

# Food for Thought

## Information Packet

This packet is designed to be used in part or in full by advocates—internally or externally—seeking to create a policy change with their local animal agency.

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# FOOD FOR THOUGHT INFORMATIONAL PACKET

SHELTER DIRECTORS SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
ENDORSEMENTS.....	6
21 REASONS TO ADOPT AN ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICY.....	7
SAMPLE ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICIES.....	9
HOW TO CREATE AN ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICY.....	11
TIPS TO HELP PASS AN ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICY.....	12
FOOD FOR THOUGHT SURVEY RESULTS.....	13
FOOD FOR THOUGHT FAQs.....	14
SAMPLE OUTREACH LETTERS.....	17
THROWING YOUR FIRST VEG-FRIENDLY EVENT.....	21
FOOD FOR THOUGHT GRANT.....	23
ANIMAL-FRIENDLY PRODUCT DONORS.....	24
CONTACT US.....	25

## SHELTER DIRECTORS SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*“The Humane Society of the United States supports the Food for Thought program because we recognize that farm animals are social, intelligent, individuals who too often are treated on factory farms as if they weren’t even capable of suffering.”*

*“Several years ago, the State Humane Association of California adopted a meat-free menu for our Board meetings and events for which we are the sole sponsor. We believe that a meat-free menu is consistent with our mission and promotes an awareness of the pain and suffering that often accompanies the keeping and slaughter of animals for food.”*

*“The San Francisco SPCA is proud to support the Food for Thought campaign because we think that anytime that a compassionate food choice is made, it’s a victory for animals, people and the environment.”*

*“The Animal Legal Defense Fund strongly supports Animal Place’s Food for Thought campaign. Our legal work is based on the understanding that all animals are worthy of protection from cruelty, whether that cruelty happens in our communities or on factory farms.”*

*“The Marin Humane Society has been a longtime supporter of the Food for Thought Program and strongly encourages organizations to join this effort. Respect for all animals begins with not seeing the animals our organizations rescue as nothing more than a meal. For over two decades the Marin Humane Society has proudly adopted policies that eliminate serving animals as dining options at our events and we hope many organizations support this program.”*

*“The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter supports the Food for Thought program because we want to cultivate an awareness of and a respect for all animals who share this world with us. It has become generally accepted that companion animals are sentient beings that have feelings. We wish to extend that understanding to animals that are raised, trapped, or slaughtered for food. We do not feel that it is appropriate for us to serve meat at any official functions of the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter.”*

*“Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest supports the Food for Thought program because we recognize that our actions should reflect our values, and we value reducing the harm inflicted on all animals by humans. Serving only vegan food at our events also opens up our celebrations to vegans, vegetarians, and omnivores alike—no one has to worry about what will appear on their plate.”*

*“RedRover respects that people hold different philosophies about the use of animals in our society and supports the adoption of animal-friendly menu policies that focus on primarily plant-based foods as a way to increase awareness about more humane choices, initiate conversation and help people begin to think about ways they can create change simply by the choices they make.”*

*“Our mission at **Harvest Home Animal Sanctuary** is to provide life-long care for our rescued animals and to educate the public about humane animal care and practices. As such, we treat all of our sanctuary residents with equal respect—dogs, cats, pigs, and chickens alike—and strongly support Animal Place's Food for Thought program.”*

*“While our mission is rescuing dogs and cats who are in danger of being killed in public facilities, as a humane organization we are absolutely against any form of cruelty. The food industry has long been a source of horror for animals, and we must speak out on their behalf... You aren't really humane if you assign a sliding scale to life.”*

~ Lisa Simmons, Director, Pets in Need (Redwood City, CA)

*“How can an organization tell the story of a flock of chicks being rescued from an abandoned farm or a pig falling from a stock truck on the highway and then serve fried chicken and barbecued ribs?”*

~ Diane Allevato, Retired Director, Marin Humane Society

*“Many humane societies view their mission to simply care for companion animals without considering the larger animal protection issues. An organization with a dog and cat focus fails to see its potential and leadership role to promote a larger humane ethic. It is a missed opportunity if we do not demonstrate more compassionate food choices.”*

~ Christie Smith, Executive Director, The Potter League for Animals (Rhode Island)

*“We have had the policy for 30 years of not benefiting some animals by profiting from the suffering of others. Any organizational event adheres to serving only vegetarian fare and we are increasingly moving to a plant-based menu. For the 18 years that we had our Santa Paws Arts & Crafts show only vegetarian food was sold, and no craft item that included materials made from any part of an animal was permitted in the show. We really try to honor our mission statement. We are not a large organization but we strive to be ethical.”*

~ Nancy Lyon, Ohlone Humane Society (Fremont, CA)

## INTRODUCTION

In addition to dogs and cats, your shelter or rescue group may work with other animals—farmed animals, such as rabbits, horses, chickens, and goats. As with any good shelter, you strive to find forever homes for the animals you save. Yet, it may still be common that similar animals are served as the fare at your functions—as hamburgers or BBQ.

