

While the ethical reasons for going vegan-organic are obvious, it is worth noting that there is a strange paradox in the way our society treats its followers. When a prominent non-vegan organic farmer does something even remotely animal-friendly, he is generally treated as if he has just developed a cure for cancer. But as soon as a person declares that he follows vegan-organic principles, he is suddenly held to a ridiculous standard by woke citizens. A self-proclaimed vegan-organic farmer no longer gets credit for anything positive he does – a vegan-organic farmer is expected to do positive things. But if he shows even a shred of imperfection, he is quickly reduced to bait in the shark tank.

PROVOCATIVE IDEAS

Few things are as provocative as the way we grow our food, both in terms of the impact on the health of the planet and the sensitivities of the people making these choices. Any proposal to change our food production systems carries a high risk for upheaval. Of course, agribusiness leaders, their advisers and their apologists in academic scientific circles will be furious if anyone disturbs the peace by writing about alleged missteps in current food production systems. This shows how sensitive they are and how vindictive they can become when the conventional knowledge they represent and their authority are questioned. Fortunately, in the eyes of the law, truth is an absolute defence against defamation.

The resistance to attempts to change agricultural practices has to do with the fact that these ideas pose a direct threat to the powerful agribusiness industry. And why? In short: money, ego, power and control! A demonstration of improved production without bought inputs would certainly have been seen as bad for agribusiness. As such, it would be subject to the usual damage-control strategies of threatened conglomerates, government agencies and colonised academics: ignore it for as long as possible, then ridicule it, describe it inaccurately, conduct false experiments, make false comparisons and discard the ideas.

The maniacal capitalist agribusiness will not get very excited about organic farmers buying nothing. That Mother Nature provides organic inputs makes them pretty subversive. The livestock industry is a billion-dollar business. It tries to spread as many false messages as possible to sow doubt about alternative approaches. The cigarette industry has done the same.

Like any drug addict, the farming industry and its lobbyists have woven a web of falsehoods to rationalise their behaviour, which has very harmful consequences for others. It contributes greatly to the current global environmental crisis, ruins our health and economy and is the reason so many animals live short and cruel lives on farms. And the main reason is our addiction to animal food.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LIVESTOCK

It is strange that everyone only talks about cattle. But chickens and pigs in factory farming are the big problem. As extensive livestock farming is rapidly being replaced by industrialised

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livestock farming, chickens and pigs make up an increasing proportion of meat production. They spend a short, cruel life in overcrowded barns, only to be hung upside down on the conveyor belt and have their throats slit. This is what injustice means.

Free grazing is of course less unpleasant for dairy cows than forced confinement in a barn, but even if animals are given the choice between barn and pasture, they are still used as living children and milking machines to be killed as soon as it is financially profitable. Moreover, grazing beef and dairy cows, goats, sheep and other ruminants tend to eat everything they see, accelerating the degeneration of grasslands.

The fishing industry has its mouth full of 'sustainable fishing', but by that they only mean they try not to participate in overfishing and reduce bycatch. There is no mention of the suffering their fishing and killing methods cause.

It is considered 'normal' to eat the carcasses of animals bred, raised, tortured, slaughtered, rendered, extruded, packaged and purchased by humans so that parents can put dead bodies on their children's plates. The animals we eat are pumped full of antibiotics and confined, beaten and killed, without giving an animal a chance to live its own life. Farm animals have to die if we want to eat them.

If we kick a dog on the street, we get fined, but when we deliberately kill a cow at the slaughterhouse, we get paid for it. We cannot boycott the slaughterhouse and its partner, the rendering industry. But we can reject products that come from the use of animals. Consumers have rejected sugar and cotton made by slaves; products from South Africa when 'apartheid' gave full political and economic control to white minorities; clothes imported from sweatshops; and even a ban on smoking in public places. What we are doing is sensible political action on behalf of sentient beings who are supposed to be outside the political sphere.

Abolishing livestock farming is also still a big taboo in biodynamic farming, as livestock farming is mandatory in the overall concept. But it is individual action that counts. Part of wrong living is not having the courage and confidence to deviate from existing conditions, to act against established norms or to question the familiar. Only those who have learned to rebel against majorities, authorities and the power of the ordinary have the courage to do so.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH

The concerted efforts of many powerful interest groups to ignore, discredit and hide the truth about animal husbandry has worked so far. Even before being confronted with this information, the establishment behaved defensively: scorn, sarcastic speculation and even ridicule. But history teaches us that revolutionary ideas have always been ridiculed. What the fearless champions of justice had in common, however, was their tenacity to make their voices heard and their commitment to hard work. They wavered, but they kept going!

