

Better
FOOD
FOUNDATION

OUR WORK IN 2019



BETTER FOOD FOUNDATION

Better Food Foundation (BFF) promotes plant-based eating and plant-forward food policies that build healthy, equitable, humane and environmentally sustainable food systems.

In this Annual Report, we highlight four of BFF's strategies, which shift individuals, institutions, and culture towards plant-based foods.

First, our signature campaign **DefaultVeg** has demonstrated such impressive results with the dozens of institutions that adopted it in 2019 that we are confident that, with proper investment, DefaultVeg has the potential to become the single most effective strategy for shifting institutional dining to plant-forward and plant-based food.

Second, we are **Growing Diverse Vegan Leadership** by supporting the capacity of vegan organizations and leaders with a focus on supporting people of color and female-led

organizations. We've provided start-up and scaling support to groundbreaking projects like Liberum in Mexico and the Vegan Soulfest in Baltimore, and we've provided assistance to phenomenal activists and scholars advancing the Black veganism movement.

Third, we are **Growing Faith-Based Vegan Outreach** by sharing financial resources, technology, and knowledge with faith leaders who are sparking a plant-based movement within Christian and Jewish communities.

Finally, we are **Transforming Academia** to bring veganism and animal protection into the forefront of new teaching and research in the humanities and social sciences to impact generations of students and educators. We are also leveraging the academy's credibility to generate media stories, for example on humane washing.

These strategies combine to make BFF a locus for producing new forms of vegan advocacy and cultivating an ecosystem of groups and individuals building a better food system for humans and animals.

DefaultVeg Makes Plant-Forward and Plant-Based Meals the New Normal

28 institutions and counting have formally instituted DefaultVeg even before the campaign has begun systematic outreach! **That’s 28 institutions who are visionary enough to say publicly that plant-based is the new normal!**

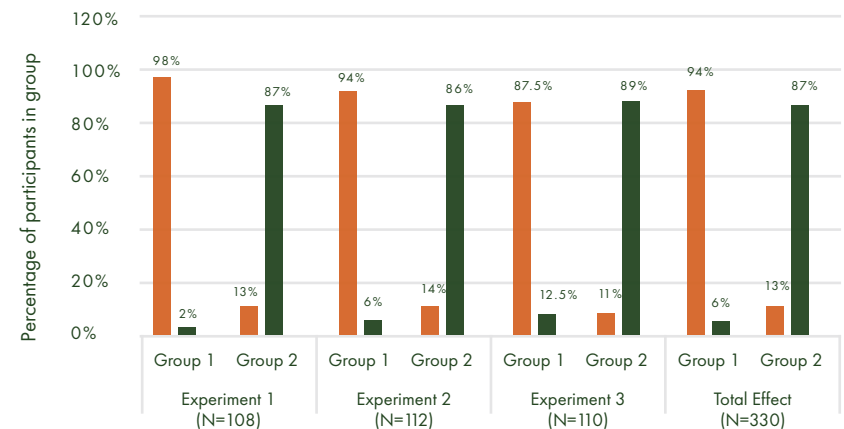
DefaultVeg is a new dining concept and campaign managed by BFF in cooperation with UK-based partners and made available to a wide range of advocacy groups. DefaultVeg is based on behavioral science that has already helped universities and other institutions radically lower animal product consumption—without taking away diners’ choices. By using behavioral nudges—like switching the default meal served at a conference from meat to plant-based, or modifying sequence of foods in a buffet—DefaultVeg not only succeeds in getting people to eat less meat, dairy, and eggs, it also **normalizes plant-based meals.**

Multiple studies have confirmed that using behavioral nudges like switching defaults results in dramatically greater reductions in animal product consumption than other kinds of meat-reduction strategies.

Harvard’s School of Public Health saw vegan meals increase from 30% to 70% when they switched the default at an annual conference.¹

Researchers in Denmark saw vegetarian meals increase, on average, from 6% to 87% at three conferences when the default was switched to vegetarian.²

LUNCH CHOICE (STANDARD VS. VEGETARIAN) AT THREE CONFERENCES



1. Adam Meier, “Workshop on Behavioral Insights and Health,” Harvard School of Public Health, 2016.
2. Pelle G. Hansen, Mathilde Schilling, and Mia S. Malthesen, “Nudging healthy and sustainable food choices: three randomized controlled field experiments using a vegetarian lunch-default as a normative signal,” *Journal of Public Health*, November 30, 2019, 1-6, doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdz154.

DefaultVeg (Almost) at COP25, Sights Set on COP26

One of the first hopes of the DefaultVeg team was to persuade the 2019 United Nations Global Climate Summit (COP 25), widely regarded as the most influential ecological conference in the world, to go DefaultVeg. As part of their commitment to climate action, conference organizers consulted with BFF, agreed to a proposal we helped write in which a DefaultVeg conference menu was the top recommendation, and included DefaultVeg in COP 25's catering bids. However, political unrest resulted in the conference's venue change from Chile to Spain just weeks before the event, and DefaultVeg was not fully integrated at the new site, though the conference was significantly more plant-forward than previous COP conferences. We have begun to strategize for a DefaultVeg COP 26 in November 2020 in the UK.