### **Food for Thought Campaign Aims & History**

This was the case with Animal Place’s first rescue, which took place twenty-five years ago. Zelda, a little piglet, was being temporarily housed at a shelter. The staff at the shelter immediately fell in love with her and wanted to ensure that her ‘forever home’ would be one that viewed her as family, not “bacon.” Oddly enough, that same shelter served ham at a subsequent event to raise money for dog kennels. It’s because of this disconnect, between an organization’s mission and actions, that Animal Place launched the Food for Thought campaign. The campaign encourages and helps shelters adopt an animal-friendly menu policy, which aligns a shelter’s value of caring for animals with its activities. To many people, rabbits, chickens, horses, goats, and sheep are considered companions, but certainly not food!

*Food for Thought* is a campaign of Animal Place, one of the oldest and largest sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country. Founded in 1989, we operate two facilities in northern California. Nestled on 600-acres in Grass Valley, CA, our primary sanctuary provides refuge to hundreds of neglected farmed animals.

### **What is Food for Thought?**

It’s a campaign to encourage and help shelters adopt an animal-friendly menu policy. We offer shelters, rescue groups, and animal advocates alike the tools they need to adopt an animal-friendly policy, such as sample policies, a growing list of endorsements, recipes and menu ideas, lists of veg-friendly caterers and food trucks, and more. Visit [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org) for access to these items.

### **What is a menu policy?**

A menu policy is a statement that is crafted, voted upon, and adopted by an organization’s Board of Directors about the type of food served to people at events, such as fundraisers and volunteer luncheons. Food for Thought is centered on the food served to the public, not individuals. This policy also does not address the type of food served to the animals at a shelter or a rescue.

### **What does it mean to be animal-friendly?**

To be animal-friendly means to serve only plant-based, vegetarian, or—better yet—vegan foods. Vegan offerings would be those with no meat, dairy, cheese, eggs, or animal byproducts.

### **Who should adopt a menu policy?**

Animal shelters, SPCAs, humane societies, rescue groups, wildlife agencies, and any other organization that works on behalf of animals or cares about their welfare.

## ENDORSEMENTS

From small, volunteer-run organizations and dog rescues, to the nation's largest animal protection nonprofit, there is widespread support for animal-friendly menu policies. Below are a few of our endorsers. For an up-to-date list, please see: [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org).

<b>Actors &amp; Others for Animals</b>	<b>Homeward Trails Animal Rescue</b>	<b>The Puppy Mill Project</b>
<b>Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society</b>	<b>House Rabbit Society</b>	<b>Protect a Pup</b>
<b>Alive Rescue</b>	<b>Hugs for Homeless Animals</b>	<b>Rabbit Rescue Inc.</b>
<b>Alley Cat Allies</b>	<b>Humane Society of Huron Valley</b>	<b>RedRover</b>
<b>Alley Cat Rescue, Inc.</b>	<b>Humane Society of Louisiana</b>	<b>San Francisco SPCA</b>
<b>Animal Balance</b>	<b>Humane Society of Silicon Valley</b>	<b>Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter</b>
<b>Animal Farm Foundation</b>	<b>Island Cat Resources &amp; Adoption</b>	<b>Save A Dog</b>
<b>Animal Rescue Foundation (Tony La Russa's)</b>	<b>Joyful Rescues</b>	<b>Small Dog Rescue</b>
<b>Animal Rescue Inc</b>	<b>Kingston Animal Rescue</b>	<b>spcaLA</b>
<b>BAPBR (Born Again Pit Bull Rescue)</b>	<b>L'Amie des Animaux Defavorises du Quebec</b>	<b>St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center</b>
<b>Beagle Freedom Project</b>	<b>Lucky Day Animal Rescue</b>	<b>St. Martin's Animal Rescue</b>
<b>Best Friends Animal Society</b>	<b>Marin Humane Society</b>	<b>State Humane Association of California</b>
<b>Brother Wolf Animal Rescue</b>	<b>Meow Cat Rescue</b>	<b>Stray Cat Alliance</b>
<b>Cat Association of Topeka</b>	<b>Meriden Humane Society</b>	<b>Sweet Binks</b>
<b>Center for Animal Protection &amp; Education</b>	<b>Mississauga Humane Society</b>	<b>Tails of Hope</b>
<b>Critter Camp Exotic Pet Sanctuary</b>	<b>Montreal SPCA</b>	<b>Tender Care Animal Rescue</b>
<b>Daisy's Animal Rescue League</b>	<b>New England Federation of Humane Societies</b>	<b>The Danville Area Humane Society</b>
<b>East Bay SPCA</b>	<b>Northwest Spay and Neuter Center</b>	<b>Toronto Cat Rescue</b>
<b>Equamore Foundation / Horse Sanctuary</b>	<b>Ohlone Humane Society</b>	<b>Ulster County SPCA</b>
<b>Fences for Fido</b>	<b>Our Companions Animal Rescue</b>	<b>Vermont Federation of Humane Societies</b>
<b>Foster Parrots</b>	<b>Palm Springs Animal Shelter</b>	<b>Voice for Animals</b>
<b>Four Paws Companion Foundation</b>	<b>Palo Alto Humane Society</b>	<b>Voices for Animals</b>
<b>Fredericksburg Regional SPCA</b>	<b>Paws for Hope</b>	<b>VT-CAN! Vermont Companion Animal Neutering</b>
<b>Greenhill Humane Society</b>	<b>Pets In Need</b>	<b>Washington Humane Society</b>
<b>Hearts United for Animals</b>	<b>Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society</b>	<b>Whatcom Humane Society</b>
	<b>Portland Animal Welfare Team</b>	

## 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 21:

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 Cook-off.
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 to then sell or serve animal products at their 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: [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://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



## SAMPLE ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICIES

Below you will find animal-friendly menu policies that other organizations have adopted. Use these as models in crafting your own policy. For an up-to-date list, please see: [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org).

