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COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

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IN THIS ISSUE:

The Edible Foil
Industry

Ban the
Catapult

BWC Rally for
International
Animal Rights
Day

Consumers'
Right to Know
What They're
Drinking

Around the World

Readers Write

The Choice is
Yours...



Contents

- 1 Editorial
- 2 The Edible Foil Industry
- 4 Ban the Catapult
- 6 BWC Rally for International Animal Rights Day
- 9 Consumers' Right to Know What They're Drinking
- 10 Around the World
- 12 Readers Write
- Inside back cover The Choice is Yours...

Editor's Note

BWC thanks members who sent us their e-mail IDs. Those who haven't done so yet are again requested to send their e-mail addresses to admin@bwcindia.org along with their names and membership numbers from their address labels. Printing, paper and distribution represent 45 to 65 per cent of a periodical's costs. We want to e-mail you future issues of *Compassionate Friend* so that the funds saved may be diverted to succour animals in other ways.

Front cover: The blue-and-green Animal Rights Ribbon. The color blue symbolizes animal rights and green, vegetarianism.

Back cover: The Declaration of the Rights of Animals, adopted by BWC on December 10 2008.

BWC City Representatives:

Vishwas Ghushe

BWC Bhopal City Representative
bhopal.cityrep@bwcindia.org

Dr. Geetha Jaikumar

BWC Chennai City Representative
chennai.cityrep@bwcindia.org

Dr. Sunil Srivastava

BWC Delhi City Representative
delhi.cityrep@bwcindia.org

P. Krishnan

BWC Ernakulum City Representative
ernakulam.cityrep@bwcindia.org



Beauty Without Cruelty

is a way of life
 which causes no creature
 of land, sea or air
 terror, torture or death.



Editorial

Caveat Emptor: Genetically Modified Food Chains

Genetically Modified, or Manipulated food chains are causing anxiety. The meaning of “genetically modified” is the same as “genetically-engineered” or “bio-tech (Bt)”, so “genetically modified (GM)” is used below to refer to these types of foods.

Many crops are under consideration for genetic modification. Animals will be eating them too, and will eventually be consumed by non-vegetarians. The effects on the human and animal species are not fully known, but the little we do know is not encouraging. Yet certain governments, USAID, Cornell University and multinational corporations like Monsanto, are global cheerleaders for the widespread adoption of genetic modification to increase agricultural productivity in a world of burgeoning populations. Patented GM crops have already been planted on 282 million acres in 23 nations, to render farmers dependent on the manufacturers because they will have to buy seeds from them every year.

France’s Committee for Independent Research and Information on Genetic Engineering has informed our Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) that GM brinjal is not conducive to animal or human health. Recently, a Health Ministry representative also expressed concerns about GM brinjal at the GEAC’s 91st. meeting. The Maharashtra Hybrid seeds Company (MAHYCO), which has borrowed the technology from Monsanto, plans to market this vegetable strain in India soon. A report from Greenpeace, an international NGO, says there is no evidence of GM foods’ safety and indicates that GM brinjal may contain the genes of spiders, lizards, cockroaches, grasshoppers or earthworms. Chips and wheat may contain spider and cow genes respectively.

The GEAC has approved large-

scale field trials for GM corn in three agricultural universities. According to an Austrian government study, this corn causes infertility in female rats. As in all scientific advances, our animal friends are exploited. Rabbits fed GM brinjal ate less; rats developed diarrhoea and liver weight decrease. The longest toxicity tests were for three months, so there is no telling what the effects of a lifelong GM food diet may be.

Doctors for Food and Bio-safety has sent a memorandum to the Union Minister of Health urging that GM crops be disallowed immediately because “Bt brinjal is a first-of-its-kind food with the Bt gene and is allowed nowhere else in the world.” They also pointed out that GM brinjal has antibiotic (Neomycin and Streptomycin) resistance marker genes which, when consumed, would result in resistance to many life-saving drugs.



Other vegetables are in the queue after GM brinjal: soyabean, okra, sugar cane, mustard, potatoes, peas, groundnut, tomato, sorghum and rice strains.

Genetic modification is crossing animals like pigs, mice, sheep, cattle and fish with plants, confusing vegetarians. To increase the shelf life of tomatoes, for example, the latter are being genetically modified by introducing an antifreeze gene from the Arctic Flounder, a fish known for its longevity. It is almost impossible to tell these non-vegetarian tomatoes, called “Flavr Savr,” from the natural ones.

Scientists at the Defence Research & Development Organisation at Leh have also identified a cold-

tolerant gene with the help of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. Their goal is to transfer it to tomatoes through tissue culture and genetic engineering. Are our troops aware of the risks involved?