DefaultVeg is an alternative to traditional reduction campaigns and practices like “Meatless Mondays”. Reduction-oriented approaches do real good, but they silently assert that animal products are normal, that meat is supposed to be at the center of our plates, and that we need only “reduce.” Reduction campaigns also may unintentionally associate veg meals with austerity or deprivation.

Instead, DefaultVeg celebrates and accelerates a vision of veg options as the norm without restricting diner's choices. Our initial experiences show that a DefaultVeg approach results in greater reduction of animal product consumption than traditional reduction campaigns.

We envision DefaultVeg achieving broad, mainstream adoption. To that end we brought on a world-class designer to help give defaultveg.com a modern, inclusive, and unique look and feel to inspire other groups to participate.

In January 2020 we will launch the redesigned DefaultVeg website complete with a new [Institutional Resource Guide](#) that offers guidance for implementing DefaultVeg in a variety of institutional settings—conferences, catered meetings, cafeterias, and more.



We have seen so many early institutional wins (see sidebar) that we are confident that other advocacy groups can easily succeed in promoting DefaultVeg to institutions in their own networks. A large number of advocacy groups have agreed to incorporate DefaultVeg into their own campaigns—including Earth Day Network-Cities Campaign, Humane Society of the United States-Forward Food, and World Resources Institute-Cool Food Pledge—and some like the Factory Farm Awareness Coalition have already succeeded in asking institutions to adopt DefaultVeg as their food policy. BFF will work to support these groups in reaching their own constituencies with the DefaultVeg message.

DefaultVeg is especially important right now as some climate groups are advocating a switch from eating cows to eating chickens and lower-carbon animal products. DefaultVeg very deliberately shifts the focus to reducing *all* animal products, and normalizes discussions of veganism and plant-forward dining within the environmental sector.

Check out defaultveg.org for all of the resources we have developed to help individuals and institutions understand, adopt, implement, and promote DefaultVeg. And notice one in particular: the DefaultVeg Recipes tool.

To date, the following 29 institutions have adopted DefaultVeg as a strategy for their dining services or for specific events. We are in conversation with dozens more, including some of the world's leaders in environmental advocacy, healthcare, and education.

- The American Humanist Association for the World Humanist Conference in summer 2020
- The American Lung Association for Lung Force Expo in November 2019
- American Medical Student Association for future events
- Avodah Chicago for their catered Fellowship events
- Beyond Investing for catered events
- ClimateNexus
- Eat 4 The Future for catered events
- Food Law Student Leadership Summit for catered conference
- Independent Institute for Environmental Issues for catered conference
- Jewish Council on Urban Affairs for catered Hanukkah event
- Lancaster University, Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion
- Leadership Festival for multi-day retreat in Europe
- Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens for The Big Green catered event
- Reboot
- Sadhana Forest for workshops and retreats
- Saint Mellitus Northwest (Church of England)
- Sketchpad Jewish Co-Working Space for all events
- Society for Jewish Ethics for annual conference
- Society for the Study of Christian Ethics, UK
- Society for the Study of Theology, UK
- Spirit Rock Retreat Center for retreats
- Susanna Wesley Foundation
- TRS-UK
- University of Chester (six departments and faculties)
- University of Durham, CODEC Research Centre
- University of Leeds, School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
- University of Pennsylvania, Material Secularisms Conference
- Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference
- York St. John University, School of Humanities, Religion and Philosophy

DefaultVeg Recipes

DefaultVeg Recipes has already become the most comprehensive recipe search tool on the internet, period. And it happens to be vegan. As users share their diet restrictions, favorite cuisines, and ingredients (and optionally ingredients they'd rather avoid) we build an intelligent personalized recipe profile to show them recipes they'll likely try rather than skip over.



A Plant-Based Recipe Revolution

Recipes are among the most popular searches on the internet—a 2015 poll shows that 59 percent of millennials search for recipes online—but they are difficult to monetize, so companies have pulled back from investing in sophisticated recipe search technology.¹ We're taking advantage of this vacuum.

