

VN columnist **Mat Thomas** brings the latest headlines to you.



# Too Sexy For Your Meat

One man's view on the politics of vegan sexuality.



Team  
Veg

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THAT A “NEW” subgroup has recently been added to the ever-expanding catalog of sexual identities. They’ve been dubbed “vegansexuals”—that is, vegans who only have sex with other vegans. And, big surprise, they’ve quickly become the target of ridicule from critics who are just tickled to have another lame excuse for vegan-bashing.

The term “vegansexuality” was coined last year by Annie Potts, PhD, co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Human and Animal Studies at the University of Canterbury. After conducting a nationwide survey on cruelty-free consumption, Potts found that a small number of her 157 respondents, most of them women, refused to share physical intimacy with those who eat animal products, both on ethical grounds and because they found the prospect viscerally disgusting.

“Non-vegetarian bodies,” said one female subject, “(are) literally sustained through carcasses—the murdered flesh of others.” If you really are what you eat, then the body of a meat eater is, as one vegan commentator put it, “kind of a graveyard for animals.” You don’t need to be a certified sexpert to appreciate that some vegans would be turned off by the thought of exchanging bodily secretions (like sweat, spit, scents, and ... well, you get the picture) with such walking culinary cemeteries.

Then there’s the unpleasant awareness that the person you’ve chosen to share your body with fails to reciprocate your most deeply held beliefs by continuing to eat animals, despite the suffering and death incurred at the slaughterhouse. Clearly, there are many happy interdietary relationships, but mismatched values can also be a cause of serious strain—or prevent the flowers of romance from even

budding. In the words of one vegansexual woman on the potential for connubial bliss with a meat eater, “Our worlds would just be too far apart.”

**It’s perfectly natural that at least some vegans would have a strong erotic attraction to fellow vegans over meat eaters.** “Really, there’s something awfully sexy about compassion,” wrote a blogger on [supervegan.com](#) in a humorous mock-letter to his parents in which he “comes out” as a vegansexual. “Nothing tickles my g-sprout more than seeing someone rescue an animal, protest cruelty, or fill their shopping baskets with seitan, soymilk, tofu, and veggies.” Plus, health-conscious vegans are often more physically fit than meat eaters, as adherents of the *Skinny Bitch* diet plan would undoubtedly point out.

But certainly not all vegans are jumping on the vegansexual bandwagon, most notably PETA, which avidly endorses using sex as a method of converting meat eaters to the vegan lifestyle. Some PETA veterans even claim that co-founder Ingrid Newkirk once tried to ban intra-office dating among coworkers to boost recruitment of omnivores into the vegan fold.

Yet, the reality at the PETA HQ in Norfolk, Va., doesn’t quite conform to Newkirk’s desire for an army of vegan Lysistratas. As one former PETA staffer told VN (on condition of anonymity), “The dating scene at PETA is intensely insular, almost incestuous in a way. What happens when you put all these vegan animal rights activists together in the same office working for a cause about which they feel incredibly passionate? *Of course* they wind up getting freaky with each other!”

PETA’s anti-vegansexual stance

notwithstanding, the vicious condemnation of vegansexuality in the blogosphere is an entirely different animal. While these **criticisms range from accusations of discrimination against meat eaters that insidiously compare vegansexuality to racism**, to idiotic comments about people's bodies also being made of meat (as though there is no difference between making love with another person and fornicating a dead chicken), meat eaters' offensively defensive posturing focuses far more on stereotypes of vegans themselves than on the ins and outs of vegansexuality.

This heated debate leads one to the unsettling conclusion that the general meat-eating public *still* just does *not* get who we vegans are, as Jenna Torres proclaimed on a Vegan Freak podcast. "We see death, we see tremendous cruelty, this horrible thing that's going on, and we're disgusted by it," she said. "Non-vegans just do *not* understand that perspective at all. It really demonstrates how wide that gap (between vegans and meat eaters) is."

Torres is among the many vegans who defends vegansexuality as a preference, but calls the term itself "ridiculous." As a practicing "vegansexual" for the last two years, I am inclined to agree, as it perturbs me that my particular predilection now has a name that has evoked such scornful derision. This is *my personal choice*, based on my life goals and values, and it's hard to accept that some people would be such jerks about it. I'm bothered even more that we "vegansexuals" did not get to define ourselves (as Potts seems to be non-vegan), and have yet to come up with an alternative term that doesn't sound so damn silly.

On top of all this, being vegansexual sure makes the already difficult search for love even harder. I live in San Francisco, where dating often feels more like a competitive contact sport than a congenial way of meeting a mate, and most vegan women seem perfectly willing to take on members of Team Omnivore. Yet, I persist in hoping, because the heart wants what it wants, and I know in my heart that I want to be with someone with whom I can enjoy the ineffably unique connection that only exists in the coupled soul of two deeply bonded vegan lovers. **VN**

**Mat Thomas** pens *News Beet* in every edition of *VegNews*. Read more of his writing at [animalrighter.org](http://animalrighter.org).

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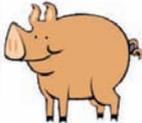
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