



ADVOCATE TOOLKIT



Resources to help your shelter
adopt an animal-friendly menu policy



ANIMAL PLACE

• SANCTUARY • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY •

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What is Food for Thought?

Food for Thought is a program of Animal Place, one of the oldest and largest farmed animal sanctuaries in the United States. The program helps animal nonprofits adopt board-approved, animal-friendly menu policies for sponsored events.

In addition to dogs and cats, your shelter or rescue group may also work with farmed animals such as rabbits, horses, chickens, pigs, or goats. As with any good shelter, you provide each individual that comes into your care with the highest standards of compassion and strive to find forever homes. Yet, your shelter may also still serve members of these species as food at organizational functions.

Animals raised for food are no different in their capacities to feel joy, pain, and fear than the animals with whom we share our homes. They suffer tremendously on farms—far worse and in far greater numbers than dogs and cats. Every year, 6.5 million companion animals are killed worldwide, but humans kill ten times as many farmed animals - 56 billion! They deserve our consideration too.

This is where you come in. As an organization dedicated to protecting animals, you have an incredible opportunity to be a humane leader and broaden your impact by leaving animals off the plate at your events. We're here to help!

What is an Animal-Friendly Menu Policy?

An animal-friendly menu policy is one that does not include animals as food, and ideally omits all animal-derived products, such as dairy and eggs, from event menus. The goal is to align your menu with your mission, by including all species within your sphere of compassion and organizational mandates. The policy statement can be short and sweet, or longer and more elaborate. You choose what will work best for your organization by outlining the type of food served to people at events, such as fundraisers or volunteer luncheons.

Who Should Use this Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed for shelter staff and volunteers who want to guide their organization toward adopting an animal-friendly menu policy. It will help you through the “whys” and “hows” of adopting a menu policy for your organization. For more guidance, we have a team of regional coordinators working across the United States and Canada to help you along the way. (Note: If you are *not* a staff member or a volunteer at a shelter or rescue, you may want to check out our other Advocate Toolkit geared towards concerned citizens. You can download that toolkit here: <http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/advocate-toolkit.html>)

Top Ten Reasons to Adopt an Animal-Friendly Menu Policy

- 1. Act in accordance with your mission.** Animal rescue and adoption agencies are driven by their missions? to help animals and reduce the harm done to them by humans. Farming animals to be killed and eaten as food is unnecessary in our modern industrialized society and causes immense suffering to these animals. They deserve to be protected from cruelty as much as dogs or cats.
- 2. Be a humane leader in the rescue community.** Our society expects animal protection organizations to set the bar when it comes to humane standards. Farmed animals suffer tremendously on farms and when slaughtered, so it makes sense for animal welfare organizations to adopt policies that don't support this suffering. As a humane leader, it is your responsibility as an organization to operate as compassionately as possible.
- 3. Truly be "no-kill."** Three to four million dogs and cats are killed in shelters across the United States annually, yet 10 billion farmed animals are killed for food each year. Do your part to reduce the number of animals killed unnecessarily by adopting a veg-only menu policy for your events.
- 4. Practice responsible donation use.** It is essential that animal nonprofits act with integrity by using their donations in service of their mission to help animals and reduce suffering. Using donated money to buy veg-only foods for events is responsible and ethically consistent. There is no justification for using funds obtained through harming one type of animal to help another.
- 5. Stand in solidarity with all animal nonprofits.** [Animal-friendly menu policies](#) have been adopted by the largest and smallest companion animal rescue and shelter organizations, from the Humane Society of the United States to volunteer-run community groups. If they can do it, so can you. Let's build a united movement for all animals!
- 6. Be inclusive.** A vegan or vegetarian event makes all supporters feel welcome. Many of your supporters are undoubtedly already vegetarian or vegan, and while someone who is not vegetarian or vegan can still attend and eat vegetarian foods, a vegetarian or vegan person cannot eat animal-based dishes. Offering exclusively veg foods makes your event inviting for all.
- 7. 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 shelter-sponsored fundraising events. A recent petition showed that over 10,000 individuals support animal and environmental nonprofits moving to a vegan menu policy for events.
- 8. Recognize all types of companion animals.** Many people identify farmed animals as companions, such as rabbits, chickens, pot-bellied pigs, goats, and other species. If any of these animals came into your shelter, you would certainly provide them with the same level of care you would the more typical companion dogs and cats. As a rescue organization, where do you draw the line between those you love and those on the dinner plate at events?
- 9. Save wildlife and the planet.** Animal agriculture is one of the largest sources of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, causes habitat fragmentation and destruction, results in loss of biodiversity and species extinction, wastes huge amounts of water, and pollutes air and waterways. Removing animals from the menu at your events significantly lowers your ecological footprint.
- 10. Win a grant!** Animal Place is awarding \$250 grants to animal agencies that adopt animal-friendly menu policies. Learn more here: <http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/companion-animal-grant.html>.

