

A New Era For Sows In Tasmania

On June 10th 2010 Minister Bryan Green announced that Tasmania will end use of sow stalls by 2017. This created excitement and much celebrating among many animal-friendly people all over Australia. It was celebrated as something of a historic moment, at last promising a change from the use of cruel sow stalls. Seven years from now Tasmanian sows will not be confined in cramped steel and concrete stalls. The question is: Will this change make a significant difference to the life of farmed pigs?

Sow stalls (also called gestation crates) prohibit almost every sense of normal behaviour in pigs. They allow no way for the sow to turn around, actually permitting her almost no movement at all. Standing, and lying awkwardly, in her own faeces and urine are the only two basic options. There is no natural ground to sniff at, to roll on, to dig up, to bathe in. There is no natural forage to munch on, to gnaw at, to chew up. There is no clean air, no cooling breeze, no sunlight, no fresh water. Nothing but stench and the same processed rations day in day out. This really is not much of a life. Actually it is no life at all. It is just a case of waiting for the day it all ends.

What is to take the place of sow stalls no-one really knows. Presumably most sows will still be housed indoors, though in pens of around four or more sows. Some of the same issues still remain. These farmed pigs will still be living on concrete floors, and be deprived of natural forage, fresh air and sunlight. They will still live a relatively short

life, about 3-5 years for a breeding sow, and 4-6 months for a typical 'grower' pig. A wild pig may live 25 years.

Even without the stalls, pig farming is a death sentence for pigs, some sooner, some later. There is one sure way to stop pig farming entirely, and that is to stop eating them. In fact you can help end cruelty to all farmed animals by eating a fully plant-based diet. It is simple to do and takes no more effort. The benefits are many. No more will farmed animals be made to suffer and die for your dinner. No more will the planet suffer under the burden of all those non-human animals you used to eat. No more will your health suffer due to the chronic diseases brought about from consuming animal products.



2017 is a long way off for pigs currently being intensively farmed. There is certainly no comfort for those whose death sentence has already been delivered, and who currently 'live' in confinement. There is also no rejoicing for the 5 million young pigs killed each year in Australia to be eaten by humans. In seven years 35 million pigs could be dead to satisfy human demands. While a ban on sow stalls is a significant step, there is much more to be done and you can be a part of that. Even if you have made the change towards a vegetarian diet, you still need to talk to your friends and family and convince them to do the same. Our website has more information, or you can phone or email us for advice.

Coordinator's Corner

Chris Simcox

AACT has had a fairly busy few months since the last newsletter. We take an active interest in the well-being of all non-human animals and this proves to be a somewhat daunting task at times. With so many forms of exploitation, in so many industries, pursuits and recreations it can be difficult to know where to assign time and energy. AACT is run entirely by volunteers, and their time is given freely and graciously to help our non-human friends, but there are limits. We are always keen to see more people taking an AACTive part in this organisation. Consider what spare time you have and talk to us about ways you may be able to help us, and the animals, just a little more.

Due to the generous assistance of our sponsors we are able to make public some of the forms of abuse meted out daily on thousands of animals in Tasmania. We have a long-running program that has seen our 'Ban Factory Farming' billboard feature in a number of prominent locations around Tasmania. It currently sits boldly beside the Midlands Highway at Devon Hills in the north of the state, reminding passers-by that animal cruelty is an everyday occurrence. We hope to continue our public advertising and welcome any contributions to support our modest advertising budget.

As you can see from our cover story there has been some progress for Tasmanian pigs, at least in the foreseeable future. On the surface this appear to be big step in the right direction, but in reality it is just a tiny one. Firstly, it is still seven years away, so the same suffering will continue for quite some time. Secondly, it is only of benefit to some pigs (sows on intensive farms) and it is only a part of their overall suffering. AACT would like to

see and end to animal cruelty in all its forms. This can be achieved on an individual level by adopting a cruelty-free lifestyle. If you are not sure where to start, ask us how.

We have continued to campaign for an end to recreational killing of wildlife (see the individual campaign reports on native ducks, Brown Quail, and Short-tailed Shearwaters). We spoke out against Brushtail Possum vilification and made a formal submission against the proposal for commercial slaughter and export (see separate report).

