

# Vegvibe

JUNE 2010



## Putting a Stop to Puppy Mills

*Also in this issue:*

**Global Imperative To Tackle Climate Change,  
Captivating Colombo, Knowing Your Avocado,  
World Cup Recipes, Going Nuts for Health and  
Winning Over Your Sceptical Parents**

# The Chief Veggie Speaks!

The interest in vegetarianism and knowledge of veganism has been steadily increasing and we can notice a clear difference from the first issue to this eleventh one. Where once the term vegan was foreign and strange, many people can now, at the very least, associate it with 'no milk'. While this may not be accurate, the fact that understanding has reached this level is reason enough to rejoice.

We at **VegVibe** are committed to furthering this understanding and engaging the community at large so that in a year's time, I can write to you to share that almost everyone knows veganism just as they do vegetarianism.

To that end, we issue a call to action for everyone to get involved to fight climate change and save our planet (*Page 02*), and a call to all animal lovers to reach out to the average pet owner and advise them against buying a pet (*Page 08*). As usual, we also share our knowledge on Avocados (*Page 11*), give you the low-down on nuts (*Page 20*), and offer you a peek into up-and-coming Colombo in Sri Lanka (*Page 04*).

We also acknowledge Fathers' Day in this issue with this month's Vegetarian Hero, Edmond Chua, crediting his father for the support and influence in his life (*Page 14*), and touch on the difficulty in convincing our parents who may not agree with our dietary choices (*Page 18*).

Finally, how can we forget that this is the *World Cup* month - we thus offer a collection of recipes that will make for great, healthy snacks while watching your favourite games (*Page 16*).

As ever, we continue to include updates and breaking news stories on the **VegVibe blog** at <http://vegville.com/blog>, and remain contactable via email at [vision@vegville.com](mailto:vision@vegville.com) and through our website at <http://vegville.com>, thank you.



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**Design & Editing by Ganga**  
**Concept & Content by Halimah**

**Contributing Writers**  
*Bhavani Prakash, Luke Otter*

*Cover photo by bk images, courtesy of FreeDigitalPhotos.net*

*The editor would like to thank Mr Edmond Chua for graciously agreeing to be featured in this issue.*



# Urgent Global Imperative To Tackle Climate Change

By Bhavani Prakash,  
founder of Eco Walk The Talk

With the worst of the financial crisis behind us, the engines of economic growth have begun to hum again. From a carbon emissions point of view, we have much cause for concern as there is a direct correlation between *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP) and *Greenhouse Gases* (GHG) emissions.

We have not yet made that shift to where economic growth comes with low carbon emissions. On the contrary, we are causing climate change at a faster rate than we are mitigating it so the challenge is in how we can manage future emissions in a way that economies, human societies and ecosystems are not blown apart due to the growth paradigm - to which we as an economy-driven world are addicted - of infinite growth in a planet of finite resources.

### No Doubt, a Crisis

The world is facing a serious climate crisis, with ever increasing concentrations of GHG in the atmosphere. Measured in parts per million (ppm), the current concentrations of CO2 as of April 2010 are 392 ppm (see table, bottom right).

We are already past the safe limit of 350ppm - a level beyond which gives us an increasing probability of exceeding the overall 2 degree temperature rise as compared to global temperatures at the start of the industrial revolution (when CO2 concentrations were about 280 ppm). The 2 degree temperature rise is the upper limit world leaders have committed to observing.

Just as we have a budget at home that we cannot exceed without negative consequences, we also now have a limited carbon budget, if overshoot, will have catastrophic consequences - rising global temperatures, biodiversity and species loss impacting sustainability of ecosystems, melting polar glaciers and rising sea levels that may engender mass displacement of millions of people.

### Fulfilling Our Responsibility

We, as members of the public, therefore have a moral responsibility to understand and engage in