GM potato varieties have been developed by the Shimla-based Central Potato Research Institute. One such modification is with Ama-1, a storage albumin protein gene sourced from an ornamental plant commonly known as “Prince’s Feather.” Albumin is usually any protein or serum — bovine, human, egg and so on, which is soluble in water.

In 2002, a GM cotton strain called Bollgard was introduced by Monsanto. Four years later, it triggered the deaths of 1,800 sheep which had grazed on the Andhra Pradesh croplands. The gene to be inserted in the GM brinjal is the same (Cry1Ac, a soil bacterium called *Bacillus Thuringiensis*) as the one used to modify the cotton. Overseas studies show that these genes may interfere with natural ones, resulting in cancer, tumours, diabetes, heart disease, lung, kidney and liver damage.

Like the “Flavr Savr” tomatoes, GM brinjals are indistinguishable from natural ones in appearance. While labelling such foods as “GM” is essential, it is just as important to inform vegetarians whether the gene inserted is of animal or plant origin.

The European Union, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan have banned GM foods, or imposed restrictions on their marketing. Britain’s Prince Charles has rightly called GM products “commerce without morality and science without humanity.”

Consumers need to object to GM crops on cultural, religious and ethical grounds before it is too late.

Ashoke Dasgupta
editor@bwcindia.org



Fact, not Fancy

The Edible Foil Industry

Silver beaten between ox-guts or sheep/goat epidermises is unacceptable to vegetarians; sometimes used instead of silver, aluminium is a health hazard.

Varkh/silver leaf/Chandi-ka-Varkh/Tabaq (edible silver or gold foil used as decorations on *mithai*, *paan*, *supari*, *chyavanprash*, *mukhwaas*, fruit, and found floating in bottles like those of *kesar* syrup and in some Ayurvedic formulations) is made by placing small, thin metal strips between ox-gut skins or *jhillil* epidermises (the layers immediately beneath the skins) of sheep or goats measuring 7 X 9 inches, bound into a booklet or *auzaar* of up to 360 pages, and put into a loose calf- or sheep-skin suede pouch/*thadaa/khol*. Twenty to 25 pages of the booklet are cut from one epidermis. Being malleable, the leather and epidermis withstand intense manual hammering for up to eight hours until the one-inch silver or metal strips in between become extremely thin, producing the desired foil. The foil is carefully inserted between special papers for distribution.

It is estimated that the *varkh* consumed on *mithai* alone by an average Indian middle-class family, during its lifetime, would represent the use of ox-guts (intestines)

from nearly three cows or bulls, in addition to calf-leather comprising one-tenth of a medium-sized yearling.

If sheep/goat epidermises are used, 15 of them are needed to make a booklet which yields 200 *varkh* bundles which would comprise 150-160 *varkh* sheets or 176 sq. cms. A kilo of *varkh* may be produced by using 12,500 epidermises. Indian demand is for 2.5 crores of booklets a year, involving 37.5 crores of animals. These booklets are only produced in Agra: the special knife used by the *pannigars* to separate the sheep/goat epidermises is called a *raapi*.

(The hair removed from the raw hides goes into making blankets and other woollen products. It may be noted that all wool is not obtained via a shearing process.)

In the early 1980s, Beauty Without Cruelty was able to convince Indian Airlines to stop serving their passengers *varkh*-coated *mithais*.

Some laboratory tests have found that the *Chandi-ka-Varkh* tested contained no silver, but was made of pure aluminium. Aluminium consumption is considered a health hazard.

India is not the only country in the world to produce metal leaf/*varkh*. The gold/metal leaf industry is important in Myanmar, where it is used for gilding. Small specialised enterprises produce gold leaf for decorative, technical and culinary

purposes by manual methods in Germany and Japan. Packed in layers of ox-gut/goldbeater's skin, the gold is beaten until it is 100 nanometres or 0.0001 mm. thick; a square metre corresponds to 0.1 cubic centimetres or two grams of gold.

Goldbeater's skin is ox-gut or the outer membrane of cattle intestines—a parchment used in the process of reducing gold to thin leaves. Goldbeater's skin is obtained from the gut of slaughtered oxen or other cattle, soaked in a dilute solution of Potassium Hydroxide, washed, stretched, beaten flat and thin, and treated chemically to prevent putrefaction. A pack of 1,000 pieces of goldbeater's skin requires about 400 oxen's guts, but is only an inch thick. Up to 120 sheets of this skin, with gold sandwiched in between, are beaten at the same time since the skin is thin, elastic and does not tear under intense hammering. The beating is performed manually with an 8 kg. hammer for an hour, reaching upto 70 strokes a minute. Before final packing, the foil is beaten again between skins which have been coated with gypsum powder to prevent the gold leaf from sticking to the skins. The gold leaf is beaten till it is thin enough for one to be able to see through it when held up against the light. It is then taken out of the leather "mould" to be cut and packaged in tissue-paper books containing 25 leaves each.