Most farmers and their supporters are stuck in misconceptions: they believe it is impossible to grow healthy crops without animal inputs. The opposite is true: animals provide nothing, not even nutrients for the soil, that cannot be obtained more efficiently from plants. Until human understanding and perception, and hence thinking, changes, we can be blind to what is happening around us. Therefore, we need to adapt psychologically. We must immediately ban the 'unjustified justification of animal husbandry' in primary agricultural production systems.

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This text addresses the provocative idea that growing green biomass in a vegan-organic system to nourish plant and soil life can be as much part of a diversified land use as livestock systems. Even if the idea is still implausible, some progressive, vegan-organic growers have already proven that we do not need livestock to create soil fertility and biodiversity. In essence, excluding livestock from our primary agricultural production system is a logical step beyond organic farming for anyone seeking safe and sustainably grown food.

We should not be afraid to tell the truth about the negative aspects of animal husbandry, even if it confuses citizens. There comes a time when silence is betrayal. Our lives end the day we remain silent about things that matter. Every time someone challenges the culture of animal exploitation that is rampant in our world, there is a ripple of hope. When these ripples come together from a million different places, they create a current that grows stronger and stronger. When we set an example by showing how our crops can be grown easily and efficiently without animal inputs, we set an example that radiates outward, an example that inspires others through its authenticity and helps set the world straight.

The way we produce food is based on so many falsehoods that it is almost impossible to distinguish between truth and falsehoods. Corporate agriculture has no intention of clarifying this situation or making people realise that what they take to be true is in fact based on falsehoods. Their tried-and-tested strategy is to undermine science and rely on herd instinct. Time and again, we are told to go with the herd; to return to the flock.

The status quo is an ugly thing. But information that threatens the status quo will always be controversial. As useful as it is to deconstruct and denounce the current production system, we must also think constructively. The challenges we face are complex and thus require more than a simple solution. We need to offer attractive, active alternatives. By offering alternatives, we do not destroy systems, we improve them. And shouldn't that be our goal?

So how can we empower people? People can and should make their own choices. But consistently missing from comments is the suggestion that individuals from the public can take control of their own destiny. Citizens ultimately have the choice to integrate the available evidence into their lifestyle, but we owe it to them to give them that choice, not to decide for them. Only they have the right to decide what to make of it.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

It has never been so easy to disseminate and find information, but it has also never been harder. The vast array of digital communication tools and online forums offers unprecedented opportunities to gather information. But information overload often sabotages our best attempts to extract viable information from the World Wide Web. We have all asked Google to find a particular piece of information, only to end up down a rabbit hole for hours without ever finding the information we need. Nowadays, anyone can publish content on the Internet, but when we are collecting data for our agricultural management strategies, we need relevant answers first.

Relevance is essential for delivering information in a world where the quality of content is increasingly diluted by quantity. Relevant information does not come from systems, but from people putting content into the systems. In today's unstable economy, having the right information is crucial. With the world now more connected than ever, reliable networks are more important than ever to bypass the unqualified leads that prevent us from achieving optimal levels of expertise.

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The spread of fabricated ‘facts’ and ignored truths is a threat to our society. We have been living with fake news for years. They are a sure path to an overwhelming sense of confusion and uncertainty. The claims of animal husbandry advocates come fast and furious, with a degree of certainty, without nuance, that undoubtedly appeals to many. The industry will sow confusion until our common sense is completely eroded by decision fatigue. We can only hope that this unethical and selfish behaviour will soon come to an end. Hope comes from finding ways to get involved and make your voice heard. Get to grips with the facts and fight for change!

New ideas, especially those that challenge an established orthodoxy, follow a similar path. First, the orthodoxy says the new idea is nonsense. Next, the orthodoxy tries to minimise the growing appeal of the new idea. Finally, when the new idea proves unstoppable, orthodoxy tries to claim the idea as its own. This is exactly the path that organic farming has been on. It is therefore almost inevitable that the description of a vegan-organic agricultural production system is immediately ridiculed. This is also because there is an almost universal belief among most farmers and their supporters in the myth: “It is not possible to keep the soil healthy without animal manure.” The information in this book will prove that this is not true.