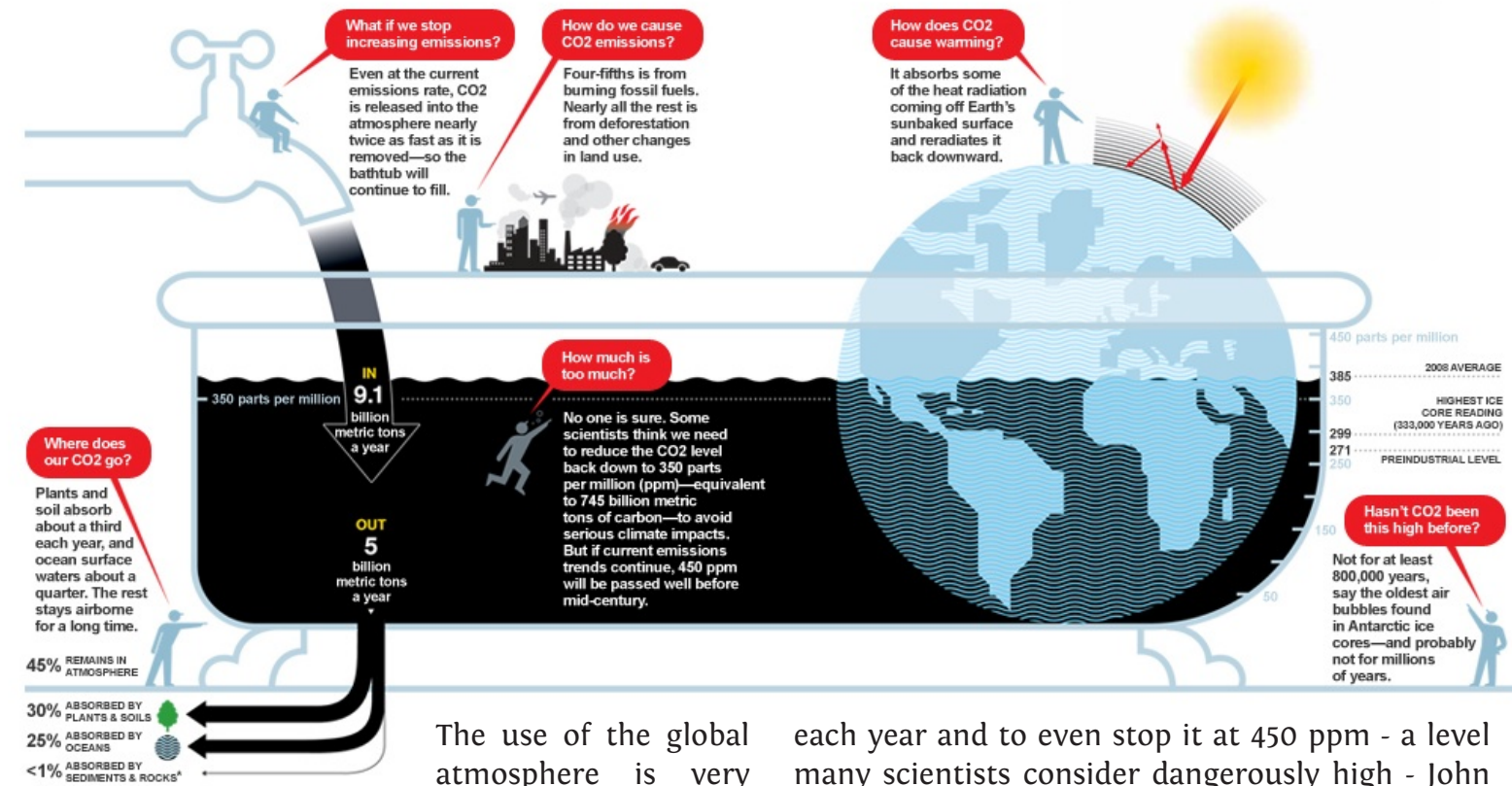
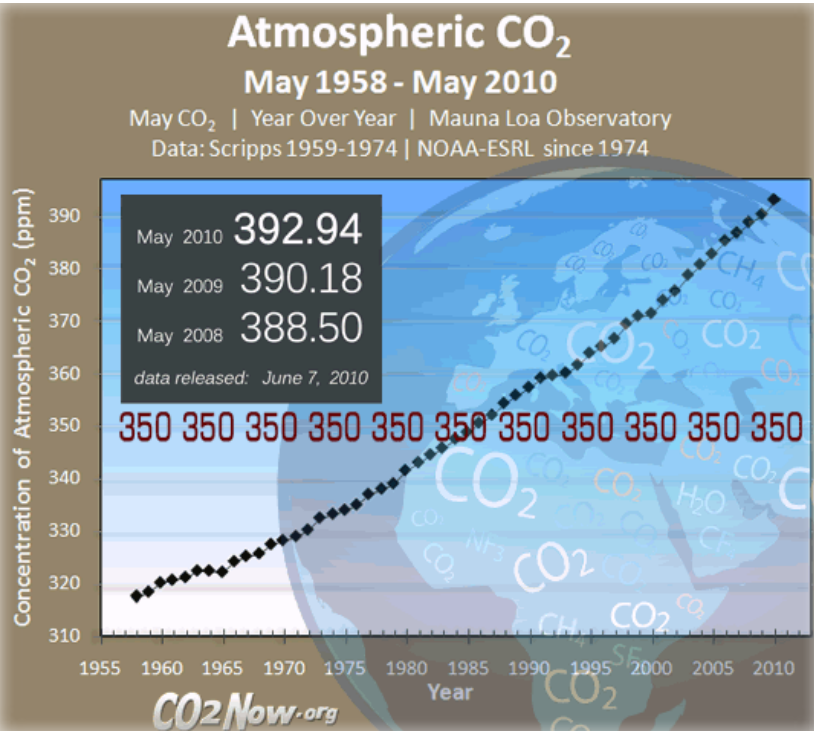
the climate change debate. It is our responsibility to have a say - to demand a say even - in our children's future - not only for the future of their education, finances and health, but critically for their ecological future on which everything else rests.

Important as they may be, we cannot too leave the issue to politicians, businesses, NGOs and climate scientists alone, especially considering that various governments haven't gone very far with the reduction of CO2 emissions since the *Kyoto Protocol* that was signed in 1997.

Various climate negotiations under the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) including the recent one at Copenhagen in December 2009, the *COP15*, have failed to arrive at a "fair, ambitious and binding" climate deal that defines a clear future path for reduction of emissions.

### Finding Fairer Solutions

Although it was recognised during the negotiations that tackling climate change is important, there was less clarity on how to share the "burden." Certainly, many developing countries felt there was injustice in why they were being asked to share the burden of the problem of solving climate change, when they had little to do with its creation.



The use of the global atmosphere is very unequal, with richer countries taking the lion's share. About 33% of the global population have carbon emissions greater than the world average of 1.3 *Metric Tonnes Carbon* (MTC).

According to *Global Carbon Project*, "From a historical perspective, developing countries with 80% of the world's population still account for about 20% of the cumulative emissions since 1751; the poorest countries in the world, with 800 million people, have contributed less than 1% of these cumulative emissions."

A recent report by the *Potsdam Institute of Climate Change Research* (PIK) has also warned that Copenhagen targets will not slow down global warming. The sum and substance in those climate negotiations are nowhere near the kind of carbon emission reductions that will contain global temperature rise to within the safe 2°C target.

Another worrying factor is the *sink efficiency* of oceans and forests - or the ability of these ecosystems to go on absorbing extra human generated CO<sub>2</sub> (see diagram from *National Geographic*, top).

The level of CO<sub>2</sub> is presently rising by 2 or 3 ppm

each year and to even stop it at 450 ppm - a level many scientists consider dangerously high - John Sterman, Director of the Systems Dynamics Group at MIT Sloan School of Management, says the world would have to cut emissions by around 80 percent by 2050!

