

Free Vegan Food Fayre - 10th December 2005

At St. Pancras Community Centre, Camden Road Camden

Following the success of three similar fayres in London, Vegan Campaigns held a free vegan food fayre on Saturday, 10th December 2005 in Camden. The main aim of the fayre was to introduce vegetarians and non-vegetarians to the delights of vegan food and to encourage people to consider changing their diets to reduce the exploitation of animals, people and the environment. The free food fayre was an opportunity to promote veganism and educate the public by demonstrating that a vegan diet is healthy, varied, tasty and practical. The venue was chosen because it is a short walk from Camden Lock, and also in a residential area.

The atmosphere was lively, happy and bustling with over 300 people attending. Admission to the fayre and all the food were completely free, however some participants chose to donate money.

We were delighted to receive generous donations of food and drink from Pogo Café, Alpro, Frys, Redwoods, Lyme Regis, Isle of Bute Foods, Yaoh, Booja-Booja, Plamil and Beanies. The hot and cold food served was varied and delicious and included mini quiches, pies, nut roast, Yorkshire puddings, casserole, stew, salad, cauliflower "cheese", sandwiches, burgers, chocolate yule cake, sugar free energy balls, "cheese" cake, trifle, Christmas cake, Christmas pudding, biscuits and chocolate.

Not only did the public taste delicious food, they were also given advice on how to go vegan and information on the reasons for making this choice. We had an information stall with literature including a recipe booklet and "Why Vegan" published by the Vegan Society. Bourgeois Boheme held a fashion stall at the fayre to show how easy it is to be stylish and cruelty free.

The idea for the free food fayre came from Realfood who have organised several similar events. These proved to be very successful in promoting veganism and setting up local groups. The Realfood website includes a plan on how to organise a vegan fayre - see www.realfood.org.uk for more information.

Information About the Participants

We asked participants to fill in a questionnaire about the event (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire), with an incentive of a free gift for filling it in. Of the estimated 250 people who attended the free vegan food fayre, 169 completed the questionnaire.

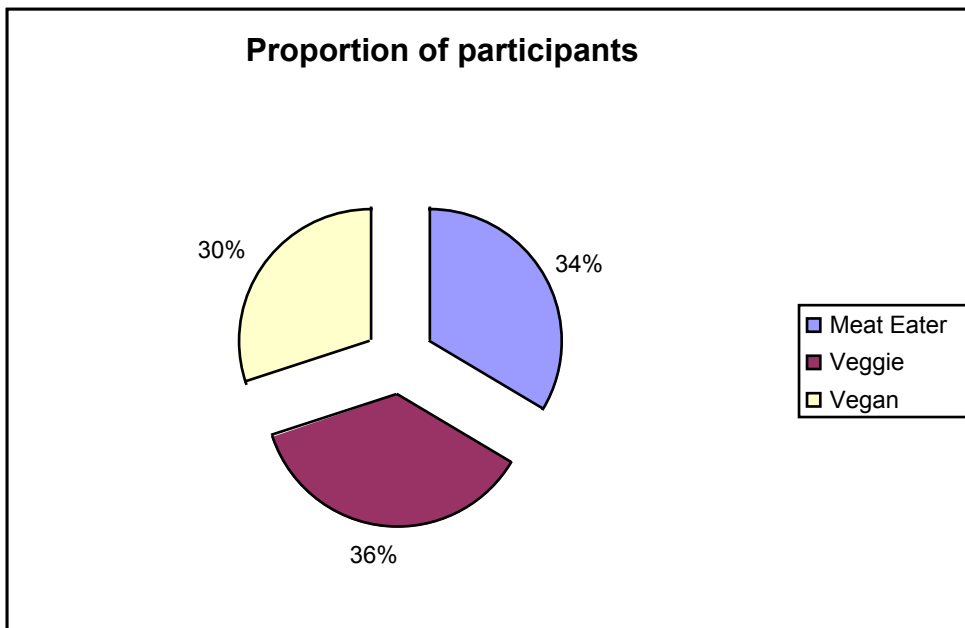
57 (34%) of the respondents were meat eaters, 61 (36%) were vegetarian and 51 (30%) were vegan. As can be seen from Table 1 below, the proportionate number of meat eaters is lower than the previous food fayres in 2004 and 2005, but still higher than the first event in 2003.

Table 1: Breakdown of respondents according to diet

	Meat Eaters	Vegetarians	Vegans
2003 (Soho)	27.4%	35.6%	36.9%
2004 (Soho)	51%	31%	18%
2005 (Pogo Café, Hackney)	41%	37%	23%
2005 (Camden)	34%	36%	30%

Chart 1 shows the breakdown of respondents according to diet for the free Food Fayre in Camden.

