

# Vegan Prisoners Support Group

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News-sheet No:4

October 2004

Welcome to the fourth edition of our news sheet which provides prison staff with up-to-date information on catering for vegans within the prison service.

Note: Back issues of our news sheets can be found on our website [www.vpsg.info](http://www.vpsg.info)

## Butler Trust Award presented to Prison Officer

*P.O. Stuart Head of HMP Highpoint receives award for his contribution to our work on the care of vegans*

How pleased I was to receive my award at the palace, and to see at first hand the response from outside the service to the work I have been doing [and continue to do] regarding the care of vegans in prisons.

It was really great that my wife Yvette was there too. Without her input and support I would not have been able to have complete the task I had taken on to help the VPSG with their work on providing every prison with the comprehensive information on veganism they have done.

All those months I worked on this issue with Yvette and Jo-Ann at the VPSG made me realise that these two ladies deserve much praise. They both continually prodded and motivated me at the end of a hard days work to meet numerous dead lines.

I must admit I still get a buzz from people contacting me from other prisons to ask advice on the vegan problems they encounter and certainly without the knowledge I gained during this time I would not be in a position to help.

I have to admit that prior to my work with the

VPSG I often struggled catering for this minority group. So thanks to Jo-Ann and her team. I hope now the Catering Information Pack is in place that the service is now more able to help vegans when they arrive.

Stuart



### Prison Shops

Lack of equal opportunities in prison shops under the Aramark contract still exist.

**See inside for more details...**

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### New vegan hygiene products under trial at HMP Bedford and Isle of Wight prisons

**Vegan prisoners** should soon be able to perform their daily hygiene without encountering the usual obstacles and problems.

Garry Pyne has been busy sourcing suitable prison issue hygiene products which are also suitable for vegans. The following products are currently under trial:

- Forest Shave Gel
- Hair and Body Wash

A new toothpaste has already been introduced:

- Sejem Freshmint toothpaste, Product Code 513023

One of the clothes washing powders used in prison has also been found to be suitable for vegans:

- Low Lather Detergent, product code 513049. Available through the Greenham contract

Other hygiene products suitable for vegans are:

- Chilwoods Pampered Blue Ice deodorant

Note: All the above products have not been tested on animals.

Thanks Garry for all your hard work. We know it hasn't been an easy task.

# The balance of good health

The five food groups in the vegan diet are as follows:

1. Bread, cereals, beans, brown rice, oats, potatoes and pasta
2. Fruit and vegetables. A minimum of five portions a day [which should include 3 large pieces of fruit].
3. Soya Products/ Soya Milk [3 ½ litres/week Fortified Soya Milk – Provamel contains the correct amount of calcium and also other essentials such as D2, E, Riboflavin and B12]
4. Nuts/seeds, beans and pulses
5. Soya or vegetable margarine, olive oil, biscuits, puddings, crisps, chocolate, pastries, cakes, soya ice-cream. [This food group should be eaten sparingly]

It is important to include the above in the daily diet in order to ensure a balanced diet. Please refer to the laminate 'Nutritional requirements for a vegan' provided with the last newsletter, or request a further copy.

## PROTEIN in the vegan Diet *VPSG Nutritionist Reports*

Recently our Nutritional Advisor ploughed through all the diet sheet records received from our test cases. It was noticed that a large proportion of prisons are relying constantly on TVP/Soya for protein (which ideally should only be consumed approximately three times/week). This meant that other important proteins were not being used as often as they should in order to obtain a more balanced diet.

We have listed below a list of alternative proteins for consideration in the vegan option, which includes the addition of nuts/seeds. Adding more nuts would vary the protein in the vegan diet in prison as well as supplying Essential Fatty Acids [EFAs] and some of the additional vitamins/minerals that TVP lacks. Various nuts and other forms of protein are listed below:

- Nuts: walnuts, hazels, brazils, almonds, cashews
- Legumes/Pulses: peanuts, peas, beans, lentils,

Note: EFAs - the simplest way of ensuring sufficient quantities in the diet is to provide 5 walnuts/day [28g].

Both nuts and seeds can be used in nut roasts or issued with the vegan salad portion. The rest of the daily ration we recommend is provided weekly.

### **The importance of nuts and seeds in the vegan diet**

Walnuts – good source of Omega 3 and 6.

Almonds – source of magnesium, zinc, calcium, and rich in Vitamin E.

