

Joel Salatin and his family own and operate Polyface Inc., a pasture-based multi-species relationally-oriented farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. The author of six books, he lectures widely about local food, ecological farming, and transparent business. The farm produces salad-bar beef, pastured poultry, pigator pork, forage-based rabbit, vegetables, and lumber. Everything is direct marketed to some 4,000 families, 50 restaurants, and 10 retail outlets.

1. From a nutrition/health standpoint, vegetarianism works for about a quarter of the population.
2. Everything is eating and being eaten: If you don't believe it, go lie naked in your flower bed for three days and see what gets eaten.
3. Soil is most efficaciously built, both today and historically, with herbivores, perennials, and predation. Vegetarianism does not appreciate these principles.
4. No civilization or religion has ever sustained itself on vegetarianism. Historical Eastern vegetarian-type diets included copious amounts of insects and bugs. Grain harvesting still includes significant portions of bugs, although not as many.
5. All of the negatives associated with meat, dairy, and poultry consumption stem from non-pastured production models and/or monospeciation. This includes both nutritional problems (i.e. colon cancer from red meat) to environmental considerations (i.e. irrigation water required to grow grain). This also includes humane farming considerations. In addition, far more herbivores (bison) existed in the Americas 600 years ago than exist today: The notion that methane from burping herbivores causes climate change is both unscientific and ridiculous.
6. Because meat is nutrient-dense, any transportation contains a smaller carbon footprint percentage per nutrients than other foods.
7. Grasses are the lungs of the earth. They sequester more carbon than trees. In order to keep grass converting solar energy into decomposable biomass as efficiently as possible, it must be grazed routinely to restart the juvenile growth period. This pulsing is literally the heartbeat of the earth.
8. No natural ecosystem exists without animals. Humans are part of that ecosystem.

9. A more historically accurate and ecological meat consumption in the US would be twice as much grass-finished beef, a quarter the chicken, and about a third the pork. Beef and dairy do not require any grain because those animals are herbivores. The omnivores, historically, were scavengers, and consumption was limited to special occasions or royalty.

10. To the folks who think animals are sentient beings deserving equal status to humans, this notion indicates not an evolution toward cosmic convergence and connectedness, some heightened level of spiritual awareness; rather, it indicates an abnormal devolution toward disconnection, a jarring dissonance from ecological harmony.

From a discussion at MotherJones.com