

FEMINISTS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS ===== NEWSLETTER

What We Are

Feminist for Animal Rights is a group of feminist, vegetarian women, with a vegan orientation, who are dedicated to ending all forms of animal abuse. Since exploitation of animals and women derive from the same patriarchal mentality, our struggle is for women as well as animals. FAR attempts to expose the connections between sexism (discrimination against women) and speciesism (discrimination against animals) whenever and wherever we can. We feel that the common denominator in the lives of both women and animals is violence—either real or threatened—and we work in non-violent ways to change that. We condemn the violence that takes place when animals are trapped, killed and skinned for their fur; when they are confined to cages and subjected to painful and repetitive experiments; when they are imprisoned under brutal conditions and killed for their flesh; when they are subjected to rituals of domination such as rodeos and circuses or used by humans in any other ways.

We feel that such violence towards animals is inherently the same type of violence that is directed against women. In patriarchal society women's bodies are also exploited for entertainment and profit. Prostitution, fashion shows and strip-tease acts are but a few examples. Less subtly, women's bodies are brutalized by men through rape, battery and other forms of physical assault. As with animals, women also do most of society's dirty, unskilled and undervalued labor. Pornography, the depiction of degrading and violent images of women, is another expression of violence towards women. Similarly, the distorted images of animals displayed in the media, language, advertising and cartoons distorts and degrades animals. Is this not another form of pornography? Such degrading images of women and animals contribute to real-life violence or real-life pornography. Both must be stopped.

Feminists for Animal Rights is dedicated to the promotion of vegetarianism because we concur with the feminist precept that the personal is political. We feel that it is not enough to claim an abstract respect for animals. We feel that we *must* show that respect in our own lives as well. As Carol Adams states, not eating the flesh of dead animals is one way of "putting feminism into action". We are vegan in our orientation because we feel that it is desirable, however difficult, to work towards the elimination of all products derived from or tested on animals—in our food, clothing, household products, etc.

Since it is mostly men who are the hunters, the vivisectioners, the agribusiness owners, etc. it is easy for women to despair at the prospect of change. But women partake in this violence as well. When women buy the flesh, skins and products derived from animals and their exploitation, we share in men's guilt. By consuming the products of men's violence, women help to maintain it. By renouncing this role, however, women *can* exert an important influence. By changing our own lives, we can help to change the lives of others, both human and non-human. In so doing, we move one step closer to achieving peace and justice for *all* living beings.

Anyone who would like more information on these and other ways of working toward the liberation of animals may write to us.

*This point is made by Harriet Schleiffer in an article written for *Agenda* in the July/August 1982 issue.

FAR welcomes the support of any women interested in working to abolish the exploitation of animals in our society and promoting the ideas of our group. We are presently small in number so any assistance you can offer will be of great help. We need women who are interested in doing layout, graphics, public speaking and out-reach, carpentry, leafletting, research and writing, etc. If you are concerned but do not have extra time or energy, a financial contribution would be very welcome. Our financial resources are minimal, and consequently limit our activities. If you have ideas for projects that you think we should undertake, please come and talk to us about them. We have regular meetings three times a month—two business meetings and one study group. Our study group has dealt with such topics as how to approach the unconvinced, vegetarianism; and similarities in the treatment of women and animals in this society.

Our meetings are presently held in Berkeley although we expect to have more meetings in San Francisco as more women from San Francisco become members. Please join us! Call 527-1365 for information and further details.

ANIMAL RIGHTS IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

Opinion

A Feminist View of the Mobilization

Undoubtedly, the April 24, 1983 Mobilization for Animals was a major achievement in the history of the animal rights movement. Fifteen thousand people assembled at four major locations around the country to express their outrage at the brutalization of animals in laboratories. The specific targets were the four major Primate Research Centers. Simultaneous demonstrations took place in many other countries as well. We had a chance to show both the world and ourselves our strength and potential as a political movement. Three thousand four hundred people showed up for the West Coast rally at Davis—and our coverage was generally favorable on television, radio and in newspapers. How could anyone find fault with such a momentous event! But if we take a closer look at the mobilization, this time with a feminist awareness, we see why this might happen.