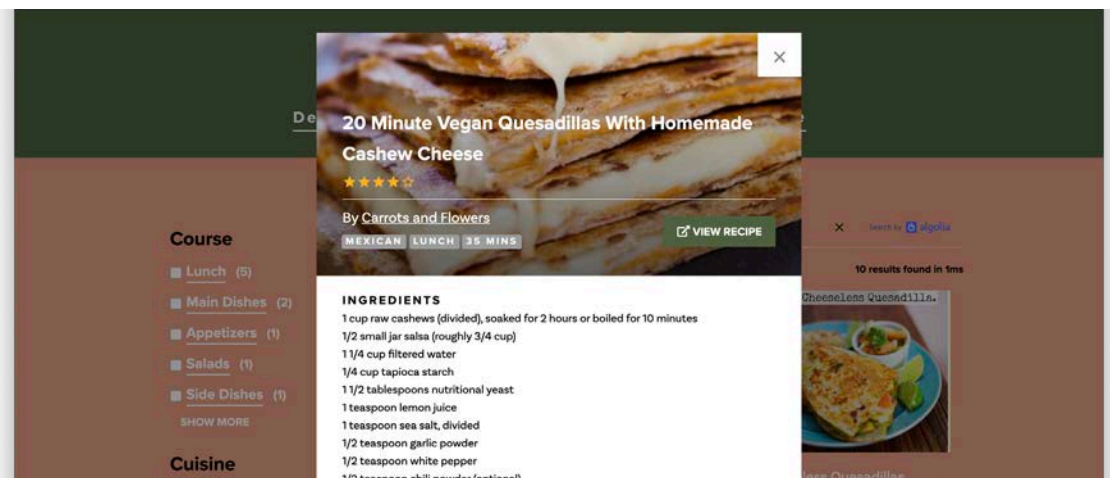
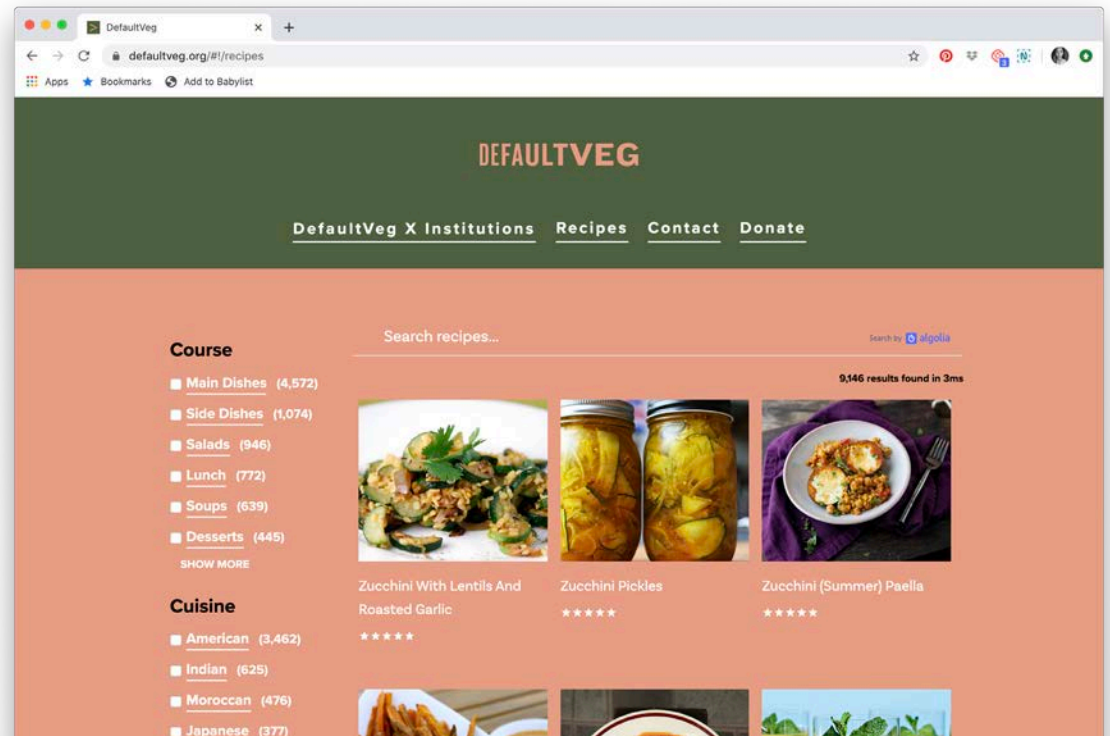
DefaultVeg Recipes functions as seamlessly as internet users have come to expect from sophisticated search engines like Google or Yelp. DefaultVeg Recipes also supports the growth of online vegan businesses, bloggers, and content creators through a unique design that pushes users towards the original sources of many of the recipes it compiles: vegan websites. In sum, DefaultVeg Recipes is part of our strategy to support and grow a whole ecosystem of advocacy!

1. Jenny Cooper, "Cooking Trends Among Millennials: Welcome to the Digital Kitchen," Think with Google, June 2015.

Here are some other ways that DefaultVeg Recipes differs from other recipe websites:

- It is set to become the *largest* collection of 100 percent vegan recipes. It already boasts ~10,000 recipes, and grows larger every week by collecting recipes from other websites.
- Our software analyzes ingredients to ensure they are *actually* vegan. Our research showed that other searches deliver nonvegan recipes even when the user specifies vegan!
- Any partner can use tailored searches to promote their own blog, company, or campaign. For example, the BeyondMeat website can link to a customized search page featuring all the recipes that use BeyondMeat products as ingredients. Or the vegan blogger Cookie and Kate can link to a search page with their own recipes.

