

Compassionate Action

The Magazine of Compassion Over Killing

Summer 2016 • Issue 31

Celebrating 20 Years of Compassion!

Horrors at Hormel: Video Goes Viral

VegWeek 2016 Success!

**Justice for All:
Meet Cheryl Leahy**

And more...





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Compassion Over Killing is a national nonprofit animal protection organization based in Washington, DC. Since 1995, COK has been working to expose cruelty to farmed animals and empower people to choose vegetarian foods as a way to build a kinder world.

Relying on a wide range of strategies to achieve our mission, COK conducts undercover investigations, engages in proactive legal advocacy, persuades major corporations to use fewer animal products and offer more vegan options, and much more.

Join our efforts today to help demonstrate the power of compassion. Visit **COK.net**.

Cover Photo by COK's Jonathan Rosenberry, taken at River's Wish Animal Sanctuary in Washington.

Photo of Erica above taken by Sylvia Elzafon. SylviaElzafon.com

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Erica Meier at Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary

Dear friend,

From day one, our mission has been – and still is today – to **give a voice to the billions of animals** who suffer behind the closed doors of animal agribusiness and to **empower others to make compassionate choices**.

Thanks to your passion, support, and generosity, Compassion Over Killing has grown from an all-volunteer high school club in 1995 into an unwavering, powerful national force for farm animals.

COK's hard-hitting investigations are shining a bright light on the truth and we've garnered award-winning national and international media coverage, from CNN and ABC Nightly News to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and more.

COK's ground-breaking legal advocacy efforts are paving the way for a more just future, from removing misleading 'humane' marketing claims to uncovering details that led to a class action lawsuit against the dairy industry for an alleged \$10 billion price-fixing scheme (case is ongoing).

COK's innovative corporate campaigns are bringing vegan eating to the mainstream and saving lives. These changes are putting vegan options on menus from Subway to Dunkin' Donuts and they've also reduced wholesale egg demand by about 25 million eggs, which means at least 100,000 fewer hens are suffering on factory farms.

COK's outreach campaigns are spreading compassion nationwide. We're inspiring tens of thousands to take our VegWeek VegPledge, to explore vegan eating at our annual DC VegFest celebration, and to open their hearts and minds through our online videos, leafleting activities and so much more.

In our crusade to protect farmed animals, we are winning. We still have a very long way to go, but we **are making undeniable progress and we're not slowing down**.

Thank you for allowing us to celebrate 20 years of compassion – and for continuing to stand strong with us as we get started on our next 20 years. **Together, we're demonstrating the power of compassion by saving lives and changing the world! ■**

Sincerely,

Erica Meier, Executive Director

VISIT US ONLINE!

- **COK.net**
- **TryVeg.com**
- **VegDC.com**
- **DCVegFest.com**
- **VegWeek.com**



Voices of **Compassion** at cok.net/blog



[/CompassionOverKilling](https://www.facebook.com/CompassionOverKilling)



[@TryVeg](https://twitter.com/TryVeg)



[@compassion_over_killing](https://www.instagram.com/compassion_over_killing)

AN INVESTIGATOR'S STORY: FINDING SANCTUARY

Compassion Over Killing's brave undercover investigators are on an important mission: to expose the truth about farmed animal abuse. They witness and document the horrors kept hidden behind closed doors in order to shine a bright light on the animals' stories for the world to see.



The challenges our investigators face are both physical and emotional and many of our supporters ask us how they get through these incredibly tough situations.

One COK investigator, who worked inside Hormel supplier Quality Pork Processors (QPP) (details on next page) shares his story in our moving video, "An Investigator's Story: Finding Sanctuary."

MEET "JAY"

Visiting a sanctuary for rescued farmed animals, "Jay" spends peaceful moments with happy pigs, and notes the remarkable change in these smart and social animals when they're given the freedom to simply be themselves.

As he describes in the video:

"I've had the chance to interact with some pigs at animal sanctuaries after I finished my work at QPP, and I was really struck by how different they acted. The pigs at the slaughterhouse are always scared; they're always physically stressed, and you can hear them yelling and struggling.

"But the animals at the sanctuaries, they're always very relaxed; they're not stressed out. They're able to interact with people in a pretty loving manner. Some of them may follow you around while you're doing volunteer work...it's always very relaxing just being with them."