FAQs

What about our supporters, donors, volunteers, and staff?

Having a veg-only menu policy sends the message to your supporters that you take the welfare of all animals seriously. Your supporters come to your events to support your work, not because you feed them meat for one meal. You may hear from a vocal minority about their unhappiness with the policy change, which may happen with any change you implement in your organization. Nevertheless, we have heard from organizations that have adopted veg policies that, if anything, they have seen increased support from those who are grateful that they have taken animals off the menu. Creating a new veg-only policy is an opportunity to grow your supporter and donor base and demonstrate your humane leadership to all.

We aren't animal rights/vegan advocates so why should we have a policy like this?

Animal rescue and adoption agencies are driven by their mission to help animals, and 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. You may choose to advertise the new policy, or whether the food at your events is vegan/vegetarian, or not mention it at all. Many organizations with veg-only policies just serve yummy, veg food without comment. It is also important to remember that many people identify farmed animals as companions, such as rabbits, chickens, pot-bellied pigs, goats, and other species. If any of these animals came into your shelter, you would certainly provide them with the same level of care you would the more typical companion dogs and cats. As a rescue organization, where do you draw the line between those you love and those on the dinner plate at events?

We don't want to dictate individual's food choices or tell them what to eat so why should we have a veg-only policy? Or, why should we create a veg-only policy if we are not vegetarian/vegan in our own lives?

It's important to emphasize that this is an organizational, mission-based policy. It is not a policy that dictates what individual people need to do/eat on their own time or with their own money. This is about animal welfare organizations taking a new step to reduce the suffering of farmed animals by not serving them at events. Farmed animals suffer tremendously when farmed and slaughtered, it only makes sense that the gold standard of animal welfare organizational processes includes not using donated money to purchase food that supports that suffering. Animal rescues, shelters, and other organizations in the humane field have a responsibility to operate as humanely as possible. Consider this analogy: A human rights organization may choose to adopt an organizational policy that items purchased for events must always be sweatshop-free, given the human suffering endured in sweatshops. Staff, volunteers, supporters, and the public would very much understand this policy from an organizational standpoint, and that it does not dictate what individuals choose to do in their personal lives.

We feed our animals meat so wouldn't having a veg-only menu policy be inconsistent?

Food for Thought is *not* about changing the menu policy of the rescued dogs and cats (or other animals) at your shelter (or for that matter, the personal diets of those working at the shelter), but rather about changing organizational policy to align fundraising menus (for people) with a rescue's mission of saving animals. While it's well documented that humans can thrive on a vegan diet, and therefore can choose a more compassionate way of eating, more study is needed in the area of dog and cat diets. Most dogs, as omnivores, seem to do quite well on a plant-based diet, but cats, as obligate carnivores, are a different story. Sometimes, instead of waiting for things to be perfect, we need to start somewhere, and Food for Thought encourages those in the sheltering community to do just that.

Isn't serving meat with a vegetarian option good enough and the most inclusive?

A vegan or vegetarian event makes all supporters feel welcome. Many of your supporters are undoubtedly already vegetarian or vegan, and while someone who is not vegetarian or vegan can still attend and eat vegetarian foods, a vegetarian or vegan person cannot eat animal-based dishes. Offering exclusively veg foods makes your event inviting for all, and is the most inclusive of animals in your sphere of compassion.