### So What Can You Do?

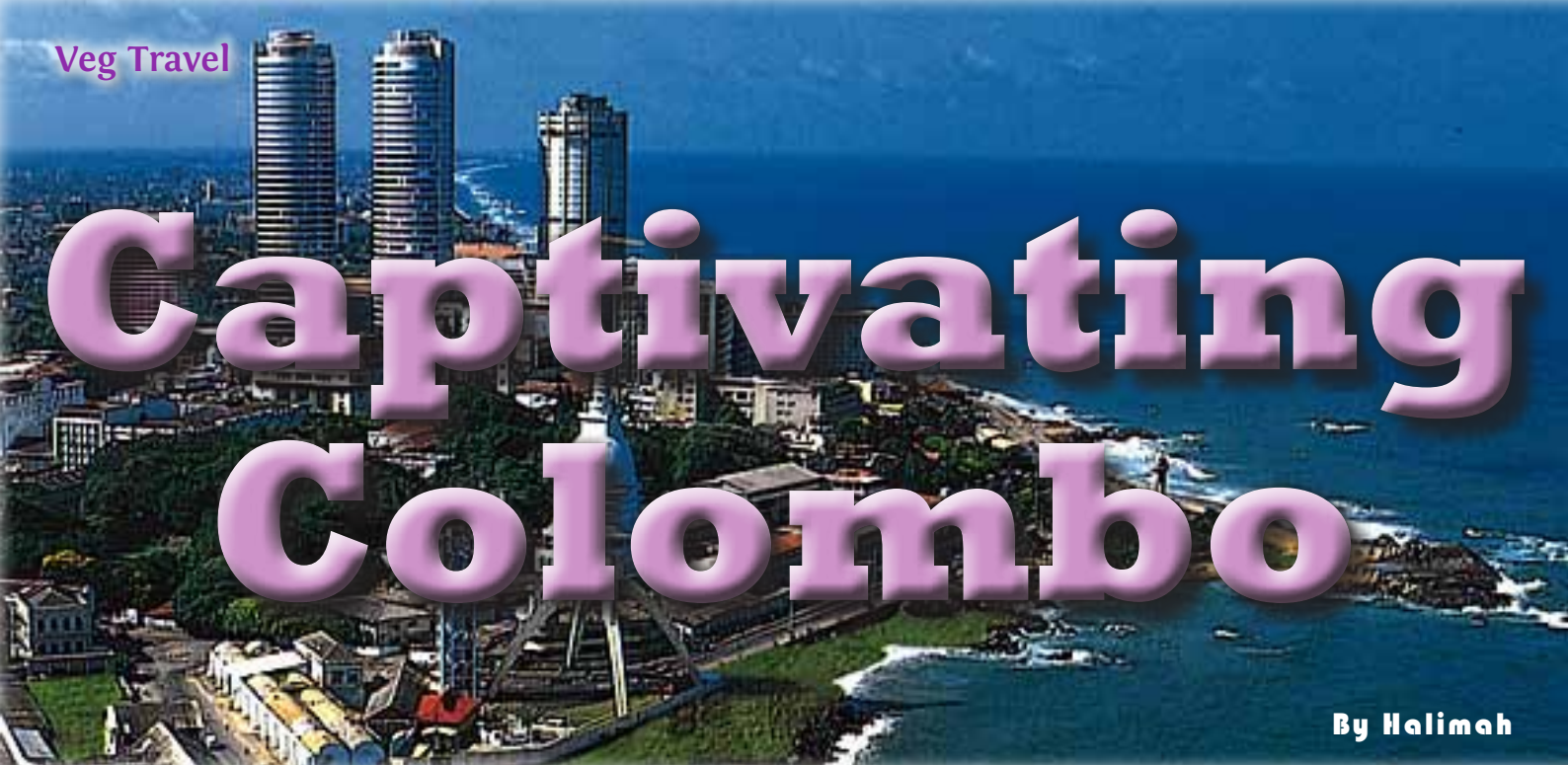
We cannot create change without taking action, so start by sharing the seriousness of the climate change issue with your family, friends and colleagues, offline and online through social media.

Write and talk to your ministers, and members of parliament. Write to various magazines and forums. We can make ourselves heard by voicing our opinions and concerns about our shared future and those of the coming generations.

As Sterman says, "In the end, it comes down to public support. We have to change the way we use energy and support policies that will enable those changes to occur. Science is no longer the bottleneck to action. We need to focus on social and political change."

*This excerpt is part of a longer discussion on the issue that was first published on <http://www.ecowalkthetalk.com/blog> on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Readers are encouraged to read the original piece to gain an in-depth understanding.*





# Captivating Colombo

By Halimah

It's hard to believe that Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka that is blessed with an exquisite medley of historical and modern architecture, was once a target of *Tamil Tiger* attacks. Coming a long way since, this vibrant city lulls travellers with its laid back charm and hospitality yet offering all the trappings of a modern metropolis.

## Getting Around

Colombo boasts a wide variety of network systems, catering to the differing needs of its residents and visitors alike. For those on a shoestring budget, head for the local buses which offer affordable fares ranging from 4 to 25 rupees (5 to 30 Singapore cents) depending on the distance.

Be warned though, local buses do not make for a comfortable trip and are often not air-conditioned and crowded especially during peak hours. However, for a little more change, private bus services are available with better comfort and convenience.

*Tuk-tuks* and taxis are also other options available to travellers. Also known as *three-wheelers*, most tuk-tuks are not metered and hence travellers must negotiate the price before boarding. Travellers who are not apt at bargaining need not worry – the *Tourist Development Authority* runs its own fleet of metered auto-rickshaws which are identifiable by their unique paintings.

Commonly found outside hotels and easily flagged

down, taxis offer a much more comfortable option than tuk-tuks but, though metered, most drivers prefer to negotiate fares before the journey. For those wary of bargaining, radio cab companies, such as *Ace Cabs* and *Cool Kangaroo*, offer air-conditioned taxis and provide reliable service.

## Things to Do

Unlike typical tourist destinations, Colombo retains much of its historical and cultural charm, evolving naturally with time. It presents travellers an opportunity to take in its eclectic colonial and religious architecture – reminders of its colonial legacy, and sample its multi-religious populous.

The city is home to several magnificent mosques, temples and churches, among them, *Gangaramaya Temple* (above) is considered to be one of the most important temples. Located near the *Beira Lake*, Gangaramaya Temple is a sprawling complex consisting a vocational institute, museum and library. At 120 years old, it is not only famous for its stunning structural designs but also for its effort in preserving the environment and helping the poor and handicapped.



To understand Sri Lanka's deep and rich history, one certainly has to make a trip to the *National Museum* (right). Established in 1877 under the initiative of its British governor at the time, the National Museum covers a wide chronology of Sri Lanka's history dating back to pre-historic times.

With a large array of displays ranging from art and craft to arms and armaments, the National Museum is without doubt an eye-opening experience.

## Shopping & Entertainment

For a spot of shopping for local products, you can head down to *Patteh market* (right) – where the streets and alleys are crammed with all sorts of items under the sun.

Located in one of the oldest districts in Colombo, the shops there sell anything from clothes to electrical products, and even fresh grocery produce like vegetables and fruits.