Liquors containing bits of gold leaf have been in existence

in Europe since the late 16th century. A well-known example is Danziger Goldwasser, originally from Gdansk, Poland. However, in America, floating bits of gold leaf in liquors like Goldschlager is a recent phenomenon.

Gold leaf is sometimes used in fruit jelly snacks. In Japan, it is also used in coffee. In Kanazawa, where Japan's gold leaf production is centred, gold leaf shops and workshops sell green tea and hard candies containing gold leaf.

The US Food & Drug Administration considers metallic-finish foods inedible. In Australia, silver food additives, classed as colouring E174, are banned.



Made by Kanishka, a Jaipur manufacturer, the KSK brand of *varkh* is the only variety known to Beauty Without Cruelty that does not use animal skins in its production processes. The phone number of the company is +91 141 2574 888.



As a result of this article in the *Hindustan Times* (timed by BWC to appear at Diwali), most New Delhi sweet shops were selling *mithais* without *varkh*.



The ISKCON sweet shop in Bengaluru which utilises BWC-approved *varkh*.

Photos: Deeksha Dheer

Ban the Catapult

By Mohammed E. Dilawar

I have been trying to convince people to ban the use of catapults for years. On surveying the wholesale markets of Mumbai, New Delhi and Pune, where hundreds of thousands of catapults are sold, I find that inexpensive plastic catapults have made their advent. They can be produced *en masse* to achieve economies of scale.

The Wildlife Act defines what may be called a weapon. It is strange that a deadly weapon like the catapult was omitted from its list. Animal- and nature-lovers may support me in interpreting the spirit of the law, and lobbying for a ban on this weapon. Of what other use is a catapult, except as a killing device?

Clause (35) of the Wildlife Act says “weapon” includes “ammunition, bows and arrows, explosives, firearms, hooks, knives, nets, poisons, snares, traps, and any instrument or apparatus capable of anaesthetizing, decoying, destroying, injuring or killing an animal.”

The extent of damage catapults are capable of may be gauged by the words of a friend: “The catapult can kill numerous birds.

I have, in childhood, killed more than 150 birds on a single day with a catapult. It was a kind of competition we partook in, in those days of innocence. My prey included black kites, pond herons, mongoose, Brahmini Kites, Spotted Owlets, Civet Cats and Palm Squirrels. I even killed a cat which used to steal milk from our kitchen with a single shot to its head!”

With the cost of meat and other food items hitting the roof, killing animals and birds with catapults is increasing. If we do not do anything soon, we may lose the little time left us. Another friend from the northeast, which is rich in biodiversity, had this to say about the use of catapults: “In the northeast, almost every rural child between the ages of 10 and 16, particularly in areas near forests, uses a catapult to hunt birds and small animals. This is one cause of the decline in bird populations. Large birds have become rare in most of the rural northeast.”

I have observed children killing birds, squirrels and other small mammals with this deadly weapon. Nowadays, even steel ball-bearings and marbles are used, apart from stones. Hunting parties of children and adults are to be seen using catapults regularly.

I have heard the excuse that this is for farmers' crop protection, but there are other crop protection methods available. We know what happened when Mao ordered the killing of sparrows for crop protection in China!

I was informed that children in my city, Nashik, sell the birds they kill to restaurants. This is a serious issue. I don't have the influence or wherewithal, to file a petition or lobby for an amendment to the Wildlife Act to ban the production, sale and use of this primitive weapon. So I hope to start a countrywide mass protest to ban it.

I have visited wholesalers and retailers in my city, requesting them with folded hands not to sell catapults. This has proved of little use, as they don't want to incur losses by destroying their inventories. In the absence of a law banning catapults, little can be done legally.

I would request readers to express their concern to the priests at temples, dargahs, churches and other places of worship, requesting them not to allow catapult sales at their fairs or fetes.

I have often been told that it is not a ban that is needed to stop the use of catapults, but awareness. I agree that a heightened awareness is important. What may be equally important, though, is that the production and sale of all forms of catapults and their components like rubber tubes and plastic handles, be stopped.

Just as guns may be used as terrorists' weapons, catapults are weapons for eco-terrorism and for killing numerous animals. The food, water and soil security of our country depends upon how

well our forests, animals and birds, which have constitutional rights as citizens of the Union of India, are protected.