What if we have fundraisers sponsored by third parties?

Having these types of third-party fundraisers wouldn't preclude your organization from creating a policy for shelter-sponsored events. However, this may change how you want to word your policy. For example, you may clearly state that any events "solely sponsored" by your organization are vegetarian, or you may choose to use wording like "When XYZ's Animal Rescue Society is involved with third party organizations in fundraising events, we will recommend that vegan/vegetarian food is served, but realize we do not have complete control over the food served by the third party organizations." The important thing is that your policy is clear that when you have control over the food, you choose to make it 100% veg-only.

How is it possible to have a policy like this in our rural community where vegetarian foods are hard to find?

There are a lot of options to make sure the veg-only food you serve at your event is delicious and satisfying! One option is requesting product donations from the numerous vegan and vegetarian companies happy to get their products into the hands of new customers. (A list of companies is provided here: <http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/product-donations.html>). You can also talk with a local restaurant to identify what dishes they can make for your event. These restaurants *want* your business, (or if they are donating food to help your cause, they *want* to help your cause!) so with a few alterations, if any at all, they should be able to provide delicious veg-only meals for a catered event. And keep in mind that many chain restaurants found in most towns already have veg-only items on their menus. (Check out this huge list: <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-food/vegan-options-at-popular-fast-food-chains/>). Finally, don't forget that for events such as potlucks where people bring their own dishes, there are many websites with easy to make, affordable vegan dishes of familiar foods. You name it -- it can be made vegan: tacos, lasagna, potato salad, pizza, macaroni and cheese, stir fry, sloppy joes, casseroles, and baked goods galore!

What is the best way to approach my organization's leadership about creating a new policy?

First, do your research. We suggest gathering resources from our website and becoming familiar with the content so that you can easily answer any questions or concerns your leadership may have. You can also print out resources from our website to provide readable information. People can be averse to change, especially when it comes to a topic that some find "controversial," so remember that it is best to pitch the topic from of angle that shows how the policy change will benefit your organization. Most importantly, reach out to the Food for Thought team! We have had many successful conversations with individuals at organizations and can guide you with the most suitable resources and tactics. We love to help!

If my organization doesn't want to create a full, board-approved veg-only policy now, what other smaller steps can I ask them to take?

If your leadership is unsure about adopting a veg-only policy, you can ask if they would consider doing a trial run or smaller increments. This can include piloting veg-only food at events without having a formal policy, having one veg-only event, increasing the veg-options at an event, or considering what kinds of events aren't meat heavy. For example, instead of a burger and hotdog picnic, a pork BBQ, or a pig roast, try things like taco bars, ice cream socials, or spaghetti dinners). For a more formal dinner, consider making the veg dish the default and offering a meat option only by special request.

Have more questions? Email us: foodforthought@animalplace.org

Testimonials

Here's what shelter executives have to say about animal-friendly menu policies:

HUMANE LEADERSHIP

"If someone has concerns that there might be drawbacks to adopting a vegetarian friendly policy at their shelter, I would suggest they think long and hard about why they got into this business. We're the ones on the frontlines rescuing animals in our communities, and it just doesn't make sense to rescue a dog or a cat... and then turn around and serve meat at a community-based function. Why do we go out there and rescue these animals when we're serving other ones for people to eat?"

- **Todd Stosuy, Officer, Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, CA**

"It is also our job to engage our communities in humane efforts that make our world a safer place for animals. It would be duplicitous for us to work so hard to save dogs and ensure they have a good quality of life on one hand and then to serve other animals to be eaten at events/meetings on the other hand."

- **Erick Smith, Development & Operations Officer, Muttville Senior Dog Rescue, CA**

"Shelters and rescue groups need to play a role in educating people about the importance of all animals lives - even if they are a shelter for a particular kind of animal whether it be a monkey sanctuary or a city pound. Farm animals, wild animals and companion animals are all equal when it comes to suffering and any animal protection agency should know that and teach people that by example."

