



# Paul Wesley

Inspiring the masses

## Big Changes in Brazil

Hard-won commitment  
will change millions  
of lives

## Costco Uncovered

.....

Shocking undercover  
footage stirs thousands  
to action



## ChooseVeg Partners

Spotlighting BIPOC  
vegan businesses





Cover Photo: James Lee Wall

## DEAR FRIENDS,

It's hard to believe that one year ago, we were just beginning to adjust to life in lockdown. Hope, back then, was scarce. As someone who both suffers and benefits from being a strong empath, like many animal advocates, I often struggled to find hope, let alone my way out of bed, to my desk, to this computer that I am typing on.

I take hope seriously. I do not throw it around like some inspirational meme. So my search for hope over the past year has been a purposeful, proactive quest for connection and meaning amid so much heartbreak and suffering.

Among other places, this pursuit took me to rural Texas and North Carolina, where I met with farmers who, though trapped in the exploitative contract-farming system, are forging a path out of raising animals and transitioning to sustainable, plant-based agriculture. I spent time with the animals still confined in their farms, bearing witness to the suffering chickens and pigs endure—the monotony, the debilitating illnesses, the mental anguish I know they feel. At times, I was ashamed of my visceral reaction, my urge to flee from the noise and smell of these places. I can only imagine the animals, too, want to flee; they also sense the constant danger.

But sometimes it takes traveling to the darkest places to feel the greatest

hope. Reflecting on these trips, I think about the farmers and what their transformations signify: that people can change; that compassion will prevail; that our collective force matters; that human beings, for all our faults, are relentless in our efforts to improve—ourselves, our world, and our interactions with others.

We at Mercy For Animals have so much to be hopeful about. We have one another as a committed team, continuing to show up and solve problems. As you will read in this issue, we have corporate and legislative reform in motion for farmed animals around the world. We are making progress; the policies of the largest institutions reflect that. Plant-based options keep increasing, and the public is more engaged than ever in creating a kinder food system. Most of all, we have you, our loyal supporters, standing alongside us.

I believe in change—of systems, institutions, and people. Together we continue our work, our steady progress, to construct a more compassionate world. Thank you for sharing our hope for this future.

With gratitude,

Leah Garcés  
President

## ANDY NAHAS & THE PROSPECT FUND

IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

Mercy For Animals' vision of a world where animals  
are respected, protected, and free.





## Oatly Makes a Statement



Oatly has the whole country singing—and debating. The plant-based milk company's first-ever Super Bowl commercial has gone viral. While viewers were split on whether they loved or hated it, everyone was talking about it.

## Moving Animals

The new short film *Moving Animals* documents the excruciating journey animals face in transport from factory farms to slaughterhouses. The film follows the work of award-winning photojournalist and author Jo-Anne McArthur.



## Impossibly Cheap

For the second time in a year, plant-based company Impossible Foods is taking on animal meat by slashing prices for foodservice distributors.



## Game On!

This year's Super Bowl was a lot more vegan-friendly! After talks with Mercy For Animals, the local Tampa Bay Super Bowl host committee decided to serve plant-based meals at hospitality events.

# VEG TREND

## SUMMER

## Honoring Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, the Afro-Vegan Society launched Veguary, a month-long campaign offering free programs that highlight the incredible work of Black vegan leaders.



## 3D Printing the Future

The world's first slaughter-free 3D-printed ribeye steak has been successfully cultivated in Israel, while 3D-printed salmon is set to debut in Austria. Both products are made with real animal cells but do not involve killing a single animal.



## Overthrowing Hunger

New York City got its first vegan community fridge! Visitors to the Overthrow Community Fridge find items like fresh produce, canned goods, beans, rice, toiletries, clothing, and educational literature on plant-based eating.



# MEMBERS ON A *Mission*

**M**ercy For Animals is lucky enough to partner with many incredible advocates who make our vital work possible. We're excited to share the stories of two remarkable, determined advocates and their visions for a healthier, more compassionate future!



## Sue Doran

Sue Doran, an animal lover and avid activist—not only for animals but for racial and LGBTQ+ equality—learned about the benefits of plant-based eating while completing the education, training, and licensing required to become an RDN (registered dietitian nutritionist). As an RDN, she worked in a hospital where she saw firsthand the struggles faced by people with diet-related illnesses. This career path and, of course, her love of animals inspired Sue to go plant-based. She later founded Let's Meat Less, a nonprofit organization that supports people in making positive, plant-based food choices.

"These days it's easier than ever to take animal meat out of a meal," said Sue. "There are so many easy-to-make and great-tasting plant-based recipes and animal-meat alternatives that it's actually fun to do it."

Sue's hope is that through Let's Meat Less she can educate and empower people to fuel their bodies with food that positively impacts their health, conserves the environment, and protects farmed animals. She launched this public health initiative to provide the latest in plant-based news, fresh and exciting recipes, expert videos, and more. These free resources are designed to be comprehensive and make eating less meat easy.

"I want to let people know that it's simple for individuals to make these changes. We don't have to be experts, wealthy, or powerful. We can enjoy delicious, beautiful food and still make our world better. We simply need to meat less."

In April, Let's Meat Less will roll out a new Meatless Monday initiative in Columbia, South Carolina.

✿ Follow @LetsMeatLess for daily tips!

## Siddharth Hariharan

Inspired by our undercover investigations and Transformation program, Sid Hariharan, one of our newest board members, said the decision to join the Mercy For Animals board was a no-brainer:

Watching Mercy For Animals' undercover investigation videos, in particular, made the decision to go vegan obvious and easy. I am truly inspired by the passion and purpose of the organization and the multifaceted approach they take in reforming our food system.



As Managing Director Sid Hariharan of Rothschild & Co., a leading global advisory firm, he brings a unique skill set to our board. In his day-to-day work, he is especially interested in plant-based businesses and works to increase their access to funding opportunities. Sid hopes for a completely plant-based world, one where we don't harm or exploit animals in any way.

"I am especially excited about raising awareness of plant-based diets so that an increasing number of people reduce animal consumption gradually initially and completely eventually," said Sid.

Sid is optimistic that through scientific innovations our society will move toward a food system that's more sustainable and compassionate for all.

