

What's Veganic??

Basically it just means that we don't use any slaughterhouse by-products or manures to grow our fruits and vegetables. All vegetables are grown using green-manure-cover-crops and plant-based nutrient sources as well as ground-up rock powders.

It has become too common for some organic vegetable farmers to rely heavily on slaughterhouse by-products (chicken manure, blood, bone and fish meal) to get nutrients to their plants. The only **commercial** sources for these products are factory farms, where animals lead miserable lives, and are fed diets of high-pesticide, GMO food, ridden with hormones, steroids and antibiotics.

These items **bio-accumulate** in the bodies of the animals and in their waste. To make matters worse, the packed and unhealthy conditions that these animals are forced to live in encourages the spread of diseases that may be transferrable to humans. For example, bone meal fed back to cows has been implicated as a possible cause for the spread of mad-cow disease in Europe.

The idea of supporting these industries in any way, and putting what we consider to be toxic waste products onto our otherwise clean fields seems completely counter to our goal of organic clean living.

Before we go any further, it's very important to note that **not ALL farms using animal waste products are getting them from factory farms!** Many (especially smaller) local organic farms have their own well-treated animals, or have access to a neighboring farm's manure. If this is something you are concerned about, just ask your local organic farmer how they handle nutrient needs on their farm! They'll be more than happy to explain it to you.

Although we do have access to local clean manures, we've chosen to be a little "extremist" and go completely veganic, in part to demonstrate that it can be done. Not having to truck waste to the farm and then use a tractor to spread it saves a lot of fuel, saving us money! It's true that we've had to be a little more clever and long-term thinking in our rotations, but once you figure it out, it's not hard at all, and the money and time saved more than makes up for the initial planning.

There is no certification standard for Veganic Agriculture at the present time, but the basic concept couldn't be simpler. Really, we are just "cutting out the middle man." The middle man in this case is the cow, chicken, horse, pig or whatever. What is their manure made from anyway but plant materials? There is no "magic" that goes on inside the animal that makes their manure better for the soil or plants than if we used the base material. In **FACT**, it is quite the opposite if you are using factory-farmed wastes! Besides disease, pesticide and steroid residue, salts (most especially in chicken manures) are high enough in concentrations that they can salinate heavier soils -disturbing the delicate micro-ecology that is so essential to the long-term health of the soil -and US!

Vegetable-based amendments, called "Green Manures" on the other hand ENCOURAGE microbial activity. Their carbon-to-nitrogen ratios are much more in balance. While the process is somewhat slower... the net increase in overall Organic Matter can be **several times** greater when a farmer uses green manures instead of animal manures. We have the soil tests to prove it!

So why doesn't everyone do it? Historically -for thousands of years- farmers relied on green manures. No one had cows and chickens and pigs in the cramped concentrations they do now... And the transport of those waste products has only been made possible by the heavy use of petroleum. The Chinese, ancient Romans, and even Hudson Valley farmers of the late 1800's all studied, wrote about, and relied heavily on "Veganic" techniques.

There are several ways farmers can apply veganic techniques. We use the simplest and cheapest in part because we have such an excess of good growing soil here. We simply take land out of vegetable production and plant it to green manures. That way we don't have to harvest the green manure -or move it from one field to another, AND we get the benefit of all the root growth, which, depending on the crop, is massive! Other veganic farmers might plant a field to a green-manure crop (like alfalfa), harvest it, and spread it onto their growing fields. That works too!

For more information on the details of what and how we use Veganics here, or solutions for farmers without the acreage to give their soil "breaks" feel free to contact us!

2002 Update!

Research last year by the University of Washington gives more credibility to our nutty purist ideals. While tests on chicken manure repeatedly prove the toxic build-up of herbicides, insecticide, steroids, anti-biotics, and disease... no one had looked at the process in non-factory farm animals until last year!

Broad-Leaf weed herbicide was applied during reconditioning of a hay pasture. The hay grew over months, and the roots soaked up the herbicide (just like non-organic carrots were found last year to soak up other broad-spectrum herbicides). Months of rain and baking sun didn't break the herbicide down... the hay was harvested, sat in a barn, was slowly fed to horses... where the herbicide BIO-ACCUMULATED in their bodies and was then passed in their manure.

The "safe" manure collected until an organic farmer brought it home and started composting it over many months. Temperatures up to 180 degrees cooked the pathogens in the manure... but didn't touch the herbicide! Months later when he applied the "black gold" to his fields, some very sensitive broad leaf crops that he happened to be growing died of herbicide damage which started the whole investigation.

The implications are tremendous! These herbicidal products are known carcinogens. They do NOT break down enough at the concentrations American farmers have started pouring on their fields -and American Farmers are applying record amounts of chemicals to their fields

and YOUR FOOD even as other countries are phasing in nationally sponsored programs to decrease pesticide use.

Want to know why this happens? Here's a crazy idea... Food in America is TOO CHEAP! American farmers -whether they are small farms OR big agribusiness do NOT make enough money on the crops they grow.

American farmers can NOT afford to lose a crop or take a risk. And our agro-chemicals and fuel are ALSO subsidized for us. Any rational farmer would be INSANE to try organic (or even more ridiculous, veganic) methods, and possibly lose a crop... then possibly lose the farm.

The current toxic condition of our food is a direct result of the American Public's demand for ridiculously cheap food! It seems we are getting what we pay for!

One of our evaluations said that we didn't try to scare people enough about the dangers currently inherent in the American Food system.

Okay then, BE SCARED! Be VERY SCARED! Food in this country is NOT HEALTHY right now. While we may be extremists, our actions are not totally unwarranted. Buy from a LOCAL farmer -and ask them what they put on their fields and what is put on the fields around them.

Certified Naturally Grown