I hope that nature-lovers will join me in a movement to free our country from this pernicious weapon. Every catapult we destroy will save at least one bird or animal.



Mohammed E. Dilawar, a life member of BWC and former lecturer in environmental studies, was one of Time magazine's "Heroes of the Environment 2008."

Lethal Catapults

The first time BWC wrote to the Government of India regarding catapults, was two decades ago. BWC has again approached the Government about catapult use, writing the Minister of State, the Secretary, IGF (Wildlife) and Additional DGF (Wildlife) of the Union Ministry for Environment & Forests. Please support us by sending them letters as well, or even a postcard. Our letter to the Minister is reproduced on the right.

Realizing that his sweetheart is never to return, this bird bewails his bereavement. *Photo: AbuNawaf.com*

Beauty Without Cruelty

INDIA
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animals
A Prince of Wales Drive, Worli, Pune 411 042. Tel: (020) 2686 0066, 2686 1182. Fax: (020) 2686 1430
Email: admin@bwcindia.org Website: www.bwcindia.org



21st November 2008

Mr S Regupathy
Union Minister of State for Environment & Forests
(Government of India)
Ministry of Environment & Forests
Paryavaran Bhavan, C G O Complex
Lodi Road
NEW DELHI 110 003

Subject: Lethal Catapults

Dear Mr Regupathy,

On behalf of Beauty Without Cruelty, an animal rights organisation, I wish to bring to your notice the fact that although catapults could technically fall under the definition of weapon under The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, the actual word is missing.

For your ready reference, the definition of weapon under the Act reads: 2 (35) "weapon" includes ammunition, bows and arrows, explosives, firearms, hooks, knives, nets, poison, snares and traps, and any instrument or apparatus capable of anaesthetising, decoying, destroying, injuring or killing an animal.

Catapults are increasingly being sold in all cities, towns and villages of India. Earlier they used to comprise of handmade Y-shaped pieces of wood to which rubber strips having a patch of leather to hold a stone were attached. Today, one finds easily available, cheap plastic catapults which are sold in hundreds, even by *paan* vendors. Their use with steel ball-bearings and marbles in place of stones makes them positively lethal.

Few people realise the extent of harm that can be inflicted by a kid who has a catapult. He randomly aims at any and every creature that he sees... killing, maiming, injuring... not only birds like sparrows, pigeons, doves, parrots, peacocks, owls, bats, etc. but other wild life such as squirrels. And if by chance a human is hit, it also results in severe injury.

More and more teenaged boys in both rural and urban areas have been hunting birds and small animals with catapults as is evident from frequent reports received from all over the country. BWC feels this could very well be the prime reason for the population of different specie of birds decreasing.

It is a question of manufacture and sale: if catapults are not sold, thousands of birds and small animals will not be illegally hunted and killed for 'fun' as is unfortunately happening.

In view of the above, please consider issuing an immediate Notification banning the use of catapults. By placing this restriction on the manufacture, import, sale, purchase, use and possession of catapults, you will be saving an unimaginably high number of birds' lives.

Thank you in anticipation of your kind co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

Diana Ratnagar

(Diana Ratnagar)
Chairperson, **Beauty Without Cruelty** – India and
Former Consultant to the Government of India
on Animal Welfare in the Ministry of Environment & Forests



BWC Rally for International Animal Rights Day

By Amruta Ubale



Candle-lit vigils are held the world over, around December 10 every year since 1998, paying tribute to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' significance for the protection of human lives. People who respect animals are trying to take the principles in that declaration to the next level, to include all sentient beings.

Stating that animals have a right to life free from pain, suffering, exploitation and death, the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights has been signed by organizations, including BWC, representing hundreds of thousands in India, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, France, the UK, USA and Germany among other countries.

The eleventh International Animal Rights Day took place December 10 2008, calling for the recognition of the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights.

At BWC, of course, every day is an Animal Rights Day. This year we decided to mark the Animal Rights Day by conducting an awareness campaign. In October 2008,

I initiated a plan for organizing rallies at Bhopal, Pune and Delhi to mark International Animal Rights Day. We decided to hold it on Mahatma Gandhi Road, a bustling Pune shopping area.

Cruelty is inflicted on animals for innumerable reasons, but we decided to highlight two of them:

(1) The cruelty behind meat production and

(2) The cruelty behind leather production.

Meat and leather production take millions of lives. We wanted to show that there are healthy alternatives. We also wanted to disseminate the message to leather users that a range of animal-friendly materials are available to them.