Join us in shaping a *better world*

Guarantee that your voice for animals will carry on.

Learn more:  
[MercyForAnimals.org/Will](https://MercyForAnimals.org/Will)





## 01

*Feelin' Grateful*

More than 75 changemakers activated their networks through our 20/20 Challenge to raise funds for Mercy For Animals last year. We appreciate all of you who participated, including our fabulous board of directors. Your support gives us—and animals—hope.



## 02

*Making Moves in Mexico*

Our Latin American corporate plant-based program, EligeVeg, helped encourage Sonora Grill Group, a major meat-heavy restaurant group in Mexico, to add Nestlé's delicious plant-based Awesome Burger to its menus. This comes after we kicked off a partnership with Nestlé, the world's largest food company, last year by promoting its new vegan meat products for foodservice in Latin America.



## 03

*Movers and Shakers*

Mercy For Animals partnered with recipients of the 2020 People's Fund for a lively panel discussion. The People's Fund provides grants to Black activists working to build a compassionate plant-based food system. Movement leaders shared their expertise in health, animal law, food relief, digital media, and community outreach.



The  
George  
Institute  
for Global Health



## 04

*A Bold Measure*

Mercy For Animals India signed an agreement with India's leading public health institute, the George Institute, to establish the Centre for One Health Research. This first-of-its-kind center in India will study animal agriculture's impact on public health.



## 05

*Launching into Vegan*

Johnny Rockets in Brazil launched a vegan burger after encouragement from Mercy For Animals supporters. The mushroom-based patty comes with Hellmann's vegan mayo, guacamole, and vinaigrette dressing. Johnny Rockets operates 30 stores in the country. Brazilian chain Kharina also introduced a vegan burger in its nine stores.



# direct action

## THREE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

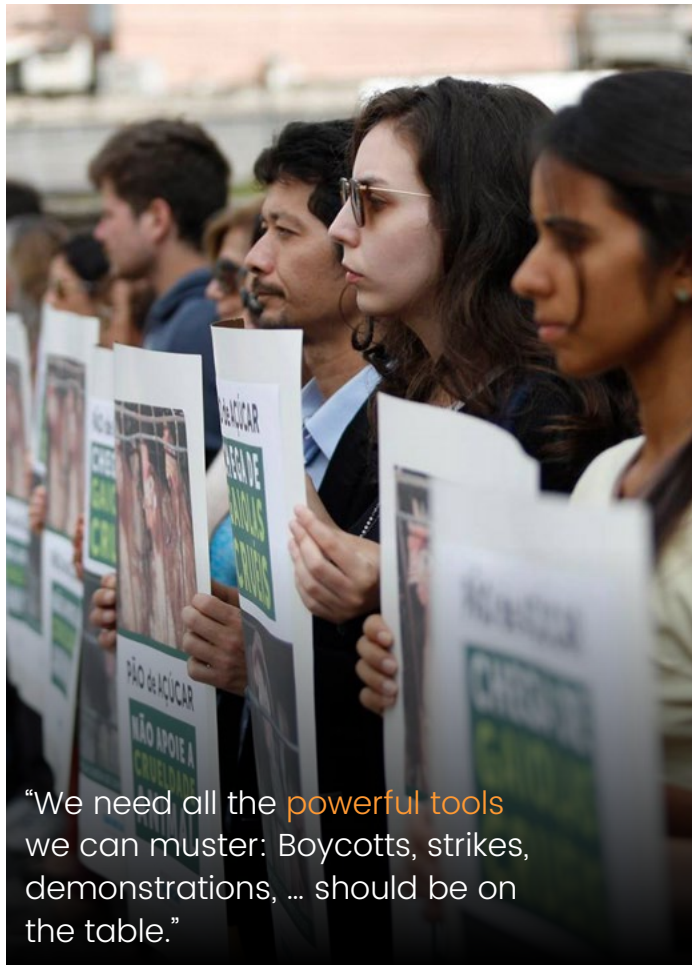
As Mercy For Animals' director of organizing, I'm always asking how we can take powerful **collective** action for animals in ways that increase our odds of winning change over the long haul.

At Mercy For Animals, we use a range of people-powered approaches to fulfill our mission. Some of these—like demonstrations and our recent guerrilla light projections for the Costco campaign—fall in the category of *nonviolent direct action* (NVDA).

Although NVDA has been integral to the success of many (I'd argue all) social movements, it is not widely understood.



Since my first NVDA over 25 years ago, as part of a campaign against the Canadian seal hunt, I've participated in a wide range of tactics. In the process of making what John Lewis called "good trouble," I have learned what makes NVDA such a useful toolbox in our fight for animals. I've also learned why it is often maligned as "disruptive." This short piece is an invitation to grapple with three things: what NVDA is, why it matters, and its implications for our wider movement.



"We need all the **powerful tools** we can muster: Boycotts, strikes, demonstrations, ... should be on the table."

### What is NVDA?

It's letting our nonviolent actions speak louder than our words, in an organized and strategic way. It entails using our actions to assert a **strong yes** or a **strong no** around a social issue, usually in a campaign for change.

### Why does NVDA matter?

In the history of positive social change, activists have often employed creative tactics outside "business as usual." But why? Why did students in the 1960s choose lunch-counter sit-ins? Why did the labor movement

need the strike in order to win the eight-hour workday and the end of child labor?

Progressive forces—people seeking a more just, humane, sustainable, and democratic society—are often up against strong resistance from groups or entire industries profiting from the status quo and trying to rig the playing field to their advantage. Lacking the financial, cultural, or political clout of their opponents, many progressive movements have needed to think differently about power. Rather than fighting on the opponent's terms, they have used resources like their bodies, creativity, voices,



By Michael Gagné  
Director of Organizing

and relationships, in addition to financial support, to level the playing field. NVDA is often how movements have answered the question, *How do we turn our resources into the power we need to get what we want?*

### Why does NVDA matter for Mercy For Animals and our wider movement?

In building a compassionate food system, everyone should be on our side. Alas, even when we approach all people as potential allies, some will fight tooth and nail to preserve factory farming. In such terrain, we need all the powerful tools we can muster: Boycotts, strikes, demonstrations, and many of the other 198 methods from Gene Sharp's [famous list](#) of nonviolent actions should be on the table. I believe there is tremendous potential in studying other movements and how they have leveraged creativity, commitment, numbers, nonviolent escalation, and campaigning around commonly held values (like transparency) to win big.