### Best Friends Animal Society



**Best Friends  
Animal Society**  
SAVE THEM ALL

*At Best Friends, the pursuit of our mission to achieve our vision specifically involves ending the killing of companion animals in shelters. While those efforts are currently focused on companion animals, the vision of*

*Best Friends is very simple: “A better world through kindness to animals.” Our current guiding principles are also prescriptive about how Best Friends should show compassion to all living creatures.*

*Golden Rule: To treat all living things as we ourselves would wish to be treated. Kindness: To demonstrate compassion and respect for all living creatures.*

*It is incongruent with our guiding principles to support industries that raise and slaughter animals for food, as these animals often live in inhumane and even torturous conditions.*

*Given the above, food served at all Best Friends staff meetings and employee events, the food that employees are reimbursed for while traveling, employee food choices when meeting with donors, and food served at any other Best Friends–related events should be vegetarian, and whenever feasible, entirely plant-based.*

*While not all Best Friends staff follow plant-based or vegetarian diets, Best Friends is an organization dedicated to animals and their well-being. Best Friends staff are expected to respect and follow this policy when using donor money because it is important that, as employees of Best Friends, we always represent the values of the organization.*

### Animal Farm Foundation

Animal Farm Foundation recognizes the value of all animals and additionally respects the missions of all our coworkers and cohorts in the animal welfare movement. As such, we make it our policy to extend our own compassionate practices beyond the scope of companion animals and to never devalue the work of other organizations who are working so hard for wildlife and farm animals. We do not serve meat at any Animal Farm Foundation functions.

### Animal Rescue Inc.

As a rescue organization, Animal Rescue, Inc.'s staff and volunteers see first-hand the senseless suffering that is inflicted upon innocent animals on a daily basis... It is, therefore, the policy of Animal Rescue, Inc. that only vegan food will be provided at all shelter-sponsored events, from small meetings of staff and volunteers, to large gatherings such as our annual Dogs' Day in the Park Festival & Mutt Strut, to ensure that all of our shelter-sponsored events are free of animal products for human consumption.

### Brother Wolf Animal Rescue

At BWAR internal events (staff meetings, holiday parties, etc.) where food is served and to which employees, volunteers, and/or guests have been invited to participate, we will only serve vegan

fare. ... External events under the control of BWAR will also only serve vegan fare. For events in which BWAR participates with other organizations but does not have total control over, we'll make every effort to serve all vegan or vegetarian food. Partnering organizations are to be informed that vegan options should be available and that they are preferred. ... Of course, we recognize that not all staff members follow vegan diets, but when representing BWAR, employees are expected to follow these guidelines and respect organizational policy.

### **Harvest Home Animal Sanctuary**

Out of respect for the non-human residents of Harvest Home Animal Sanctuary, all of our events both on- and off-site are completely plant based. When inviting visitors onsite who may bring their own food, we ask that their meals and snacks are also vegan.

### **Ohlone Humane Society**

Ohlone Humane Society strives to inspire respect and compassion for all animals, advocate for their interests and welfare, and instill in our community that all living beings have a right to be treated humanely. Any organizational event adheres to serving only vegetarian fare and we are increasingly moving to a plant-based menu.

### **Pets In Need**

To help fight cruelty to animals in the food industry, Pets In Need serves vegetarian at all its internal functions.

### **Marin Humane Society**

It is the policy of the Marin Humane Society that no meat products shall be served at Humane Society functions.

### **RedRover**

In order to respect the philosophy of many of our donors, volunteers, and staff and to increase awareness about humane choices, RedRover has a policy of only purchasing (and reimbursing expenses for) vegetarian food items and maintains a meat-free workplace.

### **Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter**

It has become generally accepted that companion animals are sentient beings that have feelings. We wish to extend that understanding to animals that are raised, trapped, or slaughtered for food. We do not feel that it is appropriate for us to serve meat at any official functions of the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter.

### **Whatcom Humane Society**

Recognizing that animals raised for food may be subjected to many forms of cruelty and inhumane treatment, the Whatcom Humane Society has committed itself to serving only vegetarian foods at any events that are sponsored or funded by WHS.

## HOW TO CREATE AN ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICY

Implementing a board-adopted, animal-friendly menu policy is a powerful statement. It demonstrates that your animal shelter or rescue is truly committed to animal welfare and the wellbeing of all types of companion animals, including farmed animals. Here's a simple guide to help you along the way in adopting such a policy.