Chart 1



Publicity

We wanted to know what kind of publicity works best, so the questionnaire asked visitors how they found out about the fayre. Table 2 show a breakdown of answers. The highest proportion of participants heard about the fair through word of mouth (27%), the second highest proportion of participants were handed a flier in Camden on the day of the fayre (18%) followed by 16% of participants who received a flier through their letter box.

Table 2: "How did you hear about today's event?"

	Meat Eater	Vegetarian	Vegan	Total	%
Word of mouth	18	13	15	46	27
Handed one in the street today	10	16	5	31	18
Through letterbox	12	12	3	27	16
Flier at Community Centres	5	1	4	10	7
Flier at Pogo café		3	6	9	5.5
Flier at health food shop	1	3	3	7	4.5
Websites / email list	2	1	3	6	4
Advert in Camden New Journal	2	3	1	6	4
Flier at other Veggie/vegan café or restaurant	1	1	3	5	3
Flier at local library	3	1		4	2
Flier at School / college		3	1	4	2
Street stall	1	1	2	4	2
Other / cannot remember	2	1	1	4	2
Through another group		1	1	2	1
Flier at gig/theatre		1	1	2	1
Xmas without Cruelty Fayre			2	2	1
Total	57	61	51	169	100

Quality of the Food

Table 4 and Chart 2 illustrate the quality and taste of the food at the fayre. Overall, 67% of respondents felt that the quality and taste of the food was excellent and 24% felt that the food was good.

Comments made about the taste, variety and quality of food included:

"Great Food - I'm lovin' it!"(vegetarian)

"... very useful for getting ideas for home cooking ... mindful of salt and gluten contents and yeast products..." (Vegan)

"Great tasting food, I was scared everything would taste like soya! Taken a few recipes home!" (meat eater)

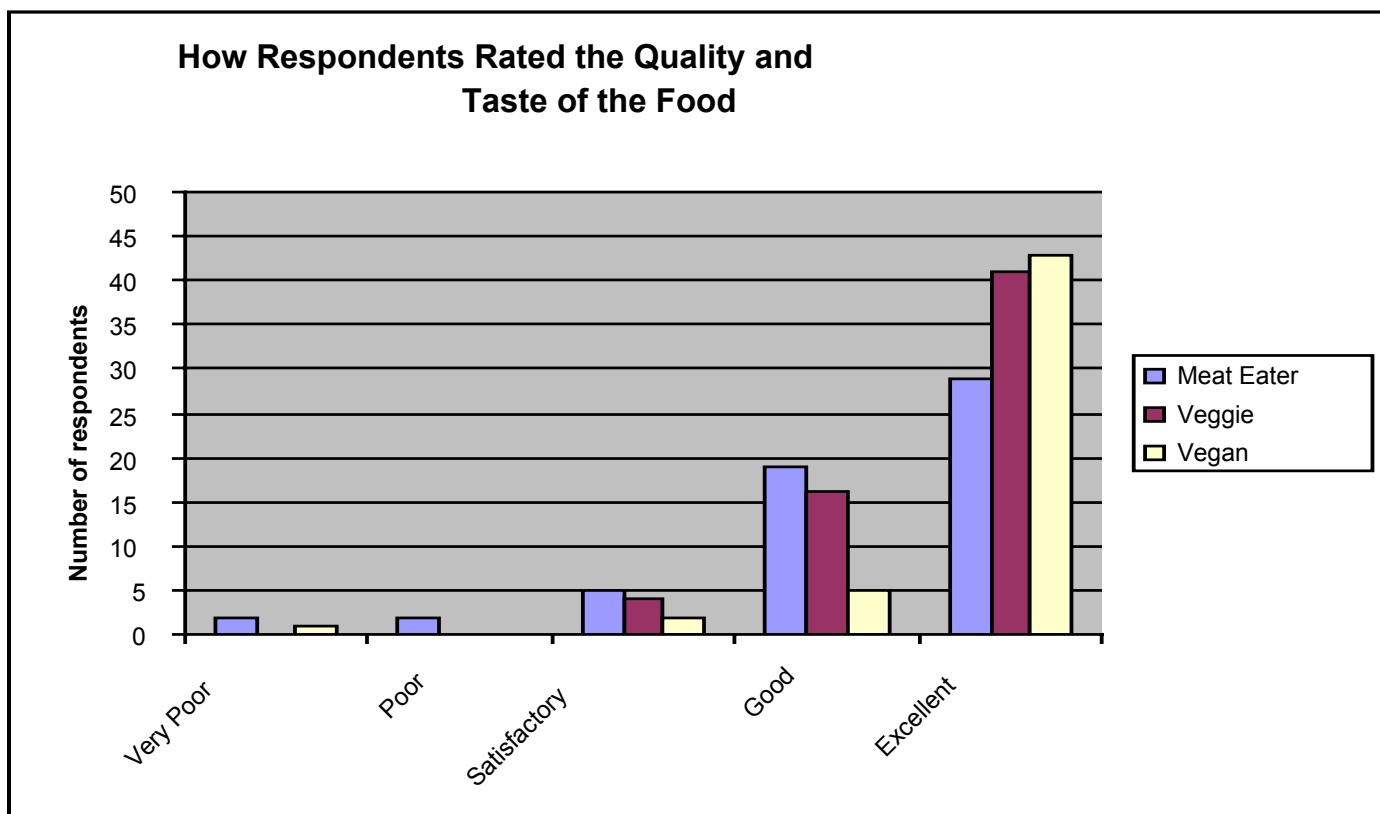
"A wonderful range of food, cooked with love" (vegetarian)