I look forward to working with you and harnessing the power of NVDA toward a compassionate food system and a cruelty-free world. To this end, the Mercy For Animals organizing team plans to host NVDA 101 training sessions this year. We hope to see you at one!

If you're interested,

EMAIL US AT  
**Organizing**  
[@MercyForAnimals.org](mailto:@MercyForAnimals.org)







# Caramel Covered Chocolate Chunk Brownies

Fudgy no-bake brownies and a two-minute caramel sauce? Yes, please! You can create these irresistible brownies from just a few protein-packed ingredients. Follow along for a sweet treat!

1. Line a small loaf pan or glass pan with parchment paper. Set aside for later.
2. In a food processor, place all ingredients for the no-bake brownie batter.
3. Process until all the ingredients come together and form a consistent batter. The batter should be thick and dark. If it looks too dry, add a splash more of your plant-based milk or maple syrup, and then process again.
4. Transfer the no-bake brownie batter to the loaf pan with parchment paper. Freeze for 10 minutes or more.
5. In a bowl, whisk together all your ingredients for the quick and easy caramel until smooth and silky. Add more maple syrup if needed.
6. Spread your quick and easy caramel over your chilled no-bake brownie batter and freeze for five minutes.
7. Remove the pan from the freezer and chop up your chocolate caramel brownies into square bites. Finish off with a sprinkle of sea salt if you want!
8. Sing your song. Do your dance. Speak your truth. And sink your teeth into these brownies!

## Ingredients:

Makes 12-16 Servings

### No-Bake Brownie Batter:

- 1/2 cup nut butter of choice
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup plant-based milk of choice
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup flaxseed meal
- 1/4 cup coconut flour
- 1/4 cup vegan chocolate chips
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Quick and Easy Caramel:

- 2 tablespoons almond butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup coconut oil
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Colorful Home Cooking  
is available from One  
Great Vegan!





BRAZIL UPDATE:

# PERSISTENCE PREVAILS!

Second-Largest Retailer Promises Big Change  
After Years-Long Campaign



**On a warm December night in 2019, dozens of Mercy For Animals supporters held candles, flowers, and signs as they stood in front of a GPA grocery store.**

This solemn candlelit vigil remembered and called attention to the suffering endured by chickens raised at GPA supplier facilities.

This demo was part of a string of campaign actions spanning four years. In all that time, supporters like you never wavered. Too much was at stake—for millions of chickens, we were their only hope.







### In late 2020, persistence paid off.

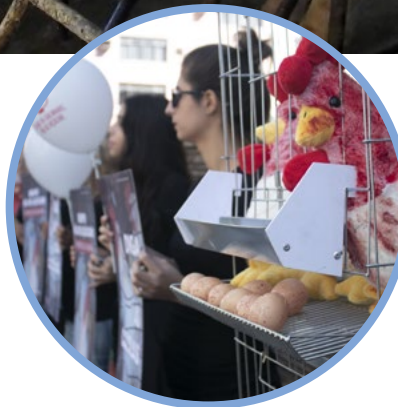
Brazil's second-largest retailer, GPA, announced a precedent-setting animal welfare policy. The company agreed to eliminate from its supply chain cruel cages for hens and crates so small mother pigs can barely lie down in them.

### This success didn't come easy.

Mercy For Animals launched efforts against GPA in January 2017. Our supporters hit the streets for demos featuring cages crammed full of stuffed hens, blood-speckled replica eggs, and hovering balloons that read "ajude as galinhas" (help the chickens). Leafleters and our bus ads gave the public even more to chew on with startling information and images of real hens agonizing in cages.

Online, we targeted ads to top decision-makers, amassed petition signatures, released investigations into GPA supplier farms, and parodied the GPA jingle in a video.

Because of you, we have created an unstoppable force that proves no industry is too powerful to change.



Before Mercy For Animals set up in Brazil, few consumers had seen inside factory farms. But combined with traditional media attention and posts from some of the country's most popular celebrities, our footage is racking up views, and our movement is gaining traction.

### The progress we've made would have seemed impossible four years ago.

Now, Brazil's three largest retailers—Grupo Big (previously Walmart), GPA, and Carrefour—have all pledged to stop selling eggs from hens raised in cages.

This progress is sure to spark a domino effect for farmed animals in Brazil, much like the one in the United States that is moving the food industry toward cage-free facilities and plant-forward menus.

Sparing these sensitive, social animals from cruel confinement won't end their suffering. But it will ease their pain as we continue to build an animal-free food system. We know that this kinder, fairer, and more sustainable system isn't just possible—it's inevitable, with you by our side.

According to the *New York Times*, the number of vegetarians in Brazil, the world's largest meat exporter, has nearly doubled in just six years.

Experts say this dramatic shift from animal meat is driven by **health concerns**, **deforestation** caused by the meat industry, and a rising **animal rights movement**—which includes Mercy For Animals.

## HEALTH

Through our Conscious Eating Brazil program, Mercy For Animals works with public schools around the country to **increase their plant-based options**. This program has already impacted more than 7.6 million meals.



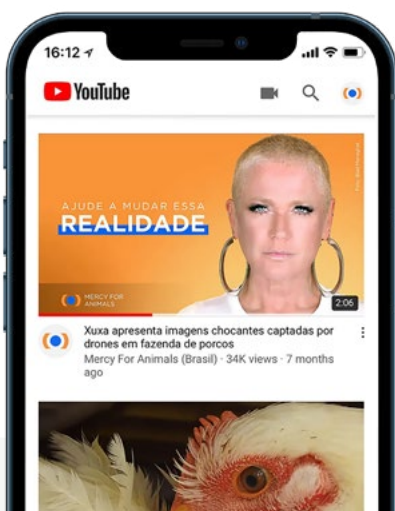
## DEFORESTATION

Animal agriculture is the **leading driver of deforestation** in the Brazilian Amazon. In response to the 2019 fires, Mercy For Animals launched a campaign called **Behind the Fires** to bring attention to the destruction caused by the meat industry.



