



Vegetarian/Vegan Video Outreach Comparison

Prepared by the Humane Research Council for VegFund

Study in Brief: VegFund helps advocates conduct vegan outreach and education, with emphasis on food-oriented and “pay-per-view” video outreach events, as well as online advocacy. To ensure the success of the video outreach programs that it supports and operates, VegFund contracted with the Humane Research Council (HRC) to evaluate a small set of vegan outreach videos representing different messages and approaches. The primary research objective was to identify which types of videos are most effective with the audiences that are most commonly targeted for outreach.

About the Humane Research Council

HRC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to maximizing the effectiveness of animal advocates by applying professional, cost-efficient, and informative consumer and market research methods.

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Summary of Results

- More than 500 respondents aged 15-23 viewed one of four videos and provided their feedback. The videos were approximately four minutes in length and included a segment from *Farm to Fridge* (Mercy for Animals), a segment from *A Life Connected* (Nonviolence United), a segment from *Geico Couple* (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine), and *Maxine's Dash for Freedom* (Farm Sanctuary).
- All of the four videos included in this study are at least somewhat effective in getting viewers to consider dietary changes. This suggests that the ability to hold an audience's attention (in this case with a financial incentive) may be as or more important than the specific tone or message of the video. On average, 29% of viewers report considering a reduction of animal products, while 8% report considering eliminating animal products entirely.
- Of the four videos, the *Farm to Fridge* segment appears to be somewhat more effective. Although the video had a 10% lower engagement rate (i.e., more people who drop out of the video before it is completed) than the other videos, on average, it was the most likely of all four videos to lead to consideration of dietary change. However, the difference was only statistically significant for eggs and dairy products, not for meat products.
- At least half of viewers reported learning something new from the video they watched. This proportion was highest for *Farm to Fridge* and *A Life Connected* (62%) and somewhat lower for the other two videos, *Maxine's Dash* and the *Geico Couple* video (53-54%).
- On average, 30% of viewers said they would like more information about vegetarian/vegan foods. This was highest for *Farm to Fridge* (36%) and the *Geico Couple* video (34%), but lower for *Maxine's Dash* (27%) and *A Life Connected* (25%).

Self-Reported Consideration of Diet Change After Viewing Video

	Reduce Animal Products (Average)	Eliminate Animal Products (Average)
Farm to Fridge	36%	12%
A Life Connected	31%	8%
Geico Couple	30%	7%
Maxine's Dash	27%	10%

Project Background

VegFund helps advocates conduct vegan outreach and education, with emphasis on food-oriented and “pay-per-view” video outreach events, as well as online advocacy. To ensure the success of the video outreach programs that it supports and operates, VegFund contracted with the Humane Research Council (HRC) to evaluate a small set of vegan outreach videos representing different messages and approaches. The primary research objective was to identify which types of videos are most effective with the audiences that are most commonly targeted for outreach.

The study included four videos representing distinct talking points, but each advocating a vegan diet. Following is a summary of the videos used in the study (all videos were used with permission):

- **Farm to Fridge** (clip: 0:00–4:13): Appeal to ethics/compassion (graphic) using footage of farm animal abuse sourced mostly from undercover investigations. Credit: Mercy for Animals
- **Maxine’s Dash for Freedom** (clip: 0:14–4:07): Appeal to ethics/compassion (non-graphic) by telling the story of a cow who escaped slaughter and was rescued. Credit: Produced by Joshua Katcher and provided courtesy of Farm Sanctuary
- **A Life Connected** (clip: 4:51–8:28): Appeal to environmental concerns with information about resource usage and pollution related to animal farming. Credit: Nonviolence United
- **Geico Couple** (clips: 0:10–1:14 and 2:34–5:54): Appeal to health concerns by telling the story of a couple that adopted a vegan diet and successfully lost weight. Credit: Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

HRC worked with a third party data collection company to recruit respondents aged 15 to 23 to take an online survey regarding one of the four videos. VegFund identified this audience as the primary target audience for most video outreach campaigns. Quotas were set to maintain relatively even proportions of female and male respondents and all respondents were provided an incentive to watch the video and complete the survey. Although representation cannot be guaranteed given the online methodology, the results should accurately reflect the opinions of the target audience.

