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# COMPASSIONATE FRIEND



Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty - India  
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

## Vegan Food Label



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**Insect Farming**



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### Beauty Without Cruelty

is a way of life which causes  
no creature of land, sea or air  
terror, torture or death

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## From my Desk...

### Milk consumption increases

### Meat production

The FSSAI (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022 are in force.

Vegan products are now available and in demand, particularly dairy-free ones because people have been sensitised to animal suffering and killing for milk.

Milk is only produced after a calf is born so the dairy industry forces pregnancy after pregnancy upon milch cattle. This is achieved via torturous artificial insemination.

No female produces extra milk, they produce just enough for their own offspring. So if we partake of animal milk, we are depriving a calf of its right to its mother's milk. Male calves deprived of their mothers' milk are these days raised to be killed for their meat and leather.

The dairy industry subsidises the meat industry. If the milch cattle was raised only for slaughter then meat would be exorbitantly expensive. No demand for milk would mean less dairy cattle and in turn less calves would be born and eventually slaughtered.



**Diana Ratnagar**

Chairperson

## Gazetted Notification dated 10 June 2022

1. Short title and commencement -
  - (1) These regulations may be called the **Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022.**
  - (2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.
2. Definitions – (1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, -
  - (a) “Vegan food” means the food or food ingredient, including additives, flavourings, enzymes and carriers, or processing aids that are not products of animal origin and in which, at no stage of production and processing, ingredients, including additives, flavourings, enzymes and carriers, or processing aids that are of animal origin has been used.
  - (2) Words and expressions used herein and not defined but defined in the Act, or rules or regulations made thereunder shall have the meanings assigned to them in the Act, rules or regulations, respectively.
3. General requirements – (1) No person shall manufacture, pack, sell, offer for sale, market or otherwise distribute or import any food as vegan food unless they comply with the requirements laid down under these regulations.
  - (2) The food products to be called vegan, shall not have involved animal testing for any purpose including safety evaluation, unless provided by any Regulatory Authority.
  - (3) Every packaging material used for vegan foods shall comply with the provisions of the packaging regulations.
  - (4) The Food Business Operator shall ensure that all stages of production, processing and distribution shall be designed to take the appropriate precautions in conformity with the Good Manufacturing Practices in such a way to avoid the unintended presence of non-vegan substances.
  - (5) If the same production line is shared with non-vegan products or ingredients, thorough cleaning or comparable measures in conformity with Good Manufacturing Practices shall be carried out before production of vegan products commences and the same shall extend to all associated machinery, equipment, utensils and surfaces.
  - (6) The Food Business Operator shall take appropriate precautions in conformity with the Good Manufacturing Practices before vegan products are prepared, produced or packaged.
  - (7) There shall be traceability established up to the manufacturer level and the Food Business Operator shall comply with any other requirements specified by the Food Authority to maintain the vegan integrity of the foods or food ingredients or products thereof from time to time.
  - (8) Every vegan food or ingredient shall comply with the relevant provisions, as applicable under the Act, rules and regulations.
4. Labelling and display requirements – (1) The seller of vegan food either exclusively or as part of retail merchandise shall store and display such food in a manner distinguishable from non-vegan food.
  - (2) Every package of vegan foods, after the approval, shall carry the logo as specified below:
    - (3) In addition to the specified requirements, all vegan foods shall comply with the packaging and labelling requirements specified under the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020, except clause (b) of sub regulation (4) of regulation 5.
5. Vegan food compliance – (1) The Food Business Operator shall submit an application to the concerned licensing authority with all necessary details in a format as may be specified by the Food Authority.
  - (2) The Food Authority may specify guidelines for approval of vegan logo.
  - (3) No vegan food products shall be imported except with a certificate issued by the recognised authorities of the exporting countries in the format as specified by the Authority is accepted.

# Recreational Fishing is a Barbaric Blood Sport

*Below are extracts from an appeal sent by BWC to the Prime Minister, some Union Ministers and Members of the Lok Sabha, requesting their kind and favourable consideration with regard to making sure that recreational fishing is not allowed in India*



**Fishing tourism is harming our rivers. Since killing mahseer is illegal, the fish is hooked by sadistic anglers. They catch, weigh, photograph, and release it back into the river after it has been subjected to irreversible damage following a long ordeal of stress, pain, fear, struggle and torture. Photo courtesy: India Angling**

**W**e wish to draw your attention to a few sections from **The Indian Marine Fisheries Bill, 2021** reproduced below – words made bold by us for you to easily notice what is exactly involved. Since this Bill is planned to be introduced in the Lok Sabha during the forthcoming session, we request you to please oppose it, particularly in view of the unimaginable cruelty involved in recreational fishing as explained in this letter.