## ANIMAL RIGHTS

Thanks in great part to **incredible volunteers** and the amazing efforts of allied organizations in Brazil, the animal rights movement has **become a strong force** in the country.





# **COSTCO**

## **EXPOSED**

New Mercy For Animals investigation  
reveals cruelty at **Costco** chicken supplier



A days-old chick takes a step and topples over. His tiny legs flail, and his wings flap, but he is too injured to get up.

**Another chick, his eyes closed, takes a labored breath. One of his last.**

An enormous bird lies on his back. He tries to flip over but **weighs too much**.

A Mercy For Animals investigator documented how these animals suffered and died at the hands of a Costco supplier.

The story broke in Nicholas Kristof's *New York Times* weekly column that landed on the doorsteps of nearly a million subscribers and remained at the top of the *Times* website's most-read list for days.

Public outcry ensued. More than **100 media outlets** across the United States covered our investigation. Calls and emails poured into Costco's executive offices. Comments inundated the company's social media.

The founder and moderator of a popular Costco-rotisserie-chicken fan page **expressed outrage at the animal abuse** and called for Costco to change.

**Countless birds suffered *open wounds*, broken bones, and twisted necks and beaks.**



Actor, activist, and Mercy For Animals supporter **Woody Harrelson** lent his star power to our investigation video, drawing the attention of **tens of thousands of online viewers** to Costco's cruelty.

How did Costco, a company celebrated for positive work culture and bargain buys, become an animal abuser akin to Tyson and Pilgrim's Pride? This is a story about a fast-changing industry and a race for cheap chicken.

## Building Costco's Complex

The U.S. poultry market is largely controlled by five producers: Tyson, Pilgrim's Pride, Perdue, Sanderson Farms, and Koch Foods.

The cost of producing a chicken has risen over the past decade, and Costco doesn't profit from sales of its \$4.99 rotisserie chickens. But the **cheap birds get people in the stores** and drive up Costco membership, a highly profitable marketing gimmick.

Why are chickens generally high-priced? Multiple class action lawsuits claim that top chicken producers have been price fixing for more than a decade.

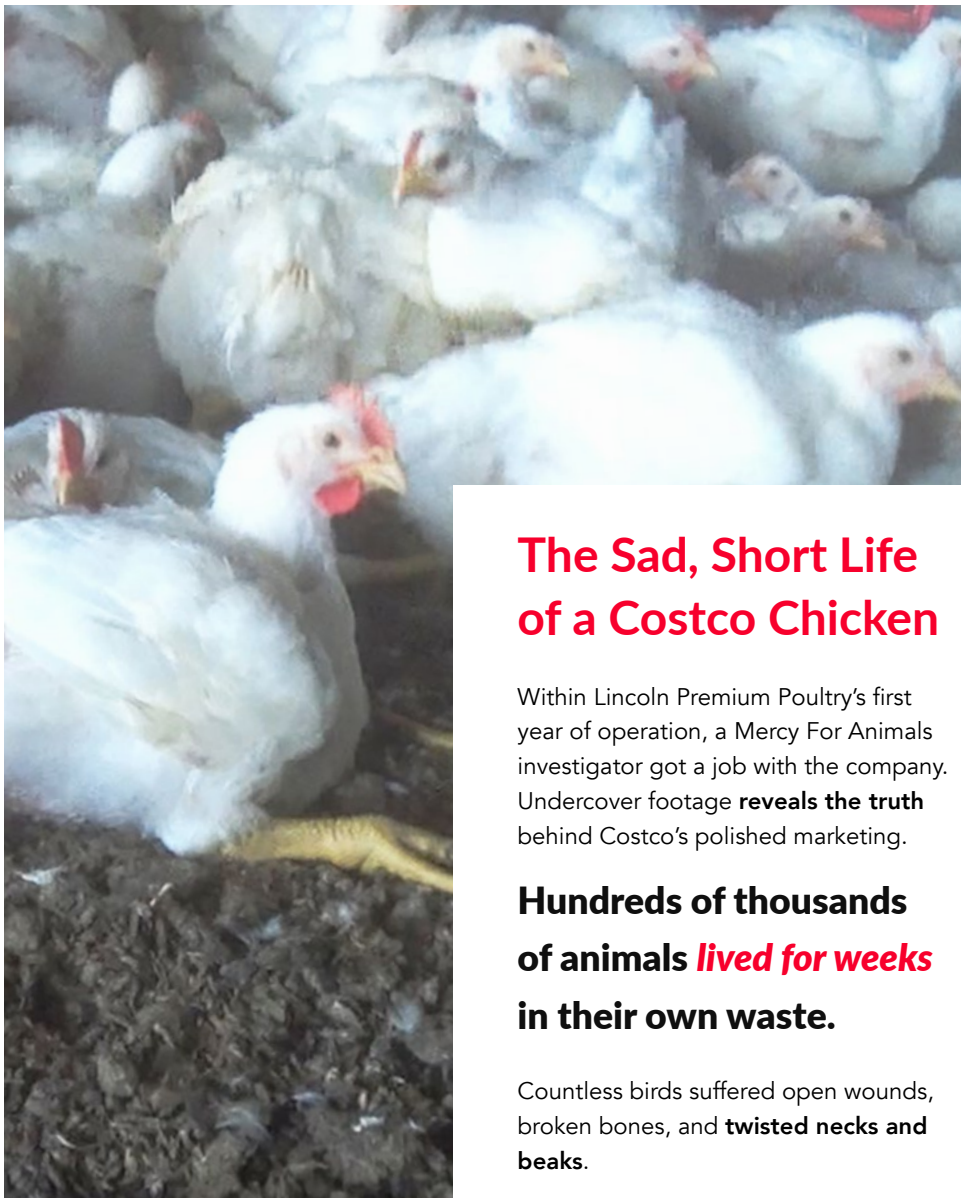
Earlier this year, Pilgrim's Pride settled a lawsuit for \$108 million and Tyson for \$221.5 million. Many lawsuits remain in litigation.

In an effort to seize more control of the chicken supply chain, **Costco built its own processing plant**, hatchery, and feed mill. Lincoln Premium Poultry opened in 2019 in a small Nebraska town.

The facilities provide Costco with around **100 million chickens a year**, or 40 percent of the company's chicken needs.