Be prepared to be accosted on the streets by peddlers and a firm but polite 'no' will be necessary to ward off sales pitches. But if you are interested, remember to bargain furiously to get a fair price as it is an accepted norm to charge foreigners more than locals.

## For the Veg Traveller

Due to Sri Lanka's geographical proximity to South India, it has a significant Tamil population, which has resulted in plentiful South Indian vegetarian cuisine to be readily and easily available.

It is thus not at all difficult to find delicious and spicy South Indian vegetarian eateries in Colombo, but vegans have to check if the food items on offer contain dairy, though it should not be too difficult to accommodate vegan meal requests in general.





A popular Indian restaurant, *Food Waves* is known for its tasty yet affordable fares, and offers a wide variety of South and North Indian food such as South Indian *thali* meals, *thosais*, *parottas* and *Naans*. This restaurant also does not serve any alcohol.

**Food Waves**  
310/A Highlevel Road,  
Nugegoda, Colombo 6



**Shanmugas Vegetarian Restaurant**  
53/3 Ramakrishna Road, Colombo 6

Yet another popular Indian vegetarian restaurant, *Shanmugas* serves a range of South and North Indian food. Known for its clean and excellent service, the food is delectable and nutritious. In particular, *Shanmugas* is famous for its *vadais* - deep fried dahl fritters (left) which are notable for their crispy exterior and fluffy interiors. Though a little more expensive than other restaurants, *Shanmugas* delivers in terms of good food, good value and good service.



One of the more upscale vegetarian restaurants, *Mathura Family Restaurant* is well decorated with wall paintings, plush carpeting and air-conditioning. This restaurant offers a buffet spread for those who enjoy sampling many types of food and an *ala-carte* menu as well. With over 117 items on the menu, it is easy to be spoilt for choice at *Mathura Family Restaurant*.

**Mathura Family Restaurant**  
185 Havelock Road, Colombo 05



A blast from the past, Canadian Jennifer Abbott's bold look at the livestock industry released in 1998 still warrants an appreciative inspection today; with 11 award nominations over the years - and several wins among them.

In a nutshell, *A Cow at my Table* explores Western attitudes towards farm animals and meat, and the intense battle between animal advocates and the meat industry to influence the consumer's mind.



The documentary was the result of 5 years of groundwork where Ms Abbott travelled across Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand to meet with the leaders of the animal rights movement, animal welfare advocates and spokespeople from the livestock industry.

Directed, filmed, edited and produced single-handedly by Ms

Abbott, the film is organised into 16 different sections that weave together interviews with animal activists and agribusiness representatives and juxtaposed cleverly against interesting archival footage.

Touted to evoke a reaction - be it for or against the issue, *A Cow at my Table* certainly delivers on the benchmark of 'a good documentary is one that offers more questions than answers for the viewer to reflect on'.

Produced at a time when the term *factory-farming* was not yet in the mainstream lexicon, a relook of this acclaimed documentary may enable us to evaluate how much (or not) the industry practices, attitudes and perspectives

(on both sides of the coin) have changed over the past decade.

*"...intelligent look at a situation many would rather not know about and many would prefer was never told."*

## Vancouver International Film Festival

Notably, Ms Abbott's dedication to the cause is laudable - she was arrested during the course of filming when she crawled under a fence to film a cow that had been left dead outside a slaughterhouse.

The pioneering film was also acknowledged as the "first Canadian documentary to raise questions about the social forces that influence our food production system" when it was first released in 1998.

Used independently by some educationists as a trigger point for discussion on the issue, *A Cow at my Table* continues to be an important documentary in the annals of animal welfare activism.

*A Cow at my Table* is available for purchase at USD\$25 (S\$35) via [The Vegetarian Site](http://TheVegetarianSite.com) but can be watched in full for free at [Top Documentary Films](http://TopDocumentaryFilms.com). However, you can always contact the filmmaker directly at [flyingeye@gulfislands.com](mailto:flyingeye@gulfislands.com) to show your support.





# PET FARMS: Why Pay When You Can Get For Free?



Puppy mills recently took centre stage when an SMS made its rounds claiming that an abandoned puppy mill's 75 dogs and puppies were going to be euthanised.

The misinformation was in relation to a group of dog lovers who had banded together and stepped in to prevent a failed pet-farm owner from selling off his 'stock' of 85 dogs to other breeders. Calling themselves *DogMillRehomers*, the volunteers have been spending time, effort and money to manage and get the dogs adopted.

Whilst the effort has resulted in almost half of the dogs being adopted - through a stringent screening process, the disturbing issue of dogs being sold as pets remains a real concern.

In this case, the group lists that "many of the dogs have skin problems, ticks, fever, (and) are suffering from malnutrition. Several need medical care" and that "these are 'used dogs' (used for breeding) and they have been traumatised."

### Relook at the Industry Necessary

Pasir Ris Farmway hosts several pet farms and the standards employed in caring for the dogs in more than a handful in them is anyone's guess. Sadly, the typical philosophy for Singapore businesses has always been to rake in obscene profits, and one can only imagine the corners that might be cut in the pursuit of such profit. Tellingly, in one newspaper report last month a kennel owner was quoted as saying "I'm a businessman at the end of

the day. Screen my customers?"

This is corroborated by firsthand horror stories of pet owners who have visited some of these farms (who usually provide additional services such as pet grooming and boarding) and observed less than caring staff mishandling the pets under their care.

Such observation lends credence to the assertion that such businesses are more puppy mill than pet-farm and demands a relook at the industry. In fact, with the size of operations and the limited regulatory supervision, most pet-farms resemble backyard breeders who are running a skeletal process for maximum profit.

### Whose Problem?

The *Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority* (AVA) says that it does "regular surveillance and monitoring of pet shops and dog farms" and its officers "also carry out surprise inspection visits to dog farms to ensure that animal welfare standards are adhered to". They also assure us that "action is taken where there is evidence of a breach of conditions."

But as Dierdre Moss of the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (SPCA) points out, "Coaxing or warning errant owners and breeders into compliance instead of prosecuting them has encouraged further abuse in the industry. It goes to show that a mere slap on the wrist is no deterrent to improving the poor conditions."



The SPCA advocates the AVA to revoke "licences of breeders who are cruel to the animals under their care, because only when stronger penalties are meted out can we hope to see standards improve" and disagrees with AVA's position that "the onus should be on the consumers to make an effort to be informed and people should patronise only farms or shops with good standards (that is, self-regulation by the consumers)."