Brazils – 7 brazils/week provide sufficient selenium

Sunflower - richest seed source of vitamin E and excellent source of copper and magnesium.

Pumpkin - an excellent source of iron and zinc.

Sesame - contain zinc and magnesium as well as calcium.

## Iodine in the vegan diet

Deficiency can result in abnormal functioning of the thyroid gland.

An iodine source is essential - found in small amounts in green leafy vegetables, in larger amounts in seaweeds and kelp. If it is unrealistic to provide sufficient quantities in the diet of a strict vegan, then a vegan supplement should be provided through Healthcare in the form of two kelp tablets a week\*, The tablet should have a labelled iodine content of 150 to 250 micrograms as recommended in our Catering Information Pack issued 2003

*\*We are offering test cases these supplements free of charge to participating prisons.*

## Vegans and vegetarians do not eat fish

We feel that most Caterers are aware of the dietary requirements of vegans and the difference between the vegan and vegetarian diets. However, it has been brought to our notice that some prison menu sheets have/are offering fish items under the vegetarian option which is being prepared in the vegan/vegetarian section which could cause cross contamination of the vegan/vegetarian option and we have therefore enclosed The Vegetarian Society's card on this subject.

## Quote from Alan Tuckwood 11 August 2004

*"The Private Estate are free to use whatever suppliers they so wish, including those contracted by HMP.*

*The Private Estate are contracted to provide a service. Anything outside of the contract will mean that they have to negotiate with HMP for inclusion [if cost is incurred]. Cost should not be the singular factor, only one of many considerations, in providing acceptable and adequate meals."*

# Your questions answered

## Question: If I provide peanuts as the nut allowance is it sufficient?

**Answer:** No they are a legume, not a nut. However, they still have an important part to play in the vegan diet and are not only a good source of protein and fibre, but contain essential minerals such as copper, phosphorous and magnesium. One ounce of peanuts provides 16% of the daily need of Vitamin E.

## Question: Do the 250ml cartons of fortified soya milk contain B<sup>12</sup>, as it doesn't state so on the carton?

*Mr. Ian Jones, HMP Wakefield.*

**Answer:** No: At the moment the 250ml cartons manufactured by Provamel aren't fortified with either B<sup>12</sup>, D2, E or Riboflavin as are both the 500ml and 1 litre cartons. However, the 250ml cartons still provide the correct calcium requirement [i.e. 500ml/day provides 700mg].

NOTE: The 250ml cartons would not be suitable for prisons either not providing (or restricting) the weekly provision of fortified yeast extract because they would not be able to provide the essential 3mg/day of B<sup>12</sup> essential in the vegan diet.

## Question: Is Soya Soleil fortified with calcium or B<sup>12</sup>?

**Answer:** Although Soya Soleil is manufactured by the same company that produces Provamel, neither of their Soleil products contain any B<sup>12</sup>, but one brand does contain calcium. If this milk is issued it must be remembered that the protein in this brand is much lower than the recommended soya milk and would also not be suitable for prisons restricting the weekly provision of fortified yeast extract which is required for vegans B<sup>12</sup> intake.

## Question: Where can I purchase vegan biscuits/desserts?

*Mr. W. Sheekey, HMP Winchester*

**Answer:** DBC have several biscuits suitable for vegans ; which are:

### D. Brand List [full listing enclosed]

Main Group 130 – All the following under Code No: 116750

Minipack Biscuits:

- Bourbon creams
- Jam rings
- Oat & Wholemeal

For the more specialist items to ensure equal opportunities, i.e. soya yoghurts, vegan cheese alternatives; there are several Wholefood Suppliers [they will all forward free catalogues upon request] who include numerous vegan items in their catalogue. Details as follows:

Goodness Foods Natural Food Wholesalers  
South March, Daventry, Northants, NN11 4PH  
Tel: 01327 706611, Fax:01327 300436, e-mail  
info@goodness.co.uk, web site: www.goodness.co.uk  
\* **Minimum orders £200 local, £250 distance**

Marigold Health Foods  
102 Camley Street,, London, NW1 0PF  
Tel: 020 7388 4515, Fax 020 7388 4516  
**Minimum order £100 – Only deliver to London and South East**

Suma Wholefoods  
Lacy Way,,Lowfields Business Park, Elland HX5 9DB  
Tel: 0845 458 2291, Fax: 0845 458 2294, Web:  
www.suma.co.uk  
**Minimum order £250 inside M25 and East Anglia,  
£200 outside M25**

**Note:**The above companies have clearance lines from time to time and obviously when such items are suitable for vegans the prices would be more competitive.

