

Vegan Prisoners Support Group

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To: No.1. Governors/Catering Managers/Prison Shops

It's Official! Equal Rights for Vegan Prisoners in Prison Shops

Governors soon to choose which vegan products they make available to prisoners.

Assurances that after 'operational difficulties' our recommendations to ensure equal opportunities for vegans in prison shops under the Aramark contract [first highlighted in 1994] are soon to be in place. Mr. Glyn Jones [Prison Shop Project] stated in December 2005 "that instructions will be shortly issued to Aramark advising them that one vegan item needs be included in each section on their Canteen listing".

Our recommendations have been realistic and include items we feel other prisoners wishing to follow a healthy lifestyle might purchase, such as nuts, seeds and soya products. Our research shows that many non-vegan prisoners involved in body building are anxious to obtain soya

products and in fact choose a vegan diet just in order to be able to be provided with their soya milk allowance. If such items are available from prison shops this might ease the burden on some catering budgets.

Guidance will also be given to Governors recommending that Honesty [a mail order company] Lumford Mill, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1GS be added to their facilities list in order to make available specialist hygiene/body care products for this minority group. We will be closely monitoring the progress via our test cases that provide us with local information on such issues.

Iodine Now Available

Iodine is now available for the purchase of vegan prisoners.

June Henderson at Aramark has confirmed that an iodine supplement (kelp) by Allsports is already on their listing and is suitable for vegans.

The First Vegan Chocolate Bar for Sale in Prisons!

Interestingly enough the first vegan chocolate bar has appeared on a canteen list at a prison in the private sector.

UKDS HMP Bronzefield are the first prison on record to list amongst the items on their Canteen Sheet a vegan chocolate bar 'Organica Hazelnut Dark Nougat Bar' and also at the RRP. Well done Margaret Ixer-Pitfield!

VPSG Still Continue To Recommend the Special Order Scheme For Vegans

Although the Prison Service are committed to ensure that equal opportunities are provided to vegans in Prison Shops, we feel it may depend on the number of vegans at each prison at the time the products from the Canteen Sheets are chosen.

As the number of vegans varies at any one time and only 400 of the 1,400 items on the full listing can be listed, we continue to recommend local and mail order purchase under the Special Order Scheme for vegans to ensure they can purchase the specialist items they require.

The items on Canteen Sheets is a local decision at the discretion of the Governor.

Next Issue to include:

Update on Prison Shops, which will include the results of our questionnaire sent to prisons.

How HMP Birmingham ensure equal rights for their vegans.

Visit our Stall at the National Catering Conference

We will be at the National Catering Conference again this April, why not drop by and have a chat about that vegan problem you have been unable to solve.

We are also hoping to have copies of our new cookery book available. This is free to Catering Managers as usual.

Your Recipes!

You should have received a request for recipes for our cookery book. Thank you for all the recipes sent so far.

If you have not yet sent a recipe there is still time, but we need to hear from you by 10 March. Please email them to: jo-ann.brown@vpsg.info. Credits will be included with each recipe.

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VPSG Visits UKDS HMP Bronzefield

On the 6th February, I was met on my arrival at UKDS HMP Bronzefield by Wendy Rayner Administrations Manager.

Wendy's responses to our communications have always been so speedy and it was good to actually meet her in person. I then met with Catering Manager Jamie Gibson and one of our test cases Heather Nicholson.

The meeting was well worth the journey and during the afternoon several issues were discussed.

Heather Nicholson discussed the importance of raw vegetables in her diet. Being the only vegan at this establishment we suggested a simpler diet would not only be more practicable, but more beneficial. Coloured vegetables such as beetroot, peppers and celery with pulses and legumes were recommended [see separate article on page 4].

Jamie Gibson also indicated his

willingness to participate in our latest trials involving the use of brown rice, quinoa and millet in the vegan diet. Prisoner participation is also invited on these trials as wholegrains are so important in the vegan diet. We still require two more prisons who are interested in participating in this trial. If you're interested just give us a call.

Margaret Ixer-Pitfield has now compiled a list of vegan products including access to mail order facilities from the Vegan Society and plans to add Honesty to this list are underway. Jo-Ann Brown

UKDS HMP Peterborough

We were recently contacted by the Director Mike Conway informing us that they would be happy to receive information from us on this specialist subject and an update will be included in Issue No.7. Overall it appears that prisons in the private sector have leapt ahead and we hope to have good working relationships with them in the future as we already do with government run prisons.

Report by Test Case Heather Nicholson

UKDS HMP Bronzefield
February 2006

Vegan Diet

When I arrived at HMP Bronzefield in November 2005 I was unsure which meals were suitable for vegans as they were not indicated clearly on the menu sheets. Although I had several meetings to discuss my diet I was still experiencing problems, so I contacted the VPSG for advice and to request a meeting.