## The Sad, Short Life of a Costco Chicken

Within Lincoln Premium Poultry's first year of operation, a Mercy For Animals investigator got a job with the company. Undercover footage **reveals the truth** behind Costco's polished marketing.

**Hundreds of thousands of animals *lived for weeks* in their own waste.**

Countless birds suffered open wounds, broken bones, and **twisted necks and beaks**.

Many endured short lives of chronic pain before being overcome by illness and injury. **Piles of dead, rotting birds collected in gallon buckets** and on manure piles.

Bred to grow too large too fast, these chickens often **couldn't support their weight**. They tumbled onto their backs and struggled hopelessly to get back up.

Many birds died from organ failure because their organs couldn't keep pace with their unnaturally fast growth.

## Call for Change

Outside many Costco stores in Georgia, shoppers met with an unexpected greeter—a **mobile billboard parked near the entrance** that featured a giant photo of a splayed, injured chicken. Meanwhile, Mercy For Animals activists in New Jersey and Washington State displayed C-O-S-T-C-O E-X-P-O-S-E-D signs as drivers on both coasts honked in support.

Our partner organizations and *New York Times* coverage of our Costco exposé fueled a firestorm of online outcry that included emails from Mercy For Animals supporters to Costco executives.



## 2012

Mercy For Animals investigated Christensen Farms, at the time a pork supplier to both Costco and Kmart.

Our undercover video reveals thousands of mother pigs forced to live in narrow metal gestation crates barely larger

## Fourth Time's the Charm

## 2010

Costco announced that it would no longer buy veal from farms that use crate-and-chain confinement. The announcement came on the heels of Mercy For Animals' public release of investigative findings from a Buckeye Veal farm in Ohio.

Our undercover investigator gathered footage of months-old calves chained by their necks in crates, alone and barely able to move.





Costco has not committed to reducing the suffering of chickens raised for meat. But it's not too late for the company to change its ways.

## After all, **Costco's** done it before.

Costco was the **first major U.S. retailer to commit to ending cage confinement of hens in its supply chain**. The move motivated other companies to follow suit, and now the industry is close to **30 percent cage-free**.

And in 2010 and 2012, Costco **pledged to stop using veal crates for calves and gestation crates for pigs** after Mercy For Animals released undercover investigations into the company's meat suppliers.

.....



than their own bodies, piglets slammed headfirst into the ground, workers cutting off piglets' tails and testicles without painkillers, and pigs suffering with bloody open wounds.

Costco and Kmart took swift and decisive action—immediately denouncing the use of gestation crates in their supply chains—after Mercy For Animals privately presented them with the undercover footage.

After behind-the-scenes discussions with Mercy For Animals, Costco announced that the company would eliminate gestation crates from its pork supply chain.

**Fortunately, we don't need to wait on Costco. We can make a huge difference for these birds by choosing hearty plant-based versions of popular chicken dishes.**



## 2015

Costco committed to phasing out cruel battery cages across its entire egg supply chain, setting a precedent for other major retailers.

## Simple Swaps

Chicken **Nuggets**



Chicken **Patties**

Chicken **Wings**



Chicken **Strips**

## 2021

The outcome of this campaign is yet to unfold.

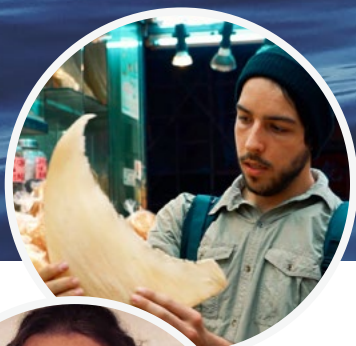


Visit  
**CostcoExposed.com**  
to take action today!



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# SEASPIRACY



## Why did you make *Seaspiracy*?

**Ali:** When we set out to make *Seaspiracy*, we had no idea what we were about to uncover. As we fell down the rabbit hole and followed the story from plastic to whaling, shark finning to habitat loss, we began to realize that these seemingly disconnected ocean issues were in many ways related to and connected by the impact of the fishing industry. It was a story that needed to be told.

**Kip:** In many ways, the oceans are the missing piece of the environmental puzzle, but we also neglect the seas in our ethical concern. The ocean and fishes

are usually “out of sight, out of mind.” And the goal of *Seaspiracy* was to give them a voice and put them front and center in the environmental movement.

## What was the most shocking thing you learned while filming?

**Lucy:** Learning the true scale of the decimation occurring in our seas and just how empty our oceans have become.

**Ali:** The fact that six out of seven sea turtle species are threatened or endangered; that 300,000 whales, dolphins, and porpoises are killed in



fishing nets every year; or that up to 30,000 sharks are killed every hour, along with five million fish per minute, in the fishing industry will never cease to haunt me.

### What was the most dangerous situation you found yourself in?

**Ali:** While making the film, we were led to the issue of slavery in the fishing industry. One of the countries where this issue is most pervasive is Thailand, although the issue is global in its reach. Entering Thailand with the intention of documenting this story and shining a light on the corruption and human rights abuses was something that we knew was going to be risky.

**Lucy:** It is important to note that we weren't unnecessarily pursuing danger, and that we were there voluntarily in order to bring their stories to light.

### What do you hope viewers take away from the film?

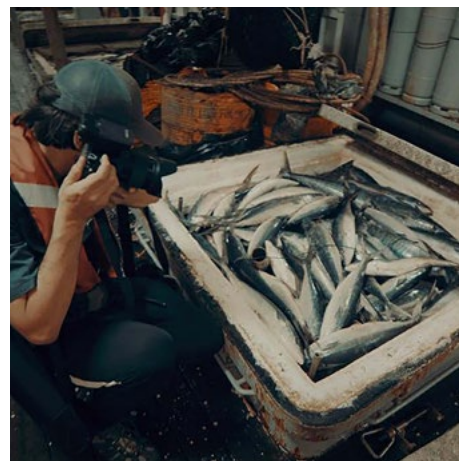
**Ali:** We'd like viewers to take away the same inspiration and determination that we were left with—that our oceans are in peril, that the fishing industry is the single biggest killer of our seas, and that we can all be part of the movement to save them.