"If I could just say one thing to a person who isn't vegetarian or vegan, about my time at QPP, it's that I have seen firsthand that these animals can suffer and that they feel pain. They're really someone we should be leaving off our plates."

Visit COK.net today to watch "Jay's" story & to also send a note of thanks to all of our brave investigators! ■



HERE'S HOW PEOPLE ARE REACTING TO OUR UNDERCOVER VIDEOS:

"Thank you for your difficult work. You are making the world a much better place!"

"Today I became a vegan. Your efforts are working."

"Thank you SO MUCH for all that you do! It's because of these videos I went vegan 3+ years ago."

"I became vegan because of people like you showing me the realities of factory farming. The animals I have not eaten in the past three months thank you, too. You are true heroes."



HORRORS AT HORMEL: USDA-APPROVED

Our shocking footage offers a disturbing, close-up view of the suffering endured by pigs as they are

In late 2015, Compassion Over Killing released a **shocking undercover video** filmed inside Quality Pork Processors (QPP), a pig slaughterhouse in Minnesota that exclusively supplies Hormel. This facility is one of five in the US operating under “HIMP,” a controversial USDA-approved pilot program that allows for faster slaughter speeds while also reducing the number of government inspectors on site.

“If the USDA is around, they could shut us down.” –QPP employee

It’s also one of the nation’s largest – and fastest – slaughter plants. For more than 20 years, it’s been operating under a limited USDA pilot program that’s never been fully evaluated, though it has been widely criticized.

Our investigation first broke in a **powerful feature in *The Washington Post***. In it, the USDA condemned the cruelty we uncovered as **“appalling and completely unacceptable.”**

Within days of release, the video went viral with more than one million

online views, while also garnering **international headlines** and exposing millions of people to the sad truth kept hidden behind the closed doors of the pork industry.

Our video inside this Hormel supplier documents:

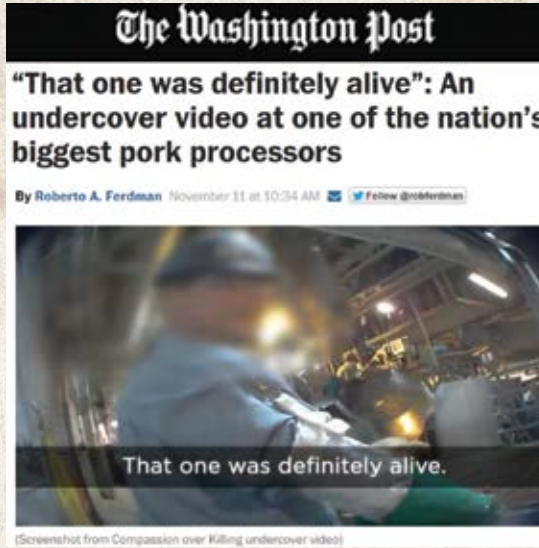
- animals being beaten, shocked, dragged, and improperly stunned—all out of view of the few government inspectors

- sick and injured pigs unable to walk, known as “downers,” enduring particularly egregious abuses, since they cannot walk to the kill floor
- sick and injured pigs too weak to stand, known as “downers,” enduring particularly egregious abuses, since they cannot walk to the kill floor
- numerous instances of improper stunning and slaughter, potentially leading to some animals entering the scalding tank while still alive

Because this facility is participating in the USDA’s “HIMP” pilot program, it’s allowed to operate at faster line speeds than almost any other facility in the US – and this excessive slaughter line speed forces workers to take inhumane shortcuts that lead to extreme suffering for millions of pigs. It also jeopardizes food safety for consumers.

By allowing facilities like QPP to operate at increased slaughter speeds combined with reduced oversight, **the USDA is essentially giving the profit-driven pork industry a free pass to police itself** – and the plant managers are taking full advantage.

TAKE ACTION:
 Sign our petition to tell the USDA and Hormel to stop the unhealthy and inhumane high-speed slaughter of pigs: Join **Alicia Silverstone, Paul Wesley, Liam Hemsworth** and nearly 200,000 other compassionate people by signing and sharing!



HIGH-SPEED SLAUGHTER HELL

pushed, prodded and dragged to their death for Hormel, the makers of SPAM.