A meeting was arranged by the VPSG, not only with myself, but with the kitchens on the 6th February. Since then my diet has improved enormously and the prison have implemented the recommendations suggested by the VPSG which have made such a difference.

Thanks to the efforts of Jamie Gibson I am now provided with more salads, which contain broccoli and beetroot, as well as pulses and legumes so important

in my diet. The vegan options are varied and include vegetable patties, lentil dhal, bean stew, samosas. I also receive daily vegan essentials such as fortified soya milk, nuts, yeast extract, fruit and cereal bars.

Canteen

Again after the VPSG made some suggestions, Margaret Ixer-Pitfield created a canteen which contained vegan items. These include toiletries, miso soup, muesli and **chocolate**. I am also informed that soon I will be able to order products from The Vegan Society and some 'vegan make-up' from Honesty!

Thanks

Although it was difficult for me when I first arrived I feel that the staff at UKDS HMP Bronzefield have made a real effort to cater for me now they understand the requirements of strict vegans. I really want to say thanks to Jamie Gibson, Anne Thompson, Margaret Ixer-Pitfield and the VPSG for their time and effort in helping me.

Vegan Society Assisting with Prisoner Work

We would like to introduce Roz Raha from the Vegan Society, who has recently started helping us with our prisoner enquiries. Our views/aims are very similar, and we are liaising closely on all our work and projects. So don't be surprised if Roz gives you a call.

Recipe

Green Beans and Peanuts

1/4 cup olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
3/4 cup unsalted, skinned peanuts
3-4 cloves garlic, chopped
675 grams green beans
1 large green pepper, chopped
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper

In a skillet heat the oil and in this sauté the onions, peanuts and garlic until the onions are translucent. Add the beans, green pepper, salt & black pepper and continue to sauté until the beans are tender. Serve hot. (Serves 4 - 6 as a side dish)

Current Research on Vegan Products

Yearsleys

Vegetable sausages
Vegetable samosas
Vegetable patties
Thai noodle burger
Ciabatta bread

N.H. Case

New breaded vegetarian burger
Findus beetroot grills
Findus falafel nuggets
Nasigoreng pattie
Noodle pattie

HMP Breakfast Packs

Breakfast Packs
Five of the six types of cereals included in the pack are suitable for vegans. The Crisp Rice is not suitable, but the following are:

- Frosted Flakes,
- Cocoa Rice
- Cornflakes
- Branflakes
- Wheat biscuits

More Grains, Beans, Nuts and Seeds, less TVP!

TVP is not one of the healthiest or nutritious foods, it is so processed that many of the nutrients are lost. Instead, we recommend grains, nuts, seeds and beans which are nutritious. They tend to complement each other well in terms of nutrients, each covering different parts of the nutrition spectrum.

Grains

Grains provide important sources of dietary fibre, plant protein and phytochemicals. They can also fortify our diets with vitamins and minerals that are typically in short supply.

Our research shows that the basic grains used in the prison kitchen include oats, wheat, rice

and corn. Some prison kitchens use cous cous which is a wheat grain with a mild flavour. It can be seasoned with garlic, onion or other spices for a richer flavour.

But there are others:

* Barley can be used either hot or cold and combined with vegetables or lentils.

* Quinoa is one of the few grains that provide a complete protein. It can be used similar to rice, good for making pilaf.

Whole grain vs Refined

A good number of nutrients are lost from grains when they are refined. Much of the fibre is also lost so we highly recommend that a percentage of grains are served unrefined. Some prisons already serve brown

rice; examples are Rye Hill, Bronzefield, Cookham Wood and Rochester.

Beans

All varieties of beans are rich sources of protein, fibre, and the essential amino acid, lysine. Lysine is missing from most grains, which is why the combination, "rice and beans" makes a complete protein. Many beans also contain folacin as well as some minerals.

Because of their high fibre content, beans help to protect us against diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and maybe even some cancers. It is the insoluble fibre content of beans that help to keep blood sugars stable by raising blood sugars less significantly than other foods.

Vegan Bread Available in Prison

British Bakeries have confirmed that the following products are suitable for vegans:

Hovis Wheatgerm Brown 800g
Hovis White medium sliced 800g
Hovis White Thick sliced 800g
Hovis wholemeal medium sliced 800g
Hovis wholemeal thick sliced 800g
Hovis sq. Cut medium sliced 800g
Hovis sq. Cut extra thick sliced 800g
Hovis sq. Cut toast sliced 800g
Daisy Fresh White medium sliced 800g
Daisy Fresh White thick sliced 800g
MP Brown medium sliced 800g
MP White medium sliced 800g
MP White Thick sliced 800g
MP Longer Life White medium sliced 800g
Hovis Country grain 800g
Hovis Granary Medium sliced 800g
Hovis Granary thick sliced 800g