Ongoing is our involvement with the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program, to ensure that recovery plans keep the devils' best interests at heart. We are also having input into the review of regulations for the importation of exotic animals into Tasmania.

Coming up very soon is our annual Tin Shake, followed in August by our Quiz Night. October 2 is the Rally for the Animals for which we welcome any offers of assistance from musician, stall holders, volunteers. See 'Upcoming Event' for full details.

On a final note, if you would like to make a bequest to AACT we would welcome this most gratefully. A bequest can be for any amount, and is a way to see that your support for non-human animals continues well into the future.

We hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of our informative newsletter. While you read, give some thought to how you can make a difference for non-human animals every day.

Upcoming Events

Annual AACT Tin Shake: 30 July at locations around the state. Make this the date you spare an hour or two of your time to help AACT raise much needed funds to continue to it vital work for all non-human animals. Call or email now to register.

AACT Quiz Night: 7pm 19 August. This is a call to all budding quiz queens and trivia champions to test their knowledge against other contestants. Book your table soon to avoid disappointment.

Rally for the Animals: 2 October, Parliament Lawns, Hobart. This is AACT's premiere event of the year, coinciding with World Animal Day, at which we raise a ruckus for the animals. Speakers, stalls and music. Contact us if you would like to help in some way as we can always use volunteers before the event and on the day.

2010 Sustainable Living Expo: 6 & 7 November, Princes Wharf - Shed No. 1, Hobart Waterfront. AACT will feature with a stall at this event. Volunteers are needed to operate the stall.



Salamanca Market Stall

AACT continues its presence at the Greens Salamanca Market stall, raising awareness of animal cruelty issues and promoting humane living. Stall volunteers are pleased to report that the last couple of months has seen an increased interest in the plight of intensively farmed animals and native animals. This can be attributed to the decision to ban sow stalls in Tasmania, the proposal to resurrect a Brushtail Possum export market, as well as recent animal cruelty prosecutions.

Since our last newsletter, Sea Shepherd Society has joined the stall roster, so AACT has been present at the stall every third Saturday for the past couple of months. We are very pleased for the third rostered group, Save Ralphs Bay, whose staunch activists have recently achieved their final win against the monstrous proposal to build a canal development at Lauderdale. Their rostered spot on the stall will be occupied in the future by Vegetarian Tasmania.

AACT's presence at Salamanca can only continue if we have enough volunteers. If you are able to help us out for a half day on a regular basis (a three hour shift) this would be *greatly appreciated*.

AACT at other community events:

AACT continued its tradition of being a part of the RSPCA 'Million Paws Walk' on May 16. Recently we had a successful outing for the TreadLightly EnviroFest on June 7 at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

Updates on AACT's current campaigns:

1. *Exposing the profound cruelty and deprivation which is factory farming:*

We have had the AACT awareness raising billboard, 'This is the face of factory farming' displayed again last month at the Devon Hills site on the Midlands highway.

2. *Raising awareness of the war against wildlife in Tasmania:*

A submission from AACT was compiled and forwarded in April to the Commonwealth Environment Dept, outlining AACT's many objections on severe animal cruelty and environmental grounds, to the proposed reopening of the possum abattoir. Please refer to separate

newsletter reports on this and on the 'recreational' slaughter of native ducks, brown quail and Short tailed Shearwater chicks.

3. *Awareness raising of other animal welfare issues:*

The plight of 'laboratory' animals has been presented to the public in recent months at AACT stalls at the 'Million Paws Walk', at TreadLightly and at the AACT Salamanca Market stalls.

Animal experimentation has also been highlighted in the form of a beautifully illustrated children's book, gently introducing children to this subject, written and illustrated by Kathleen McLaren and published by Humane Research Australia (see the review of Kathleen's book in this newsletter).

Background leaflets outlining the cruelty inflicted in animal experimentation and outlining humane alternatives to animal testing are also available on AACT stalls. Kathleen has written an article about animal testing for this newsletter.

Community/ Government Liaison:

AACT has a representative on the Save the Tasmanian Devil Recovery Program Stakeholder Reference Group, whose input along with other Stakeholder organisations, has resulted in amendments being included in the Draft Tasmanian Devil Recovery Plan, the final form of which will be available in the future for submissions during a public consultation period.

