

HEALTH

SAVE YOUR ENERGY MR BUSH!

We are proud vegetarians

DIET@WORK

The benefits of turning vegetarian reached new heights when US president George Bush blamed India for soaring food prices. Recently, PETA India dashed off a letter asking him to turn veggie. LIFE@WORK asks whether it's a good idea to make the change

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The debate over killing animals for human consumption has heated up, to the extent that most of the times friends end up debating the issue over coffee. However, according to many activists, if one has to contribute towards leveling soaring food prices worldwide, there is nothing better than turning vegetarian. And when advice like this reaches the President of America, via Indian PETA representatives, it means it's more than just advice. Here's unplugging the debate for you, guys.

LETTER TO BUSH from PETA:



ANURADHA SAWHNEY,
Chief Functionary,
PETA - India

Eating meat, takes desperately needed grain away from the world's poorest people. In light of the global food crisis, it is the perfect time for President Bush to lead the fight against hunger, by going vegetarian. PETA India sent a letter to US President George W. Bush, taking him to task for blaming India for the current global hunger crisis.

The Honourable George W Bush
President of the United States
May 9, 2008

Respected Mr President,

On behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals India (PETA) and our affiliates worldwide, I am writing to you about your statements that appeared to blame India's economic growth for the grain shortage and resulting food crisis. Many Indians like me were taken aback by these statements.

A vegetarian diet is a far more efficient in the use of grains than a meat-based diet. Since India has more vegetarians than any other nation in the world, we'd like to suggest that if you are truly concerned about the hunger crisis, it is time to take a leaf from our book and go meat-free and encourage other Americans to do the same.

Because raising, killing and eating animals is grossly inefficient (especially in the US), eating meat steals food from the mouths of the world's hungriest people. The world grows enough crops to feed every human being, but food that could be used to prevent starvation if instead of being fed to the billions of chickens, pigs and cows whose flesh is consumed by the world's wealthiest people. It takes up to 7.27 kilogram (16 pounds) of grain to produce just 0.45 kilogram (1 pound) of meat. As long as a single child goes hungry, this kind of waste is unconscionable.

Last week, you proclaimed that "America will lead the fight against hunger for years to come". You can turn these words into action by announcing that you will try a vegetarian diet and require that the menus for all state dinners be meat-free. By doing so, you will be setting a good example for others to follow. Our US affiliate would also be happy to work with the White House chef to create super-healthy vegetarian options for you.

If you have any questions or would like more information about vegetarian diets, please contact me at Anuradhas@PetaIndia.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Anuradha Sawhney
Chief Functionary

Bush's Statements

*Blaming India for the soaring food prices
US President George W Bush on May 3, said:*

► Prosperity in countries like India is "good", but it triggers increased demand for "better nutrition", which in turn leads to higher food prices.

► The more prosperous the world is, the more opportunity there is. It also, however, increases demand. So, for example, just as an interesting thought for you, there are 350 million people in India who are classified as middle class. That's bigger than America. Their middle class is larger than our entire population.

► We don't have a scarcity issue in America... We got a price issue. Our shelves aren't going empty; it's just costing more money. There is scarcity in the world, and I happen to believe when we find people who can't find food, we ought to help them find it.

► America is by far the most generous nation when it comes to helping the hungry.

► We're an unbelievably compassionate nation.

► I think we ought to change our food policy in Africa and other developing countries... buying food directly from farmers as opposed to giving people food.

► I think we ought to be saying, "Why don't we help you be able to deal with scarcity by encouraging your farmers to grow and be efficient growers? Otherwise, we're going to be in this cycle forever."

These comments came close on the heels of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's controversial statement that "apparent improvement" in the diets of people in India and China and consequent food export caps were among the causes of the current global food crisis.

Are vegetarians missing out?



JYOTI LALWANI,
Consulting
Dietician

► The non-vegetarian diet contains first class protein, which is not present in pulses. This can be obtained from milk or soya products.

► Fruits and vegetables are unable to provide Vitamin B12 to our body as it is animal made. This can be obtained from milk and milk products.

► Well planned vegetarian diets can provide us with all the nutrients that we need, minus all the saturated fat, cholesterol and contaminants found in animal flesh, eggs and dairy products.

Correlation between food crisis around the world and turning vegetarian:

To produce one pound of flesh, the animal consumes 16 pounds of grain. So, in spite of increased growth in crop production, the maximum amount of grain is utilised to feed animals. Meat-based diets are partly to blame since land, water and other resources to grow food for human beings, are being used to grow crops for farmed animals.

Reasons to turn veggie:

- Animals have the right to be ethically treated too.
- Vegetarian foods don't contain cholesterol, known to be a cause for cardiovascular diseases.
- Vegetarian foods contain a lot of

fibre which helps form the bulk of our stools and remove waste products effectively.

- It contains all the vitamins in a natural form; easily absorbed by the body.
- Is satiating, so, calorie consumption can be easily restricted.

► Vegetarian diets are not acidic in nature when compared to non-vegetarian diets.

► Great meditators including Buddha and Mahavir, have emphasised the fact that man

should be vegetarian, not thanks to philosophy revolving around non violence, but because if you really want to move towards spiritual upliftment, body needs to be weightless, natural, flowing.