TAKE ACTION:

COK presents: the **"Unauthorized SPAM Tour,"** a parody of Hormel's "SPAMERICAN Tour!" Join your guide Earl to see where SPAM really comes from. Visit NotSoFastHormel.com and please share the video using hashtag #NotSoFastHormel!



Not only did our investigator document a supervisor sleeping on the job when he should have been ensuring pigs were being properly stunned, he also recorded another employee commenting, "...if the USDA is around, they could shut us down."

And that's exactly the point: under HIMP, the USDA isn't around as much. So what the USDA doesn't see, the USDA doesn't enforce. Pretty convenient for the

pork industry and for the USDA, but bad news for animals and consumers.

HIMP has been in place for over 20 years, yet the USDA has not yet thoroughly reviewed the program to determine its effectiveness. Yet by nearly

"The actions depicted in the video under review are appalling and completely unacceptable." -USDA

all accounts – including our undercover video, whistleblowers within USDA, federal food safety records, labor unions, and a 2013 report by the USDA's Office of the Inspector General, as well as a letter from 60 Members of Congress sent to the USDA in January 2016 – HIMP is a dangerous program putting consumers, workers, and animals at unnecessary risk.

In fact, after dragging its feet for months on our case, the USDA recently admitted that "The actions depicted in the video occurred at times when USDA inspection personnel were not performing verifications," and that "[h]ad these actions been observed by FSIS inspectors,

they would have resulted in immediate regulatory action against the plant."

Visit COK.net to watch our video and take action. ■



WHAT IS "HIMP"?

It's the USDA's "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Based Inspection Models Project." In a nutshell, it:

- reduces the number of government-trained inspectors at slaughter plants by allowing facility employees to oversee many of their own food safety control measures
- also allows slaughter lines to run at even higher speeds than those at other plants.

JUSTICE FOR ALL:

Cheryl Leahy, COK's General Counsel, celebrates 10 years of legal advancements for farm animals

As I come upon ten years as General Counsel at Compassion Over Killing (COK), I reflect upon my own journey, and how it fits into the amazing arc of progress the animal protection movement has made.

I went to law school because I had an interest in finding a way to maximize what the law could do to change the system. My thoughts focused on bringing to light and fighting against the worst abuses being inflicted upon the largest numbers of animals, which led me to factory farming issues and to my work at COK. By the time I graduated in 2006, a small number of nonprofit groups had begun to focus on legal advocacy for farmed animals, including COK.

The growth of farmed animal law, which was not yet a field when I began law school in 2003, has been particularly dramatic. There were some excellent animal lawyers pioneering early cases back then, but without any structure or format to guide or offer opportunities to students entering animal law. There was no rulebook for how to do this work.

Defending the Animals: COK's Legal Advocacy Program

In the last ten years, COK has been on the front lines of developing legal advocacy for farm animals into a thriving field. We're seeing unprecedented, sweeping changes that few of us could have predicted a decade ago.

Our undercover investigations are the only meaningful tool we as a society have to expose the lies that the secretive animal agriculture industry tells the public in order to maintain business-as-usual.

We were one of the first to adopt the employment-based model of undercover investigations, allowing us to take hidden cameras inside factory farms and use that footage to seek prosecutions, support lawsuits, encourage changes to corporate practices, and



educate people about the realities of the tragically commonplace egregious abuses to farmed animals and the cruelty of standard industry practices.

We have also led the charge in innovative litigation projects, often using laws that weren't originally intended to directly help animals. For example, we're now fighting systemic abuses by fighting false advertising as well as unfair and anticompetitive business practices.

In doing this work, we've thought very carefully about why and how we choose projects and legal tools. Bit by bit, we've been able to help create a model for others to

learn from and use in their efforts.

Shaping the Future of Animal Law

Animal law is of growing interest and top schools are investing in it. I've had the privilege of creating and teaching one of the first-ever U.S. law school courses focused on agricultural animals, at UCLA Law.

Awareness among law students and attorneys has built steadily and rapidly, including the many pro-bono

In the last ten years, COK has been on the front lines of developing legal advocacy for farm animals into a thriving field.

and other lawyers who have lent us their time and expertise.