Coming Events

See previous page for details of what is coming up. We will also send out email alerts for upcoming events. We ask members to refer to the calendar of events on the website, as other actions may arise without much notice, in response to media reports or new animal rights / welfare issues coming to light.

With the support of members, AACT looks forward to advocating on behalf of and furthering the humane and respectful treatment of all animals.

We always welcome input and participation from our members in AACTivities and this is especially important as we plan future events. If you would like to volunteer on our stall for any event, please contact AACT on 0408 970 359.

Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania Inc is a not-for-profit organisation based in Hobart, Tasmania. Our aim is to eliminate all exploitation of and cruelty to all animals within our state and beyond. We strive to facilitate change through awareness raising, liaising with government and industry and non-violent action.

The Plight of the Brushtail Possums

Brushtail Possums are being targeted as part of a move to recreate a commercial business out of selling their flesh and fur to countries like China. Recently there was opportunity to make comment on the *Draft Management Plan for the Commercial Harvest and Export of the Common Brushtail Possum (Trichosurus vulpecula)* in Tasmania via the federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. AACT put in a detailed submission opposing the plan. If approved, the plan will allow the international export of Brushtail Possum products, such as skins and carcasses.

The commercial quota is expected to be around 100,000 possums per annum. The proposal is being made by Lenah Game and Gourmet who are attempting to resurrect the cruel possum abattoir at Rocherlea.

A commercial export industry previously existed as recently as 2004. At the time it was operating there was a large public outcry about the cruelty involved, particularly the way they were being slaughtered. A story was featured on the 7.30 report in which the abattoir footage was shown. You can see some of this footage in a video that can be viewed at either:

<http://www.engagemedia.org/Members/HuonEnviroCentre/videos/possumdeath.wmv/view>

or

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnGMN1sOtK0>

Commercial killing is not the only problem. Brushtail Possums are one of the most maligned of native species in Tasmania. They are killed in the thousands by intolerant farmers and ignorant people across the state. Much of the problem is a lack of understanding, and an unwillingness to change old habits.

They are accused of destruction of all manner of vegetative species from fruit trees to ornamental plants to vegetable gardens. While on cursory observation this may appear to be true, the real story is far more complex.

The first thing humans need to realise is that they

entered this landscape some two centuries ago and changed it substantially to suit themselves. They gave little or no consideration for how the indigenous inhabitants wished things to be. Instead they went ahead clearing native forests, creating pasture, and planting exotic food species. Many native species were disadvantaged and decreased in numbers or disappeared entirely. Some species such as Brushtail Possums were able to take advantage of an opportunity. The opportunity came in the form of much readily available food. Therein lay the problem.



Photo: Megan Earl

Any species will proliferate when the conditions are right. An ample supply of suitable food and appropriate nesting are among the key considerations. Possums are opportunistic and will utilise much of what humans grow and build for themselves. This is where the conflict occurs, and it is also where the solution is to be found.

The first rule in reducing possum impacts is to reduce the food supply, or reduce access to food. Providing alternative accommodation

in nesting boxes is also a solution to the problem of a possum in the roof. While it can take a bit of effort, it can also be seen as an interesting challenge. Either way it is the only real long term solution.

Go to our website for more information: www.aact.org.au/possum.htm and also follow the link to living peacefully with possums http://www.aact.org.au/possum_harmony.htm. Join over 850 other people on our Facebook page (see link on possum page above) and spread the word to your friends. Letters to the federal government are still encouraged while the decision is being made as to whether or not to approve the commercial plan.

Chris Simcox

Discovered an injured or orphaned native animal?

Call 6233-6556

(all hours)

Ban Duck Shooting – Campaign Update

AACT is strongly opposed to duck shooting and continues the campaign to bring it to an end. With a State election imminent as the season approached in early March it was difficult to get any media attention. The media were focussed on the upcoming election and the issues seen as most important to that process. We drew some attention when we chalked messages on the streets of Hobart in late February, and also when the season started on March 6.