TRANSITION

Western society is on the cusp of an economy in which our scarce natural resources are used more wisely. An economy in which we ensure that the returns from our collective efforts are distributed more evenly across the world. The question, however, is whether we will be able to make this transition on our own (by design) or wait for it to catch up with us (by disaster). Potential solutions exist, but pursuing them requires individual and political courage. Farmers can lead by example by investing in practices without intentionally bred livestock. This will accelerate the transition to a sustainable economy.

Other creatures don’t celebrate their ingenuity as often as we do, but they don’t have to. Instead, they express their innate wisdom. We too have this innate wisdom. In this context, it is useful to point out the difference between intelligence and wisdom. Intelligence is the ability to solve problems through inventiveness and innovation. We have that in abundance. Wisdom is the ability to apply experience, awareness of context and foreknowledge of consequences and put it all into practice. This is where we seem to be more challenged.

As much as society extols the importance of looking for role models, the inward-looking work of becoming a good model for others is too often overlooked. Think about your own pursuits and make yourself heard when you have something to say. Your silence is not a great asset to society. Those who have power are responsible for sharing their power with others, whether by their example or by their thoughtful involvement.

Scientific evidence has clearly shown that we do not need animal food to thrive. Unlike animals that kill other animals for food, we have a choice. They kill out of necessity. We do it for pleasure. When we have abundant access to plant-based food and a choice between saving lives and killing animals, it is not at all humane to reject compassion and choose violence and death for others just because we like the taste of animal food and because animals do not fight back.

People eat meat because they think it makes them as strong as an ox, forgetting that an ox eats grass. Since the recommendation not to eat meat one day a week suggests deprivation, a

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campaign should promote the theme of eating every day of the week, in terms of whole foods that are tasty, easy to prepare and enrich our lives.

More and more people find the exploitation of animals and the associated loss of biodiversity as well as the killing of animals for human consumption, ethically unacceptable and no longer necessary in terms of nutritional physiology. This book therefore encourages a reconsideration of animal food consumption.

A ROADMAP

This book is divided into three controversial areas: 1) small-scale farming versus large-scale farming; 2) vegan-organic farming versus animal husbandry; and 3) plant cultivation and crop protection without harmful chemicals versus agricultural management strategies with the ‘help’ of synthesised products. The text addresses each of these topics in succession to better illustrate the challenges for agriculture, science and the health of society as a whole. To understand this, the text repeatedly returns to the controversies so that we can move forward to restore the health of our soils, our crops, our own health and the health of the planet.

Part I, ‘Agricultural Production’, explains that both large-scale, industrialised monoculture farming and factory farming have disastrous consequences. However, the central theme of the book is a rapidly developing trend in organic farming, so-called vegan-organic farming, which is based on the conscious renunciation of all products of animal origin. Part I also provides all the information needed to defuse the debates between two opposing movements: the proponents of large-scale industrial farming and those of small-scale farming on an ecological basis. Before discussing the impacts of livestock farming, the distinction between conventional, regenerative and organic farming is highlighted.

How to maintain as much green leaf mass as possible throughout the year to optimise plant growth is explained in Part II, ‘Plant Growth Management’. Our crop management basically determines how much of the sun’s one-way energy flow is captured and used. So, to get more energy into a system for healthy plant growth, we need to maximise photosynthetic conversion.

That the combination of plant growth and crop protection, the so-called ‘integrated approach’, offers alternative solutions is presented in Part III, ‘Crop Protection Management’. It is explained that crop protection measures often do not provide sustainable solutions to disease, pest and weed pressure because the measures chosen are curative rather than preventive.

The real truth and a roadmap for implementation can be found in Part IV, ‘Looking to The Future’. The pluralistic ignorance that seems to dominate our food consumption pattern, along the lines of ‘if nobody does anything about it, why should I?’, must be stopped from below.

PLANNING AHEAD

Certainly, our record on planning ahead for the long-term well-being of our planet leaves much to be desired. But anyone with an intelligent interest in how food is produced can see that the current wasteful primary agricultural production systems can no longer continue and that we need to show what radical changes are needed to get more people to switch to a more sustainable, alternative agricultural food production system. If you too want to make a real difference by growing decent crops on your own small but significant portion of the world, the following pages will tell you most of what you need to know.