At least one woman refused to go to the Mobilization because she did not want to hear Bob Barker, a man whom she stated "had been exploiting women on television for years". Those of us who did go and were subjected to his references to "pretty ladies" can, perhaps, appreciate this woman's concerns. Unfortunately for Bob Barker, the Mobilization audience was a bit more political than his usual, and some voiced their disapproval with loud hisses!

Clearly Bob Barker was chosen to speak at the rally because it was felt that his celebrity status would lend legitimacy to the animal rights movement. Most of the other speakers were obviously chosen for similar reasons. (Dobie Goodman, Jamie Lee Curtis, etc.) But is there not something strange about a movement that feels compelled to establish its credentials through association with the "stars". Haven't feminists been involved in enough movements that produced "stars" or were run by leaders? Isn't this, after all, one of the aspects of patriarchy that feminists are fighting against? Even the manner in which the rally was conducted reflected this "star" mentality. The "masses" listened to the celebrities offer them their pearls of wisdom. Anyone who has been involved in the animal rights movement for some time will find this type of structure reminiscent of conferences and other rallies.

It is difficult to refrain from attributing this type of structure and organization to the male mentality that has come to dominate so much of the animal rights movement (which is not to say that women do not partake in it, but only to the extent that they have adopted male norms and beliefs.) One can only speculate how feminists might have organized the rally. The collective spirit of the Women's Pentagon Action of 1980 comes to mind. No celebrities existed at that event. Workshops were held where women were able to learn from each other, not just from a select few; rituals were enacted including the weaving of yarn across one of the main entrances; women used civil disobedience to block the doorways to the Pentagon. In short, women's collective energy was unleashed in many creative ways.

The male domination of the Mobilization was also reflected in the way that it was organized. One man, Richard Morgan, heads the Mobilization for Animals. He then

appoints coordinators in various parts of the country who are almost all women. The old structure of men at the top and women at the bottom seems to be alive and well in the animal rights movement today.

By contrast with the Women's Pentagon Action, the Mobilization rally seemed very self-contained. While many of us felt invigorated by the large numbers and the high level of energy, we also felt frustrated by the tameness of our actions. Somehow, standing among 3,400 people in a room provided by the campus administration against which we were protesting did not seem to adequately express our outrage and pain at the continuing brutalization of animals by that same university.

Fortunately, there were some bright spots for feminists. Sally Gearhart gave an impassioned speech which received a standing ovation. She proclaimed to loud cheers that the animal rights movement could no longer be viewed by the public as a "lunatic fringe" but had become a "viable political force". A "women only" bus also went to the rally, giving women a chance to assert our support for animal rights within a women's space.

Does this mean that women should no longer support mainstream animal rights events? I am not at the point where I would say yes. I would say, however, that women must be aware of the problems inherent in working in a movement that is dominated by men. When we do join with them we must do our best to create a separate female energy that can combat the overwhelming male energy that permeates so many events. We can also create our own events. A number of conferences have already been held on women and the environment. We could hold similar events concerned more specifically with the abuse of animals. We could create our own rallies, marches, and rituals as well. Women abound with creative energy. Perhaps we can learn to use it in ways that will work towards ending not only our own oppression but that of animals as well.

—Marti Kheel

What You Can Do As An Individual

Aside from making changes in your lifestyle that will help to reduce the suffering of animals (such as adopting a vegetarian diet, buying products not derived from or tested on animals) there are a number of ways you can help as an individual. Writing letters to the editor is an excellent way of reaching thousands of people at no cost. The Oakland Tribune and the Berkeley Gazette have been particularly receptive to letters with an animal rights point of view. Whenever you are in a bookstore, you can ask if they have any books with animal rights/ environmental themes. If not, you might suggest that they stock such books as Elizabeth Gray's *Green Paradise Lost*, Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature*, Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* or Hans Reusch's *Slaughter of the Innocent*. Libraries can be approached as well. If you go to a restaurant that offers no vegetarian meals, complain to the manager. Finally, simply talking to people about your ideas on animal rights can do a great deal to raise people's consciousness. Don't be a closet animal rights sympathizer! Voice your opinions and your concerns!