One thing has changed for duck shooting in Tasmania in that David Llewellyn exits as the Minister and Bryan Green now takes his place. This is no consolation for those who remember Mr Green is a shooter. We can only hope that he has mended his ways, though only time will tell.

The shooting season closed for 2010 on June 6th. We kept watch on the wetlands during the three month open season but saw little shooting except on opening weekend. Shooters claims of 'bagging' 35,000 or so native ducks in a season seem very dubious with the apparent absence of shooters during much of that time. We remain

sceptical about the reported take figures

To recognise the end of another killing season AACT handed a 3000 signature petition to Greens MP Cassie O'Connor to show the level of public support for a ban on duck shooting. Ms O'Connor will present the petition in Parliament to open debate on the issue. We await that outcome. We also recently wrote to every Member of Parliament to ask for their support for a ban on duck shooting.

Please write to your local member, and Mr Green, and express your wish to see duck shooting brought to an end now, along with all forms of animal cruelty. With a number of new members in Parliament it is timely to let them know what issues matter to you. Send letters to the daily papers too. Sign up at any time to help with this campaign, including the hands on duck rescue on the wetlands. For more info check the website: www.aact.org.au/ducks.htm; email nativeducks@yahoo.com.au; or call 0408 970 359.

AACT decisively for ducks!
Chris Simcox

Stop Shearwater Slaughter

AACT continues to condemn the annual Short-tailed Shearwater slaughter in Tasmania that happens in April each year. There is a two week recreational season and a four week commercial season. About 65,000 are killed recreationally, and up to 200,000 killed commercially.

There were several news stories in the early part of the recreational season. Via the media we drew some attention to the cruelty of shearwater killing, as did the RSPCA, and repeated the call to ban it. The media also reported illegal killing that was discovered and prosecuted by wildlife rangers. Every year there are a number of offenders in the published list from the Department. It shows that the laws are useless, and that violence and brutality knows no bounds.

Short-tailed shearwaters are amazing migratory birds that fly a 30,000 kilometre round trip every year. Many arrive on the coastline of southern Australia exhausted prior to the start of the breeding season. They raise their young and then depart before the chicks are able to fly. The young will then make the long journey north without guidance from their parents, if they manage to escape the brutal chick killers.

Murdering shearwater chicks is just another exploitative abuse of native animals. Write to Minister Mr Bryan Green and tell him to put an end to the cruel practice of chick killing. Write a letter to your local newspaper in support of full protection for short-tailed shearwaters and to condemn the mindless slaughter. Should you wish to know more, visit our website, or contact us.

Chris Simcox

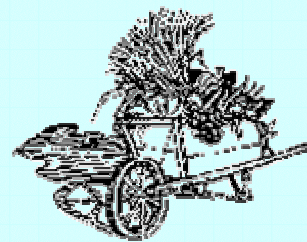
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Ban Quail Shooting

AACT once again took up the fight for the quail in 2010. We spoke out against the senseless cruelty that is quail shooting before the season started at the beginning of May. This attracted some media attention but as usual it was difficult to arouse interest in something that goes largely unseen.

Each year in Tasmania there are about 5000 of these diminutive native birds killed by people (usually men) wielding shotguns and calling themselves 'hunters'. All they do is walk around a paddock or field, using their dogs to flush out the unsuspecting quail, and blast at them with a spray of lead pellets.

Shooting small defenceless native birds is claimed by some to be part of a tradition in Tasmania. Any 'tradition' that involves violence and death is well overdue for being relegated to history. All native wildlife should be fully protected in Tasmania, not protected for eleven months of the year, and shot to pieces during the twelfth month.

Quail shooting sits along side duck shooting as something many people would see stopped tomorrow. Other states have already ended recreational quail and duck shooting and that time is right for the same to happen in Tasmania. With your help we can achieve this.

Raise your voice against all forms of oppressive and exploitative treatment of native animals, of which quail shooting is just one form. Contact the Minister Mr Bryan Green and tell him of your disgust that the government supports shooting native quail. Tell him that it is cruel and that you want it stopped, now. Write a letter to your local newspaper in support of full protection of brown quail and to condemn the mindless slaughter. Should you wish to know more, email nativeducks@yahoo.com.au or ring AACT on 0408 970 359.

