

21 REASONS TO ADOPT AN ANIMAL FRIENDLY MENU POLICY

There are many reasons why a shelter or other animal-related nonprofit should adopt an animal friendly menu policy. Here are our top 20:

1. **To act in accordance with your mission.** Animal rescue and adoption agencies are driven by their mission to help animals. Rabbits, chickens, pigs, and other species suffer immensely on farms - far worse and in greater numbers than dogs and cats. They deserve our consideration, too. An animal-friendly menu policy is a chance to align your actions and values with your mission.
2. **To be truly humane.** If you had the option to either help or hurt animals, what would you do? The public expects a shelter to help animals at every opportunity. The food at your events *is* an opportunity to reduce or eliminate animal suffering.
3. **To be an example for others.** In our society, we turn to nonprofits as our beacons of light; they do what's right and ensure that no one falls through the cracks - that goes for animals, too. We expect animal protection agencies to set the bar when it comes to humane standards. Organizations that help animals should not be the ones endangering an animal's welfare.
4. **To operate sustainably.** Our planet is in jeopardy and studies show that animal farming is one of the leading causes of environmental degradation. Plant-based options have a significantly lower ecological "footprint."
5. **To offer healthier foods.** The United States faces serious health concerns including heart disease and other preventable illnesses, many of which can be remedied with nutritious plant-based foods. Your organization can be part of the solution.
6. **To take advantage of new cuisines and tastes.** Ethnic cuisines, from Mexican to Thai to Indian, have an amazing array of animal-friendly options. Shelters can make an event intriguing and festive under an ethnic umbrella: a Bollywood-themed volunteer luncheon, a 'Spay'ghetti fundraiser dinner, or a Tex Mex Veggie Chili Cookoff.
7. **To pinch pennies.** Animal products are expensive! Black beans are only a dollar a pound while ground beef and chicken breasts are \$4-5 per pound! Feed more people for less by going the animal-friendly route and save money for where it's truly needed: helping animals. Even if you're seeking donated food, it's a win-win for a caterer or restaurant. If their donation is plant-based, they save money, too! [1]
8. **To really be "no-kill."** Many shelters and rescue agencies say they're no-kill, but is that true if they serve meat from cows, turkeys, and chickens at their events? Statistics show that three to four million dogs and cats are killed in shelters across the nation annually. As for farmed animals killed for food -- there are billions killed each year and they're just as intelligent and sentient as the animals at your shelter.
9. **To join the "cool kids."** From celebrities to Olympians, eating animal-friendly foods is not only widely accepted and understood, it's popular. Vegan restaurants, food trucks, and bakeries are popping up all over the country and most restaurants have veggie options on their menus.
10. **To make all supporters feel welcome.** Many of your supporters are undoubtedly already vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, or flexitarian. It can be very uncomfortable to ask any of these supporters to attend a BBQ where they see animals being grilled. Offering exclusively animal-friendly foods makes your event inviting for all.
11. **To recognize all types of companion animals.** Many people identify farmed animals as companions, such as rabbits, pot-bellied pigs, goats, and other species. How can you draw a line of excluding some companion animals but not others from your circle of consideration and compassion?
12. **To maintain best practices.** As an organization, shelters should act differently than individuals. An animal-friendly menu policy is not about influencing or changing an individual's food choices, but is

centered on what an organization should do.

13. **To value animal sentience and cognition.** Pigs, chickens, fish, and cows are every bit as intelligent and able to suffer as the dogs and cats you rescue. Did you know that pigs can learn to play video games? And that chicken intelligence has been compared to that of monkeys? [2] Why is it okay to serve chickens, but not monkeys?
14. **To fight industrialized farming of puppies and farm animals.** Puppy mills and factory farms are a lot alike: they intensively confine animals, have little to no regard for animal welfare, and commodify the life of a sentient being. If you're against puppy mills, can you really be for factory farms?
15. **To increase awareness.** Your shelter holds a powerful position in the community. You can choose to educate the public about more humane choices through an animal-friendly menu policy. In your welcoming environment, supporters can engage in a healthy and important conversation about the ways they can create change simply by the choices they make.
16. **To market your events as allergen-friendly.** Many people have dairy, gluten and other allergies. Animal-friendly foods, caterers and restaurants are generally more accommodating for people with such allergies.... Another win-win for the animals and your supporters.
17. **To listen to the public.** A poll by Animal Place showed that 85% of those surveyed believe it is ethically inconsistent for an animal shelter that rescues dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, goats, sheep and other animals but to then sell or serve animal products at the shelter-sponsored fundraising events. If polled, your supporters would likely respond the same, would they not?
18. **To welcome new corporate support.** There are many animal-friendly companies that are eager to support nonprofits who do right by the animals, including businesses in the natural products market. Most are happy to provide donations for your events, from cookies to veggie burgers to coupons.
19. **To have better hygiene standards.** The top source of food poisoning in the United States comes from animal products (particularly animal flesh and eggs). With plant-based foods, there's less worry about cross-contamination, salmonella on the kitchen counters, or using different cutting boards for veggies and meats. Event planning is challenging enough and you can avoid these headaches altogether. [3]
20. **To stand with other animal nonprofits.** Animal-friendly policies have been adopted by the largest and smallest of organizations, from the Humane Society of the United States to all-volunteer-run community groups. If they can do it, you can do it. Let's have a united front!
21. **To win a grant!** Animal Place is awarding \$25,000 in funding to animal agencies that adopt an animal-friendly menu policy.

Learn more at: www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org.

[1] G.E. Miller, "Frugality through Vegetarianism: How to Save \$2-\$3K Per Year & the Planet by Moving Away from a Meat-Based Diet." 20 Something Finance. 1/5/14

[2] Roger Highfield, "So who are you calling bird brain? Chatter of chickens proves they are brighter than we thought." The Telegraph. 11/15/06

[3] Gretchen Goetz, "11 Years of Data Show Poultry, Fish, Beef Have Remained Leading Sources of Food-Related Outbreaks." Food Safety News. 6/28/13