A recipe revolution is underway. Give DefaultVeg Recipes a try, and tell your friends!



Growing Diverse Vegan Leadership

As BFF scales up its own ability to directly reach people with powerful vegan advocacy messages, we continue to be inspired by the work of activists who transform culture in a more vegan direction starting with their own communities.

BFF has provided financial support, technological assistance, mentoring, and fundraising support to leaders who scale up vegan advocacy in communities and locations where there has been little investment in advocacy work previously, and who are piloting innovative new approaches to vegan advocacy.

In 2019, we were proud to support Liberum, the Baltimore Vegan Soulfest, and the Black Veganism Memoirs.

Debuting a Standout Organization: Liberum

With a team of Mexican professionals, Liberum is a new vegan organization working in Mexico to generate cultural change, create market alternatives, and promote laws and public policies ensuring that animals are respected and not exploited. Launched in 2019 with BFF support, in less than a year Liberum has accomplished more in their first year than some

organizations do in their tenth, including launching an anti-dairy campaign called “¿LECHE? NO GRACIAS” (“MILK? NO THANK YOU”), which has the support of major Mexican celebrities and athletes, with a video already seen by **17.9 million people at the end of 2019: 17.19 million on Facebook, 453 thousand on Instagram, and 315 thousand on YouTube.**



¿LECHE? ¡NO GRACIAS!
19 weeks ago · 20.9M Views
👍❤️😮 549K



¿LECHE? ¡NO GRACIAS!-Todas las madres importan
2 weeks ago · 380.6K Views
😮👍❤️ 11K

Liberum’s “¿LECHE? NO GRACIAS” (“MILK? NO THANK YOU”) video had been seen by more than 20 million people by early 2020.



Liberum’s *El Recetario Godin* is an online cookbook created with vegan celebrity chefs like Eddie Garza, addressing the need for vegan meals that Mexicans can eat at the office.

Growing Vegan Advocacy and Leadership in Black Communities

Our work in this program area has a twofold aim: (a) to directly support high quality campaigns, programs, and events that advance veganism, and (b) to support highly talented Black vegan leaders through recognition, consultation, and funding assistance. The first goal has an immediate impact; the second goal will ramify over time.

“Better Food Foundation’s generous donations have made it possible for us to reach tens of thousands of people from marginalized black and brown communities with information and resources that are both lifesaving and world-changing.”

-Baltimore Vegan Soulfest co-organizer Brenda Sanders



In 2018 and 2019, BFF proudly served as the primary sponsor of Thrive Baltimore’s Vegan Soulfest—the largest one-day festival in Baltimore this summer, with close to 12,000 attendees (Thrive-provided data).

Attendees at the Baltimore Vegan Soulfest are mostly new to veg eating. This year, feedback included:

“I didn’t even know all the food was vegan at this festival. I could definitely eat like this!”

- Tracy M.

“I thought for sure vegan food was nasty, but the food at this festival changed my mind.”

-Donte S.

“I learned so much from this festival and the food was so good! I can’t wait to go home and try some recipes!!”

- Angela S.