Act quickly for the quail!
Chris Simcox

Elephants in Zoos

The urban zoos of the last century were a form of cheap entertainment for humans, at the expense of the numerous "exotic" animals confined in inadequate, barren cages. Who can forget the last known photo of the forlorn Tasmanian Tiger, as he paced up and down in his pen at the Beaumaris Zoo, on the Domain in Hobart?

Although many zoos have introduced breeding programmes to boost the number of endangered species, the infants born in zoos can never be returned to the wild. In a recent interview with the Weekend Australian magazine in 2010 Peter Singer stated, "The best zoos do play a role in educating the public about the importance of conservation, but it is always a mixed message because at the same time they tell the public that it is okay to keep animals in captivity, so we can enjoy looking at them.

What is the point of preserving animals if they are having miserable lives?"

Perhaps of all the exotic animals, the elephant appears to fare the worst in an urban/city zoo situation, and it is for this reason that public opinion has changed about keeping these intelligent animals in captivity. Organizations around the world, such as In Defence of Animals (IDA,) recently held an International Day of Action on the 19th June 2010, to inform people of the elephant's plight in zoos.

Nearly all elephants are captured from the wild and even though the number of these animals is falling, zoos still appear to capture more. Research has shown that elephants born in zoos have a shorter life span than those born in the wild. Zoos it seems, haven't contributed to the conservation of Asian or African elephants, as there is no evidence that artificial insemination methods (used in zoos), have improved birth rates of these types of elephants. More over, elephants born in captivity have high

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still births and infant mortality. When born in captivity, elephants are unable to return to their normal home ranges because they have none of the survival skills which would have normally been taught by their own kind in their original habitat.

The existing population of captive elephants worldwide isn't self sustaining, rather zoo elephants are reliant on the continual capture of wild animals to replenish numbers in captivity. Zoos continue to trade these animals from one zoo to another to replace animals which have died. It is for this reason that the birth of any animal at a zoo becomes a constant "crowd pleaser", bringing in vast amounts of revenue to a particular zoo. For example, the birth of an Asian elephant at Taronga Zoo which was nick-named "Mr Shuffles" in 2010.

Elephants have complex social structures, roaming in groups of up to 58 animals. Female elephants exhibit the strongest social bonding staying in groups of up to 20 female members. These elephants develop life long bonds with each other-witnessing the birth of an infant (or calf), and mourning the death of older members. It has been found through the study of these animals, that they can display not only physical symptoms when taken from their family groups to be housed in zoos; but serious "emotional starvation" which can result in premature death. Psychological stress can also result from lack of space to roam (elephants can roam 9km per day), boredom, and the breakdown of family groups, which is often displayed by constant head rocking from side to side and pacing.

Frequently, elephants have serious health problems such as arthritis which is largely due to lack of exercise and space. Problems can occur with changes in climate, and the continual confinement on hard surfaces which cause

problems with their feet.

Usually elephants only live with a few animals of their kind, and in some cases one other elephant in an urban/city zoo situation. Helen McKenna once said "Freedom is a precious concept, and wild animals suffer physically and mentally from the lack of freedom captivity imposes". Some people can agree that zoos are educational, however most people only spend a relatively short time looking at each animal, so isn't it better for the well being of wild herd animals such as elephants, to educate children through the vast range of wildlife videos, books and TV wildlife programmes on offer?



Image courtesy Last Chance for Animals

As the public has become more educated about zoos over the past decade, a debate has grown world wide about the ethics of keeping complex animals such as elephants confined in zoos. Keeping elephants confined in captive zoo settings is never beneficial, however knowing this, zoos are now allowing elephants to be rehomed in large sanctuaries

which can provide an environment for these animals which better suits their needs. Even though elephants are still in a captive environment, it seems sanctuaries can provide a more ethical way to provide alternative placement for these animals.

Zoos present visitors with a distorted view of wildlife. All species of animals living in zoos suffer greatly, through lack of space, exercise, mental stimulation and association with animals of their own kind. Frequently animals display neurotic behaviour or "zoochosis" which results in depressed and sick animals. Should we still allow animals to live in confined, unnatural conditions in order for us to be "entertained"?