Gay Day

On the sunny Sunday of June 26, **Feminists for Animal Rights** participated in the International Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day at San Francisco's Civic Center. In the parade itself, animal rights people estimated about 45 in their contingent, drawing a favorable response from the crowds. We did not march, preferring to set up and stay by our literature laden table. We were situated between the Fund for Animals table and, curiously, a Burger Pit stand that industriously sullied the air with the stench of charred flesh. Throughout the crowded, hot day, massive varieties of humans inspected us, reading our data, signing our petitions and even giving donations! They asked us such questions as "how does feminism tie in with animal rights?" and "do we step on ants?" "Get your hamburgers here!" our neighbors hawked. "Get your dead animals there" Laura chorused. A man clad in a ragged sheep skin loin cloth with matching leggings strode by, no doubt enacting his idea of the noble savage. Tina looked at me, suppressing the urge to rip his borrowed fur off. Rogene delighted at how some people would light up enthusiastically when spotting the rodeo flyer, but would then slink away, betraying the wrong interest. I noted grimly that we should have had a blow-up of slaughterhouse violence in our display to neuter our neighbors' burgeoning business. Interestingly enough, three vivisectionists graced our table with their presence, two identifying themselves as neurophysiologists, purportedly the most notorious of their species. Their protestations became rationalizations and intriguingly enfolded into confessions. For some reason, they felt a need to voice their occasional feelings of pity as though to convince us that they had some molecules of conscience left. I felt uncomfortable as they bared what remained of their souls.

In all, the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay event was a highly educational experience. The greaseburger pit and the visitation of the vivisectionist served to enlighten me in my internship as an animal rights activist. The many dogs dragged along for this event were panting and no doubt thirsty and we vowed to bring water and bowls next year. We also resolved to come armed with slaughter house scenes as we take our place, which we will have especially requested, next to the Burger Pit.

Dorothy Vinals

Gay Rodeo - A Sad Event

Recently, **FAR** was involved in protesting the gay rodeo. Rodeos are, perhaps, men's most blatant attempt to celebrate the domination of nature (in this case animals). Domestic animals are brutalized so as to appear wild and unmanageable. Bucking broncos and steers are made to buck through the use of a leather strap pulled painfully around their lower abdomen, where their intestine are located. Electric prods are forced into the animals' rectums to drive them wild. "Cowboys" dig painful spurs into animals' ribs to maintain their frenzy. **FAR** distributed a flyer expressing our outrage at these brutalities. We also wrote a letter to *Coming Up* requesting that they issue a disclaimer for their advertisement for the gay rodeo. Anyone wanting to help protest could write or call *Coming Up* or any of the several gay men's newsmagazines that have been covering the rodeo. Let's let them know that violence is *not* entertaining!

Referendum For Animals

A petition is currently being circulated to establish a referendum in Berkeley which would propose an ordinance to abolish laboratory research on animals. If you live in Berkeley, please contact us so you can add your name! Also, please let us know if you would like to help circulate petitions.

FAR Workshops and Presentations

FAR is interested in doing workshops and presentations on the general issues of animal rights as well as the connections between animal rights and feminism. We have a 20 minute slide-show presentation produced by the Animal Rights Network entitled "Animal Rights - The Issues and the Movement" which we will show to any interested group along with a presentation and discussion.

We are also interested in doing workshops that involve consciousness-raising about animals. Connie Salamone has written an excellent six page article suggesting possible topics for such a group which can be obtained from our group. It is hoped that the same method that helped women to understand the effects of sexism in their own lives will also help us to comprehend the effects of speciesism in our lives, the lives of animals and all of nature. We will be having a workshop at the upcoming Jewish Feminist Conference that will employ this technique. If you know of anyone who is interested in having us do either a presentation or workshop, please contact us.

Slide Show

Feminist for Animal Rights is currently producing a slide show to illustrate visually the negative connection our culture all too often makes between women and animals. We are looking for examples from the media (magazine/newspaper advertisements, billboards, cartoons, movie posters, etc.) to help us make our point. Our aim is to show how pervasive is the equation of women/animals/violence in American popular culture. In general, we will stop short of pornography since the work **WAVPM** does illustrates all too well the use of women/animals for sexual exploitation. We'll concentrate instead on the media exploitation that so often goes unnoticed - the advertisements we see so often we forget what they mean. If you have any photo/advertisements that you'd like to contribute, please send them along with your name and address to BETSY SWART, 3914 24th Street, San Francisco CA 9414.