Brown morning rolls x 12
White morning rolls x 12
Mothers pride white baps x 12
Hovis Wholemeal rolls x 6
Hovis White cobbles
White burger buns seeded and sliced x 12
Mothers Pride White fingers rolls x 12

Large Multigrains Baps x 4
Large white baps x 4

Mother's Pride Teacakes x 4
Mother's Pride Currants buns x 4

!!The products below are NOT suitable for vegans!!
Mothers Pride Hot cross buns x 4 [shellac found in fresh peel]
Mothers Pride Derby scones x 6 [milk powder]
French Sticks [made by outside bakers who put grease on tins]

Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds offer an abundance of nutritional benefits and an important part of a healthy vegan diet when combined with grains and vegetables. They are a good source of vitamins, minerals, protein, essential fatty acids and fibre.

For example:

Nuts

*Walnuts supply copper and manganese and are full of linolenic acid, which can be converted to omega-3 fatty acids in the body. They are also a good source of omega-6.

*Almonds are high in riboflavin, copper, magnesium and vitamin E. They also contain zinc and are a rich source of calcium.

*Brazil nuts are a good source of selenium.

Although peanuts are not a nut, but a legume, they should not be forgotten. They can provide not only a good protein source, but also vitamin E, folate, fibre, protein, copper, phosphorous and magnesium.

Seeds

*Pumpkin seeds are an excellent source of iron and zinc.

*Sunflower seeds are the richest seed source of vitamin E and an excellent source of copper and magnesium.

*Sesame seeds good source of zinc, magnesium and calcium.

Five a day Fruit and Vegetables

To maintain a healthy vegan diet at least five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables are required each day.

What counts as a portion?

- 1 medium sized banana
- 1 apple
- ½ a cup of raw vegetables
- A few broccoli or cauliflower florets
- ½ a cup of frozen peas
- ½ a red pepper
- 1 medium-sized courgette
- 1 medium-sized carrot
- ¼ medium-sized cucumber
- 1 large tomato

Potatoes are a starchy food and so they don't count.

Vegetables provide us with some of the vitamins and minerals we need for good health and they are also a high fibre food. In order to ensure that more vitamins are available to the body we recommend that some vegetables are provided raw, as heating destroys some vitamins.

Rainbow Foods

It is recommended that everyone should eat a wide variety of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables. Brightly coloured vegetables contain an arsenal of disease-fighting chemicals called phytonutrients. Less colourful vegetables like potatoes and bananas are not associated with the same benefits, though they are useful sources of potassium and other nutrients.

Luckily it is easy to get all the benefits available from rainbow foods, you simply eat vegetables and fruits from each of the following seven colour families.

RED/PURPLE

These foods contain anthocyanins, powerful antioxidants that may cut the risk of heart disease and stroke by inhibiting clot formation.

Aubergine
Blackberries
Prunes
Red apples
Red cabbage
Red pears
Red pepper

RED

Any tomato-based food provides a cancer-fighting antioxidant. Also:

Kidney Beans
Red Onion
Red Peppers
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Watermelon

ORANGE

The beta carotene in orange foods boosts eye and skin health:

Carrots
Mango
Oranges
Pumpkin
Sweet potato
Winter Squash

ORANGE/YELLOW

These cousins to the orange family are rich in beta cryptoxanthin, an antioxidant that protects cells from damage.
Oranges

Peaches
Pineapple
Tangerines

YELLOW/GREEN

Further protection for your eyes: these foods contain lutein and zeaxanthin.

Courgette
Cucumber
Green Apples
Green beans
Green peas
Green or yellow pepper
Kiwi
Pears
Peas
Spinach
Spring greens
Sweet corn

GREEN

Green foods pack natural chemicals called isothiocyanates such as sulforaphane and indoles, all of which stimulate production of cancer-fighting liver enzymes.

Broccoli or broccoli sprouts
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Kale

WHITE/GREEN

Garlic and onions contain allicin, a tumour fighter. Mushrooms have other disease-battling chemicals. These foods are rich in flavonoids, which protect against cell damage:

Garlic
Onion
Celery
Leeks
Mushrooms

Definition of Veganism

VEGANISM may be defined as a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

In dietary terms it refers to the practice of dispensing with **all** animal produce - including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, animal milks, honey, and their derivatives.

Abhorrence of the cruel practices inherent in an agricultural system based on the abuse of animals is probably the single most common reason for the adoption of veganism, but many people are drawn to it for health, ecological, resource, spiritual and other reasons.

The above information was obtained from the Vegan Society formed in 1944 as it had recognised the ethical compromises implicit in lacto-vegetarianism [i.e. dairy-dependent]. For more information on veganism a free information pack is available from the Vegan Society.