### Does your shelter currently have a menu policy?

A good place to start is to determine whether or not your shelter or rescue organization currently has a menu policy. It could be an informal one that was developed out of habit or under the leadership of a particular director or board. Perhaps the policy was formally approved by the Board of Directors. Usually, the Executive Director or the Board Chair would know if a policy exists.

### IF YOUR CURRENT POLICY IS INFORMAL...

... **and Animal-Friendly: Then, formalize it!** Informal policies are a wonderful opportunity to improve a policy and/or formalize it through board adoption. If you happen to currently have an informal animal-friendly menu policy (all vegetarian or vegan), then we strongly encourage you to have the board adopt this formally. At the board level, policies are less likely to be challenged and tend to be easier to carry out. Formalizing it could be as simple as drafting a one sentence statement (examples can be seen on the *Food for Thought* website) and sharing it with the board for minor edits and a vote.

... **and NOT Animal-Friendly: We've got work to do!** If you have an informal policy that isn't particularly animal-friendly, then proposing that the Board adopt an animal-friendly policy provides a great platform to analyze what your organizational history is on this issue, review current information and trends found on the *Food for Thought* website, and potential for the future. See below for more tips.

### IF YOUR CURRENT POLICY IS FORMAL...

... **and Animal-Friendly: Can it be improved?** Every so often, most organizations will review their policies. This is a standard best practice and one that will help keep your policies current by gleaning new insights in our changing world. Vegan is no longer a scary word. In fact, it's hip and incredibly tasty given all the new products on the market. Can your policy be more humane? Does your organization still serve fish, dairy, eggs, or animal byproducts at its functions? Maybe it's time to consider a completely plant-based policy.

... **and NOT Animal-Friendly: We've got work to do!** Let's say your shelter has a policy, but it's not animal-friendly. In order to change this policy or make it official, you will need to rally the support of your board so that they can vote (in favor!) of changing the language of the policy.

## TIPS TO HELP PASS AN ANIMAL-FRIENDLY MENU POLICY

1. Try to get a feeling for where staff and board members stand on this issue—are any vegetarians, vegans, pescatarians/flexitarians, environmentalists, or health advocates? Their support will be key. Supportive staff members or board members can help you in the “campaign” process, not just with legwork, but to show that there is wide support within the organization for this policy.
2. Figure out who might be a harder sell and what would motivate them to say ‘yes’ to a policy change. Is it economics? Is it taste? Concerns about donor satisfaction?
3. Determine your best course of action. Would your board be impressed with a formal presentation and handouts that answer their questions or concerns? Would they appreciate a vegan food tasting? Is a sample budget showing the economic advantage of having a plant-based menu over meat dishes a convincing argument for a ‘numbers’ person? Do they need to know which food trucks, caterers, and restaurants are able to donate or make plant-based foods?
  - i. Review the available resources on Animal Place’s *Food for Thought* website which could prove helpful at this stage in the policy adoption process.
4. When your board seems ready to draft the language for a policy, turn to the *Food for Thought* website for sample verbiage from other shelters that have implemented their own animal-friendly policies. Creating a policy can be as simple as a one-sentence statement!
5. Once the policy has passed, let us at Animal Place know so we can recognize your efforts and add your policy to our site! If at any point, you need help—whether it’s with menu ideas or seeking sample products for your event—just let us know. We’re happy to help!
6. Once your policy has passed, consider applying for a Shelter Grant. Animal Place is awarding \$25,000 in grants to eligible and deserving organizations that have adopted an animal-friendly menu policy. See our website for further details.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT SURVEY RESULTS

**In Fall 2013, Animal Place undertook a two-phase survey of humane societies, SPCAs, animal shelters, rescue groups, and other similar organizations in the state of California to learn more about their menu policies for their shelter-sponsored events. Here are our findings –**

- 29% of shelters accept and re-home chickens, turkeys, and other farmed birds.
- 32% of shelters also accept rabbits, goats, pigs, and/or other species of farmed animals.
- Over 30% of California’s humane societies and SPCAs (Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) had a vegetarian-only policy for their sponsored events.
- 49% of shelters were either interested in creating an animal-friendly menu policy or, at the very least, had their curiosity piqued.
- A majority of shelters—78%—already have in place an animal-friendly policy or are receptive to creating one.
- Some shelters have had such a policy for multiple decades.
- A prior poll by Animal Place showed that 85% of those polled believe it is ethically inconsistent for an animal shelter that rescues dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, goats, sheep, and other animals to sell or serve animal products at shelter-sponsored fundraising events.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT FAQs

**People won't come if they know the food is vegan or vegetarian.** Your members and patrons attend your shelter's events because they support your mission. It's that simple! They want to help your organization and your efforts for the animals. The activities, entertainment, and fare at your events are side benefits; the heart of the matter is helping animals. Some organizations choose to focus on the event rather than the type of food served. Some casually mention that the offerings are animal-friendly, vegetarian, vegan, or plant-based. Others take it as an opportunity to engage their supporters and explain why they've chosen to adopt an animal-friendly menu (which is also better for the health of their supporters and the planet). In our experience, most people understand why an organization that helps companion and some farm animals—rabbits, goats, horses, sheep, chickens— chooses not to serve them as food.

