

My Vegan Story (An Herbivore is a Vegan, Right?)

edited by Delisa Renideo

I was just ambling around in Delisa's garden last week, munching on the remaining stalks of broccoli, kale, collards, Swiss chard and peas, thinking what a great arrangement we have.

I never decided to be vegan. I just am.

She and Charlie plant a big, organic vegetable garden and enjoy it all summer long, and when they're done with it in the fall, I come in with my young'uns and munch on the tough parts they don't want. You see, we like a lot of the same foods, but I have the advantage of having a few extra stomachs to help me digest the woody, tough parts that humans can't digest.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. While I was enjoying her garden, I overheard Delisa say to Charlie, "I don't have anyone lined up to write the story of why they're vegan for this month's newsletter." Well, that got my attention because I've had a secret desire to stand out in the crowd – to be recognized – and to see my story in print! But not wanting to look too eager, I sort of casually raised my head, looked straight at Delisa, caught her eye, and then winked at her.

Flabbergasted, Delisa understood that I wanted my story to be in the newsletter this month. She graciously offered to edit my story for misspellings and grammar,

but agreed that I could decide what I wanted to talk about, so here goes!

First of all, I never decided to be vegan. I just am. I can't quite imagine how I would chase down a rabbit, bite it in the neck to kill it, and then eat it – all warm and bloody. Yuck! The very thought of it makes me sick. I'm very happy to just meander around, taking a bite here and a bite there, sampling willows, birches, and other



shrubs. One of my very favorite foods is the buckbean growing in the shallow water at the edge of the lake behind Delisa's and Charlie's house. I just wade out there and nip the leaves off the stems, taking my time and eating until I'm full. No big chase scene, no blood, no mess.

I have to tell you something really funny. Delisa was watching me enjoying the buckbean from her kayak and could tell

Here I am, all buff at 1000 pounds, and humans don't think they will get enough protein to build their puny little muscles from plants!

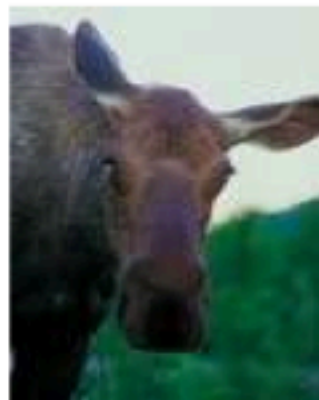
how much I relished it, so she picked a leaf and ate it. What a face she made! For some reason, she found it

unbearably bitter. I don't know why she didn't like it, but I can appreciate that she's not afraid to try new things!

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I eavesdrop on a lot of Delisa and Charlie's conversations, and I've heard her talk about how a lot of people don't know you can get enough protein from



plants. Isn't that a hoot? Here I am, all buff at 1000 pounds, and these scrawny 150 pound humans don't think they will get enough protein to build their puny little muscles from plants! But seriously, you really ought to think about how so many of the biggest animals get every single bit of their protein from plants. Can you just imagine an elephant eating a steak to get her protein?

And how about calcium? So many people think they have to drink cow's milk to build strong bones. Can't you just see me down on my knees, sucking on a cow, so I could have strong bones? I get my calcium

I get my calcium from the same place cows do – from plants – and so can you!

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One big difference between me and humans is that I have 4 stomachs. That's because I need extra help digesting the tough, woody parts of plants. Delisa and her friends only need one stomach because they eat the more tender parts of plants. And like me, they have a nice, long set of intestines to do most of their digesting. Critters that eat meat don't have long intestines like that.



So I'm really glad that Delisa and Charlie can eat the tender parts of their garden and leave the rest for me and my family. We have no trouble digesting it, and we really appreciate the great relationship we have. Wouldn't it be great if we could all learn to get along like that?