If I'd been told a decade ago that we'd be making this much progress for animals, I certainly wouldn't have believed it. I remember thinking the system was so entrenched, its players so powerful, that even one legal victory would be a massive achievement. The reality is we've seen achievements cascading down, one after another, and each helping the next succeed.

What Lies Ahead

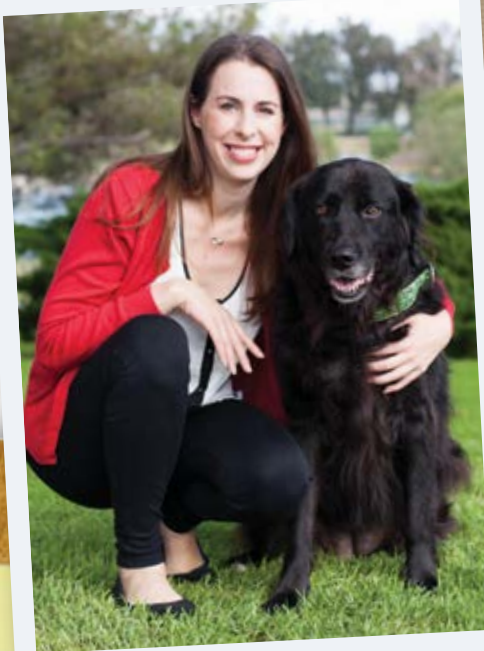
Looking to the future, I can't even imagine what the next ten years

might bring. I envision our movement truly shifting the fundamental ways people think about our relationships with animals.

The rising awareness and interest in where our food comes from and how farm animals are treated is encouraging. While we certainly have a long way to go, and the widespread and unrelenting violence toward animals can be disheartening, the pace of change has been so rapid and so apparent, that I believe we'll see a major cultural shift in the coming years.

The brightest and most compassionate minds from all fields will continue to get involved, to offer new perspectives, to innovate, to validate this movement, and to create real and lasting change. We see influencers from the fields of law, policy, economics, business, psychology, nutrition, art, and many others stepping in to help people truly see this suffering and death and feel empowered to make the life-affirming choice to change it.

We know animal industries are cruel, that we don't need to eat animals to thrive, and that eating animals is actually harmful to our bodies and our environment. What we're learning now is how to build a future world wise enough to continue learning from the exploitations of our past and to proceed with the compassion that meets all of our needs in a humane and sustainable way. ■



COK'S LEGAL DOCKET

Here are a few highlights among our game-changing cases and legal victories:

Victory – Egg Industry Removes Misleading Marketing Claim: After COK filed complaints with the Better Business Bureau, took egg companies and retailers to court, and garnered nationwide media about the horrors of egg factory farming, the egg industry removed its misleading “Animal Care Certified” claim that was stamped on egg cartons nationwide.

Slaughterhouse Shutdown: A gut-wrenching COK investigation that made national headlines on ABC's Nightline prompted the USDA to temporarily shut down a California “spent” dairy cow slaughter plant. Major retailers, including Coscto and McDonald's, severed ties with this facility.

Hatchery Sued and then Shuttered: After COK revealed horrific cruelty at a California chicken and duck hatchery, we sued the facility under state unfair business practices law. We reached a settlement that ensured the closure of the hatchery, and it marked the first-ever successful use of this law to address animal cruelty.

Class-Action Case against the Dairy Industry: COK conducted extensive research and initial case development of antitrust litigation against interests representing 70% of the dairy industry. The complaint is based on a \$9.5 billion price-fixing scheme that revolved around a so-called ‘dairy herd retirement’ program.” This case is on-going.



US VEGWEEK 2016

A star-studded success!

Spanning April 18-24, VegWeek 2016 marked COK's eighth consecutive year organizing this 7-day celebration that empowers thousands to explore vegan eating.



"I'm never going back. I can't believe the changes in my body, spirit, mind. I'm in."



"VegWeek is wrapping up and I really enjoyed it. A vegan place I tried has now become a favorite and my friends were super supportive."



"I really enjoyed it and plan to have more meatless days going forward."



Our popular campaign was originally inspired by Maryland Senator Jamie Raskin who, in 2009, was the first person ever to take our VegPledge, suggesting: “There are 52 weeks in a year. Why not make at least one meat-free?”