**Vegan and vegetarian food is bland.** On the contrary! Well-prepared food tastes great, regardless of whether it is vegan or not. In fact, animal-friendly foods are becoming so popular that Forbes Magazine identified "high end vegan" fare as the #1 food trend in 2013! And virtually anything can be made animal-friendly: BBQ, Southern, Thai, Italian, Mexican—you name it.

**Vegan alternatives to animal products don't taste the same.** Okay, this isn't exactly a myth. While some alternatives are shockingly similar to animal products, most have their own taste and texture. There are many brands of veggie hot dogs, chicken nuggets, and burgers, and they all taste and feel different. Have a blind taste test with some of your volunteers and staff and see what they prefer— make it a fun event!

You may want to reach out to vegan-friendly businesses and ask about donations or samples to try. And if you're working with a caterer, restaurant, or food truck, don't be shy about requesting a tasting of potential menu items. Most chefs appreciate the opportunity to experiment in the kitchen and want to satisfy their customers. And remember, while you can incorporate plant-based cheeses, dairy, and meats into your offerings, you also can opt for veggies in their pure form too, as in eggplant 'parmesan' or Portobello burgers.

**Food for Thought and Animal Place are vegan advocates.** Animal Place promotes a plant-based diet and vegan lifestyle because we rescue and advocate on behalf of farmed animals. It would make little sense for a farmed animal rescue to save a cow and then advocate eating cows, right? We recognize that not every individual is ready, able, or at a place in their life to be vegan. *Food for Thought* was developed to encourage a board-approved policy change, not to challenge individuals to adopt a particular lifestyle. As an animal protection agency, you are held to a higher standard, a higher ethic. Adopting a plant-based menu policy for your shelter events is simply a logical aligning of your ethics with your actions.

**What about feeding the dogs and cats at my shelter animal products?** *Food for Thought* is NOT about changing the menu policy of the rescued dogs and cats (or other animals) at your shelter.

**What if someone does complain?** We would ask, “What about all the attendees that don’t complain?” This majority tends to reflect your happy customer base. If someone does make a suggestion, use it as constructive criticism... NOT a reason to alter a policy that is, at its heart, in the best interest of the animals you rescue and protect.

**I care about animals, but still eat meat, is there anything wrong with humane certified meat?**

It is admirable and important to investigate the impact our actions have on others, and when we find that there is a change we can make that will do less harm to others, it is right to pursue it. However, it is equally important to be realistic and well-informed and not to take actions in the name of compassion that soothe our conscience while not necessarily addressing the violence and injustice being experienced by others.

The animal agriculture industry has a decades-long track record of misleading the public, on everything from the health benefits of consuming their products to the living conditions and mode of death of the animals who are killed to create those products. Positive-sounding labels are guaranteed to increase sales of more expensive “humane” products, but the evidence suggests that this is where the guarantees end.

**What does a “Certified Humane” label require?**

The animals must be kept in conditions that allow for exercise and freedom of movement. Crates, cages, and tethers are prohibited. It is not required that “certified humane” pigs have any access to the outdoors though loosely defined “access” is required for other livestock species. Stocking densities are specified to prevent the overcrowding of animals. All animals must be provided with bedding materials. Hormone and non-therapeutic antibiotic use is prohibited. Pain relief must be used for physical alterations (castration and disbudding) for cattle, but for other mammals, mutilations without anesthesia or painkiller are permitted and performed. Poultry may also have parts of their beaks removed without painkiller. [1]

**What does “Humanely Raised” mean?**

It’s meaningless and intentionally misleading. This is a label of the National Chicken Council, a private industry group and not a welfare verifier. Chickens raised for marketing under the ‘Humanely Raised’ label can be confined in windowless sheds with thousands of other birds and less than one square foot of space per bird. These standards do not require any access to fresh air or sunlight. [2]

**Aren’t “humane” animal products more sustainable?**

A recent study demonstrated that animal agriculture is the number one source of greenhouse gas impact; making a greater contribution to global warming than all cars, trucks, buses, airplanes, trains, and ships combined. This effect is based on the unavoidable biological realities of animal agriculture itself. Realities that are present in all

styles of animal farming; from the smallest scale farms to the largest industrial operations, the level of greenhouse gas impact per unit of animal products created is going to be in the same catastrophic range. [3]

Producing “humane” animal products requires at least double the amount of land required for the industrialized style of farming adopted in wealthy countries over the last several decades. In some cases, it takes several times more land to convert to “humane” methods. So while the immediate surroundings of smaller scale pasture-based farm operations may have less concentrated pollution and less soil erosion than that produced by larger industrialized farms, the reality is that more high quality farmland would be needed to convert existing production to “humane” farming. That amount of land is simply not available on the scale needed to meet worldwide demand for animal products.

[1] HSUS, "How to Read Meat and Dairy Labels." [Humanesociety.org](http://Humanesociety.org). 12/18/12.