**Kip:** We want people to identify with the ocean, to relate to marine animals and know that they are fellow guests on this earth, who feel and who want to live. We also want people to know they are not alone and that they are making a phenomenal difference when they leave marine life off the hook and shift to a plant-based diet, when they ask their governments to end fishing subsidies and demand they enforce no-take marine sanctuaries. Together we will see our oceans thriving again.

### Why is it important to push for both individual and institutional change?

**Ali:** For so long, the conversation around ocean conservation has mostly centered on institutional change, which is important, but we need to go beyond the small, incremental, and poorly enforced regulations and all unite behind three clear solutions:

1. We must end the \$35 billion in subsidies going to the fishing industry.
2. We must protect at least 30 percent of our ocean from industrial fishing by 2030.
3. For those who are able, we must shift toward a plant-based diet. It will be this powerful combination of personal responsibility and government accountability that will turn the tide of destruction and protect our oceans and marine life.



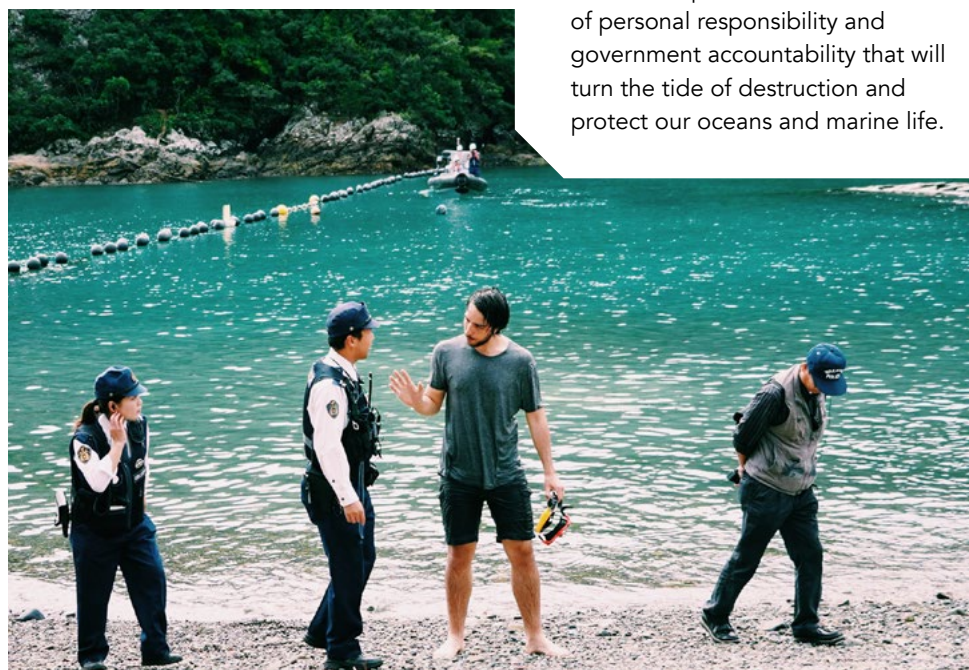
### The film has also raised criticism. Can you address some of it?

Two numbers have been challenged in particular, about virtually empty oceans by 2048 and the number of sea turtles caught as bycatch every year in the United States, which we state to be 250,000.

Regarding 2048, we referenced a study in the film that has been cited over 3,000 times and has never been retracted by the authors. Regarding sea turtles, we appear to have repeated an original mistake made in a Sea Turtle Conservancy white paper, which misattributed the global figure to the United States alone. But this gave us the opportunity to learn that scientists in a 2010 study estimated bycatch of 8.5 million sea turtles in an 18-year period, meaning nearly 500,000 sea turtles killed every year worldwide.

We also received some criticism about anti-Asian sentiments. Of course, the film begins with Japan and Hong Kong, which was intentional, because it gets the audience up to speed on what most people know about ocean conservation—that is, whaling and shark finning. However, we quickly depart into a vast rabbit hole about the number of dolphins killed in Taiji (700+) compared with France (10,000+) and how shark-fin soup is consumed mostly in Asia, but sharks are dying in nets around the world.

If there is one thing *Seaspiracy* has shown, it's that we ALL are complicit in the destruction of our oceans and must unite and take action together.







# Partnering with Progress

Meet Our



In February, Mercy For Animals launched ChooseVeg Partners—an initiative that highlights a different small, Black-owned vegan business each month. Our followers get to meet the inspiring founders of these businesses and learn about their missions. All our partners produce delicious plant-based products and ship nationwide.

Black Americans are the fastest-growing vegan demographic. Our ChooseVeg Partners program **amplifies the widespread contributions of BIPOC vegans in the animal protection movement** and supports small plant-based businesses. It is also an excellent way to expose our supporters to plant-based options that are currently unavailable in grocery stores, which is especially helpful for people in areas with less access to vegan food.

We will spotlight each month's partner in a blog and a video, as well as promote them through our social media channels and email list. On top of providing exposure for our partners, we offer supporters a joint giveaway of the company's products and Mercy For Animals merchandise.

Supporting these fantastic plant-based businesses benefits animals and the planet by encouraging others to try some of the many delectable vegan products on the market. Our partnerships expose Mercy For Animals followers to plant-based foods they may never have tried, whether nacho cheese or gourmet cookies. They also create allies within the movement—and **we are stronger together.**





Our first partnership, **Maya's Cookies**, launched during Black History Month. **Maya Madsen** founded this gourmet cookie company in 2015. Maya lives in San Diego, where she is inspired by her travels, memories, and experiences to create exciting new cookie flavors. She started Maya's Cookies as a way to **satisfy her cravings for sweets**:



As a vegan with a sweet tooth, I was always looking for that **decadent soft-baked cookie** for my cheat days but just couldn't find what I wanted on the market, so **I decided to make my own**.

In March we spotlighted **MylkDog**. Founded by San Diego native **Bethovan Enhancing**, MylkDog crafts amazing plant-based cheese in two flavors: Original Notcho Cheez and Spicy Fiesta Queso. Bethovan first went vegan for his health and was **inspired to create MylkDog for his sons**:



**My sons are my inspiration to live a healthy life.** I didn't want my sons to experience the detrimental effects of dairy as I did. Therefore, I decided to create a **great-tasting plant-based cheese**.