## Definitions Chapter I – 3

(d) “fish” means **finfish, molluscs, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animals** and plants other than marine mammals, reptiles and sea birds.

(f) “fishing” means searching for or trailing or pursuing fish, catching or taking or harvesting fish by **any method**.

(z) “recreational fishing” means **fishing for sport or pleasure**.

## Chapter II

Under Marine Fisheries Development Plan 5 (2) (iv):

“**recreational** fishing, aqua-sports, marine tourism and other activities aimed at promotion of additional livelihood opportunities.”

Under Special Licence for certain activities 18 (1):

The Central Government may authorise the State Government to grant special **licence for allowing recreational fishing**, aqua-sports, marine tourism **and any other activity on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed**.



Recreational fishing is angling – a blood sport – just like hunting wildlife.

Since some species of fish like the Himalayan mahseer are protected, 'catch and release' fishing is practiced, but fish that are hooked and released back into rivers, rarely survive due to shock, inability to eat, and mouth infection. Targeted fish are not the only ones to get caught in anglers' fishing hooks. Others such as turtles, including protected marine life have had their food pipes ruptured, and legs of aquatic birds have got entangled in fishing lines. There is no doubt that fish that are hooked undergo a long ordeal of stress, pain, fear, struggle, agony and torture. Live bait such as minnows, worms, tiny fish, frogs, flies, etc. that are used by anglers to lure fish to bite into the hooked bait, also suffer and die.

When hooked or netted, all fish wither in pain and gasp for air. Chased, confined or otherwise threatened, they react just as we do to stress with increased heart and breathing rates and adrenal hormone release. Bio-chemically and structurally the central nervous systems of fish closely resembles that of humans.

We feel on knowing these facts, you will not want to allow fish to be tortured; nor would you like the sacred rivers of our country to be misused for recreational fishing in order to promote tourism – it is just not worth the blood money earned. After all, the *Matsya* or Fish Avatar of Vishnu in Hindu mythology is said to be the first incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Recreational fishing and angling is not only cruel, but illegal since it attracts the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

## Fishing Bans

To allow fish to breed and spawn, India imposes annual fishing (trawling) bans along its coasts during the monsoon. During this period fishers depend on financial support from the government.

While fishing is completely banned in national parks, in wild life sanctuaries fishing may be regulated, controlled or prohibited. For example, the government bans fishing for around 7 months of the year along a 20 kilometre stretch within the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in Orissa in order to protect Olive Ridley turtles.

Fishing is prohibited for 500 miles in the Ganga river but the ban is mostly defied... except may be at Haridwar where fishing in the Ganga river is strictly disallowed.

In 2021 the Delhi government banned fishing in certain stretches of the Yamuna river because the water was extremely polluted making the fish unfit for consumption.

Besides the Ganga and Yamuna, fishing for three months during the rainy season in their tributaries Tons, Belan, Varuna, Naina, Gorma, Lapri, Tudiari and Sasur Khaderi, has been banned.

At Pawapuri in Nalanda District of Bihar, where Lord Mahavir attained salvation, everyone abstains from non-vegetarian food and alcohol. Fishing is prohibited around the Pawapuri Jal Mandir and when a fish dies it is given a proper burial.

Fishing is also banned on the Shetrunji river around 5 kms of the Jain holy pilgrimage place of Palitana. In 2014 Palitana became the first city in the world to be legally vegetarian. Buying, selling, penning, etc of animals for their flesh and eggs or any related work has been outlawed.



Khurshid Bhathena is a Trustee and Honorary Secretary of BWC-India

# Animals: Entities, not Utilities

Beauty Without Cruelty **observed with dismay that a number of companies are encouraging livestock farming which results in blood money, says Ashoke Dasgupta**

In 2014 the Government of India made it mandatory for all companies to spend at least 2 percent of their net profits on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and declare such activities on their websites.

BWC appreciates the corporate zeal to help humans improve their living conditions in Indian villages by undertaking development initiatives like the construction of dwellings and roads, teaching villagers modern techniques to improve agricultural productivity, helping them with water conservation, installing solar energy, educating children and empowering women.