[2] Natalie Berkhout, "Animal Welfare Institute targets Perdue Chicken Packaging." [Animal Welfare Institute/World Poultry Magazine](http://AnimalWelfareInstitute.org) 5/14/10.

[3] Castel, V., Gerber, P., de Hann, C. Rosales, M., Steinfeld, H., Wassenaar, T. , "Livestock's Long Shadow." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2006.



## SAMPLE OUTREACH LETTERS

### LETTERS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Writing a letter to the Board of your local shelter, rescue, wildlife, or environmental organization is one of the first steps in working towards getting an animal-friendly menu policy in place. Here are a few sample letters, but **please customize your own to best suit your local shelter.**

#### **SAMPLE LETTER #1 (VERY SHORT)**

Dear [Board members of a shelter, rescue, wildlife, or environmental group],

As a resident of [city/state/region], I am writing to encourage you to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for your organization's events. This means serving only vegetarian or vegan foods at your fundraisers, events, and internal group meals such as staff luncheons. I believe that an animal-friendly menu policy would best follow your organization's core mission of helping animals and reducing the amount of suffering faced by animals around the world. I plan on calling later this week to answer any questions or concerns you may have about making the transition. You are doing a tremendous service to the animals of [city/state/region] and it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

#### **SAMPLE LETTER #2 (MEDIUM)**

Dear [Board members of a shelter, rescue, wildlife, or environmental group],

As a resident of [city/state/region], I am writing to encourage you to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for your organization's events. This means serving only vegetarian or vegan foods during your fundraisers, events, and internal group meals such as staff luncheons. I believe that an animal-friendly menu policy would best follow your organization's core mission of helping animals and reducing the amount of suffering faced by animals around the world.

Over 270 SPCAs, humane societies, rescues, sanctuaries, and wildlife and environmental groups have already adopted an animal-friendly menu policies for their sponsored fundraisers and events! These nonprofits have made the commitment to respect all animals in partnership with Food for Thought, an international campaign organized by Animal Place, one of the oldest and largest farmed animal sanctuaries in the U.S.

I support the efforts of Food for Thought and am happy to send along additional information to help you consider a more animal-friendly menu policy. I plan on calling later this week to

answer any questions or concerns you may have about making the transition. You are doing a tremendous service to the animals of [city/state/region] and it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

### **SAMPLE LETTER #3 (LONG – FOR COMPANION ANIMAL GROUPS)**

Dear Board member of [shelter/rescue/group name],

As a board member of an animal [shelter/rescue/org/], you know how important being a great ambassador for animals is! Your contribution to improving the welfare of dogs, cats, and other animals is greatly admired and appreciated.

As someone who is equally concerned about the welfare of animals, I would like to introduce you to the Food for Thought program, a national campaign that encourages animal rescue nonprofits to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for all sponsored events. This means serving only vegetarian or vegan foods during your fundraisers, events, or internal group meals such as staff luncheons. The initiative is supported by Animal Place, a non-profit farmed animal sanctuary located in Grass Valley, California.

Animal rescue organizations save and advocate for animals and, because of that, Food for Thought asks organizations to extend their sphere of compassion to farmed animals by not serving them at events. Many dog and cat shelters rescue farmed animals, such as rabbits, chickens, goats, pigs, cows, and horses. And, as you do with dogs and cats, reasonable efforts are made to find permanent, loving homes for these individuals. I hope that you can make the connection between the chickens saved from hoarding cases and injured calves rescued from the side of the road—and serving chicken and beef at a shelter-sponsored meal.

I support the efforts of Food for Thought and am happy to send along additional information to help you consider a more animal-friendly menu policy. I plan on calling later this week to answer any questions or concerns you may have about making the transition. You are doing a tremendous service to the animals of [city/state/region] and it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

### **SAMPLE LETTER #3 (LONG – FOR WILDLIFE GROUPS)**

Dear Board member of [rescue/wildlife group name],

As a board member of an animal [rescue/org/rehab], you know how important being a great ambassador for animals is! Your contribution to improving the welfare of wild animals is greatly admired and appreciated.

As someone who is equally concerned about the welfare of animals, I would like to introduce you to the Food for Thought program, a national campaign that encourages animal rescue nonprofits to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for all sponsored events. This means serving only vegetarian or vegan foods during your fundraisers, events, or internal group meals such as staff luncheons. The initiative is supported by Animal Place, a non-profit farmed animal sanctuary located in Grass Valley, California.

Wildlife organizations offer an important service to the public with education on habitat and biodiversity loss and/or rescue and rehabilitation services. Environmental organizations educate about the critical condition of the planet and how to work toward sustainability and resource conservation. Because animal agriculture is one of the leading causes of habitat and biodiversity loss, pollution, and species extinction, many members and donors are now expecting that an organization's ethic of care also extends to the animals served for food at events.

Many organizations, like Born Free USA and A.U.M. Films, makers of the award-winning film, "Cowspiracy," are now keeping animals off the menu at their functions. I encourage all animal-related organizations to join this effort to be consistent in our concern for animal welfare by adopting an animal-friendly menu policy. A lot of great information is available through Animal Place's Food for Thought program: [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org).