In April we featured **Funky Mello**, a vegan dessert company owned and run by husband and wife **Zach and Delisa**. Based in Austin, Texas, Funky Mello offers handcrafted, gluten-free vegan marshmallows in a variety of tasty flavors. Zach described their vegan journey this way:



After cutting out animal products from our diets, we just **felt better physically and mentally**. We realized how much being vegan positively impacts the planet and decided to fully commit to veganism and do our part in **leaving the planet better than we found it!**

Who will our  
*next* **ChooseVeg**  
partner be?



**Stay up to date** by following us on social media and signing up for emails.



And never forget—our work highlighting these fabulous plant-based businesses is **thanks to supporters like you**. Without you, this program would not be possible.







# The Future of Meat

---

CULTIVATED MEAT COULD BE A GAME CHANGER FOR BOTH ANIMALS AND THE PLANET.



Global consultancy AT Kearney predicts that by 2040 most meat will be plant-based or cultivated. But what, exactly, is *cultivated* meat?

Made directly from animal cells, cultivated meat is real meat that does not come from a slaughtered animal. This groundbreaking product, created through technology used in the **biomedical field**, could be a game changer for both animals and the planet.



Increasingly, scientists are calling for a **mass reduction in meat consumption** to fight climate change, and COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of the meat industry. But for various reasons, not all consumers are willing to switch to plant-based meat. This is why making real animal meat in a way that **doesn't harm animals** is so important.

## EXCITING ADVANCEMENTS

While cultivated meat still has a way to go before it can compete with traditional meat on cost and availability, the industry is advancing quickly. Last year **Eat Just**, the vegan company that brought us the incredible JUST Egg, received government approval in Singapore to sell cultivated chicken bites—the world's **first regulatory approval** for a cultivated meat product. Josh Tetrick, co-founder and CEO of Eat Just, said:

I'm sure that our regulatory approval for cultured meat will be the **first of many** in Singapore and in countries around the globe.

This February, Israel's Aleph Farms presented the world's first **3D-printed, cultivated ribeye steak**. The company created the revolutionary steak in partnership with the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering at Israel's Technion research university. The technology starts with a 3D bioprinter that **prints live cow cells**.

From there, the process mirrors nature, as Aleph nurtures the cells in a cultivator, **supplying all the nutrients and energy sources** that cells need to thrive. The cells grow, divide into muscle and fat cells, and interact with one another to **produce a real steak** with characteristic form, texture, and other attributes.

## GETTING GOOD FOOD OFF THE GROUND

While companies worldwide make exciting advancements in cultivated meat, international nonprofit **The Good Food Institute** offers them support. The organization boasts more than 100 team members across the United States and five affiliate offices, all dedicated to building a world where "**alternative proteins are no longer alternative.**" In a TED talk, GFI executive director Bruce Friedrich said:



What we need to do is we need to **produce the meat that people love**, but we need to produce it in a whole new way.

GFI is currently working with a select group of donors to distribute **grants for open-access research** into alternative protein science—which includes cultivating meat. The organization also helps level the playing field for alternative protein products through legislative advocacy and legal action.

Even if cultivated meat isn't for you, it has enormous potential to foster positive global change and spare billions of animals the misery of factory farms. Keep up with exciting innovations in cultivated meat by visiting **The Good Food Institute's** website at

**[gfi.org](https://gfi.org)**

The **ASPCA®** congratulates **Mercy For Animals** on **22 years** of effectively fighting cruelty against farmed animals.

**ASPCA®**  
ASPCA.ORG  
WE ARE THEIR VOICE.®



©2021 ASPCA®. All Rights Reserved.



# Companies That

How one of America's favorite vegan restaurants is adapting to the ever-changing plant-based landscape.



Veggie Grill is a national plant-based restaurant with indulgent menu options ranging from healthy bowls to decadent burgers. Founded in 2006, the company is continually adding innovative new menu items. Last year, Veggie Grill formed new partnerships to bring vegan tuna melts, Reubens, deli subs, and classic Mexican fare to eager customers.

## Más Veggies Taqueria

Veggie Grill is also working with a new virtual-restaurant concept called Más Veggies Taqueria. The goal of the delivery-only concept is to make plant-based eating safe and accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, as well as to appeal to a broader audience. Veggie Grill co-founder T. K. Pillan explained:

**Veggie Grill is the industry leader in plant-based restaurants, and Más Veggies Taqueria is a natural next step for us to advance plant-based eating nationwide and bring a new and exciting experience straight to people's doorsteps.**

"As restaurants nationwide remain closed or are operating with drastically reduced seating capacity for safety reasons,"

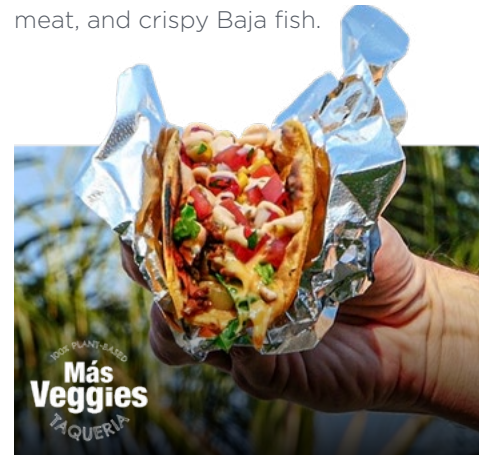


**"Stand up for what they believe in and show love for the planet, animals and themselves."**

Pillan said, "Veggie Grill also seized the opportunity to explore alternative ways to reach these conscious foodies. The virtual Más Veggies Taqueria helps accelerate the plant-based movement while leveraging existing Veggie Grill kitchens nationwide."

Más Veggies Taqueria launched on January 20, 2020, as the first national Mexican restaurant to offer delivery-only vegan dishes. The restaurant concept, created in partnership with plant-based powerhouse Beyond Meat, makes use of Veggie Grill kitchens, with room to grow. Customers can choose from delicious tacos, burritos,

bowls, and nachos. Menu highlights include crispy poblano chickin', shredded jackfruit chipotle carnitas, cauliflower asada, savory Tex-Mex taco meat, and crispy Baja fish.







