



**QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS**



**QUAKERS AND BUSINESS GROUP**

## ***A joint project***

January 2014

### **QUAKER FOOD CHOICE**

The early Roman philosopher, Ovid, wrote that as human and non-human life is so intertwined, to kill a non-human animal is like killing a human one. The Beatle, Paul McCartney, said that if the walls of slaughterhouses were made of glass, we'd all be vegetarians. But, of course, the choice is yours and mine. No-one could, or should, be told to be a vegetarian or vegan: it's our choice. There are videos (such as on YouTube) of undercover film shot in slaughterhouses which could help if we wished to make an informed choice: again, that's up to us.

Friends House, in London, give us a choice of milk – either from plants or from animals. Such items as beakers are biodegradable, and the food is Fairtrade. Very little choice there though, but we don't seem to mind because we know it helps others – and we probably buy Fairtrade goods ourselves for the same reason.

What we are suggesting is **that**:

- in all Quaker facilities there is always a vegetarian and/or vegan choice of dish each day;
- the source of any food offered contains ingredients which cause the least hurt to animals and people, for example, always truly free range eggs;
- animals killed for our preferences (not need or benefit) have been killed in an abattoir that has continual Closed Circuit Television. These suggestions and similar ones are no more than a step on from those which Friends House, and many of us, do already.

By the same token, business people who are Quakers, may also consider the possibility of using these ideas and others in their places of work ... they own a restaurant or manage a works canteen, perhaps. Or they manufacture food, and therefore might carefully choose the suppliers of raw material, and the source/s of those materials.

Quakers are asked not to take part in the making of munitions, or gambling, or drug or alcohol manufacture including tobacco products. What we suggest is that this be extended to include animals used as "products" or as "by-products", unless very strict conditions are observed always.

Some may say, quite rightly, that in some instances food considered in this way may increase its price. It might, but any new product, or new production method, will tend to be initially "pricey". It certainly was so with free-range eggs until most people bought them; and the increase in demand brought down the price – as we know it usually does.

Quakers, or the Religious Society of Friends, have their discipline rooted in Christianity. Those so minded might consider Andrew Linzey's ideas from his Animal Theology, ... "we need a theocentric view of creation". God is love and God created all things. Therefore, all things are imbued with his love. All things are connected in this way, as well as being so scientifically. Further, if God's Spirit moves through all creation, then his Spirit is in all things, not simply humans. Finally, theologically speaking, the language of rights is no novelty. To grant human rights is to accept that they may be wronged; to grant animal rights is to accept that they also may be wronged....

Whether we do take this "one step on" – one step further – is our choice.

Edna Mathieson – QCA

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Clerk's Comments:

*Management Committee, Quaker Concern for Animals*

*Quaker Concern for Animals welcomes the opportunity to work with Quakers & Business on this 'ethical sourcing of food' project, particularly insofar as this impacts upon the raising and slaughter of animals for meat, which is a major concern for our membership.*

*We wholeheartedly endorse our committee member Edna Mathieson's paper on Quaker Food Choice, and wish that our work together with Q&B will benefit animals, for whom we all have responsibility.*

*Elizabeth Redfern, Co-Clerk, Quakers and Business Group*

*Q&B studies a wide range of aspects of business life, including how business and workplace practices impact all living creatures, both people and animals. In recent years we have been looking more closely at animal welfare and its impact within the farming and food production industries.*

*We were delighted to be approached by Edna with her Quaker Food Choice project, and we immediately saw its fit with our wider work, including our 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014, at Friends House, London, the subject of which will be 'Food'.*

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For more information on this project please contact either:

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