- **Sharon DiGenova, Founder, Holly's Hope, ON**

"We believe an animal friendly menu policy is the right thing to do. Most animal welfare organizations have in their values and/or mission something about being compassionate about animals or promoting the human-animal bond. Having the menu policy is simply reflecting those values and mission; it is demonstrating how the organization can be a good role model too."

- **Nancy McKenney, CEO, Marin Humane Society, CA**

DONATION USE

"While we do not want to dictate personal choices, as an organization choosing to spend our money in such a way makes sense. I do feel that such a policy reflects a 'walking the talk' attitude."- **Allison Lindquist, Executive Director, East Bay SPCA, CA**

"We are...very conscientious and aware of how we use donor dollars and believe it would be inappropriate to spend donor dollars on animal meat for the purpose of parties, events, or meetings."- **Erick Smith, Development & Operations Officer, Muttville Senior Dog Rescue, CA**

"There seemed little sense in accepting donations from the public toward our cause of protecting animals only to then spend some of that money on unnecessarily supporting the very industries that were causing so much pain and suffering to animals. We are a humane organization; what is the point of protecting animals all day long, only to serve them up on a platter at that evening's donor reception?" - **Nicholas Gilman, Executive Director, Montreal SPCA, QC**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

"It sends a mixed signal to the public if you are helping cats and dogs while eating other animals. No one involved in animal rescue would deny cats or dogs have feelings and emotional lives of their own, so it's a natural step to also believe farmed animals are sentient beings capable of feeling emotions as well." - **Grace Froelich, Founder, Animal Rescue Inc., PA**

“We have not experienced any negative reactions to eliminating meat from our events and know it is possible to serve delicious, appealing animal-free foods. Offering a vegetarian menu is a simple thing to do, and sends a message about where your organization stands in regards to animal welfare.” - **Elena Bicker, Executive Director, Animal Rescue Foundation, CA**

“We did not always have a vegan menu policy; some inertia and some fear that it would affect the outcomes of the fundraisers, or frighten people away. But finally, we decided that we had to put into practice those things that we believed in ourselves, irrespective of how it affected outcomes, etc. When we did implement vegan only food policy, we were pleasantly surprised to find it very well accepted.” - **Cath Ens-Hurwood, Co-founder & Director, Niagara Action for Animals, ON**

“We acknowledge that not everyone involved in our organization is vegan or vegetarian, in fact, the majority are not. However, we are all involved because we care about the well-being of animals we call ‘pets.’ The non-vegetarians and non-vegans in our organization understand that for some of us, there is no difference between a dog and a cow or a chicken and cat, and therefore, out of respect, support and honor this policy.” - **Dr. Shayda Ahkami, Director of Shelter Operations and Veterinary Care, Palm Springs Animal Shelter, CA**

Sample Menu Policies

Below you will find compassionate menu policies in place at other animal nonprofits. Please feel free to use these for reference when crafting your own policy. For a more detailed list, visit: foodforthoughtcampaign.org/testimonials-companion-animal

VEGAN POLICIES



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.



Meriden Humane Society

As a No Kill rescue organization, with a motto that "Every Life Matters" it is with a warm heart that we put forth a new policy in place that only Vegan food will be provided at all of our Shelter sponsored events (fundraisers, staff, volunteer meetings, open house days etc.) We truly believe in our Mission that Every Life Matters, and with the assistance of Food for Thought we welcome this new change in our policy.



Montreal SPCA

We serve vegan food only at events. We do not allow our name to be associated with fundraising events in which animal products are served.



Humane Rescue Alliance

The Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA) believes all animals deserve humane treatment. As part of our mission, HRA provides care to animals of all species, including animals commonly raised for food. HRA believes it would be inconsistent and hypocritical for an organization dedicated to saving animals to

serve animal products as food for people. Policy: All food purchased by HRA for events and meetings will be vegan. Additionally, for events featuring or connected to HRA where food is funded by another party, all efforts will be made to have humane food choices, and HRA will recommend vegan food.