However, we were disconcerted by some companies' encouragement of livestock farming, which results in blood money.

These organizations support animal husbandry, dairy, goat and poultry farming, fisheries, bee-keeping, sericulture, and similar activities. Suffering is an intrinsic aspect of animal labour, as well as for food animals specially bred and raised to be exploited for milk and eggs, or fattened to be killed for their meat. This has been conveniently overlooked.

Livestock falls into two categories: animals for food production like goats, sheep, poultry, pigs, rabbits, fish and dairy cattle (cows and buffaloes); and non-food animals like oxen, horses, donkeys and camels (beasts of burden).

We approached the heads of some companies and reminded them of the spiritual unity of all life, requesting that they offer humane vocational training, in lieu of animal exploitation, to people wanting to earn an honourable living.

We asked them not to forget India's *ahimsa* culture as well as that all the world's religions enjoin compassion for, not exploitation of, creatures of land, sea and air. We also reminded them that it is a widely-accepted scientific fact that global warming, rising oceans and other environmental disasters are being accelerated by animal abuses – especially by the incorporation of animals into human diet.

We enclosed several posters specially made to make an impact, such as:

- Milk of Human Unkindness
- Breeding for Profiteering (poultry farming)
- Weep for Sheep
- Cruel Goat Farming
- Fish Feel Pain
- Harmful Honey
- Silk loses its Sheen
- Exploitation & Murder
- Earning Blood Money from Livestock Farming (printed on opposite page).

While wishing them luck in their endeavours we urged them to offer vocational training which does not involve any creatures being bred for slaughter, or the exploitation of any animals for food or labour. These may include trades like welding, plumbing and electrician.

No company has responded to BWC's plea, but we hope managements may reconsider their strategies to end their financial support for the generation of blood money from innocent animals by unthinking, desperate villagers.



*Ashoke Dasgupta is an award-winning journalist and a former editor of Compassionate Friend*

# Earning Blood Money from Livestock Farming



**Helping humans to raise, exploit and kill  
poultry, goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, fish and silkworms  
is not humanitarian.**

**True humanitarianism respects both human and non-human species.**



# Spread the Word

## Plastics can contain Animal Substances

**T**he word “plastic” indicates something that is malleable and can be shaped, formed, modelled, or moulded. Apart from knowing what the material is capable of doing, we need to know the ingredients used to manufacture plastics.

Everyone is aware that saying NO to Plastics helps the environment and world heal. But there is another good reason, especially for those who care for animals, not to use it: it could contain animal substances.

### Components

Some plastics originate from petroleum/oil and natural gas. They can be synthetic or semi-synthetic organic solids. Natural plastic materials are from plant resins and shellac (lac insects). Chemically modified natural materials are rubber and nitrocellulose (both from plants), collagen (connective tissues of animals) and casein (milk protein).

For years scientists have been trying to develop biodegradable plastics with different renewable materials to replace petroleum. Many feel that keratin (derived from feathers, hair, hooves, horns and wool) can lend strength and durability to thermoplastics. Research utilising chicken feathers (said to be “inexpensive, abundant and a waste product of the poultry industry”) to make plastics has been undertaken.

Another replacement idea is liquid wood which comes from pulp-based lignin, a by-product of paper mills. And, the starch from the taro/*arbi*/*kochu* tuber can be used to make plastic that degenerates over time.

In UK and USA, processes to clean and powder egg shells to fill biodegradable plastics that bolster strength were developed

in 2016. A year later China decided to get rid of its massive corn stockpile by using it as raw material for its fledgling biodegradable plastics industry. The government began promoting the nation’s poly lactic acid (PLA) sector which turned corn starch and cassava (tapioca) into biodegradable plastic products like bags and plates. Also crustaceans’ hardy shells contain chitin, a material that, along with its derivative chitosan, is being used by the plastic industry to make biodegradable PLA.

People believe PLA straws are an environmentally sound choice over single-use plastic ones. But this is not so (irrespective of what the PLA is made from) unless they are disposed off correctly. In order for items made from PLA to biodegrade, the temperature needs to be above 140° F for 10 consecutive days. They do not decompose in landfills, and cannot be composted in gardens. So if not sent to an industrial composting facility, or for incineration to cement companies, they can, just like plastic straws, end up in rivers and the ocean, and are as likely to be consumed by marine wildlife and fish, ultimately harming or killing them.