### Cut the Demand

Singaporeans are prone to the 'buy new' mentality and - be it a house, car or pet - only think of some form of retail purchase. It is hard for the average pet owner to consider adopting from the SPCA or animal interest groups such as *Mutts & Mittens*, the *Cat Welfare Society* or *Action for Singapore Dogs*.

Somehow, animals from these sources are deemed inferior, 'used' or with defects by such people. However, the irony is that pet-farms that practise indiscriminate breeding practices (such as inbreeding) cause animals with health problems to be born, and so the cute puppy or kitten can pretty soon become a chronically-ill cat or dog.

In fact, the older animals looking to be rehomed at the various shelters often have a more stable temperament and their health condition can be verified, meaning the likelihood of finding a companion that is compatible with one's lifestyle is much higher at animal shelters.

The pet industry relies on the consumer who wants a 'pure bred' puppy and doesn't mind paying thousands of dollars; those who truly care for animal welfare never buy their companions (unless under exceptional cases for rescue purposes). Thus the vanity element of getting a pet needs to be addressed and these materialistic people need to divert their thousands of dollars to welfare groups instead.

Imagine the funds from this multi-million dollar industry being diverted to the care of all our abandoned animals. Not only will at least 3,600 dogs (the number of breeding dogs in Singapore according to AVA's count) stop producing puppies, more abandoned and feral animals can be rehomed.

As Louis Ng of *Animal Concerns, Research & Education Society* (ACRES) succinctly puts it, "ACRES is opposed to any industry that treats animals as commodities that can be bought and sold without consideration for the welfare of the animals. There are hundreds of dogs in shelters in Singapore that need a home and we urge the community to adopt these dogs instead of buying them from pet shops or pet-farms."



Photos courtesy of Anderson Humane Society



Animal Activism

Photos courtesy of Soda Head



Win-Win-Lose

This approach will lead to much-needed resources and funds becoming available to animal welfare groups (win); greater number of animals in need of love and care being rehomed (win); and, the end of an industry that serves no real purpose other than to earn money (lose).

But the average potential pet owner needs to be convinced against buying a pet and more education is necessary to that end. And it should start from all of us who

sincerely care about animal welfare. Share your experiences on how fulfilling it has been to give a rescued or abandoned animal a loving home - more satisfying than having an 'off-the-factory-shelf' pet.



Photo courtesy of Damascus Way Labradors

Perhaps we can even appeal to the fundamental mentality associated with Singaporeans - being *Kiasu*. Maybe we can invoke this primal local instinct of 'getting the best deal' in pet owners and get them to start considering why they are paying (i.e. buying from pet-farms) for something they can get for free (i.e. adopting from shelters).

**VegVibe** is presently embarking on a major project to collect preliminary quantitative data with regard to the number of vegetarians in Singapore. We intend to collect responses from as many people as possible and, more importantly, draw inferences as to the type of vegetarians we have here. The success of this project will depend largely on the consolidated effort of everyone and the 2 things that are essential include **a) ensuring that YOU fill out the survey**; and, **b) ensuring that you pass the message on and encourage others**

Answer The Call!

We are happy to note that over 100 respondents have answered the call to offer their input and we sincerely hope that the responses will reach critical mass soon so that there is a mandate to call for a larger study or investigation into the extent of vegetarianism in Singapore, which will in turn lead to more support and due recognition for the community - both morally as well as tangibly.

1. What is your dietary preference?

	I would describe myself as a...	I consume eggs	I consume dairy (i.e. milk, yoghurt, cheese, butter, etc.)	I consume the 'five pungent spices' (i.e. garlic, onion, chives, spring onion or scallion, and leek)	I consume ONLY raw food	I have NOT changed my preference in the last 12 months	I follow this preference strictly without exception
Non-Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pescetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CLICK ON THIS LINK TO ENTER YOUR SURVEY RESPONSE NOW

[HTTP://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/S/85L9QRL](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/85L9QRL)



# Know Your Avocado!

Avocado is native to Central and South America and has been in cultivation for more than 10,000 years.

To prevent avocado from browning after cutting, sprinkle some lemon or lime juice.

Research indicates that nutrients found in avocado are able to inhibit the growth of prostate cancer, breast cancer and oral cancer.

Avocado is a fruit and not a vegetable, though it is commonly used to prepare dishes such as guacamole.

Choose avocados that are slightly soft to touch with a blemish-free skin. If the avocados are hard, they can be kept in a paper bag on the counter top to ripen.

Avocados have one of the highest concentrations of vitamin E in any fruit and is a good source of vitamin C.

Avocados can make convenient baby food as they can be served raw and contain many essential nutrition like oleic acid, proteins, potassium and vitamins.

Avocado has the highest protein content of any fruit and more potassium than pears.

Avocados are high in oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat, which is attributed to reducing cholesterol levels.



## Out & About

Since its opening a few weeks ago, *Zen Japanese Vegetarian Restaurant* has been creating quite a buzz both in and out of the vegetarian community. Located only a stone's throw away from *Fortune Centre* (i.e. vegetarian haven); *Zen Japanese* certainly has its fair share of competition but their strong advertising campaign seems to be working well so far.

Cuisine-wise, my main reason for going here was to see how the *Salmon Sashimi* (right) was recreated - and I was pleasantly surprised. The texture was outrageously authentic but it was a little flavourless for my liking though - I would have preferred a more fishy taste.

The highlight was undoubtedly the *Sea Eel Teriyaki with Rice* which consisted of scrambled tofu rested on a bed of seaweed. The set meal comes with many components, including *miso* soup, pickles, fruit and salad. Overall a high quality dish, it justifies the S\$14 asking price.



*Review with photos  
by Luke Otter,  
blog author of  
The Hungry Ang Mo*

The ambience of the restaurant is also lavish and plush, giving it the feel of a four-star restaurant, but thankfully the prices don't match its look!

A unique dining experience indeed, one which I certainly enjoyed.

*Zen Japanese Vegetarian Restaurant* is open daily from 11am to 3pm and 5.30pm to 10.00pm.