Sincerely,

### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Writing a letter to the editor raises awareness in your community about the opportunities nonprofits have to help more animals each time they offer food to the public. Below we have a few sample letters to the editor you can adapt to suit your needs. **Make these letters your own by writing in your own voice and from your own perspective.** Be sure to research the submission requirements for your paper, as each newspaper has different word count requirements and may request your contact information before printing.

Please note: Food for Thought encourages letters to the editor that name a specific organization only *after* the "behind the scenes" efforts to work with the group to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy have come to an impasse. Check out our [Report Cards](http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/report-cards.html) for the most up-to-date correspondences (<http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/report-cards.html>).

#### **SAMPLE LETTER #1 (SHORT)**

Dear **[editor of newspaper]**,

Dog and cat shelters offer an important service with public education, adoption, and rescue. They work incredibly hard to help dogs, cats, and other animals, including farmed animals such as rabbits, chickens, and goats. Because of the ambiguous line between who is food and who is

friend when it comes to animals at the shelter, there is a growing trend for animal nonprofits to adopt animal-friendly menu policies for events. In other words, animal rescue organizations are now keeping animals off the menu at their functions to show their compassion for all animals and save more lives. I encourage all animal-related organizations to join this effort to be consistent in our concern for animal welfare by adopting an animal-friendly menu policy. A lot of great information on how to do this is available from Animal Place’s Food for Thought program: [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org).

[your name]

### **SAMPLE LETTER #2 (MEDIUM)**

Dear [editor of newspaper],

I am writing to inform readers of [newspaper] about a nationwide effort to encourage animal shelters, rescues, wildlife, and environmental groups to adopt an animal-friendly menu policy for their fundraising events. This nationwide effort—called the Food for Thought program—is being led by Animal Place, one of the oldest and largest non-profit sanctuaries for farmed animals in the country.

Those at Animal Place, Food for Thought, and myself believe it is inconsistent for organizations that rescue animals to also serve animals as food at their events. How many lives are truly saved when their events serve some animals to help others? I believe that developing an animal-friendly menu policy would be ethically consistent with an organization’s compassion already demonstrated for the animals in their care. Many other organizations have already adopted such policies, including Best Friends Animal Society [or use the name of a local group that has adopted a policy OR one of the Wildlife endorsers like Born Free USA].

Thanks to those of you who support animal shelters and rescues, the staff and volunteers of these organizations, and most of all, the wonderful animals in their care. See [foodforthoughtcampaign.org](http://foodforthoughtcampaign.org) for additional information.

[your name]

## THROWING YOUR FIRST VEG-FRIENDLY EVENT

Putting on your first veg-friendly event is no different than any other event you may have planned or attended. The only difference being, the food. A veg-friendly event provides only vegetarian and/or vegan items on the menu. Keep in mind it's not about catering to the vegetarians and vegans in the house (although they will be super excited about the food!), it's about creating a delicious experience for everyone, regardless of their personal dietary choices.

### 1. ***Establish a budget***

Contrary to popular belief, providing veg foods at your event is not more expensive. Many grains, legumes, and alternative proteins are far less per lb. than ground beef or chicken breasts, but don't look at a one-to-one comparison of steak to tofu. You're not trying to replace meat, you're simply leaving it off the table to make room for other yummy and filling foods.

### 2. ***Pick a theme or size of event and level of elegance***

Casino night, luau, yappy hour, *Spay*-ghetti dinner, casual luncheon, or black tie dinner. The possibilities are endless! Raising funds for dog beds? How about a pajama party! Staff luncheon? How about a vegetarian potluck challenge with judges and prizes? Best use of a vegetable, best presentation, best taste. If you have chefs amongst your staff or supporters they'll love the challenge of bringing out their best veg recipe! You might find a delicious recipe that can be used at another event.

### 3. ***Select a venue***

Where your event takes place will have an impact on your budget and theme. Will it be outside or inside? Outside events can be a little tricky because of elements beyond your control (weather, insects, noise). Inside venues might be a bit more expensive to acquire. Consider what you are trying to say with this event. Fun and informational or an elegant affair for top donors?

### 4. ***Research veg product donations***

Many veg-friendly companies are happy to send samples or donations for charitable events. These items can be used as a part of your food spread or given as gifts or prizes. Reaching out to your local veg resource group may prove to be very useful as they have already done a lot of veg food sleuthing around town. Nearly every college campus has a student-run vegetarian/vegan group that would be more than happy to offer their help and resources.

### 5. ***Now we come to the best part: the food!***

- Many chefs love to create and prepare plant-based recipes. It is a welcome challenge that allows them to use wholesome foods to highlight their own spin on traditional recipes. If there is a caterer or restaurant you love to use, inquire about items that can be made meat free with a simple omission or ask about vegetarian sides that can be made into entrees.
- In the summer months, caterers and restaurants are able to locally source fresh fruits and vegetables, while in the winter months heartier meals can include delicious meat-free stews and soups!