We came up with a blue-and-green ribbon to invest the International Animal Rights Day with a unique symbol – blue to signify animal rights and green, the vegetarian

idea. BWC hopes to see all animal activists wearing this ribbon at all venues.

To focus awareness on the cruelties of meat and leather production, we prepared two handbills for distribution: one was the Declaration and the other, "3 Good Reasons to Go Veg" and "3 Good Reasons to Stop Using Leather":

3 Good Reasons to Go Veg

1. Cruelty behind **Meat Production**
2. Concern for our **Health**
3. Eating **Meat** = Eating **Earth's Resources**

3 Good Reasons to Stop Using Leather

1. **Not** a By-product
2. Murder of **Animals**
3. Using **Leather** at the cost of our **Environment**

To heighten people's empathy with our message, we came up with the idea of a street play. We approached



International Animal Rights Day painting contest under way in Delhi.
Photo: Dr Sunil Srivastava

a Pune Municipal Corporation school where BWC had conducted awareness programs. PMC schools have always been the first choice for BWC in Pune, since the pupils in these schools may be underprivileged. This would give the children an opportunity to showcase their talent. Deciding on the plot, we approached Vasudev Balwant School's principal. He was delighted to be a part of a noble cause. We made an announcement in the school and asked the teachers to select students with acting skills. The plot was as follows.

Act I

A bunch of men are chatting on a roadside. A police officer is at a little distance. A man appears, beating a boy ruthlessly with a stick. Observing this cruelty, and the boy's inability to escape, the group of men wonder what they ought to do. Approaching the police officer, they direct his attention to the cruel man. The policeman pulls the boy towards him, shouting, "What do you think you are doing? Beating the boy is against the law. You are under arrest." Handcuffing the man, he leads him away. The men take the boy to a safe place.

Act II

The scene in the second Act is the same as in the first, the road with the men and police officer. But this time, a man appears with four animals tied neck-to-neck. He has a stick in his hand, with which he beats the animals. As before, the group of men notice the man and animals and wonder what to do. They ask the police officer for

help, but the latter takes a look and replies, "Oh, they're just a bunch of animals. What has it to do with you? Go away and let me get on with my work. Haven't you any work to do?"

The group of men walks back wondering why the policeman reacted the way he did. Were they in the wrong, or was the



Cruel man hitting animals in the street play. Photo: Ajay Welinkar



A policeman arrests the man for beating the animals. Photo: Ajay Welinkar

policeman? They are discussing the matter when a boy appears with a placard in his hand saying, "Animals also have a right to live, and it is our moral responsibility to take care of them."

This boy goes up to the group saying, "Animals have every right to live. We must fight for them."

This motivates the group of men. Realizing the truth of the boy's message, the group walks back to the police officer with the stranger. They show the policeman his placard and urge him to take action. Reading the message on the placard, and the desire for justice in the men's eyes, the policeman decides to act. He runs to the man beating the animals and throws his stick away saying, "See this placard? Animals have a right to live. Torturing animals is a crime, and you'll be punished for this."

The cruel man realizes that what he has done is wrong. He is handcuffed and taken away. The group walks to the animals and unties them. The men and animals form a circle. They go around crying, "Animals also have a right to live!"

The policeman wore a *havildar's* uniform, the man beating the animals wore a lungi (a men's skirt or kilt) and *banyan* (a T-shirt or vest) to resemble a butcher, and the boy who motivated the group wore a *kurta* or long, collarless shirt. There were, of course, four animal costumes: those of a cow, chicken, goat and rabbit.

First Pune Rally

Along with the other preparations we made a list of individuals and organizations invited to the rally: ISKCON, the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Sai Baba Foundation, Jain temples and others which believe in, and promote, vegetarian lifestyles. We invited all BWC members and volunteers in Pune



BWC beauties displaying faux leather and fur. *Photo: Ajay Welinkar*

city, and other like-minded people. The BWC staff invited their friends and relatives. This was the first rally to be organized by BWC in Pune. A few volunteers helped us get things together, while others contributed valuable planning inputs.

The play was performed four times at different locations. A lot of passers-by gathered to watch it, deeply engrossed. The children did a beautiful job in portraying the characters' emotions. We also wanted to educate people on the alternatives to animal products. At the end of the play, three BWC beauties with trendy, stylish animal-friendly faux leather and faux fur jackets, boots, bags and other accessories carried placards to sensitize people on these issues.

After each performance, we displayed anti-meat and anti-leather placards, shouting slogans like: "Meat is murder," "Stop killing animals for food," "Stop killing animals for leather," "Use synthetic leather," "Veggies rock,"

"Beat meat with green," "Lose red, choose green," "No meat, no heat," "Go veg—live long," "Live and let live," and "Save the animals, save the world." Supporters joined us as we walked along, so we were eventually 90-100 strong. At one of our stops, someone came out of a supermarket, requesting a participant not to shout "Meat is murder."