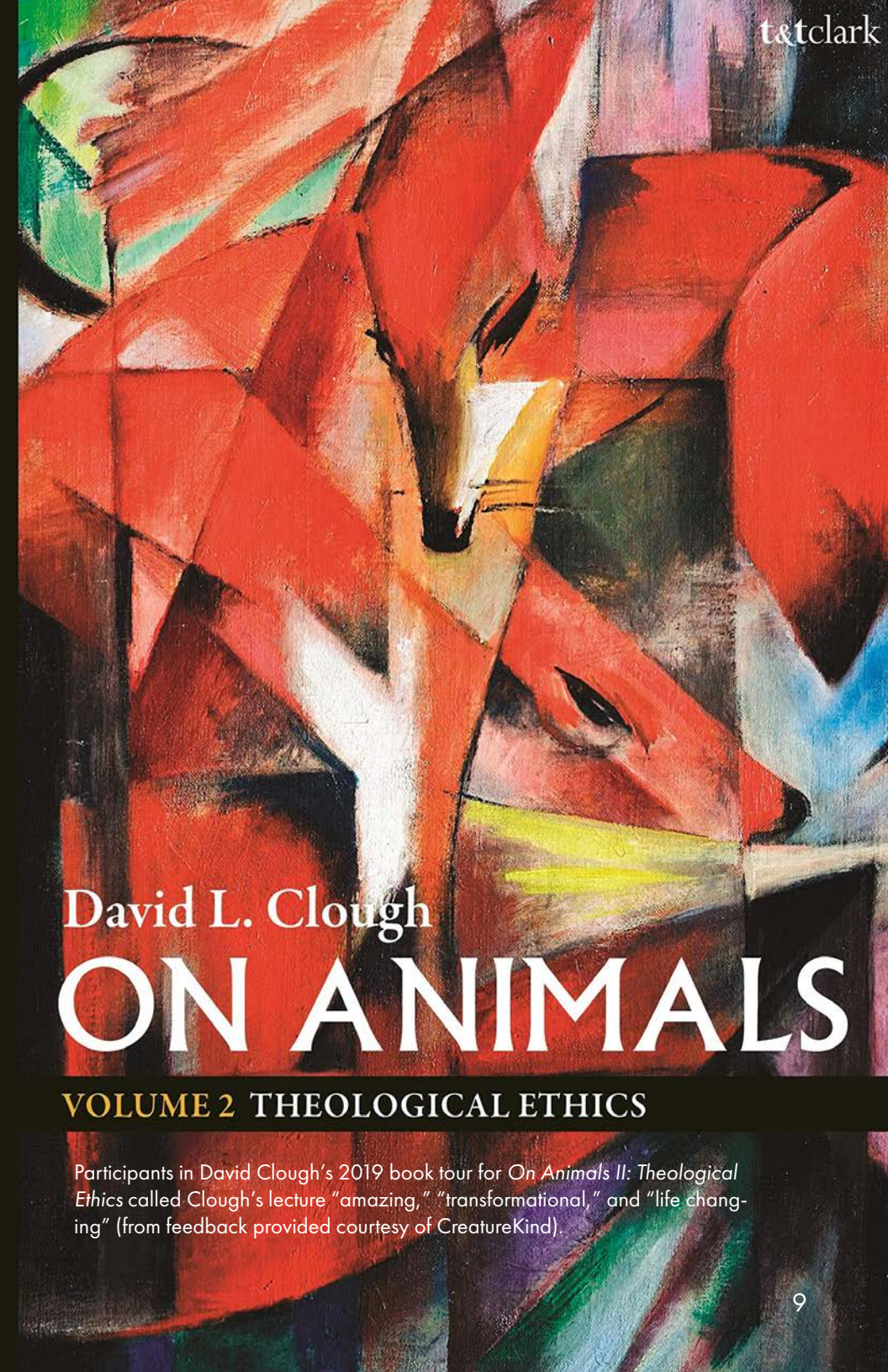
Growing Faith-Based Vegan Outreach

Farm Forward supports the work of several scholars, faith leaders, and faith-based organizations to grow values-based anti-factory farming movements within their religious communities. Our first two Faith in Food Fellows are Dr. David Clough, the founder of CreatureKind, which works to engage Christians with farmed animal welfare as a faith issue, and Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter, whose work engages Black churches in plant-based and animal welfare advocacy. Farm Forward CEO Dr. Aaron Gross co-founded BFF, teaches Jewish Studies at the University of San Diego, and has helped grow the academic field of animals and religion. Read more about Drs. Carter's and Gross's work in "Transforming Academia," page 12.

In addition, BFF awarded 2019 grants to CreatureKind for Christian outreach and Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy for Jewish Outreach.

CreatureKind

BFF provided funding and other assistance to CreatureKind, including connecting them to new funders. In 2019 CreatureKind's founder David Clough had a book tour of more than 20 colleges, universities, churches, and organizations in Australia, New Zealand,



David L. Clough

ON ANIMALS

VOLUME 2 THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

Participants in David Clough's 2019 book tour for *On Animals II: Theological Ethics* called Clough's lecture "amazing," "transformational," and "life changing" (from feedback provided courtesy of CreatureKind).



Shamayim is a vegan voice for animal protection in the Jewish Community.