Completely synthetic molecules’ examples are Bakelite, Epoxy, Polyvinyl Chloride, and Polyethylene. This is probably why almost every one erroneously assumes that plastic can never contain any animal-derived components!

### Straws and Tetra Packs

The ban on single-use plastic which kicked in on 1 July, 2022 forced India’s beverage makers to stop attaching plastic straws to their small tetra packs. They have begun providing





**Products made from chitin from crab shells. Photo courtesy: sciencedirect.com**

paper straws or biodegradable straws made of PLA; or asking their retailers to distribute paper straws separately.

Paper straws are often made by rolling three layers of bleached waste paper and dipping in glue derived from animal blood, skins/hides, bones, horns, hooves, even fish. Moreover, they could have been coated with beeswax to retain their shape.

As stated above, PLA (poly lactic acid) is derived from a variety of substances. It can be from cellulose like fermented plant starch of corn, cassava (tapioca plant), maize, sugarcane or sugar beet pulp. Or it could be from chitin/chitosan.

Biodegradable PLA straws made from chitin/chitosan, a polysaccharide present in the natural state as an ingredient in the shellfish of marine crustaceans, is derived from aquatic creatures consisting of exoskeletons of crustaceans like shellfish, crabs, lobsters and shrimp.

A couple of years ago, over a dozen pubs in the UK declared that they felt it necessary to inform their customers that the biodegradable PLA alternative to plastic straws they were using were made from chitosan and therefore were unsuitable for vegans and vegetarians.

BWC wrote to India's largest beverage company, to make doubly sure that the straws they would be supplying with their tetra packs are suitable for vegans and vegetarians. However, we have not received any assurance from them to this effect.

It is important, but difficult no doubt especially if imported, to get to know the origin of the PLA (poly lactic acid) from which the biodegradable straws attached to the tetra packs are made. It would be best not to use a straw at all.

But, what about the tetra packs? What are they made of? Tetra Pak is the name of an international company and since it was the first to come out with such cartons, the item got to be commonly called and known as tetra pack. Although Tetra Pak has claimed to be the first company in the food and beverage industry to offer packaging with a fully traceable supply chain of plant based polymers, the ingredients used by other manufacturers of tetra packs may or may not be of plant origin.

In the light of the information given above it would be worth remembering that even if the content in the tetra pack is vegan or vegetarian, the carton itself and the straw supplied may contain animal derived substances.

# Ritual Slaughter

## Camel Sacrifices

About a month before Bakri-Eid, Beauty Without Cruelty sent off letters to the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of states, police and other authorities requesting them to ensure that no camels are sacrificed. This year we also attached the April 2022 Madras High Court final order to stop illegal inter-state trafficking and slaughtering of camels.

The Animal Welfare Board of India had also written on 7 June 2022 to the Secretaries of all states and union territories regarding intercepting illegal sacrifices. In turn, they issued orders to the Police pointing out that killing animals outside slaughterhouses in urban areas was illegal, and that it was illegal to sacrifice camels, cows and calves.

In addition, several Imams appealed to Muslims not to sacrifice animals that were prohibited, kill in open spaces, or upload photos and videos on social media.

Thanks to the efforts of People for Cattle in India, 18 camels that had been illegally transported from Rajasthan to Tamil Nadu



**Camel sacrificed in Karimnagar, Telangana.**

were rescued by the Hosur and Krishnagiri Police and sent back to Rajasthan.

Upon a complaint from the Gau Gyan Foundation, 16 camels that were being illegally trafficked for slaughter from Rajasthan to West Bengal via the Varanasi-Chandauli highway (NH-2) were intercepted in Uttar Pradesh. The animals which were between 1½ to 2 years old were found lying in the vehicle with their mouths tied. The Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate ordered them to be shifted to a shelter at Sirohi in Rajasthan.



**Truck containing 16 camels with their mouths tied intercepted at Varanasi.**  
Photo courtesy: lawbeat.in

However, Earth Quotient South India suspected that many camels were clandestinely killed in Telangana. They did however manage to save 4 cows.



## Barbaric Bonalu Festival

In 1989 when BWC managed to persuade the Catholic Church to stop the age old barbaric custom of teenage boys dressed in tiger-skin biting a piglet to death at Terekol, Goa, in celebration of St John's Baptism, we never imagined we would come across something similar 30 years later.