We Rolled Out the Green Carpet: award-winning musician **Moby**, actresses **Emily Deschanel** (*Bones*) and **Kristin Davis** (*Sex and the City*), actor **Paul Wesley** (*The Vampire Diaries*), singer **Mya** and other kind celebrities voiced their VegWeek support!

Animal Advocates: Esther the Wonder Pig, Albert the Super Cow of Asha Sanctuary and Wee Wee the Pig, who was rescued in DC’s Snowzilla blizzard and now lives at Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary, each lent a hand – er, hoof – in support too.

Our VegWeek Partners: dozens of compassionate companies from Beyond Meat and Tofurky to Daiya Foods and Miyoko’s Kitchen — pitched in by providing enticing deals, discounts, and meal ideas to all who took the VegPledge.

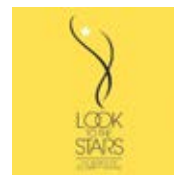
COK sends a massive **VegWeek thanks** to our Recruiters who inspired others to join in, and the many VegPledgers who posted photos on social media to show just how delicious animal-free eating really is. ■

Thousands Took Our 7-Day VegPledge: With 5,400 people joining the fun this year, that means more than **113,000 meat-free meals were enjoyed each day of the week** — sparing the lives of countless animals and leaving a lighter footprint on our planet.

VEGWEEK 2016 LIT UP THE HEADLINES:



WJLA TV/DT WASHINGTON, DC



THE HUFFINGTON POST

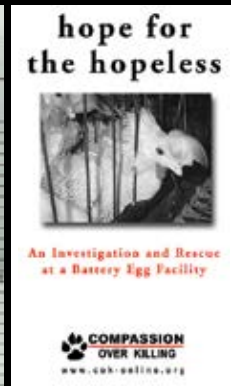
LIGHTS, CAMERA, VEGWEEK!

- With so many reasons to choose veg foods, we asked several people what inspired them to take the 7-Day VegPledge and created the motivating video: “I pledge because...”
- Esther the Wonder Pig helped turnip the volume in “Lettuce Turnip the Beet,” and showed the yummy foods she eats to celebrate VegWeek.
- Our adorable “Bring Your Buddies” video, featuring footage from Edgar’s Mission Farm Sanctuary, inspired many to recruit their friends to join the VegWeek fun.