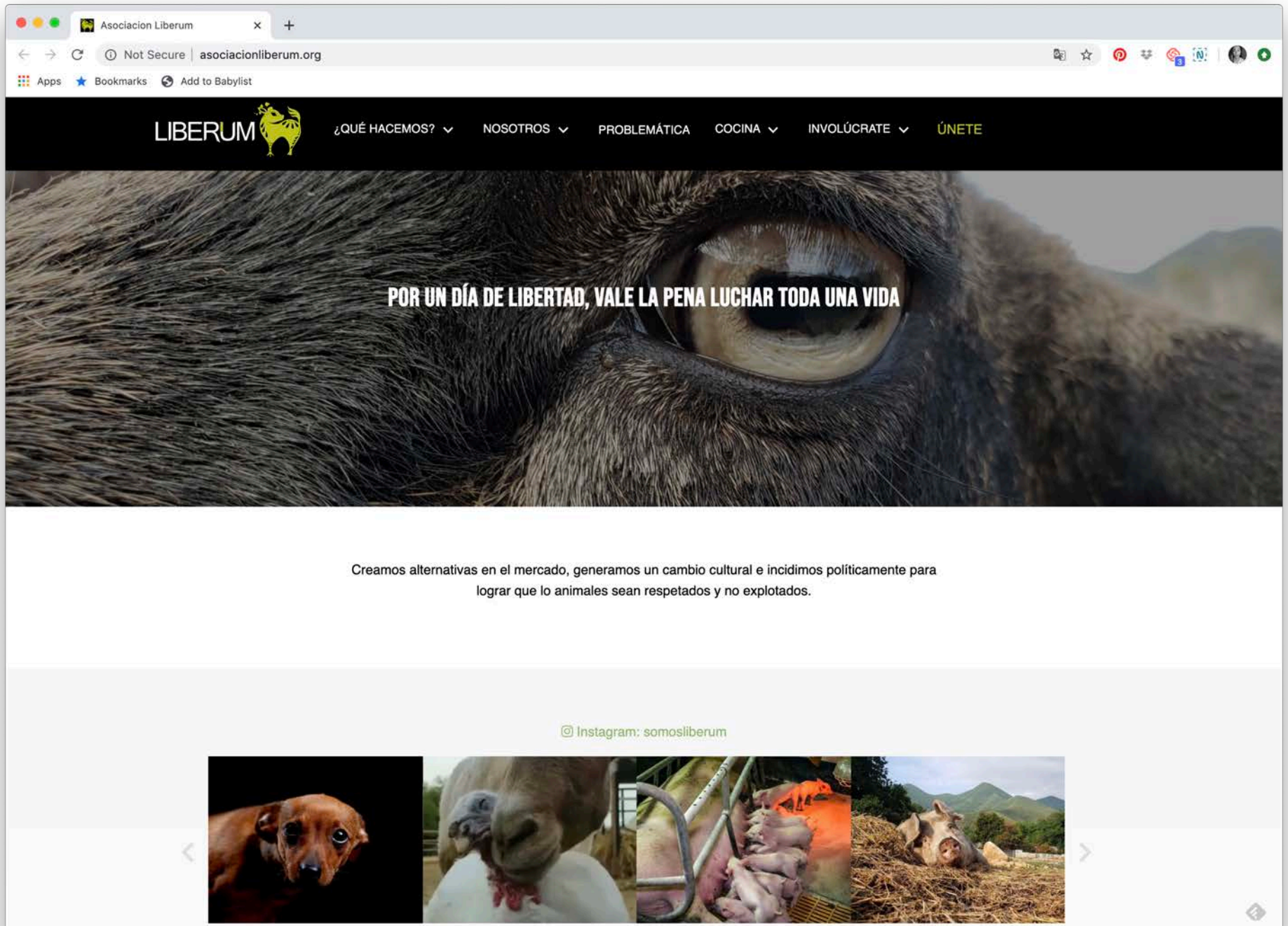
and the US, and our support helped CreatureKind advance its food policy conversations with 52 colleges and universities and establish relationships with 63 more.

Shamayim

In 2019, BFF's team members spent considerable time advising leaders and training new team members at partner organisations like Shamayim, a vegan voice for animal protection in the Jewish community. This year Shamayim held their largest annual convening with 50 registrants, grew their Campus Fellows program, and received a record number of applications for their Vegan Synagogue Challenge, including some of the most highly respected and innovative synagogues in America like B'nei Jeshurun in New York City, and Sixth and I in Washington DC.

Better Advocacy through Technology

To jump-start the capacity of small nonprofits like Liberum, Creaturekind, and Shamayim, we began sharing the services of Gaiahackers, our phenomenal web-development team. Gaiahackers built a state-of-the-art custom web platform for both Farm Forward and BFF, filled with features tailored for animal protection advocacy. Sharing this platform with other animal protection groups is one way that we help smaller organizations achieve the kind of large-scale impact that typically requires far greater resources. Because these websites are all built on the same original platform, when Gaiahackers adds a new feature to meet the needs of one group (like DefaultVeg Recipes, a custom online petition tool, and advanced social media integrations), that feature becomes available to any group using the platform. In addition, our shared platform and close partnership makes it easy for us to collaborate on projects; for example, with Liberum we've begun discussing a possible collaboration with DefaultVeg and other ways that Liberum can help BFF reach Spanish-speaking audiences. This is the power of the *ecosystem* we're building.



Liberum's beautiful new website was built by our web team, Gaihackers.

Transforming Academia

BFF supports scholars who are building the capacity of the academy to play an increasingly active role in helping create a more humane, just, and regenerative future for agriculture. Through a combination of collaboration and grants, we help committed vegan scholars spend more of their time working on three tasks:

- advancing classroom teaching that addresses the ethical issues raised by factory farming, veganism, and the state of our our food system;
- activating theologians, clergy and other religious leaders to become better advocates for farmed animals and a more ethical food system; and
- incubating a new generation of policy-relevant food studies scholarship that is sensitized to the problems caused by contemporary industrial animal agriculture.

The common task of truth-telling undergirds the work of both advocates and university professors; BFF leverages this common ground to help transform our food system. The academy is especially important to our advocacy because it is a uniquely stable cultural institution. Few businesses that were dominant 100 or 50 years ago remain

influential today, but the leading academic institutions of a century ago, like Harvard University, are still leaders today. Our work in the academy is a complement to the corporate focus of most of our efforts. And because our approach to transforming the academy leverages the *donated* time of deeply committed scholars to achieve lasting change, the modest dollars BFF spends on this outreach—less than \$30K—can deliver outsized results.