So far, the virtual restaurant has launched in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Long Beach, Boston, New York, and downtown Seattle. Other locations across Southern California, Portland, and Seattle will follow soon. Customers can access Más Veggies Taqueria's tasty menu options through popular delivery platforms, such as DoorDash, Postmates, Uber Eats, and Grubhub.

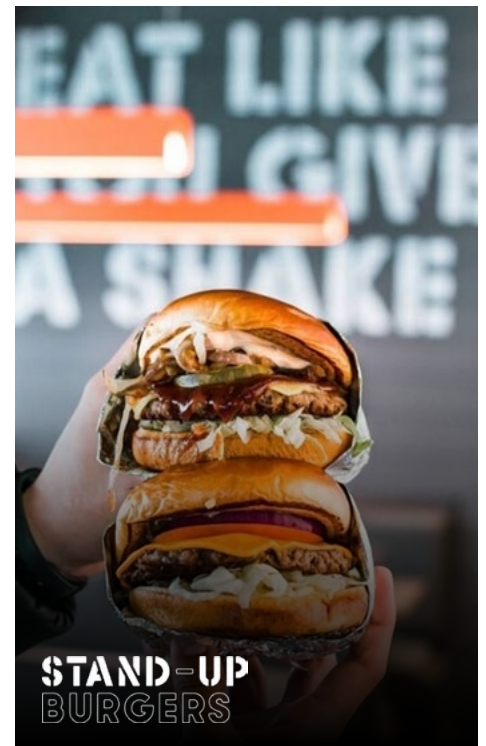


## Stand-Up Burgers

In another exciting move, Veggie Grill opened its fast-casual burger restaurant—Stand-Up Burgers—in March of this year. Located in Berkeley, California, the restaurant offers fries, onion rings, shakes, and bold entrees, such as the barbecue bacon cheeseburger and the Freebird crispy chicken sandwich.

Stand-Up Burgers partners with local charities that benefit people, animals, and the planet. For March and April 2021, a portion of the restaurant's

proceeds went to Berkeley Humane and Support + Feed.



Pillan shared:

**We are excited to introduce Stand-Up Burgers to the Berkeley community—a historically passionate and vocal community—and invite them to stand up for what they believe in and show love for the planet, animals, and themselves.**



Excited for what Veggie Grill has in store? Be sure to follow them on social media:

**@VeggieGrill**





EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# INSPIRING THE MASSES

*Actor, director, producer, and animal activist Paul Wesley sits down with Mercy For Animals to discuss his vision for a compassionate food system.*

**Q** We've all spent a lot of time at home this past year. What have you been up to? Perfected any plant-based recipes?

At the start of the pandemic, we decided to foster puppies from Love Leo, an incredible animal rescue. Two of the three puppies found other loving homes, and we adopted the third. The experience taught me to further appreciate animals for all of their nuances and complexities.

And to answer your question, yes, I did take up more cooking. My friend sent me several books, including the Crossroads cookbook. I have yet to attempt anything gourmet though. My claim to fame is plant-based smoothies.





**Q** Last year your inspiring Twitter post about factory farming generated a lot of conversation. Why did you share that message?

I often think of something the brilliant actor and activist James Cromwell said:



"If a kid ever realized what was involved in factory farming, they would never touch meat again."

I couldn't agree more. I feel it's my responsibility as someone who has millions of followers on social media to help spread that message.

**Q** What was the catalyst for your animal advocacy?

Since childhood, I've loved animals. I remember reading the book *A Day No Pigs Would Die* when I was in elementary school. I cried for days. The idea that a human could kill and eat pigs never made sense to me.

**Q** What do you love about Mercy For Animals?

Mercy For Animals approaches animal advocacy from a place of action, compassion, and education. It's always comforting to be part of a larger community and well-structured organization that serves as a voice for the voiceless.

**Q** What is most encouraging about the shift toward plant-based eating in Hollywood?

It's very encouraging to read the word "plant-based" next to some of the greatest athletes and artists—like Novak Djokovic, Lewis Hamilton, Billie Eilish,

and Joaquin Phoenix. They have significant influence and are leading by example.

It fills me with hope.

**Q** Where would you like the animal protection movement to go in the next five years?

For the sake of animals and the environment—and to prevent a future pandemic—I would like to see laws put into place that protect farmed animals, a society that normalizes not eating meat, and ultimately, the end of factory farms.



Stay up to date with Paul:



@paulwesley



@paulwesley





MERCY FOR  
ANIMALS

8033 Sunset Blvd, Ste 864 • Los Angeles, CA 90046

Postage required unless mailed by Mercy For Animals

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
DENVER, CO  
PERMIT NO. 5377

THURSDAY,  
JUNE 10, 2021



MERCY FOR  
ANIMALS

Hope Gala

PRESENTED BY  
ANDY NAHAS  
THE PROSPECT FUND | ASPCA

MFAGala.com



AWARDEE  
PINKY COLE



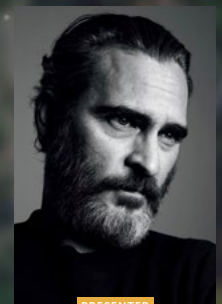
AWARDEE  
MIYOKO SCHINNER



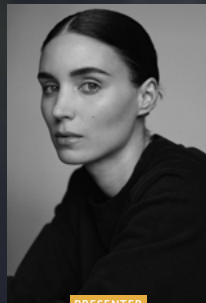
HOST  
TABITHA BROWN



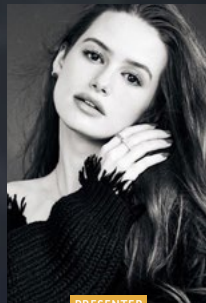
AWARDEE  
JANE GOODALL, PHD, DBE



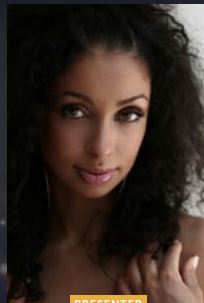
PRESENTER  
JOAQUIN PHOENIX



PRESENTER  
ROONEY MARA



PRESENTER  
MADELAINE PETSCH



PRESENTER  
MYA



PERFORMER  
JOHNNY MANUEL



PERFORMERS  
JADE NOVAH AND  
DEVIN JOHNSON