- Don't label things as VEGAN. A great meat free meal stands on its own. Simply call the item what it is: Three bean chili with quinoa, pasta with garden vegetables, BBQ Sweet Potato sliders, etc. Everyone will be thrilled with the variety of foods to choose from.
- Serve really good bread; warm baskets of bread and butter are always a welcome sight at any event. Dairy-free *Earth Balance* is a great choice and can be found in most grocery stores.
- Dessert should be simple. An elegant strawberry shortcake or fudgy warm brownie with coconut cream. Even a boozy fruit salad with *Grand Marnier* and shredded coconut accompanied by a coffee and cookie bar. A sweet finale to a delicious meal is always memorable!
- Remember that Pajama Party? Try a candy/popcorn bar, mini pizzas using dairy-free *Daiya* cheese, and s'mores with *Dandies* marshmallows!
- Outside event? How about a pre-packed picnic lunch featuring *Tofurky* sandwiches or veggie hummus wraps, cold sesame noodle salad, and fresh fruit! If you have a really nice variety of condiments, you can use anything as the base. Instead of hot dogs and hamburgers how about a make your own taco bar with veggie crumbles and all the fixin's. Utilizing local vegetarian/vegan food trucks is another great alternative!

Remember your guests are there to support the noble and inspiring work you do for the animals. They will appreciate the extra effort you took to provide a mouthwatering and satisfying meal that supports the core values of your organization. They'll be looking forward to your next event!

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT GRANT

### \$25,000 to be awarded

Thanks to the generous support of a donor, Animal Place's *Food for Thought* campaign is delighted to be able to award \$25,000 in grants to deserving organizations that adopt an animal-friendly menu policy! The funding will be distributed to the first 100 companion animal nonprofits that meet the following requirements. The award is a one-time gift of \$250.00 per organization. Please note that priority will be given to those with a brick-and-mortar facility hosting public events.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Be one of the first 100 organizations to adopt a written animal-friendly menu policy (within the last six months).
2. Must operate as a companion animal organization in the United States and/or Canada.
3. Classified as a 501(c)(3) organization or municipally funded entity.
4. Policy must include language that states food served at all organizational events will be all vegetarian or vegan.
5. The organization's Board of Directors must formally adopt a written policy and share with Animal Place (e.g., minutes from the Board meeting).



*"It is incongruent with our guiding principles to support industries that raise and slaughter animals for food, as these animals often live in inhumane and even torturous conditions. Given the above, food served at all Best Friends staff meetings and employee events, the food that employees are reimbursed for while traveling, employee food choices when meeting with donors, and food served at any other Best Friends-related events should be vegetarian, and whenever feasible, entirely plant-based."*

To apply, please fill out the short application online:

<http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/shelter---grants.html>

## ANIMAL-FRIENDLY PRODUCT DONORS

These companies may be able to offer food donations, coupons, recipes, and more.

### ALTERNATIVE BAKING COMPANY

Cookies  
alternativebaking.com  
shirleyp@alternativebaking.com

### ALVARADO STREET BAKERY

Great affordable bread options  
alvaradostreetbakery.com  
sales@alvaradostreetbakery.com  
(707) 283-0300

### BUMBLE BAR

Snack bars & coupons  
bumblebar.com  
Sponsorship@bumblebar.com  
(509) 924-2080

### CRUNCHA MA ME

Veg friendly snacks  
Samples, donations, coupons  
crunchamame.com

### DAIYA

Amazing cheese options!  
Daiyafoods.com

### FIELD ROAST

Plant based meat options & coupons  
fieldroast.com  
(800) 311-9497

### FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Tasty cheeses and dressings  
Followyourheart.com  
info@followyourheart.com

### GARDEIN

Veggie chicken, beef & more  
Donation help, coupons, and more  
gardein.com  
(604) 278-7300

### MARY'S GONE CRACKERS

Snacks & cookies  
info@marysgonecrackers.com  
(888) 258-1250

### PRIMAL STRIPS

High energy snacks  
primalspiritfoods.com  
(304) 845-1810

### RICE, ALMOND, SOY DREAM

Dairy-free milk, ice cream & more  
tastethedream.com

### SILK

Dairy-free yogurt, milk  
silk.com  
(888) 820-9283

### SOL CUISINE

Entrees  
solcuisine.com  
info@solcuisine.com

### SUNSHINE BURGERS

Coupons  
sunshineburger.com

### TURTLE ISLAND FOODS

Home of Tofurky, veggie sausages,  
hot dogs, & more  
tofurky.com  
(800) 508-8100

### TREELINE NUT CHEESE

Gourmet nut cheeses  
treelinecheese.com  
info@treelinecheese.com

### TURTLE MOUNTAIN

Dairy-free frozen treats  
sodeliciousdairyfree.com  
(866) 388-7853  
cmielenz@sodeliciousdairyfree.com

### A WELL-FED WORLD

awellfedworld.org  
(202) 495-1348

### WHOLE FOODS

catering and donations  
wholefoodsmarket.com

### V-DOG

Want to know more about finding better  
food options for your pets? V-dog offers  
vegan dog food.  
Website: v-dog.com  
Phone: (888) 280-8364

### VEGFUND

Provides grants for vegan food samples,  
educational literature, and venue fees.  
vegfund.org

### ZEVIA

Drinks & coupons  
zevia.com



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