Information Packet

FAR has assembled an information packet that deals primarily with the connections between feminism and animal rights but also with more general issues of animal abuse. Anyone interested in obtaining this packet can do so by sending a \$2.50 contribution (see order form).

World Women's Network

Connie Salamone is a feminist, vegetarian activist who has been working on animal rights and environmental issues and their connection to feminism for ten years. She has a wealth of information on all of these issues. Currently she is working on an anthology of women and animals and will be looking for contributors. She has an excellent article in *Reweaving the Web of Life—Feminism and Nonviolence* edited by Pam McAllister, a book that will serve as the model for her own. Connie has begun to organize a world women's network of individuals and autonomous collectives to work on issues concerning women, animals and the environment. Possible activities for the network include publishing a newsletter, holding conferences, sharing literature, etc. If you are interested in being a part of this network or in contributing to the anthology you can write to Connie at:

Vegetarian Feminists
616 6th Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215

(Vegetarian Feminists is the local collective with which Connie works.)

Where to Read About It

A number of articles have begun to appear on the connection between women and animals under patriarchy. One of our members recently wrote an article entitled "Animal Rights is a Feminist Issue" for the March issue of *Matrix* (available from our group). The article was then reprinted in the Summer issue of *Womanspirit*. After years of effort by many women to get *Ms.* to deal with the issues of feminism and animal rights, an excellent article finally appeared in the July 1983 issue. For ongoing information about the animal rights movement you can rely on *Agenda*, the only independent newsmagazine for the animal rights/liberation movement. It is an excellent magazine and really the only way of staying in touch with what the movement is doing around the country. *Agenda* has several editors with a feminist awareness so that you can count on feminist issues being raised at least some of the time. An interview with Sally Gearhart will be featured in the next issue. *Agenda* can be ordered for \$15 for a year's subscription, \$2.00 for a sample copy. Their address is:

Animal Rights Network
Box 5234 Westport
Connecticut, 06881

Tools for Research

Tools for Research is the title of an excellent and very moving documentary film produced by Marie Carosello which exposes the major myths surrounding animal research. It is available for both rental and purchase. Contributions would also be welcome to help with debts incurred in order to finance the making of the film. Send contributions or inquiries to:

Film to Liberate Laboratory Animals, Inc.
725 Lisbon Street
San Francisco, CA 94112

Vegan Cookbooks

Often people have difficulty adopting a vegan diet (i.e. no meat, eggs, milk or other products derived from animals) because they do not know how to go about it. There are a number of excellent vegan cookbooks that can help you get started. Many of them have been sold in the past at A Women's Place bookstore, so you can support women and animals at the same time! These are a few of the best ones:

The Back to Eden Cookbook by Jethro Kloss

The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook by Louise Hagler

Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Cookbook by Edith Young Cotrell

The Cookbook for People Who Love Animals available from World of God, Rt. 2, Box 98E, Brooksville, FA 33512

Ten Talents by the Seventh Day Adventists

(The latter two are not looking for converts, in case you were worried!)

Cruelty Free Shopping

Most commercial products that we buy have been tested on animals in painful experiments. Many products also contain ingredients derived from animals. If you do not wish to contribute to this exploitation we encourage you to buy from the small number of companies that produce cruelty-free products. These products can be ordered from the following companies:

Beauty Without Cruelty

175 West 12 Street
New York, New York 10011

Amberwood

125 Shoal Creek Road
Fayetteville, Georgia 30214

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

Joan Ashley
247 Everett Street
Middleboro, MA 02346

We also have a long list of manufacturers and retailers who do not include animal products or test on animals available upon request.

Tapes for Sale

A copy of Sally Gearhart's lecture on "Feminism and Animal Rights" is available from FAR courtesy of **Action for Animals**. The lecture, taped at Old Wives' Tales bookstore, explores the connections between the exploitation of animals and of women.

Also available is a tape of Sally Gearhart's speech from the Plenary Session of the **1983 Attorneys for Animal Rights** conference. Cassettes are \$5.00. Mail orders to **AFAR**, 333 Market Street, Suite 2300, San Francisco, CA 94105.