## Question: Is synthetic cheese suitable for vegans?

**Answer:** We have been unable to trace any manufacturers who produce a synthetic cheese suitable for vegans. However, the following vegan cheese substitutes are available from health food stores or the above wholefood suppliers:

**Bute Island Foods** - Scheeze [in Blue Stilton, Cheddar, Cheshire, Gouda, Mozzarella Style]. 12x227g £18.50.  
**Redwood:** Cheezly [Cheddar, Gouda, Mozzarella] All now come in a melting variety 6x190g £7.50

## Question: Can you suggest any 'easy to prepare' puddings for vegans?

**Answer:** Our research shows that some prisons are already preparing imaginative desserts for their vegans; HMP Winchester bake banana cake and also make their own vegan ice-cream!

Other Suggestions [or phone us for a free copy of 'Vegan Feasts']

- rice pudding made with soya milk instead of cow's milk.
- vegan custard using soya milk instead of cow's milk.
- apple/fruit pies or crumbles [if made with one of the margarines suitable for vegans i.e. Marquee All Vegetable Margarine, Astra, Dawn and Bebo].

Ambient soya desserts are also on the market now available from Health Food Stores or Wholefood Suppliers, such as: Provamel chocolate dessert. They come in packs of four - for a pack of 6 125g pots they cost £6.26.

We are frequently contacted by Area Catering Managers, as well as Kitchen Staff in order to provide information on the vegan diet. We always help where we can. Our services are free of charge so, if we haven't answered your query in this news sheet just call us on **0208 292 8325**.

## VPSG case workers visit HMP Rye Hill

As part of our ongoing study of the care of vegan prisoners in prisons, two of our Caseworkers recently visited HMP Rye Hill to meet with one of our test cases. We were able to spend time with the prisoner and discuss first hand the menu cycles and any problems that existed with regard diet, toiletries and canteen.

Our visit was followed by a brief meeting with Stuart Jacklin, their Catering Manager. Several areas of concern were discussed. However, we did not have time to cover all the points that Mr Jacklin or ourselves felt needed to be covered. It was therefore agreed that a second visit, which will include a member of the canteen ([prison shop] staff, would be an advantage to all concerned, and this will be arranged shortly.

We felt our initial meeting was used productively and there have been many positive results since. We would like to thank Stuart Jacklin for the reception he gave us and for his contribution/input into our research on the care of this minority group in prisons.

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## Reduction of fat/salt in diets

Current publicity is constantly highlighting the health problems associated with regular consumptions of high salt and high fat in the diet. We have had several calls to the office from prison kitchens informing us that they are reviewing their menu sheets.

So in order to help, we have on offer

- 20 free copies of a 'Plant Based Nutrition' by Stephen Walsh PhD
- 50 free laminated copies of a new wall chart which shows the proportion of fruit, vegetables and protein in a healthy diet.
- 20 free copies of 'Vegan Feasts' by Rose Elliot

**All the above have been donated by The Vegan Society.** If you would like any of these offers just give us a call.

We also have a few of the following available. If you would like copies, just call us!

- Spare copies of the Catering Information Pack provided to all prisons in 2003
- Back issue of news sheets.
- Laminated copies of both the Prison Service Guidelines
- Laminated copies of the Definition of a Vegan and their Nutritional Requirements

## Prison Shops

In 2002 the then Director of the Prison Service, Mr. Martin Narey, declared that vegans should be offered equal opportunities in prison shops and in their dietary requirements by end 2002. Mr. Alan Tuckwood met the deadline given with even time to spare and continues to give help/advice in any problem areas. Unfortunately prison shops under the Aramark contract are still unable to cater adequately for vegans almost three years past the promised deadline!

Recently further research and recommendations were requested of us, which we provided by their deadline of 1.9.04. We are now informed by Glyn Jones [PAG] that the assurances by both Mr. Martin Narey and Mr. Phil Wheatley, that vegans should be offered equal opportunities, will be in place by January 2005.

**In the meantime, vegan prisoners at prison shops under the Aramark contract continue to remain disadvantaged.**