2015

YEARS OF  **COMPASSION OVER KILLING**

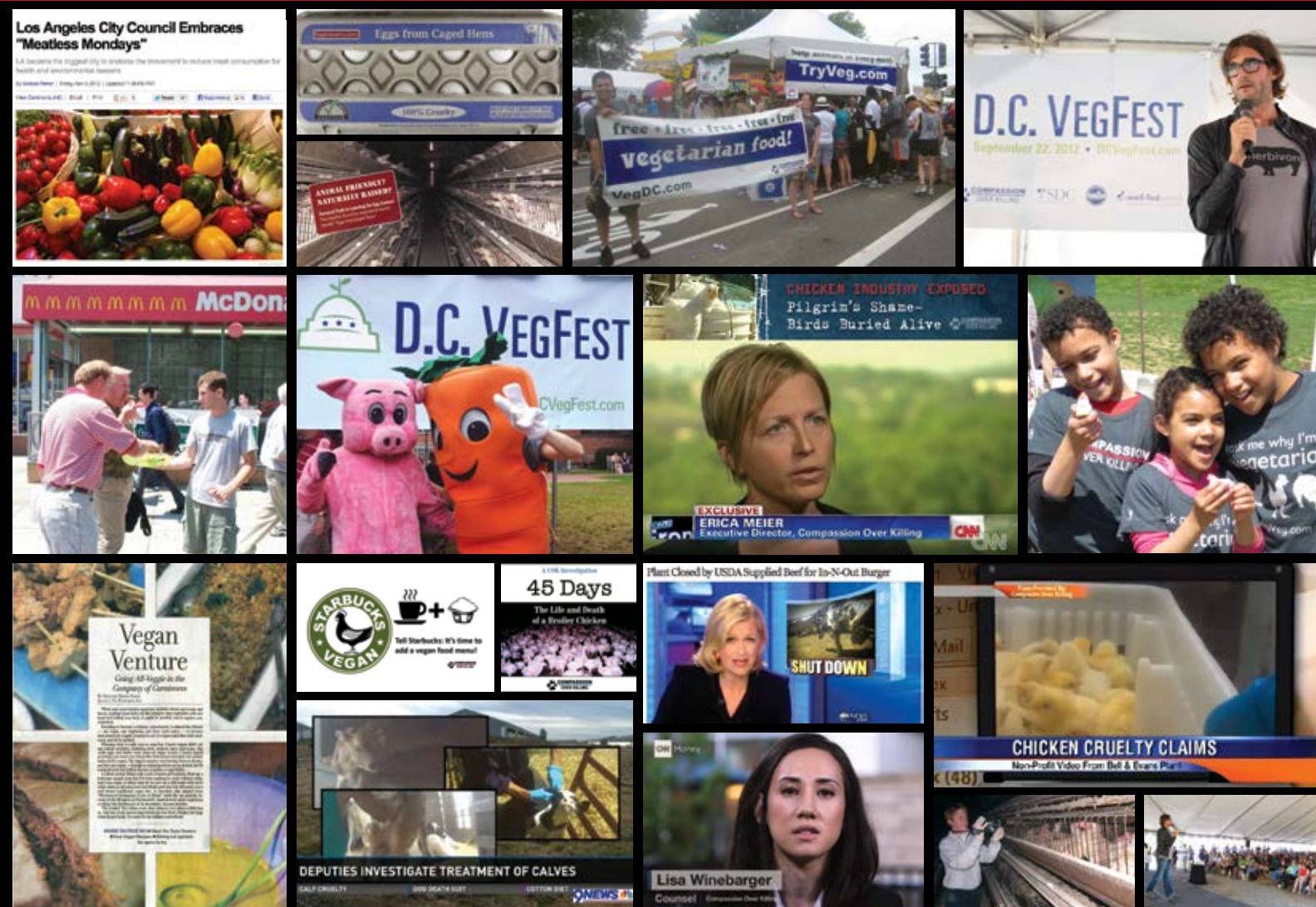


TRUTH • INNOVATION

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US CELEBRATE OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

Since 1995, Compassion Over Killing has served as an unwavering force bringing about positive changes for animals. Thanks to our many generous supporters, we've come a long way: starting as an all-volunteer high school club and evolving into a powerful national voice for animals.

As we enter our next 20 years, the animals are counting on all of us to continue standing strong together, forging ahead in our shared mission to build a kinder world for all. ■



JUSTICE • COMPASSION

Meet Robin Walker, Compassion Over Killing's Special Events Coordinator!



Robin is a long-time COK volunteer and core team member who brings years of experience in event planning to the table. For the past six years, she has gracefully taken on the high-pressure tasks of planning the operational details of our ever-growing DC VegFest and annual holiday celebrations – and so much more!

When she's not planning events, she's volunteering at animal sanctuaries, baking vegan sweets to feed the masses, or rescuing animals in need all over the DC area. Robin is an all-around hero for animals, and we were honored to present her with an award (photo below) at our 20-year anniversary celebration this past winter!

Q: What inspired you to go vegan?

A: I became a vegetarian when I was a teenager, and a few years later when a neighbor pointed out to me what cows and chickens endure to produce dairy and eggs, I was horrified. I immediately went vegan.

While opposing cruelty to animals remains my main motivation for being vegan, I've also become aware of the devastating environmental impact of animal agriculture – from water pollution to climate change – and I'm happy to opt out! And of course, there are the many health benefits of choosing a plant-based diet.

Q: What led you to volunteering with COK?

A: I was drawn to COK's thoughtful work to build a kinder, more compassionate world for all. COK has a positive message that empowers individuals, including me, to do what they can to help save animals.

I've been an animal advocate for many years, having previously worked

at the Washington Humane Society and PETA. I also volunteer at Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary in Maryland. It's such a motivating experience to meet rescued farm animals face-to-face and to get to know them as individuals. I encourage everyone to visit a sanctuary near them and get to know these amazing animals!

Q: The DC VegFest is now one of the largest veg festivals in the US and you've made it shine! Can you give us your secret to successful event-planning?