**Zen Japanese Vegetarian Restaurant**  
**Midlink Plaza #02-02, 122 Middle Road**  
**Tel: 68831586**





The foundation for this eatery is in the remarkable story of Ms Barbara Chin who, with no prior culinary experience, used vegan cuisine to help improve the condition of many cancer patients. This led to her opening *LivingGreens* which, needless to say, is 100% vegan.

The restaurant itself has a cosy feel to it, with classical music drifting through at all times, with friendly and attentive waiters providing great accompaniment to the ensemble.



*Review with photos  
by Luke Otter,  
blog author of  
The Hungry Ang Mo*

used Chinese mushrooms instead of the authentic button mushrooms usually found in Western-style soups.

The food is certainly not terrible though, but it struggles to transcend the higher than average benchmark. However, *LivingGreens* is still an agreeable dining experience, the inspirational story adding the necessary spice to the food on offer.

*LivingGreens* is open daily from 11am to 8.30pm from Monday to Saturday, and is closed on Sunday.

Moving on to the food - my highlight was the lasagna dish, consisting of eggplant, red capsicum, shiitake mushrooms and scrambled tofu which all blended to form a divine overall taste.

Unfortunately, the tuna sandwich was rather small for the price-tag, and the mushroom soup which followed suit was accompanied by a rather meagre serving of bread. The soup itself has been adapted from the traditional version and the one served



**LivingGreens**  
**325 Beach Road**  
**(opposite The Concourse)**  
**Tel: 63965523**  
**[www.livinggreens.com.sg](http://www.livinggreens.com.sg)**





*Edmond Chua, 27  
Engineer*

Many vegetarian parents worry that their children will choose to eat meat when they grow up. Edmond Chua grew up most of his life in one such household, where his parents turned vegetarian when Edmond was just 6 years old.

Being Buddhists, his parents had already been observing a vegetarian diet on select days and the shift completely was not a major issue.

However, unlike other parents who would have simply issued a decree that the children follow this new diet, Edmond's father allowed the autonomy for the children to choose their preference. Unsurprisingly though, with the peer pressure and easy availability of meat-based food products, the children remained meat-eaters.



But something changed for Edmond whilst he was serving his National Service. He had the opportunity to observe a vegetarian diet for a full month in honour of his recently deceased grandfather and also, a friend had shared with him the VCD *Seeds for a Better World*, circulated by the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)*.

These got him thinking more closely about his dietary preferences and the consequences of his choices, which culminated in swearing off meat altogether in 2004. He recalls, "when I decided to become a vegetarian, I took some bites into a chicken drumstick before spitting out everything."

He thus does not have an issue with temptation, having a deep conviction in preventing animal cruelty. In fact, his skin condition has become better and he feels that "if I am down with flu, it is milder as compared to in the past." Of course, it helps that he has the support of his parents, with his mother preparing only vegetarian food at home.

### The Man Behind The Man

Crediting his father as "the catalyst for the change in the family", he shares that his father is "very knowledgeable on Buddhism and he influenced me to be a better person as my bad temper got under control a few years ago."

He is thus thankful to his parents, and the close relationship the family shares is evident in how everyone comes together to dine at vegetarian restaurants as a family and travel together during every Chinese New Year break.

Edmond wears several hats on top of being a filial son, and 2 of these include volunteering his time at a Buddhist temple and also helping out the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* to manage its online forum as the moderator and facebook page as its administrator. He also reveals that he enjoys spending time in the kitchen trying out new dishes during his free time.



On the challenges he faced when he first turned vegetarian, he observes, "As I was still serving national service, I put up with having vegetables and rice, giving away all the meat to my campmates. Since I was going to 'ORD' soon, I put up with it so as not to trouble people."

He also notes that initially he felt left out when a group of friends decided to dine at a non-veg restaurant but took comfort in the knowledge that "this is nothing as compared to the cruelty in the meat industry."

Edmond also understands that his friends have to get used to finding a place with vegetarian options and has come to terms with the fact that "I have to keep



*Edmond with his parents, grandmother and siblings*

explaining to different friends why I have decided to become a vegetarian."

When asked on his advice to those considering a vegetarian diet, his suggestion would be to "omit a meat-type one by one till one can give up all the meat", adding that "asking a non-veg to give up all meat at one go can be a daunting task."

### 1) What is one veg food that describes you best and why?

*Vegetarian Curry Mutton.* Well it can be a dish eaten with just rice and leaves you feeling completely satisfied.

### 2) If you were given one wish for the world, what would it be?

*World Peace, there are just too many conflicts in the world.*

### 3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

*That vegetarian food consists only of mainly fried stuff and therefore is unhealthy and oily.*

### 4) What is your favorite book or show on vegetarianism?

*Seeds - it was passed to me by a friend before I became a vegetarian.*

### 5) What would be a 'Quotable Quote' to you?

*"To think the environment is unimportant is to forget the land you stand, the water you drink, the sun you feel, the air you breathe..."*  
- Stonepeace, from the book "The Daily Enlightenment 3" -







## Creamy Corn Dip

### Method

- 1) In a food processor, blend all ingredients together
- 2) Serve in bowl and sprinkle with coriander or spring onion as garnish

280g sweet corn kernel  
 150g silken tofu  
 5 tablespoon nutritional yeast  
 1 tablespoon tahini  
 1/4 teaspoon salt or to taste  
 3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 Coriander or spring onion for garnish

### Method

- 1) Cut eggplant into 5 inch pieces, then quarter each piece to make eggplant wedge
- 2) In container, add eggplant wedge with salt and sit in salt mixture for 15 minutes (should leech water)
- 3) In shallow tray or plate, mix *garam masala*, chilli powder, cinnamon powder and cornmeal
- 4) Shake off salt and water from eggplant and dredge in cornmeal mixture
- 5) In pan, add enough oil for pan frying, and once hot, gently slide eggplant sticks cut side down into oil, before frying until golden on both sides
- 6) Drain on paper towels and serve hot with favourite BBQ sauce

400g Japanese brinjal  
 1 tablespoon salt  
 1 teaspoon *garam masala*  
 1 teaspoon chilli powder  
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon powder  
 60g cornmeal  
 Oil for pan frying





## Spicy Hummus Cups

### Method

- 1) In food processor, blend all ingredients except *Sriracha* sauce and cucumbers until smooth
- 2) Cut cucumbers into 2-inch thick pieces, then using using melon scooper, scoop out seeds and some flesh 2/3 in (do not hollow out completely)
- 3) Fill hole with hummus and drizzle some *Sriracha* or *Tabasco* sauce on top