Lin Ashton

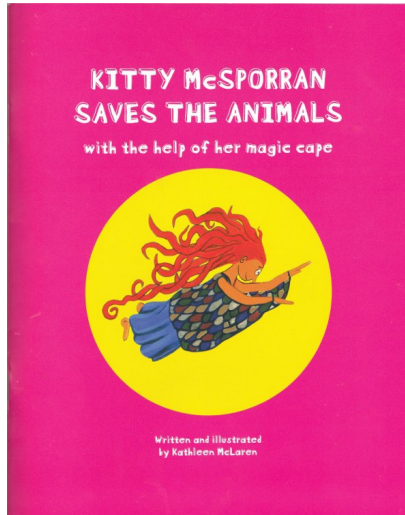
2010 AACT Tin Shake

30th July - At locations across Tasmania

We need your help to collect important funds to maintain a voice, and provide ongoing advocacy, for all non-human animals in Tasmania. Put aside an hour or two to help AACT raise money for those who need us. Register today: 0408 970 359 or info@AACT.org.au

Book Review: Kitty McSporran Saves the Animals

Kitty McSporran Saves the Animals (with the help of her magic cape) was printed with the financial help of Humane Research Australia (HRA) in 2010. This book was written and illustrated by AACT member and relief teacher Kathleen McLaren who spent two years getting the book finally to the printing stage. Kathleen decided to write and illustrate her book to educate school children about animals used in research or testing. Kathleen stated "When I did decide to write a book it seemed a great way to get information out and enjoy myself at the same time". She went on to say, "Maybe I chose animal research as it is such an extreme form of abuse of power over sentient creatures who have no hope of defending themselves. It is also a very unscientific and therefore a misleading method of research. It really is dark ages stuff. Many people still accept the false notion that it is a necessary evil and so prefer to not think about or question it."



After submitting an application to Voiceless in order to receive \$10,000 for the publishing cost of 3,000 books, Kathleen received an "in kind grant" which although less than had been hoped for, the Voiceless grant did help with the numerous issues involved with the publishing of her book. Meanwhile after many months, Voiceless suggested that the original copy (which had had two significant rewrites), be edited. A Tasmanian woman Lian Tanner helped with the editing of Kitty McSporran, after which Kathleen sent the edited version to Humane Research Australia to see if they may be interested in funding publication of the book. After two years, Kitty McSporran Saves the

Animals (with the help of her magic cape) was ready to educate and delight school children in each school library across Australia!

The book has a brightly coloured cover and is in picture book format with a font size which makes reading easy for children whether by themselves or in groups. The story centres on Kitty who is a young scientist working at the Dark Ages Research Corporation where animals are used for medical research and the testing of products. Although Kitty enjoys her job, she begins to question the real use of the animals, when five monkeys are taken away.

Kitty has always wanted to help humanity through the work she does, but she begins to wonder why animals are used in research for humans. Although this book brings up ethical questions, the book is beautifully illustrated in bold, bright colours which in no way makes the subject matter either depressing or gory. The text is written in a simple manner and the mixture of reality and imaginative content, creates a balance of information which is both educational and fun.

The use of Kitty's magic cape makes the story exciting and inspiring, resulting in a happy outcome for both animals and humans. The use of words which may not have been in children's vocabulary e.g. laboratories, experiments and scientists; can encourage children to interact with teachers and parents to discuss the issue of animal experiments. This book also encourages thought about ethics which stimulates questioning, which before hand may not have been deemed suitable for children. However, the reading of this book is suitable for eight year olds, up to 100 year olds.

This book is a valuable addition for teachers in primary or high school, in order to present modern day ethical issues. AACT is extremely proud of Kathleen's achievements, and should you wish to obtain a copy of this wonderful book please contact us to obtain details.

Lin Ashton

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Cruelty Free Recipe

Spanakopita

Forget the ricotta cheese, and try this tasty and nutritious tofu version.

