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Veganism

The concept of veganism has existed for many years, but it has not been universally accepted until fairly recently. According to the "The Vegan Society", veganism can be traced back nearly 2,000 years ago, but the term "vegan" was not coined until 1944 when the vegan society was formed. I want to note that the website "The Vegan Society" may not be the most reliable source, but it contained information that I found interesting and was backed by other websites. Mary Pat Fisher notes in the book *Living Religions*, that Siddhārtha Gautama (known as Buddha in Buddhist religions) discussed the concept of vegetarianism with his followers in hope that it could lead him to enlightenment.

Veganism can be defined as "an individual who actively avoids the use of animal products for food, clothing or any other purpose" (atasteofhealth.org). Veganism is popularly known as a healthy alternative way of eating; however, it is not as commonly discussed as an environmentally beneficial way of eating. Fredrick Hedenus notes that the amount of land used to raise farm animals and grow the grain that they eat is increasing greatly as human populations increase. He also calculated through studies that food is responsible for one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions. Although this includes food products that are a part of the vegan diet, the amount of CO₂ emissions released during production of meats such as turkey or beef are greater (Hedenus).

Veganism and vegetarianism are both controversial topics in the food industry. Most of the issues derive from differing opinions. Joey Flores (not the most reliable source, but he brings up factors that I found interesting) notes that one of the main factors that make this eating lifestyle controversial is that some people believe that vegans/vegetarians think that people who eat animal products are unsympathetic and uncaring for animals. This is not always true. Some say that vegans try to push their belief on others, which in actuality they are just trying to inform the public about their lifestyle. This video was made by a vegan blogger and I found it interesting about how veganism has impacted her life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aHghAkV-0g>.

"History." *The Vegan Society*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

Link: <http://www.vegansociety.com/society/history>

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999. Print.
(Book so no clickable link provided)

<http://www.atasteofhealth.org/what-is-vegan.htm>

Hedenus, Fredrick. "The Importance of Reduced Meat and Dairy Consumption for Meeting Stringent Climate Change Targets." *Climatic Change* 124 (2014): 79-91. Web. 12 Feb. 2015. Link: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10584-014-1104-5#page-1>

<http://www.quora.com/Why-is-veganism-so-controversial-but-eating-meat-and-dairy-not>