

## **Misguided Meatless Campaigns**

By Stewart Truelsen

Throughout the course of history there have been attempts to get people to stop eating meat. An early advocate of a meatless diet was Priscillian, the bishop of Avila. Priscillian urged followers to renounce their marriages, stop drinking wine and avoid eating meat.

The reason he is remembered at all today, however, has little to do with the ascetic lifestyle he advocated. Priscillian also was a mystic, and he has the unfortunate distinction of being the first Christian condemned to death for heresy in the year 385 AD.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a Protestant minister advocated a somewhat similar lifestyle. Sylvester Graham promoted a strict dietary regimen that he thought would eliminate impure thoughts. Graham's lectures about temperance, vegetarianism and lust were ridiculed by the media of his day, but he created something you'll find on supermarket shelves — graham crackers.

Zealots are still trying to convince the vast majority of us who eat meat to become vegetarians, with about the same degree of success as in the past. The aim is the same, but the strategy has changed. Now, these activists are trying to get at meat eaters by eliminating livestock farming. They say it contributes to global warming.

Cows are ruminant animals with multi-chambered stomachs. They produce a certain amount of methane in their normal digestive process. The same can be said of sheep, goats, deer, bison, moose and elk. All ruminant animals should go the way of gas guzzling cars, the critics imply.

According to an article in *Forbes* magazine, Stanford University biochemist Pat O. Brown, who is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences, is taking leave from genetic research in his determination to “eliminate animal farming from planet Earth.”

Brown has been a vegetarian for 20 years and became a vegan more recently. In the article he suggested livestock producers start finding alternatives to producing meat and milk, because those days will be over. “If you're a big food producer now, this is absolutely inevitable,” he said. And like Priscillian, Graham and others before him, Brown seems absolutely convinced of the correctness of his mission.

The kind of diet that he envisions for all of us got a trial run, so to speak, at the Danville Correctional Center in Illinois. Inmates now charge in a lawsuit filed in federal court that their chili-mac, sloppy joes, hot dogs and chicken patties were laced with so much vegetable protein that they became ill. Some suffered allergic reactions.

Perhaps the inmates should have taken prison cooking into account before committing crimes, but their plight does prove a point. A vegetarian diet should be a matter of personal choice, not something mandated by the government or an international climate treaty, as Brown and cohorts would like to see it. While the developing world is trying to improve people's diets with more beef, pork, lamb and poultry, the anti-meat campaigners want just the opposite for America and the rest of the developed world.

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