A: The DC VegFest is a day-long celebration with more than 15,000 people – and behind the scenes it takes months of planning by just a handful of us! The secret to our success is how much fun it is to be part of that action! And I'm really proud of the way DC VegFest has sprouted up in just a few short years, so much so that people are contacting us from across the US asking for tips on organizing their own festivals! That is truly inspiring.



Q: What tips can you offer to empower others to get active for animals?

A: I truly believe that one person can make a difference for animals! As COK says, each one of us has the power to stand up for animals every time we sit down to eat. And for those of us who are already vegan, we can turn small opportunities into life-changing experiences. That's why I love baking up a storm of vegan desserts to serve at various events, or bringing newcomers on a tour of an animal sanctuary, or introducing people to my favorite veg-friendly places around town. ■



Egg-Free Potato Salad from COK's *Easy Vegan Recipes* on TryVeg.com

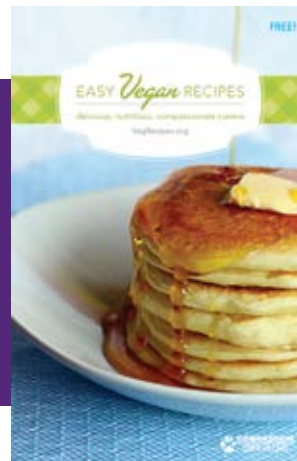


Serves 6

- 2 pounds red potatoes, cut into large cubes
- 1/3 cup vegan mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons Dijon or brown mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup celery, diced (optional)
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped (optional)
- 1/4 cup parsley or chives, finely chopped

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil, then carefully add the chopped potatoes. Cook for about 10 minutes or until potatoes are soft enough to be pierced with a fork, but not at all mushy. Drain and rinse in cold water. Set aside to cool completely.
2. Separately, combine the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a small bowl and mix well to combine.
3. When the potatoes are fully cooled, place them in a large bowl with the celery, onion, and parsley or chives. Mix gently to combine. Add the mayonnaise mixture and toss to coat. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours. Adjust seasoning before serving. ■

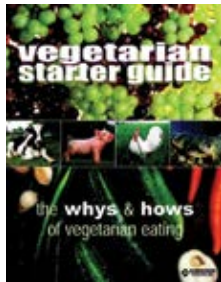


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VEG OUTREACH

First copy is free, \$1 for each additional copy unless otherwise noted. Please contact us at info@cok.net for bulk orders.



Vegetarian Starter Guide

This guide explains the benefits of choosing vegetarian foods. Includes recipes and meal ideas. Free PDF download available on TryVeg.com.



Easy Vegan Recipes

A collection of our favorite easy recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert and snacks. Free PDF download available on TryVeg.com.



I Support COK Sticker or Magnet

Show everyone just how much you support compassion with our new stickers! Stickers are free. Available as a magnet for \$2 each



TryVeg.com Bumper Sticker or Magnet

One of the simplest ways to spread a message of compassion. Stickers are free. Available as a magnet for \$2 each.



Restaurant Manager Cards

Use these pocket-sized cards to kindly encourage restaurants to add more vegan options. Set of 10 for \$2 or 50 for \$5.



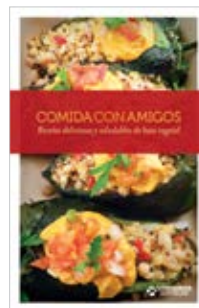
Veg Guide to DC

This handy Guide lists dozens of the best veg-friendly restaurants in and around the nation's capital. Free PDF download at VegDC.com.



Eating Sustainably

This brochure explains how animal agriculture is a leading cause of pollution and resource depletion, and that we can fight global warming—and animal abuse—with our forks. \$4 per pack of 25 flyers.



Comida con Amigos

This colorful 16-page guide celebrates the flavors of traditional Hispanic foods with a compassionate twist. You'll find vegan versions of 20 delicious cultural recipes. Free copy can be requested online at COK.net.

PRODUCTS



TryVeg.com Canvas Bag

This canvas bag is a handy way to carry your groceries (or other items) while encouraging others to choose vegetarian. \$12 each.



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"I'M VEGAN BECAUSE THE
ANIMALS WANT TO LIVE."

What a Child Sees – Visit COK.net to watch our video of compassionate kids talking about farm animals.