"Very surprised about the variation" (meat eater)

Table 4: How respondents rated the quality and taste of the food overall

	Meat-Eater	Vegetarian	Vegan	Total
Very Poor	2		1	3
Poor	2			2
Satisfactory	5	4	2	11
Good	19	16	5	40
Excellent	29	41	43	113

Chart 2



Did the Fayre Change People's Attitudes and Diets?

Participants were asked how they would change their diet after the fayre. Table 5 shows the responses to this question.

A high proportion of meat eaters (76%) and vegetarians (89%) said that they would change their diet as a result of the fayre.

45% of meat eaters said that they would introduce more vegetarian or vegan food into their diet; 20% of meat eaters were either thinking about or definitely becoming vegetarian and 11% of meat eaters were even thinking of becoming vegan!

57% of vegetarians planned to introduce more vegan food into their diet, and 32% were either thinking of or definitely going to become vegan.

Table 5: How will you change your diet after today?

	Meat-Eater	Vegetarian	Vegan
No change in diet	14 (24%)	7(11%)	51(100%)
Continue eating meat, but eat more vegetarian / vegan food	26 (45%)		
Thinking about becoming vegetarian	9 (16%)		
Definitely becoming vegetarian	2 (4%)		
Will continue to be vegetarian, but will eat more vegan food		35 (57%)	
Thinking of becoming vegan	6 (11%)	18 (30%)	
Definitely becoming vegan		1 (2%)	

What helped people to change their diets?