Handbills were distributed after each play performance. BWC members, Aloka Deane, Amit Mahalle and I led the crowd to

ensure optimum enthusiasm throughout the rally, rendering it an attention-getter for passers-by.

We finally stopped at B.J. Medical Grounds, at 6.30 p.m., thanking each individual for coming to contribute to the cause of animal rights. All were given certificates of participation along with BWC calendars and copies of *Compassionate Friend* as tokens of appreciation.

The peppy, enthusiastic crowd, with colourful placards and messages, the reverberating voices of 90-100 people chanting animal rights slogans, children enacting animals' situations... the energy generated by the event was awesome.

The rally made the masses aware of cruelty to animals, alternatives to animal products, and that there are people who deliver a message of compassion to support animal rights.



Amruta Ubale is a BWC education officer.



Foreground: The street play actors and actresses. *Photo: Ajay Welinkar*

Consumers' Right to Know What They're Drinking

By Khurshid Bhathena

“Name your poison,” inquires the bartender in cowboy movies. Even in those days, people presumably knew what poisons they were imbibing. But does the Indian consumer know?

According to Rule 32 of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act & Rules, the provisions relating to the declaration of vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbols do not apply to carbonated water or liquids.

Consequently, consumers are in the dark as to whether the carbonated waters or liquids they are drinking are vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Vegetarians would naturally like to know of any non-vegetarian ingredients.

Nor do they know of the possible presence of addictive ingredients such as caffeine and alcohol in bottles or cans of certain brands.

Manufacturers of packaged foods are required to declare the ingredients of their products, so it should be mandatory for carbonated waters as well.

The only difference between the two categories is that liquids are drunk, whereas foods are eaten.

Both are ingested orally, so they should not be treated differently as regards to labelling – particularly because this consideration is of importance to vegetarians.

In addition to declaration of all ingredients, the affixing of the vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbol ought to be made mandatory on carbonated waters or liquids, prominently affixed on bottles or cans (not on the bottle caps), for the present inconsistency of exemptions granted under the PFA Act & Rules to be rectified.

Beauty Without Cruelty has requested the Government of India to make the declaration of all ingredients, and the vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbol, mandatory for carbonated waters or liquids.

BWC considers it unfair that carbonated waters, including colas, have hitherto been exempted from having to declare the nature of their ingredients. The same laws and rules should apply to all packaged foods and drinks sold in India, regardless of where they

or their ingredients are sourced, manufactured, packed, bottled or canned.

BWC sent a proposal for the amendment of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act & Rules, making it mandatory for all ingredients to be declared, and for affixing the vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbol on carbonated waters or liquids, to the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Union Ministry of Food Processing, and others as listed below:

Dr. Anbumani Ramdoss
Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare

Shri Subodh Kant Sahai
Union Minister of State
(Independent Charge)
Ministry of Food Processing

Dr. R. K. Srivastava
Director General of Health Services

Assistant Director-General (PFA)
Directorate-General of Health Services
PH (Food) Section

This was followed by questions asked under the Right of Information Act, 2005, but the reply received was not clear.

Then, on December 4 2008, BWC filed an Appeal, along with copies of relevant correspondence, to the Assistant Director-General (IF) of Health Services, asking to know the grounds on which the Government has exempted aerated or carbonated water companies from complying with the statutory mandate of affixing vegetarian or non-vegetarian symbols on their products.

A reply is still awaited.


Khurshid Bhathena is honorary secretary of BWC.



Around the World

Fur Trade Diversifies into Cat and Dog

Investigators from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) infiltrated the cat and dog fur industry in the Philippines, Thailand and China. They found about two million of these animals are abused and killed by this industry annually. Many animals are skinned while still alive, which may be easier than skinning after the corpse has stiffened, and the blood coagulated. Cat and dog fur products were found across the UK, Germany, Italy, Spain and the USA. They are used for gloves, coats, hats and fur trim. Their skins are used in musical instruments like drums. Some of the animals are bred on farms for the purpose. Five to 300 dogs are bred at a time on Chinese farms, and upto 70 cats on cat farms. Some Chinese families keep a few dogs and cats to kill them during the "on" season from October to February. An estimated

