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Some thoughts on

Veganuary

By Jayne Duveen

It is the month of Veganuary and on the one hand I applaud and respect vegans for raising the awareness of the damages caused by mass food production, on the other I feel proud to be a part of a team that rears and butchers beef and lamb. Proud because we are farmers that have rebelled against the modernised farming industry and fought hard to remain loyal to farming that puts the well being of our animals before “economies of scale”.

Animals at Jacob’s Ladder do what animals naturally like to do. They go out to pasture for most of the year (the cattle only come into barns when the land becomes very wet and can be damaged by being poached by their hooves). The sheep are interfered with as little as possible and lamb in the spring when sheep naturally like to lamb.

The breeds of animals are hardy and native. There is little or no stress and there is no need for the animals to be routinely wormed or vaccinated.

The numbers are small, just 32 beef animals and 60 sheep. Not the numbers that you hear being boasted about in the farming press. The latest shocking news being that China has begun work on the construction of a 100,000 cow dairy unit to supply the Russian market with milk and cheese.

Another reason to be proud is that we produce all of our own feed from the farm. We do not import grain from half way across the country or even the world, keeping food miles to an absolute minimum.

Our beef and lamb is grass-fed only.

Research shows that meat from cattle fed on a grass only is good for our health. It contains low cholesterol-elavating saturated fats and high levels of heart-healthy good fats like Omega-3.

CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid) is also high in grass-fed beef. CLA is a type of fat that is thought to be related to reduce rates of heart disease and also potentially lowering cancer risks. It’s also helpful in maintaining lean body mass.



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What other nutrients are found in grass fed beef?

It's rich in precursors of vitamins A and E, nutrients that are integral to the immune system and used in maintaining healthy skin and eyes.

There are plenty of antioxidants to take advantage of too. Grass-fed meat is packed with carotenoids such as beta-carotene which are sourced from the pigments in the greens that the animals eat. Plants are masters of creating antioxidants, and when the cows eat these plants, the nutrients accumulate in their fat.

Not only should we be grateful for the health that the Jacob's Ladder meat provides us, these magnificent animals also play an important role on the farm and to our environment.

There is increasing research that says that grazing animals actually reverses climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity – resulting in both carbon drawdown and improving the water cycle. For anyone wishing to learn more about the vital role that animals can play in helping reverse climate change I would suggest watching [Allan Savory's Ted Talk](#)

We also mustn't forget how important the cow is to a biodynamic farm.

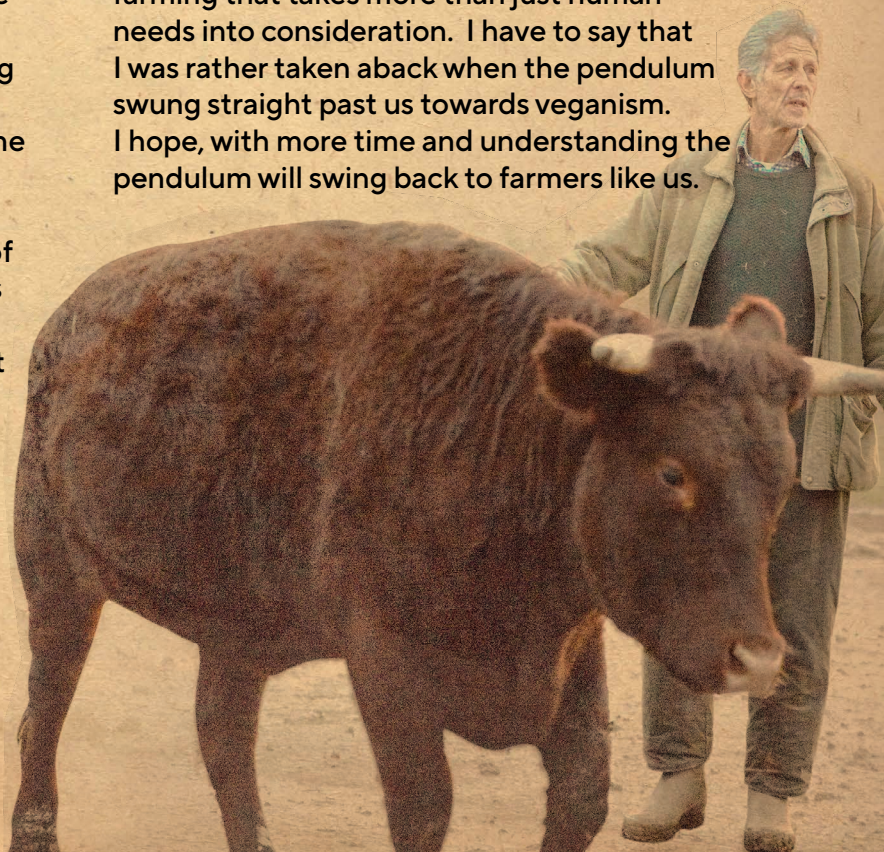
The most difficult and challenging part of our role as husbandmen of our animals is sending them to the abattoir. This is not something that is done lightly or without care and thought. Having tended to the animals for many years it is always a sad day when it is time for an animal to leave the farm for slaughter.

"WE FEEL A CONNECTION WITH THE LAND, THE ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT"

As biodynamic farmers we immerse ourselves in the daily life of the farm and see it as a living organism. We feel a connection with the land, the animals and the environment. After a period of time we see and understand that life and death is taking place all around us all of the time.

We feel blessed that we take part in that natural process. We rejoice at the birth of newborn, we take care of the land and the animals with respect and humility whilst they are alive and we are naturally sad when it is time for them to die. We see this as a necessary part of a process and we are grateful for all that the animal gives us whilst being on the earth.

For years I have waited for the pendulum to swing from industrialised farming back to farming that takes more than just human needs into consideration. I have to say that I was rather taken aback when the pendulum swung straight past us towards veganism. I hope, with more time and understanding the pendulum will swing back to farmers like us.



Jacob's Ladder