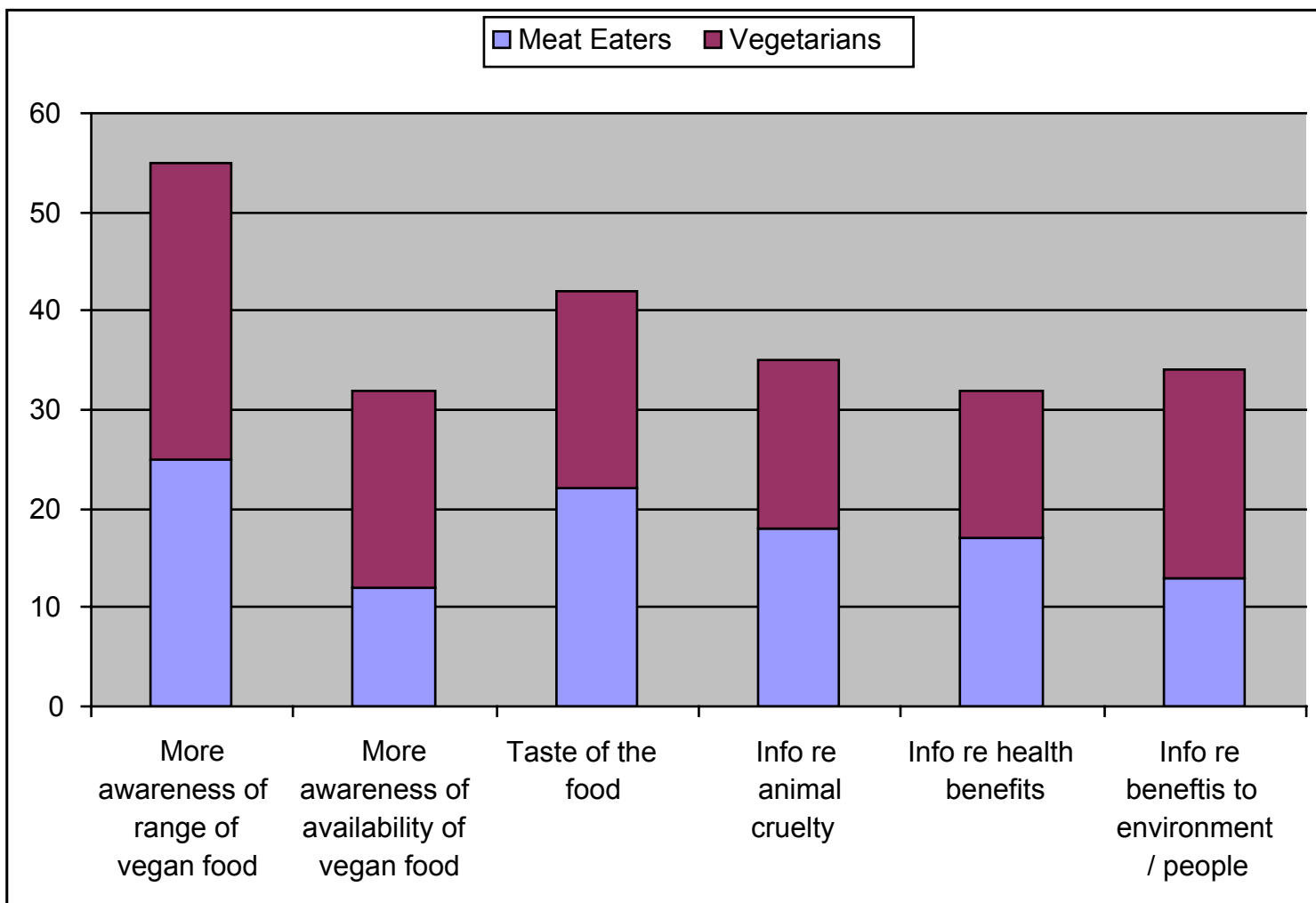
Respondents who indicated that they were changing their diet because of the fayre were asked to tell us about their reasons for doing this by selecting from a list of options (they could tick more than one and had space to write other reasons). **The option that received the highest number of responses (55) was gaining awareness of the range of vegan food available, followed by the taste of food (42 responses).** Responses are shown in Table 6 and chart 3:

Table 6: If you are changing your diet or thinking about it because of today, what helped you to make this choice?

	Meat-Eater	Vegetarian	Total
Gaining more awareness of the range of vegan food available	25	30	55
The taste of food	22	20	42
Information about the cruelty involved in animal farming	18	17	35
Information about	13	21	34

the benefits of a vegan diet to the environment/people			
Gaining more awareness of the availability of vegan foods	12	20	32
Information about the health benefits of a vegan diet	17	15	32
Other: The vegans here today look really healthy		1	1
Honesty and openness of people involved	1		1

Chart 3 - How Respondents Felt They Were Helped at the Fayre to Make The Decision to Change Their Diets



Comments relating to changes in diet, included:

"A very warm atmosphere and the friendly people really helped convince me of the benefits of the vegan lifestyle" (vegetarian)

"I am more aware of the health benefits of the vegetarian / vegan lifestyle" (meat eater)

How People Felt They Could Start or Maintain a Healthy Vegan Lifestyle

Respondents were also asked if there is anything else that would help them to start or maintain a healthy vegetarian/vegan diet lifestyle. They could choose more than one option from the following list:

- * More information (please specify type of information)
- * Joining a vegetarian/vegan group
- * Having a vegan buddy (being in contact with an experienced vegan who can give you advice)
- * Other (please specify)

Their answers are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Would anything else help you to start or maintain a healthy vegetarian/vegan lifestyle?

	Meat eaters	Vegetarians	Vegan	Total
Having a vegan buddy	14	11	8	33
Joining a vegan / veggie group	8	14	8	30
More information (not specified what type of information)	4	9	2	15
More vegan sandwiches /fast-food/general vegan food on the high street	1	2		3
More leaflets in public areas about veganism	2		1	3
If vegan alternatives were cheaper		2	1	3
More free vegan food / food fayres	1	1		2
Vegan social group with child friendly facilities	2			2
More gluten free vegan recipes		1	1	2
Nutrition information	1			1
To become Hari Krishna	1			1
More information about animal welfare	1			1
If I had a vegan house mate		1		1
Vegetarian/vegan cookery classes	1			1
Use of vegan herbs /remedies/health			1	1

pills				
Nutrition information		1		1

Further thoughts about the day

Other comments about the day included:

