



GROWING OUR OWN - VEGAN-ORGANICALLY

Growing Sustainably, Growing Compassionately

Most people in the UK could grow some of their own food, if only on their windowsills. Many could grow an important proportion in gardens and allotments. Some could buy land or help others to acquire the use of it. There could be plenty of land available in this country and in most parts of the world for self-reliant lifestyles.

Obviously such food, if grown by vegan-organic methods, is healthier because free from artificial chemical and slaughterhouse residues. Less obviously, but of utmost importance, because such ventures, voluntarily and conspicuously undertaken, can help to set a trend away from the mechanised agriculture, the large scale industrialism, the money worshipping consumerism, the pseudo-democracy that is destroying people, other animals and the world.

Much of the food on our supermarket shelves comes from parts of the world where many people never get enough to eat. It is wrong that we should use it when we could easily grow enough ourselves.

Industrialised agriculture, with its monocultures and dependence on heavy machinery and artificial fertilisers, is accelerating soil erosion worldwide. Its pesticides, herbicides and fungicides poison field workers, wildlife and the soil. It uses irreplaceable, polluting fossil fuels for its machinery and biocides, and to transport its products, often thousands of miles. Its factory-farmed animals are deprived of all significance in living, suffer painful and humiliating treatment and traumatic journeys to painful deaths.

Sadly, millions of people have been so corrupted by the example of the spiritually blind rich that they seek to copy their dependent lifestyles. The most important of all work - food production - is grossly undervalued. It has been tainted by forced labour, serfdom and slavery.

The urbanised millions of the developed world, many of whom live below the poverty line, are largely unaware of the source of their food. They have forgotten their most basic right without which political freedom is a mockery: the right to use land to meet their needs.

IT IS TIME TO CHANGE OUR WAYS!

It is becoming increasingly clear that the over-industrialised way of life, based increasingly on animal exploitation and spreading fast through the developing world, is not sustainable. It is wasting vital resources of land, water and energy that will be desperately needed as the world population continues to grow. Besides poisoning people and the environment, it causes global warming and makes holes in the protective ozone layer in the stratosphere. It must be simplified, and the developed world must give a lead.

Livestock farming must be phased out. Animals yield nothing, not even fertiliser, that cannot be got more economically direct from plants. Cattle, sheep and other ruminants emit methane, a gas that is molecule for molecule 20 - 30 times as powerful as CO₂ as a 'greenhouse gas'. It is building up in the atmosphere more rapidly and could become the major greenhouse gas in 50 years.

Land released from animal farming could be planted with trees: mixed varieties managed sensitively on a sustained yield plan could provide nearly all the things humans need, including food. At the same time, forests maintain the water cycle, check erosion and could check, even reverse, global warming. Orchards and hedges could protect small fields of vegetables and cereals.

10 million acres would be sufficient to feed the present population of Britain if it took its food direct from plants. This would leave 36 million acres of agricultural land for forests and for wildlife areas where animals could live unexploited.



At present few of us have the land (or the time or energy) to grow much of our own food, but we can all help raise awareness of the importance of the concept of 'Growing Our Own'. Even small-scale action can 'speak louder than words'. We can remind people that the exercise involved can be a real benefit to health. Moreover, an energetic 'Grow Your Own Food' campaign, based on the above ideas, could help raise awareness of the need for self-reliance, face to face democracy, local community power, and personal caring for each other.

Kathleen Jannaway

Full information, with references, is given in the booklets published by the Movement for Compassionate Living and these are available on the Publications page of the MCL website.

MCL, 105 Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT, UK

www.mclveganway.org.uk