In 2019 we focused support on two scholars at the University of San Diego, BFF Board Member Dr. Aaron Gross, and Farm Forward Board Member and Faith in Food Fellow, Dr. Christopher Carter. Accomplishments BFF helped support include:

- Dr. Aaron Gross's new co-edited book designed for use in undergraduate religion classes, *Feasting and Fasting: The History and Ethics of Jewish Food*, was released by one of the most respected food studies and Jewish studies academic presses in the world, New York University Press. The book embeds a discussion of Jewish animal ethics and veganism in a contemporary textbook addressing the larger relationship of Judaism and food. The book features an afterword from Jonathan Safran Foer where he discusses his vegetarianism, and has received critical praise from heavy hitters in food studies like New York University's Marion Nestle.



FEASTING AND FASTING

The History and Ethics of Jewish Food

EDITED BY

AARON S. GROSS

JODY MYERS AND

JORDAN D. ROSENBLUM

With a Foreword by Hasia R. Diner and
an Afterword by Jonathan Safran Foer



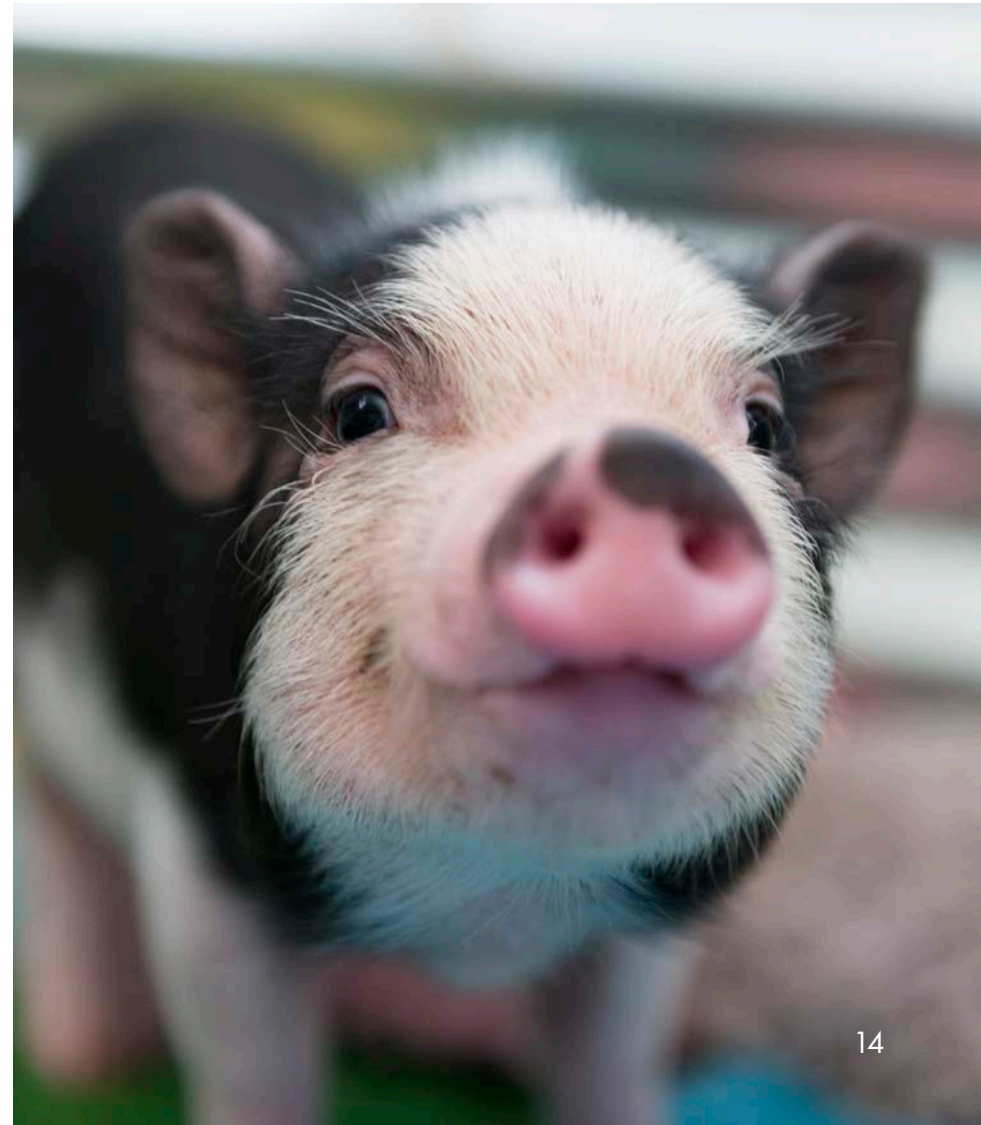
- The use of *Feasting and Fasting* in the classroom was supported by two sessions held at the Annual Meeting of the world's largest society of Jewish studies scholars, the Association for Jewish Studies. One session directly addressed pedagogy and another focused on animals and Judaism.
- Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter delivered the 11th Annual Animals & the Kingdom of God Lecture at Calvin College, published a chapter in a new edited volume *Feeling Animal Death: Being Hosts to Ghosts* encouraging Black people to think about the relational connections between human and nonhuman animals, and gave the keynote address to the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality at the American Academy of Religion, where he addressed Black veganism as a spiritual practice/praxis.
- Drs. Gross and Carter worked together to successfully submit a pre-proposal for a grant from the University of San Diego that would support the creation of a justice-oriented food studies program.