"What an absolutely inspired idea" (vegetarian)

"This was a good opportunity to be in contact with the vegan way of life" (meat eater)

"...particularly liked vegan bacon and Lincolnshire sausages" (meat eater)

"This is a very good idea to remind people of their duty in/with the world" (meat eater)

"I was impressed... especially its appeal to the younger generation...volunteers were really helpful...lively atmosphere...friendly ambience. The sponsors most generous and admirable in their donations" (meat eater)

"Great to have recipes for the food I have eaten"(vegetarian)

Suggestions for future free vegan food fayres included:

- Selling food for people to take home
- More promotion of seaweed and nuts to promote a healthy vegan diet
- Join the Healthy Communities Collaboration run by Primary Care Trusts as they might be able to help find suitable sites for future free vegan food fayres
- Tombolla stall and raffle
- More veggie/vegan gatherings for University students in London
- Holding a similar event outside of London where there is less availability of vegan food
- Inviting a performer, e.g. Benjamin Zephaniah
- Having a larger venue with more seating
- Providing fruit juice

Would You Like to Help at Our Next Vegan Fayre on 28th October 2006?

If so, please contact;

Vegan Campaigns BM Box 2300 London WC1N 3XX

info@vegancampaigns.org.uk

With a special thanks to the following companies for sponsoring the vegan food fayre:

Alpro www.alprosoya.co.uk

Beanies www.beanieshealthfoods.co.uk

Booja-Booja www.boojabooja.com

Frys www.frys-special.com

Isle of Bute Foods www.scheese.co.uk

Lyme Regis www.lymeregisfoods.com

Plamil www.plamilfoods.co.uk

Pogo Café www.pogocafe.co.uk

Redwoods www.redwoodfoods.co.uk

Yaoh www.yaoh.co.uk

And also a special thanks to all volunteers who helped to make the fayre such a great success!

Appendix 1

Vegan Fayre Questionnaire!

We hope you have found today's free food fair an enjoyable and informative event. To help us plan future events, we have devised a short questionnaire. Hand in your questionnaire to one of our volunteers to receive a free Oy! Shake, kindly donated by Alpro, or a fruit bar donated by Lyme Regis.

1. How did you hear about today's event?

- q Handed flier/food in street today
- q Saw advertising board today
- q Saw poster/flier (please state where)
- q In the press (please state which publication)S[~]
- q By email (please say which list/who sent it)S[~]
- q On the web (please state which site)S[~]
- q Word of mouth
- q Other (please specify)

2. How would you rate the quality and taste of the food served today overall

- q V Poor
- q Poor
- q Satisfactory
- q Good
- q Excellent

3. How would you describe you current diet:

- q Meat eater
- q Vegetarian
- q Vegan
- q Other (please specify)

4. How would you describe you attitude to going vegetarian before today:

- q I have not considered going vegetarian before today
- q I have thought about going vegetarian before today
- q I have been vegetarian but started eating meat again
- q I am already vegetarian/vegan

5. How would you describe you attitude to going vegan before today:

- q I have not considered going vegan before today
- q I have thought about going vegan before today
- q I have been vegan but started eating animal products again
- q I am already vegan

6. How will your diet change after today?

- q I will not change my diet
- q I will continue eating meat, but I will eat more vegetarian/vegan food
- q I am thinking about becoming vegetarian
- q I am definitely becoming vegetarian
- q I will continue being vegetarian but will eat more vegan food
- q I am thinking of becoming vegan
- q I am definitely becoming vegan

Please turn over to complete the questionnaire

7. If you are changing your diet or thinking about it because of today, what helped you to make this choice (tick all that apply)

- q Gaining more awareness of the range of vegan foods available
- q Gaining more awareness of the availability of vegan foods
- q The taste of the food
- q Information about the cruelty involved in animal farming industries
- q Information about the health benefits of a vegan diet
- q Information about the benefits of a vegan diet to the environment/people
- q Other (please specify)

8. Would anything else help you to start or maintain a healthy vegetarian/vegan lifestyle (tick all that apply)

More information (please specify type of information)S~

Joining a vegetarian/vegan group

Having a vegan buddy (being in contact with an experienced vegan who can give you advice

Other (please specify)

9. Any further comments, or suggestions

If you would you like to be included on a mailing list to receive updates about future events, please give your details below:

Name and address:

Name

Address

Postcode.....Tel

Email

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and for participating in our vegan food fayre.

Please hand in your questionnaire to receive your free gift