

## Much Ado About What I Chew

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Throughout my life, I have gone through many dilemmas with what I consume. Let's start at the beginning, so you can understand where I am coming from. When I was a child, the only food I would eat was beans. After my mom would prepare a meal she was working on all day, I would say, "Can I just have beans?". Being the wonderful mother she is, she would always heat up a separate meal of beans for me. Since beans are full of nutrition and protein my parents did not mind this diet. As I grew older though, I began to expand my meals and started eating new things. Yet, I wouldn't eat meat because I was very attached to animals at the time to the point where I created a "mouse hospital", for every mouse that my cats would harass. I would cry everytime my brother or dad would kill an animal, but in consideration, I was around six or eleven years old at the time. Anyways, my dad would try to explain to me that what they kill is not just for fun, but it provides meat for our family. Even then I wouldn't eat meat, until one breakfast my dad suspiciously said, "Here try this." It was bacon, which at the time, I did not know it was a source of meat, but I loved it. From there on, I came to the realization that the meat my family supplies is a lot healthier and the animals they killed lived outside as they should be, not stuffed in a warehouse together.

Have you ever been exposed to the scene of pigs, cows, and chickens in factory farming? If not, you should check into it because it could possibly change your food ethic. What I mean is, that the way we treat animals in large manufactured business is atrocious. All of these animals are crammed into small spaces in a warehouse, living in their own faeces, with a minimal supply of fresh air. As you can imagine with these living conditions, some of the animals become very sick and have diseases. In order to fix this problem, the workers put chemicals and drugs into the animals. Also, the animals are given hormones to increase their growth, so the industries have a faster process. Another thing is the cruelty towards the animals from the workers is inhumane. The first time I saw a video about factory farming, I cried, because I could not believe this is what animals are going through to put food on the table.

Not only are large manufactured business cruel to animals, but it's having an effect on the world's health too. With the amounts of fertilizers and faeces from the animals, it's adding to the pollution we already have. The faeces and chemicals are sinking into the soil, which will eventually make its way to water sources. This creates acid rain, which is another form of pollution. Food miles is another huge contribution to the pollution because, on the daily, loads of trucks are travelling to different businesses to provide them with supplies.

This is why I think having a connection with your food is very important. Not just because I care about animals and the world, but because I believe knowing where your food comes makes it taste so much better. When I eat the meat that my family killed and butchered or the vegetables and fruits that my family grew in our garden, I don't feel guilty. I don't think about how sad the animals lives were to provide meat, dairy, eggs, etc, or how many miles were travelled. I think about how the chickens and elk lived a happy and healthy life before they were sacrificed for us. Especially with growing your own food, you have a strong relationship

because you spend so much of your work and time for caring for these plants. For me, it makes me appreciate the food more and happier knowing where it came from.

It's sad to say that a lot of Americans don't have this connection with their food though because they think buying from manufacturer business is harmless and normal. This is because Americans are constantly surrounded by advertisements about what to eat. These advertisements are not showing the truth about factory farming, but are showing how appetizing their meal is and why we should purchase it. They're convincing, it's hard to say no to their tasty looking items. This is how most Americans are raised and that's why diabetes is such a huge issue in our country. Fast food is not healthy for you, it's fuel. It's hard to switch to a locally sustainable lifestyle though because in some places there is not a lot of opportunities to. Every time I eat out, I cheat my food ethics, because most businesses get their supplies from large manufacturing businesses. So, for someone to quit fully from buying from manufacturer business would have to sacrifice a lot of their food options. This is why I think communities should make a worldwide change to the system because it would save millions of food miles and people would have more of a connection with their food.