BWC was shocked to know from Earth Quotient South India that for Telangana's Bonalu Festival sheep, goats, fowl and their young are held aloft and passed from man to man who bites off a bit of its flesh till it dies.

If Karnataka can, what stops Telengana? It was not until January 2020 on the commencement of the Karnataka Prevention & Eradication of Inhuman Evil Practices & Black Magic Act, 2017 that "forcing any person to carry on evil practices such as killing of an animal by biting its neck (*gaavu*)..." became illegal.

## Man Beheaded

The Kerala Animals and Bird Sacrifices Prohibition Act of 1998, forbids animal sacrifices in temples to please the deity. However, in April 2022 rooster sacrifice was illegally conducted at Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple, Kodungalloor following which two persons were arrested.

Although there is a petition pending in the Supreme Court against the ban on animal sacrifice in Kerala, no order has been passed yet. In 2020 the Kerala High Court had dismissed the plea.

BWC feels it would be good if every state government bans animal sacrifice.

In January 2022 a youth was beheaded allegedly by mistake at the Yellamma temple during the Sankranti village festival at Valasapalle hamlet near Madanapalle in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. It seems the person who was sacrificing sheep one



**Barbarism at its height. Photo courtesy: Earth Quotient South India**

after another on the temple premises was inebriated and therefore made the grave mistake.

## Bullocks Brutally Killed

Long ago at the Mari Jathra and Thingala Jathra in villages around Tumakuru, Karnataka, sacrificial beheading of male buffaloes to appease goddess Maramma took place at annual fairs. In 1991, Beauty Without Cruelty along with Akhil Karnataka Prani Daya Sangh had managed to foil the beheading of about 100 buffaloes by contacting localities, distributing leaflets and giving speeches. Since then the administration banned sacrifice of buffaloes.

Despite a petition by residents, in May 2022 two oxen were sacrificed during the annual fair (held after three years due to the pandemic restrictions) in honour of the village deity Chowdeshwari in Bellibatlu village of Pavagada taluk in Karnataka.

# Meat Producers have a New Animal to Farm

*The research surrounding the sentience, emotions, behavior, intelligence, and other relevant aspects of insects' lives is quite recent says Matilde Nuñez del Prado Alanes*

In an effort to be more sustainable, the industry is turning to insects as an alternative source of protein. But new research on insect sensitivity and behavior raises ethical questions about this surprising trend.

Humans have fed on insects for centuries and continue to do so today. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, in 2013, insects were still part of the traditional diet of at least two billion people around the world, mostly in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Most of the small six-legged land animals consumed for food today are collected from the wild. However, in some countries, insect farms have existed for several decades.

Such is the case in Thailand, where experts estimate there are 20,000 small- to medium-scale cricket farms and about 5,000 for palm weevil larvae, and in China, where there are even some industrial-scale cockroach farms intended mainly for the production of medicines and animal feed. Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Kenya also have insect farms, mostly for crickets. Most of these farms are small-scale and not technologically developed.

In the Global North, the insect-based food industry is an emerging sector that is growing rapidly. Until recently, in addition to cultural rejection by potential consumers, one of the main barriers to the growth of the industry was in the legal field, since most Western countries did not have regulations that allowed the marketing of edible insects. However, recently, the EU authorised the use of insects as animal feed, and the United States approved the use of black soldier flies in dog food. Also, Canada allows the marketing of food products based on insects of some species for both human

and animal consumption. These initiatives are being replicated in other countries, which creates a favorable legal framework for the growth of the sector.

Canada currently has the largest cricket farm for human consumption in North America, where between 8 and 10 million individuals are harvested each week, in addition to several insect farms whose production is destined as feed for fish, poultry, and pets. One of the world's largest insect farms was opened in the Netherlands in 2019, and France is also among the leading producers of insects. Meanwhile, the U.S. is projected to produce about 60,000 metric tons of animal feed and 20,000 metric tons of oils for poultry and swine rations per year at the world's largest insect farm to be constructed in Illinois by 2024.

## The Insect Farming Propaganda

In recent years, the insect-based food industry, supported by the FAO, has successfully championed insects as a sustainable source of protein. Insects require much less water and land and emit much fewer greenhouse gasses than conventionally farmed animals to produce the same amount of protein. In addition, the industry says it could contribute to reducing food and agricultural waste worldwide. The list of so-called advantages is so long that several prestigious Western media outlets celebrate the initiative.