300g cooked chickpeas	1/4 teaspoon salt or to taste
70ml lemon juice	1/4 teaspoon cumin powder
3 large cloves of garlic	<i>Sriracha</i> sauce or <i>Tabasco</i> sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil	2 cucumbers
3 tablespoon tahini	100ml reserved liquid from cooking chickpeas or water

### Method

- 1) Toast rolled oats and sesame seeds until lightly browned
- 2) In bowl, whisk sugar and oil until sugar is well incorporated and becomes slightly thick
- 3) Add flour, sesame seeds, oats, baking powder and salt to oil-sugar mixture and mix well
- 4) Add chocolate chips and mix in gently

## Seesame Oat Cookies



- 5) On greased baking tray, take ping-pong sized dough and flatten to form a cookie
- 6) Bake at 180°C for 20 mins, then remove from oven and allow to cool on baking tray

220g plain flour
30g rolled oats
50g sesame seeds
30g non-dairy chocolate chips
70g Demerara sugar
Pinch of salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
90ml corn oil





As parents, we are always on the lookout for ways and means to ensure our children are not disadvantaged as a result of the family's dietary preference. But the current generation is seeing such a surge of people making the conscious choice to become vegetarians - and many even adopting an outright vegan philosophy - that it may very well be appropriate to discuss how children can engage their parents on the matter.

Especially with Fathers' Day around the corner and Mothers' Day just over last month, it may very well be an opportune time to consider the things that we can do to foster better understanding between vegetarians and our meat-eating (even meat-loving, sometimes) parents.

### Why Parents Don't Believe

Usually, parents are sceptical when told of their children's choice to turn vegetarian - be it the young teenager or the married adult.

They ask what possessed such a sudden change and cannot fathom reasons such as considering all life precious.

Even when the decision is based on scientific fact - that a meat-less diet has a significant health advantage, it is hard to convince them. Unsurprisingly, with the former generation having lived at a time when meat was a sign of health and wealth, they simply don't buy this argument and instead think we are denying ourselves (some even go so far as to claim we are forsaking a god-given responsibility).

But on the flip side, it must be incredibly hard for someone who has lived his or her whole life believing a particular fact to be the absolute truth, to acknowledge or accept that this 'truth'

is no longer valid. We thus cannot blame them for rejecting something that turns their existing belief system on its head.

### So How to Engage Them

The trick is not to portray their philosophy as wrong or in error - much like it is better not to tell your children that they have no choice but to follow your rules. Instead, at both ends of the age difference, it is better to have open and honest dialogue to explain the reasons and justifications.

When explaining to one's parents, it is also better not to dismiss their beliefs with cold hard facts but to explain the changes that complement or update those beliefs. For example, an aged parent may feel that nutrients are lacking in a non-meat diet (such as protein or iron), and the best way to address this point would be to point out that during their prime, many of the excellent non-meat sources of protein and iron (such as quinoa) were not readily available in Singapore.

This approach protects their sense of ego while communicating the more important point that the understanding of

nutrition has changed for the human civilisation over the past decades. We must always bear in mind that people tend to resist change automatically - what more of those who have already lived full lives.

### Stomach Still the Fastest Route

They say the quickest way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and this strategy can be applied to the older generation as well. With vegetarian cuisine here finally having moved away from the age-old practice of deep-frying everything to make up for a perceived lack of taste, there are now remarkable options available to the diner seeking vegan or vegetarian food.

In fact, there is even anecdotal evidence to suggest that meat-eating family members are being enticed to return to some vegetarian restaurants

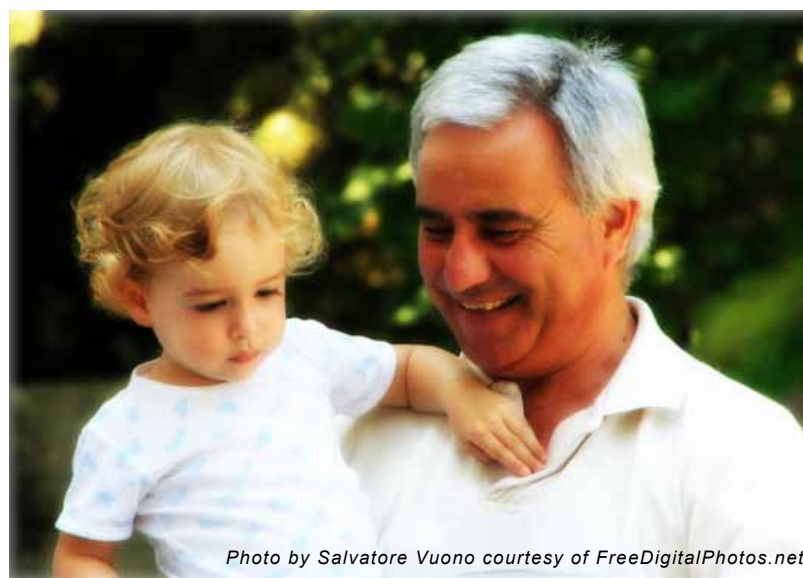


Photo by Salvatore Vuono courtesy of FreeDigitalPhotos.net

on their own accord - i.e. the second trip does not even involve the vegetarian who introduced them to the outlet in the first place!

This is indeed truly a significant development for the cause and a telling victory for the overall movement. It is becoming increasingly effortless to find a restaurant that serves great tasting dishes without the use of MSG or mock-meat, and the positive after-effects (i.e. no uneasy feeling or lethargy) are irrefutable evidence enough for the consummate sceptic to be convinced.

So, why not bring your parents out for dinner at any one of the host of acclaimed vegetarian restaurants littered around the island this Fathers' Day? Who knows, you might just be able to finally win them over and what a memorable present that would be - for both you and your parents!



Hand photos by Michal Marcol courtesy of FreeDigitalPhotos.net



*Vegetarian Society (Singapore), VSS, is a non-profit, non-religious organisation formed in 1999 which is also a member of the International Vegetarian Union. We strive to build a more humane and harmonious world for everyone on the planet - for our children, as well as for our fellow creatures.*

For the year 2010, as we enter into our second decade of existence, we would like to become a thousand-strong society - which can then move mountains. And for this, we need your support - both from the pocket and the heart.