Fences For Fido

Like most animal welfare groups, we support the wider cause of animal welfare by serving plant-based foods at our events. This policy covers food purchased and served by Fences For Fido at its officially-sponsored events.

VEGETARIAN POLICIES



Best Friends Animal Society

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.



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.



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.

OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY
Advocating For All Animals Since 1983



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.



East Bay SPCA

In keeping with the trend of change, EBSPCA is going vegetarian. This means that any meals or food purchased by the EBSPCA for staff lunches, VIP events, Board Meetings, et al will be vegetarian fare. We are one of the last animal welfare groups in the area that still serves

meat options, and we feel that we are overdue for this change. We respect that dietary choices are quite personal, and we do not intend to dictate what anyone eats; however as an organization we feel we could be better in tune with our mission by implementing this new policy for any food purchased by/provided by EBSPCA.



Kingston Animal Rescue

Simply put: we don't hurt animals to help animals. Though our focus is on rescuing domestic animals, compassion for all animals guides our policies and practices. We are proud to endorse the Food for Thought campaign and encourage other rescues and shelters to do the same. Making the easy choice to serve only vegan/vegetarian food simply serves to extend our impact.



MEOW Cat Rescue

We've had a Board formalized animal-friendly menu policy for events for many years. Any and all activities where food is offered, including meetings, volunteer projects, etc., are strictly vegetarian.



Animal Friends

As a progressive leader in the national animal welfare movement, Animal Friends strives to inspire respect and compassion for companion animals, advocate for their welfare, and instill in our community that all living beings have a right to be treated humanely. Often in our work, especially Humane Investigations, we find ourselves providing rescue, treatment and safe haven for animals other than just companion animals. Therefore, we believe it would be inconsistent for our organization, which is dedicated to saving these animals, to serve animal products as food. Animal Friends

is committed to only vegetarian menus at all organizationally hosted events and gatherings to demonstrate our support for and honor of all of our animal friends.

Food for Thought Grant

Thanks to the generous support of a donor, we're delighted 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
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).

APPLICATION:

<http://www.foodforthoughtcampaign.org/companion-animal-grant>

Finding Vegan Product Donations

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

ALTERNATIVE BAKING COMPANY

Cookies
alternativebaking.com

BEANFIELDS

Snacks
Beanfieldssnacks.com
alternativebaking.com
855-328-2326 x108

BUMBLE BAR

Snack bars & coupons
bumblebar.com
509-924-2080

CLIF BAR

Snacks
clifbar.com
1-800-254-3227

DAIYA

Cheese options
daiyafoods.com

FIELD ROAST

Plant-based meat options & coupons
fieldroast.com
1-800-311-9497

FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Tasty cheeses and dressings
followyourheart.com

GARDEIN

Plant-based meat options & coupons
gardein.com
604-278-7300

HILARY'S

Snacks, crackers
www.hilaryseatwell.com
785-856-3399

MARY'S GONE CRACKERS

Snacks & cookies
info@marysgonecrackers.com
1-888-258-1250

MIYOKO'S KITCHEN

Gourmet cheese
Miyokoskitchen.com
415-521-5313

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
1-888-820-9283

SIMPLY PROTEIN BARS

simplyprotein.com
1-800-547-5790

SOL CUISINE

Entrees
solcuisine.com

SUNSHINE BURGERS

Coupons
sunshineburger.com

TURTLE ISLAND FOODS

Tofurky, veggie sausages, hot dogs & more
tofurky.com
1-800-508-8100

TREELINE NUT CHEESE

Gourmet nut cheeses
treelinecheese.com

TURTLE MOUNTAIN

Dairy-free frozen treats
sodeliciousdairyfree.com
1-866-388-7853

UPTON'S NATURALS

Plant-based meat options
uptonsnaturals.com
312-666-7838

A WELL-FED WORLD

awellfedworld.org
202-495-1348

WHOLE FOODS

Catering and donations
wholefoodsmarket.com

VEGFUND

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

ZEVIA

Drinks & coupons
zevia.com

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