But for insect farming to deliver on these promises, the industry needs to grow in large magnitudes, which in turn could present some environmental and health problems.

## What about insects themselves?

Even if insect farming turns out to be more sustainable than raising cows, chickens, and pigs for food, proponents rarely mention the





**Farmed for food – black soldier larvae, crickets, palm weevils, cockroaches (clockwise, from top left). Photo courtesies: forbes.com, newfoodmagazine.com, bugsfeed.com, latimes.com**

ethical concerns that the industry raises. The research surrounding the sentience, emotions, behavior, intelligence, and other relevant aspects of insects' lives is quite recent, so the scientific community has yet to come to a consensus in terms of just how much pain and suffering insect farming would cause. However, more and more studies support the idea that many species of insects experience a variety of different emotions.

Scientists from Macquarie University consider "insect brains may indeed be capable of 'phenomenal consciousness'" and have "the capacity to be aware of sensations and emotions." In a similar path, a recent BBC article mentions that "there's mounting evidence that insects can experience a remarkable range of feelings" and that they can be "optimistic, cynical, or frightened, and respond to pain just like any mammal would."

According to Jonathan Balcombe, Ph.D. in Ethology and author of the book *Super Fly*, flies exhibit discerning social lives, idiosyncratic behavior, and sensitivities to stimuli that could be very similar to our own. For example, fruit flies are able to learn from what their peers are doing, they even suffer from insomnia and react to human-effective analgesics for chronic pain in a similar way we do.

"If industry predictions prove accurate, these farms might soon kill upwards of 50 trillion insects a year. That is more insects killed for food in a single year than the number of mammals killed by humans for food in the entire history of civilization," writes Jeff Sebo, director of the Animal Studies M.A. Program at New York University, and Jason Schukraft, senior research manager at think tank Rethink Priorities. In addition, the conditions to which insects are subjected can lead to premature death, as well as cannibalism, which is common among other farmed animals when they are under a lot of stress.

Even if it's not yet certain that insects are sentient, the latest studies suggest there's a good chance they are. According to Dr. Steve Cooke, Associate Professor of Political Theory at the University of Leicester, "It is important not to exclude insects from consideration, and perhaps to adopt a precautionary principle given the risks to them of getting it wrong."

Ethical concerns around the rapid growth of insect farming are growing, in part because producers plan to sell most of the insects as animal feed. According to European Circular Bioeconomy Fund, "growing numbers reveal that most of the insect meal produced will be used for livestock and fish feed." The fund states that producers are banking on "the market for animal feed as the more immediate business and growth opportunity for the insect industry." This means that despite the industry's promise to be more sustainable than traditional animal farming, it will be virtually impossible for it to be more ethical.



*Matilde Nuñez del Prado Alanes' topics of interest are the relationships between humans and other sentient animals from the perspective of Human-Animal Studies.*

Kind Courtesy: [sentientmedia.org](http://sentientmedia.org)

## Vegan Recipe *Fermented Rice*

**F**ermented rice is known by many names in different parts of India like *Neeragaram, Pazhyaiya Sadam Kanchi, Soru Thanni, Neecha Thanni, Pulichathanni, Pakhala, Nisineer, Paani Bhat, Panta Bhat, Poita Bhat.*

The American Nutrition Association says that the previous day's soaked rice is the best breakfast. In the agrarian communities of South East Asia, fermented rice plays a big role in the lives of people. It gives energy, nutrition and a cooling effect that is needed for a full day of manual labour. Unfortunately, people moving up the wealth chain look down on fermented rice as a poor man's food and ignore the great nutritional value it provides.

Traditionally rice is cooked in the afternoon and excess water is drained. After it cools down to room temperature, it is soaked fully in water and stored in an earthen clay pot, covered and left overnight at regular room temperature. The rice ferments and is rich in starch by the next morning when it is usually mashed and consumed after adding salt and may be a little lime juice. Some people drain the water before eating this rice along with raw onion, green chilli, or pickle.

The lactic acid bacteria break down the anti-nutritional factors in rice resulting in an improved bioavailability of micro-nutrients and minerals such as iron, potassium and calcium by several thousand percentage points. For example, after 12 hours of soaking, the iron content of 100 grams of the cooked rice changes from 3.4 mg to as much as 73.91 mg (an increase of 2073%).