Study Limitations

It is important to note that the findings for this study are subject to several caveats and limitations, most notably the reliance on self-reported data. Respondents’ answers may differ from their actual opinions or behavior for a variety of reasons, particularly for questions involving predictions of the respondents’ dietary changes in the future. Despite this limitation, however, self-reported intentions provide the best available indication of actual intentions.

People react to vegan outreach videos in diverse and nuanced ways and those reactions are influenced by factors including which video is viewed, who is viewing it, where it is viewed, the incentive provided (if any), and the relevance of the video to the viewer. No single research study can provide a definitive answer regarding which video or approach is “best.” Advocates should use these results with some caution and avoid extrapolating the findings to other videos or target audiences.

Video: Farm to FridgeEngagement Rate¹:

78%

Animal Product Reduction²:

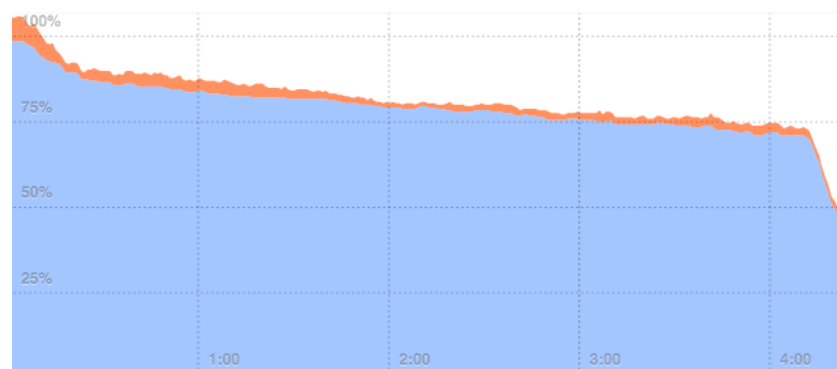
36%

Animal Product Elimination³:

12%

Would Like More Information⁴:

36%



Farm to Fridge is an intensely graphic portrayal of farmed animal abuse based primarily on footage from undercover investigations. One of the primary concerns with the use of graphic imagery is the possibility that people will be more likely to look away or stop watching and therefore miss the intended message. Indeed, *Farm to Fridge* had the lowest engagement rate (average proportion of the video that was viewed by respondents) of the videos included in the survey. Although it was only 10% less than the other videos, on average, the difference was statistically significant.

The “heat map” above shows the engagement rate over time for the duration of the video.

The fact that some people stopped watching the video appears to be offset by the higher proportions of respondents considering dietary changes. Specifically, the segment of *Farm to Fridge* used in the survey resulted in more than a third of viewers (36%) saying they were considering reducing animal products; this was 7% higher than the other three videos, on average. More importantly, the *Farm to Fridge* segment resulted in 12% of viewers saying they were considering eliminating animal products; this was 4% higher than the other three videos, on average.

Farm to Fridge excelled in other areas as well. Sixty-two percent of respondents said they learned something new from the video, which is comparable to *A Life Connected* but substantially higher than the other two videos. Additionally, more than a third of *Farm to Fridge* viewers (36%) said they would like more information about eating vegetarian/vegan foods, which was the highest of all four videos shown in the survey (closely followed by the *Geico Couple* video).

Of the four video segments in this study, *Farm to Fridge* is easily the most graphic, which is likely what lead to slightly lower viewer engagement. However, the video seems more effective on other counts, including providing new information, persuading viewers to want more information about vegetarian/vegan foods, and encouraging diet change. Due to limited sample size for the study, however, these results are not statistically significant.

¹ Proportion of the video watched by survey respondents. The chart to the right shows engagement with video over time (blue section) and number of people re-watching portions of the video (orange section).

² Proportion saying that they are considering changing their diets to reduce animal products.

³ Proportion saying that they are considering changing their diets to eliminate animal products.

⁴ Proportion saying that they would like more information after seeing the video.