500,000 cats are killed each season. About 24 cats, or 11 dogs, are necessary to make a fur coat. More are needed, of course, if kittens or puppies are used. Investigators visited a Philippine slaughterhouse where upto 100 cats are skinned daily. Male cats are preferred as the female cats' nipples reduce the marketable skin area. This has led to a dearth of male cats in the vicinity, so collectors round cats up from other cities. To do so, they stuff the cats into sacks and drive them upto six hours without food or water, to the slaughterhouse. Videos show children helping to hang the cats by the neck while other cats watch. Cat fur pelts, jackets and throws were openly sold in German petrol stations. One German importer told investigators exporting such furs to the US wasn't problematic. It was merely a question of nomenclature: house cat, wild cat, Katzenfelle, Goyangi and mountain cat were acceptable for cat furs. Dog fur needs to be labeled gae-wolf, goupee or sobaki while dog skins are called special skin, lambskin or mountain goat skin. Dog and cat skins are used for bedsheets, golf gloves, handbags and rheumatism aids.

Glass Windows Kill N. American Birds

About four billion birds die annually in N. America by smashing into glass-paned windows at full speed. Most Americans are unaware of this problem because scavengers like rats, crows and cats usually remove the dead birds before they get to see them. People who see a cat with a dead bird assume the cat must have killed it. Research shows birds are unable to perceive clear glass as a solid object. They fly straight at them thinking they are approaching the gardens, trees or skies they see mirrored in them. Researchers say at least half these hapless birds sustain mortal brain injuries. One study surmises that about a million of the eight million birds that migrate across Chicago every year die this way. Most of these collision take place in the daytime, but many also occur at night. Many firms and stores leave their lights on all night as a security measure. Migrating birds are attracted to sources of artificial light and, once inside a beam, are loth to fly out of it. Consequently they collide with the structures emitting the light, mistaking them for the celestial cues like stars, by which they navigate. Sixty-four of the 150 bird species which usually meet their ends this way are continentally in decline. Toronto city has had a "Lights Out Toronto" program since 2006. A few private citizens may be placing narrow cloth strips across window panes, or placing screens or netting over their windows.



Cute: made from cat fur in China, sold in India.

Photo:
Rohan (Bhate) Shah

Illegal Ivory Trade

The drop in South East Asia's elephant population is being aggravated by Vietnamese ivory prices being the highest in the world. Traffic, an international group, says an estimated 4,000 tonnes of illegal wildlife products pass through Vietnam annually. The demand is mainly in Vietnam, Japan and China. A maximum of 150 elephants roam the Vietnamese wilds, in contrast to Laos' population of about 1000. Though the Vietnamese ivory trade was banned 16 years ago, the law allows shops to sell tusks obtained before 1983. This law is being abused to continue the trade. Traffic is asking the Vietnamese government to improve monitoring of illegal elephant products, and to close the legal loopholes that allow the ivory trade to continue.

For years, BWC objected to the Government of India's policy of permitting trade in African ivory. Eventually, in 1992, our government banned the ivory trade altogether. It came as a shock when, despite the international 1989 ban on the ivory trade, a one-time ivory sale was sanctioned (for the second time) by the UN-backed Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). It was worth \$40 million, for approved buyers China



Globalized capitalism: poachers hack ivory for peanuts to gratify the whims of the wealthy.

and Japan. In these two nations, ivory is used to make handicrafts and traditional family seals to stamp documents with. CITES (and WWF) did not consider these sales irresponsible.

Meanwhile, last October, an International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) report found Ebay was being used in the illegal trade in wildlife products. Ebay announced a global ban on ivory sales the same month. An estimated 20,000 African elephants are killed annually for their meat, a lucrative by-product of the illegal ivory trade. These elephants are mostly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and Nigeria.

Polar Bears

Home to about 67 per cent of the world's 25,000 polar bears, you might expect Canada to be active in solving their problems. Unfortunately, the kaleidoscope of stakeholders include environmental organizations, researchers, Inuits (Aboriginals) and territorial, provincial and federal governments. They haven't seen eye-to-eye for the last 30 years. Among the issues they disagree on are how healthy the polar bears

are, how many of them live in the polar regions, and whether they are a threatened species due to global warming reducing their habitat. Yet the bear populations in the south Beaufort Sea and west Hudson Bay areas have diminished 17 and 22 per cent respectively over the last two decades. University of Alberta biologist Andrew Derocher says they may be extinct in a century. The U.S. Geologic Survey estimated, in 2007, that 67 per cent of the world's polar bears may have vanished by 2050. The predictions have been so gloomy that the U.S. government declared the polar bears a threatened species last spring, under the Endangered Species Act. The Canadian government is yet to take action, though the bears' habitat is decreasing 10 per cent every decade. Canadian Aboriginals consider hunting, fishing and trapping parts of their heritage. Despite changing technology and times, many of them know how to do little else. Consequently Inuits have taken a dim view of the bears' being declared endangered, because millions of dollars' revenue from U.S. hunters may simultaneously be endangered. Fearing swelling Aboriginal numbers on social insurance for longer periods, the Canadian government is usually sensitive to preserving Aboriginals' "heritage." The Inuit claim the current polar bear population is stable, and they share their land with the bears, whom they respect. They insist the bears are the stuff of their legends, so they want to preserve them, especially because they are important for their (the Inuits') diet and culture.