Ingredients

1 bunch of silverbeet or spinach, washed and chopped
375g block of firm tofu, drained
1 onion, chopped
1/3 cup vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed (or 1tsp minced garlic)
1tbs vegetable stock powder
1/4 tsp nutmeg
1 tbs soy sauce
2 tbs lemon juice
Pepper to taste
1tsp salt
1/2 tbs soymilk for glazing
Optional—sesame seeds
2-3 sheets of puff pastry or rice paper

Method

Pre-thaw pastry sheets. Preheat oven to 190°C. Fry onion and garlic in the oil until softened. Add silverbeet or spinach and sauté for 5 minutes. Add nutmeg and pepper, mix well and remove from heat. Put all remaining ingredients (for “ricotta”) in food processor (or use a masher) and blend until smooth. Add the ricotta to the spinach mixture, mix well.

Grease 24x20 cm baking dish and line with pastry, leaving some overlap over the edge. Place mixture in pastry case, flatten out evenly. Place rest of pastry on top of mixture, pinch and fold sides to enclose properly. (Instead you can place 3-4 alternate layers of mixture and pastry finishing with pastry). Glaze top with a little soy milk, sprinkle sesame seeds on top if desire. Bake for 35-40 minutes at 190, until pastry is browned.

The Evils of Animal Experimentation

Many of the world's atrocities have occurred because not enough people asked questions about highly questionable practices and too many people accepted the status quo. It took a few dedicated individuals to question the practice of slavery. Knowing it to be cruel, unethical and unnecessary they encouraged others to think about and question the practise. Until then, society as a whole had accepted it as a necessary part of life.

To date the cruel, unethical and unnecessary practice of animal experimentation continues. Around the world millions of animals are tortured and killed in tests for cosmetics, household products, agricultural products, weapons and pharmaceutical products. There are multimillion dollar industries involved, including animal breeding facilities, capture of wild animals, contract testing laboratories, suppliers of cages and equipment and pharmaceutical industries.

These industries claim that testing is necessary for human safety. There is ample evidence to refute this. Apart from the obvious ethical problems of continual use and abuse of millions of sentient creatures there are major questions about the reliability and validity of animal tests.

“Animal researchers continually make the unfounded claim that animal experimentation is ‘necessary’ and that ‘without it, medical progress will cease.’ The next time you hear such a claim, please remember that it is made out of self-interest, not in the public interest.”

Dr Stephen R. Kaufman, Medical Research Modernisation Committee, New York.

Animal species (including humans) differ from each other in anatomy, immunity, genetics, histology and physiology. Species react differently to various vaccines, drugs and chemicals. For example penicillin kills guinea pigs and strychnine doesn't. Aspirin kills cats, causes birth defects in rats and mice but not in humans. Morphine sedates humans but stimulates cats. Each year numerous drugs pronounced 'safe' after being tested on animals are recalled due to serious side effects in humans. The list goes on.

Because of species differences it's not possible to apply the results of animal experiments to humans with any accuracy. In the UK 82% of GP's said they were *“concerned that animal data can be misleading when applied to humans.”* (2004 Survey commissioned by Europeans for Medical Progress).

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“The very idea that one species could serve as a model for a different species ignores the basic principles of biology.”

British Medical Journal, 18th February 2002.

Vested interests, conservatism and apathy together have allowed a cruel and outdated practice to continue. Many people just don't want to know or think about animal testing due to its confronting nature. But animal suffering of such magnitude must not be tolerated. There are a number of reliable and humane research methods available such as computer modelling, clinical research, imaging techniques, epidemiological studies into the effects of environmental, emotional and mental states of health, autopsies, biopsies, in vitro cell and tissue cultures and the human placenta. Also, a great deal more could be done in prevention of illness through public health programs.

What you can do:

*Check the Choose Cruelty Free website or

preferred products list. It lists what products are not tested on animals and indicates which products are free from animal ingredients.

www.choosecrueltyfree.org.au

*Check the Humane Charities website for a list of charities and medical research institutions that don't test on animals and support them only.

www.humaneresearch.org.au Humane Charities List.

*View these websites for further information: Anti-Vivisection Society W.A. Inc.

www.avwa.com.au

Anti-Vivisection Union S.A. www.arrc.org.au

Medical Research Modernization Committee

www.mrmced.org

The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection

www.BUAV.org

Safer Medicines Trust www.safermedicines.org

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

www.peta.org

Kathleen McLaren

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 - **More than Skin Deep**
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