Video: A Life Connected

Engagement Rate:

91%

Animal Product Reduction:

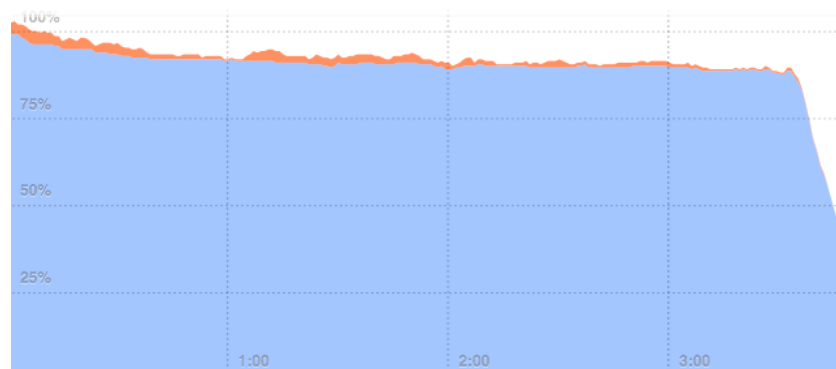
31%

Animal Product Elimination:

8%

Would Like More Information:

25%



A Life Connected is an informative video focused on excessive resource consumption, pollution, and other detrimental effects of consuming animal products. This video segment had a slightly higher engagement rate compared with the other videos (91%), although it should be noted that this segment was 15-45 seconds shorter than the other three videos. Nonetheless, engagement with this video was strong (see the “heat map” above), which is also reflected in the open-ended comments.

Although seemingly not quite as effective as *Farm to Fridge*, the segment from *A Life Connected* also yielded positive results. Nearly a third of viewers (31%) said they were considering reducing animal products and 8% said they were considering eliminating animal products. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%) said they learned something new from the video, which is higher than the *Geico Couple* and *Maxine’s Dash* videos. One fourth of viewers of *A Life Connected* (25%) said they would like more information about eating vegetarian/vegan foods; this is a good response, but it was the lowest response of all four videos.

Of the four videos in this study, *A Life Connected* provides the most information in a short amount of time. Despite this, the segment had the highest level of engagement and appears slightly more effective than *Maxine’s Dash* or *Geico Couple* (but less effective than *Farm to Fridge*) in creating behavior change.

Video: Geico Couple

Engagement Rate:

87%

Animal Product Reduction:

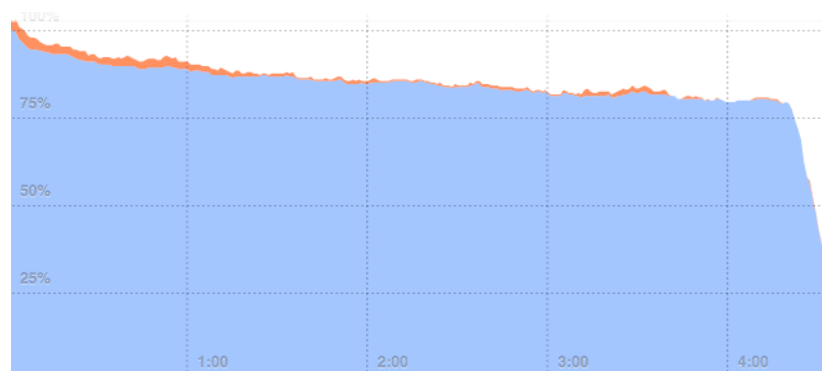
30%

Animal Product Elimination:

7%

Would Like More Information:

34%



The *Geico Couple* video segment focuses on the story of a married couple that adopted a vegan diet for the primary purpose of losing weight and improving health. This video segment had the second highest engagement rate (87%) after *A Life Connected* (see the “heat map” above).

The *Geico Couple* video is less effective than *Farm to Fridge* regarding behavior change, but is comparable to the segment from *A Life Connected*. Three in ten viewers of the *Geico Couple* video (30%) said they were considering reducing animal products and 7% said they were considering eliminating animal products. Just over half of respondents (53%) said they learned something new from the video, which is among the lowest of all four videos (but comparable to *Maxine’s Dash*). About a third of viewers of the *Geico Couple* video (34%) said they would like more information about eating vegetarian/vegan foods; this was substantially higher than either *A Life Connected* or *Maxine’s Dash*.