Scientists who have done research on food practices among various regions in the world have concluded that the South Asian tradition of consuming the previous day's cooked rice soaked in plain water overnight, as breakfast the next day, was the best. It also contains

B6 and B12 vitamins which are not otherwise easily available in other foods. No wonder it cured a BWC vegan member of her B12 deficiency!

The rice generates and harbours trillions of beneficial bacteria that help digestion and has many disease fighting and immunity developing agents. The bacteria that grow in the intestines due to this rice safeguard the internal organs and keep them fit. Consuming this rice helps quicker digestion and wards off ageing, bone related ailments and muscular pains. Brown rice is said to be the best for this as its nutrients are retained intact.

The American Nutrition Association has listed the following health benefits if one sticks to the practice of having soaked rice.

- Consuming this rice as breakfast keeps the body light and energetic.
- Beneficial bacteria get produced in abundance for the body.
- Stomach ailments disappear when consumed in the morning because excessive and harmful heat in the body is neutralized.
- As this rice is very fibrous, it removes constipation and also dullness in the body.
- Blood pressure is normalised and hypertension subsides appreciably.
- It removes allergy induced problems and also skin-related ailments.
- It removes all types of ulcers in the body.
- Infections are kept at bay due to consuming this rice.
- It helps in maintaining a youthful and radiant look.

So do not throw away that extra rice. Soak it overnight. It could be the healthiest breakfast you have ever eaten!

# Neeragaram

## Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked rice
- 3 cups water
- Salt to taste
- ¼ teaspoon fenugreek/*methi* seeds
- 10 curry leaves
- 2 tablespoons coriander leaves, chopped
- 1 or 2 slices of lime for squeezing
- 1 or 2 green chillies
- 1 or 2 onions (optional)

## Preparation

Add 3 cups water, fenugreek seeds and salt (plus 1 whole green chilli and 5 curry leaves if desired for flavour) to the cooked rice.

Keep covered in an earthen vessel at room temperature overnight or for at least 12 hours.

Chill the vessel for half an hour in the fridge after mashing the rice if preferred.

Garnish with coriander and curry leaves.

Additional salt can be added as per taste.

Serve cold. If desired garnish with chopped raw onions and sliced green chillies, with a dash of lime juice, or with pickle.



# Fermented Rice Balls

## Ingredients

- 200 gms urad dal
- ½ teaspoon fenugreek/*methi* seeds
- 500 gms rice
- 2 small onions
- 4 green chillies
- 20 curry leaves
- Water as required
- Salt as required
- 4 teaspoons refined oil
- ½ teaspoon mustard seeds
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds

## Preparation

Mix urad dal, fenugreek seeds and rice along with a little salt. Soak in water and leave overnight to ferment.

Next morning drain the excess water and grind well. Add a teaspoon of water to form a smooth batter and transfer to a bowl.

Heat oil and add finely chopped curry leaves, onions, green chillies; also add cumin seeds and mustard seeds and sauté. Pour into bowl and mix,

Grease the holes of a *paniyaram/appam* pan with oil over a medium flame. Pour the batter into the holes and drizzle oil over the edges. Cover with lid and allow to cook for 5-7 minutes.

When the balls have risen and have turned fluffy, turn off the flame. Scoop out the balls and transfer them to a serving dish.

Serve with coconut or mint chutney.



Do visit [www.bwcindia.org/Web/Recipes/Recipesindex.html](http://www.bwcindia.org/Web/Recipes/Recipesindex.html) for an assortment of Beauty Without Cruelty's tested and tasted, healthy and delicious vegan recipes.











# Why Waste Grain and Water?

There would be more than enough food and water for everyone if humans did not breed animals and feed them grain just to raise them and exploit them for milk and eggs – only to then kill them.

Meat is second-hand food.

It is far better to directly consume the produce of the land.

## Feed and Water Conversion Ratios

To produce one kilogram of	requires	Feed (in kgs)	Water (in litres)
Vegetables		—	332
Fruits		—	962
Cereals		—	1644
Milk		1 to 5	1020
Eggs		1.5	3265
Chicken		2	4325
Pork		3	5988
Mutton		4 to 6	8763
Beef		5 to 20	15415
Fish		1.5	—



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