Legal Protections for Animals

Farmed animals enjoy few legal protections in the US. BFF organizes direct advocacy for laws and policies that improve the conditions of farmed animals, and guards against the passage of bills like ag-gag, even as we work to reduce market demand for products made from animals. In 2019:

- BFF worked with the Food and Climate Alliance to ensure that forthcoming state, federal, and global public policy proposals for addressing climate change are beneficial to farmed animals as well as the environment.
- We testified at a hearing for a Maryland bill about the procurement of carbon intensive foods, alongside Friends of the Earth, the Center for a Livable Future, and the University of Maryland.
- As part of our work to level the playing field for plant-based dairy products, we issued a public comment on the Food and Drug Administration’s labelling standards for plant-based dairy foods such as milks, yogurts, and cheeses.
- We joined Friends of the Earth in support of California’s

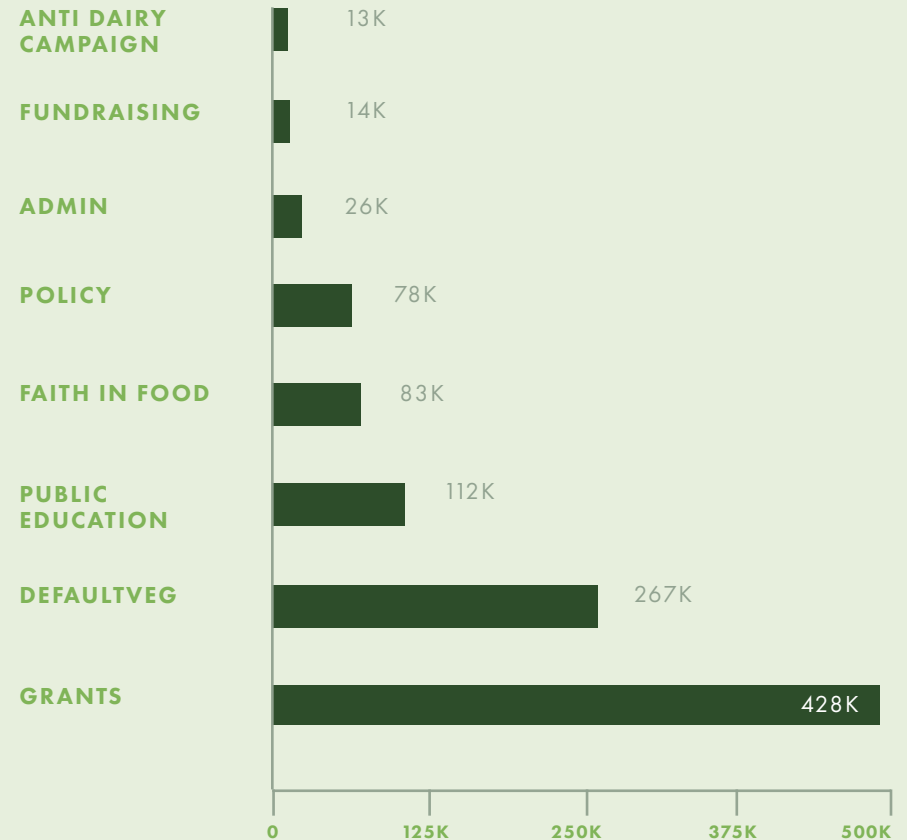
AB 479, the “Healthy, Climate-Friendly School Lunch Act.” The bill, which passed in the Assembly and is being considered by the Senate, would provide schools additional state funding for serving a plant-based entree and plant-based milk.



An Online Community of Change

After launching BFF's new and improved website in 2019, our social media community grew from 19K to more than 25K followers across our social media channels (for total growth of 32% in 2019), with content about Black veganism, plant-based milk, the Million Dollar Vegan Campaign, DefaultVeg, the future of "cultivated meat," and much more. More than 315,000 individuals have been reached by our messages. We've established an online community where we share in complex conversations about our food system. Our intersectional approach to raising critical questions about the way in which our food system perpetuates systemic oppression for human and non-human animals has caught the eye of journalists, media, and other nonprofit organizations. Together, we are building a better food system.

Financial Data



TOTAL SPENT 1.022M



BUILDING A HEALTHY, EQUITABLE,
HUMANE, ENVIRONMENTALLY
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM.

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