If you are not yet a member, please consider putting your thoughts into action by committing a monthly contribution of just S\$5 to enjoy VSS Premium Membership as well as \$100 worth of food vouchers per year, discounts on all VSS organised events, invitation to special 'Members Only' events, and a complimentary copy of the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*.

Just drop us a line at [soh@vss.sg](mailto:soh@vss.sg) for the GIRO form to be mailed to you, or download the GIRO form from the VSS website and mail it to Seeds of Hope, Vegetarian Society (Singapore), 3 Pemimpin Drive, #07-02, Lip Hing Building, Singapore 576147.

Meanwhile, if you are student aged 23 and below, we are pleased to offer a student membership absolutely free - becoming a student member is just a short form away!



<http://www.vegetarian-society.org>



Have we gone nuts to suggest that nuts are actually good for you? These notoriously high-fat snacks have certainly endured a bad reputation of being unhealthy over the years. But while they may be high in calories, research is starting to shed light into the many health benefits of nuts that are locked inside.

### Fats = Heart Health?

On average, 60% of the calorie in nuts comes from the fat content - with macadamia and pecan being the highest in fats at 70g per 100g, many are understandably convinced that nuts are unhealthy.

However, the truth is that much of these fats are polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats which in fact help to lower the LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein - also known as the 'bad' cholesterol) and consequently reduce the incidence of heart disease.

Notably, a Harvard University study in 2006 found that women who consume at least 142g of nuts a week reduced their chances of a heart attack by 35% as compared to women who consumed less than 28g of nuts in a month.

### Weight Loss on Nuts

Meanwhile, a 2007 Spanish study conducted on nearly 90,000 participants concluded that those who add nuts to their diet regularly were less likely to gain weight than those who rarely ate nuts. Though not conclusive, this is in line with studies that suggest that nuts can assist in slightly increasing calorie burning.

So how exactly do nuts help in weight regulation? Well, as nuts are high in fats, proteins and contain fibre, they help to create

a sense of satiation over a longer period, thereby reducing hunger pangs and the consequent need to snack in between meals.

In addition, studies are also starting to show that not all fats



from nuts are digested and as much as 17% of it is excreted as waste.

### The Vegan Angle

Apart from the heart-friendly health benefits, nuts are especially important for vegans due to the high in protein content and essential fatty acids. While these are not complete proteins on their own, nuts can be easily combined with other protein sources such as wheat to provide the necessary protein intake.

Also, some nuts are high in *Omega 3* and *Omega 6* fatty acids which are often not as conveniently available in the vegan diet. Walnuts in particular contain significant amounts of these fatty acids. Nuts also contain many vitamins and minerals like vitamin E, potassium, calcium and a range of phytochemicals, all of which promote heart-health and well being.

### Does that Mean All Nuts are Good?

The *US Food and Drug Administration* (USFDA) has approved the heart-health claim for almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, some pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts. However, all nuts have nutritional benefits when eaten in moderation.

What is important though is how these nuts are consumed - nuts are best consumed raw and unflavoured, without salt, sugar or savoury coating. Also, care must be taken to ensure store-bought nut butters do not contain sugars, preservatives and fillers like hydrogenated oils.

Make the right choice for yourself and the next time you start feeling guilty about snacking on some delicious nuts, remember that your heart could very well be thanking you for it!





*All-Natural Soy Dream Chocolate Fudge Brownie* is a non-dairy ice-cream dream come true. The taste of this rich and chocolaty ice-cream is accentuated by sweet chunks of fudge brownie. Velvety and creamy, it is hard to believe that there is no dairy in it - made with organic soy and sugar, it is indeed a heavenly substitute for dairy ice-cream (not to mention, minus the added cholesterol). Have it on its own or make a chocolate shake, either way be warned – once you have a mouthful, you will not want to stop!

*Soy Dream Chocolate Fudge Brownie* retails for S\$8 a tub and is available at most major supermarkets

Veggie burgers are dime a dozen but a good veggie burger is still hard to find. And finding one that is also gluten free and vegan is even harder. That is why *Amy's Organic Bistro Burger* is a heaven-send, made using organic brown rice, pinto beans, and studded with plenty of mushrooms, celery, carrots and a touch of barbeque sauce to give it that 'just off the grill' flavour. Serve it in a wholemeal bun coupled with your favourite condiments for a quick meal on the go.



[www.amys.com](http://www.amys.com)

*Amy's Organic Bistro Burger* retails at S\$11.80 a box (4 patties) and is available at Cold Storage supermarket

If you would like to 'Talk Shop' about any product or provide further information on those featured in this column, please drop us an email at [vision@vegville.com](mailto:vision@vegville.com)

[www.naturaworks.com](http://www.naturaworks.com)



*Nature's Baby Organic Shampoo and Body Wash* is made using the highest quality botanicals, essential oils and luxurious moisturisers, such as *shea butter* and *kukui nut oil*, to pamper you and your baby's tender hair and skin without drying. This luxurious shampoo and body wash is 100% vegan and free of parabens and harmful SLS (Sodium Lauryl Sulfate) chemicals which give that soapy feel. Available in 2 aromatic scents – *Lavender-Chamomile* and *Vanilla-Tangerine* – this shampoo and body wash will leave your skin feeling smooth and supple without any dryness.

*Nature's Baby Organic Shampoo and Body Wash* retails at S\$29.90 a bottle and is available online at *NaturaWorks*



# ADVERTISE WITH US

To ensure that **VegVibe** remains sustainable in the long term, we have devised a hassle-free model for advertising.

For all the online issues of **VegVibe**, you can advertise your product or service in a half-page space for a flat rate of \$50 per issue, so do drop us an email at [vision@vegville.com](mailto:vision@vegville.com) if you want to reach out to over 1,000 discerning readers who read **VegVibe** because they really want to!

We accept placement requests from both individuals and businesses alike, with the only stipulation being that any advertisement should be beneficial to the vegan and vegetarian community.

*We currently have over 250 subscribers and each issue is downloaded about 500 times every month, not including the countless email forwards that we estimate would further add between 100 and 200 to this figure. We also maintain a fan page on facebook that has almost 350 fans - click on the button to join us there!*



“As long as there are slaughterhouses, there will be battlefields.”

**Leo Tolstoy,  
Russian Novelist  
1828-1910**