Are her Vietnamese cousins soon to be extinct?

Photo:
D. Belmens



Readers Write


Vegetarian Bakri-Id

Pranaam.

In 2007, the Samaritan Help Mission started approaching its Muslim friends in Tikiapara, who spend a lot on sacrificing cows and goats during the Id-uz-zoha festival. We persuaded four of them to donate Rs. 30,000 to the SHM instead of buying animals to sacrifice.

Again, in 2008, we started this campaign a month before the Id-uz-zoha festival, which fell on December 9. Apart from the four friends mentioned, we succeeded in motivating another three, so seven individuals have now promised to donate money every year to the SHM's educational funds for poor children, instead of spending on animal sacrifices. Consequently, we have already raised Rs. 45,000.

We are also propagating vegetarianism among the children. I am happy to write that all the SHM children bring vegetarian lunches to school. The food supplied by the school is also vegetarian. The children are enjoying their new diet.



Mamoon Akhtar
 Secretary, Samaritan Help Mission
 Howrah, West Bengal

Form IV (See Rule 8)

Statement about ownership of the newspaper entitled COMPASSIONATE FRIEND as required to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

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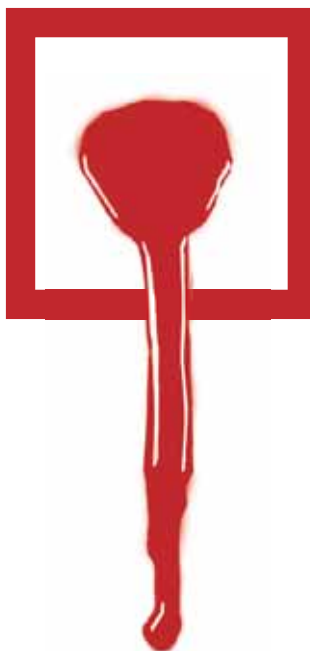
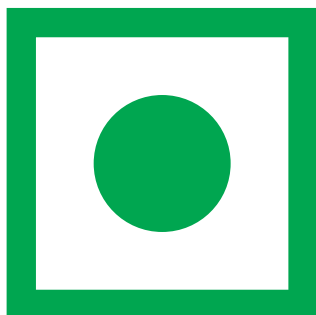
I, Diana Ratnagar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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 Signature of Publisher

Sd/- Diana Ratnagar

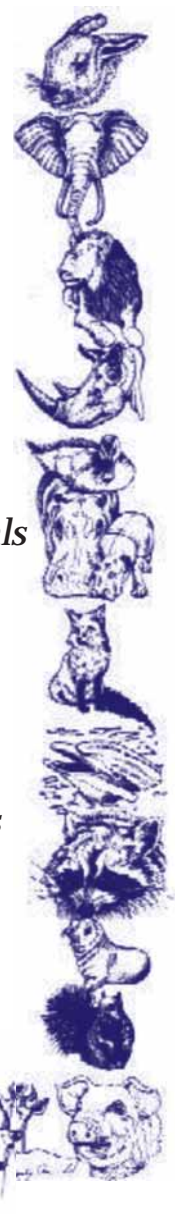
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International Consumer's Day

The choice is yours...



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Declaration of The Rights of Animals

Whereas it is self-evident

*That we share the earth with other creatures,
great and small;*

*That many of these animals experience
pleasure and pain;*

That these animals deserve our just treatment; and

*That these animals are unable to
speak for themselves.*

We Do Therefore Declare That These Animals

*HAVE THE RIGHT to live free from human exploitation,
whether in the name of science or sport,
exhibition or service, food or fashion;*

*HAVE THE RIGHT to live in harmony with nature
rather than according to human desires; and*

HAVE THE RIGHT to live on a healthy planet.

This Declaration of The Rights of Animals was adopted and proclaimed by

**Beauty Without Cruelty
on this, the Tenth Day of December 2008,
In Pune, India.**



Beauty Without Cruelty – India

4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040.

Tel: 0(20) 2686 1166; Fax: 0(20) 2686 1420.

E-mail: admin@bwcindia.org; website: www.bwcindia.org

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