Of the four videos in this study, the *Geico Couple* segment is unique in both its “testimonial” style and by focusing on health and weight loss. This led to relatively high engagement and behavior change results that were comparable to *A Life Connected* and *Maxine’s Dash*.

Video: Maxine's Dash

Engagement Rate:

84%

Animal Product Reduction:

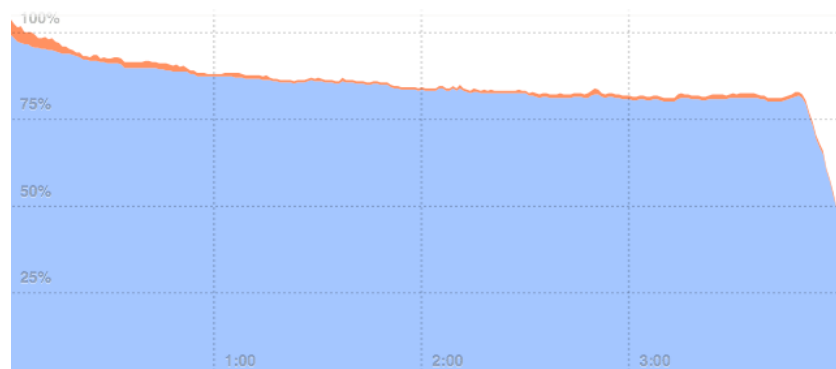
27%

Animal Product Elimination:

10%

Would Like More Information:

27%



Maxine's Dash tells the story of a cow (Maxine) who escaped a slaughterhouse in New York City, was rescued by Animal Care and Control personnel, and was eventually placed at Farm Sanctuary (a nonprofit that provides permanent shelter for farmed animals). This video segment had a slightly lower engagement rate (84%) than the other videos in the study, with the exception of *Farm to Fridge* (see the "heat map" above).

Maxine's Dash is also less effective than *Farm to Fridge* regarding behavior change, but is comparable to the other two videos in many ways. Interestingly, *Maxine's Dash* is slightly less likely to lead to reduction of animal products when compared with the *Geico Couple* video or *A Life Connected*, but is more likely to lead to elimination of animal products than those two videos. The differences are small and this may be statistical "noise," but the finding could be significant.

Specifically, just over a fourth of viewers of *Maxine's Dash* (27%) said they were considering reducing animal products and 10% said they were considering eliminating animal products. Just over half of respondents (54%) said they learned something new from the video, which is among the lowest of all four videos (comparable to the *Geico Couple* video). Just over a fourth of viewers of *Maxine's Dash* (27%) said they would like more information about eating vegetarian/vegan foods; this was comparable to *A Life Connected*, but lower than the other two videos in the study.

Of the four videos in this study, *Maxine's Dash* is the only to focus on the story of an individual animal; it also deemphasizes the appeal to veganism. While the engagement rate was slightly lower for this video compared to the others, behavior change results were comparable to *A Life Connected* and the *Geico Couple* video, but lower than *Farm to Fridge*.

Significance Test Results

To examine the strengths of the relationships previously discussed, we conducted statistical tests, including chi-squared tests of significance and ordered logistic regressions, to determine the statistical significance ($p \leq .05$)⁵ of our findings. Our statistical analysis is focused on demographic characteristics and examining differences between the videos viewed.

Overall, there were few statistically significant relationships. However, this should not negate the trends and patterns previously discussed. Though the sample sizes for this study were large enough to perform statistical tests, the inherent variability of content and presentation among the videos may mean that other factors are having unintended influence on the results. A future study should increase sample size and/or reduce the degree of variation between each video to determine if the lack of significance is reflective of a lack of difference between videos or due to other factors.

As it is, the lack of statistically significant relationships suggest, at worst, that any well-produced video that educates the public about factory farming will encourage a sizeable minority of viewers to reduce consumption of animal products in the future and a small minority to plan to eliminate at least one animal product all together. This suggests that the video content itself may be a less important factor than simply having the complete attention of a captive audience, which is typically the case with pay-per-view video outreach.

Variables Examined: To examine demographic differences, we recoded each demographic variable into a dichotomous variable, such that education was measured as whether or not a respondent had at least a bachelor's degree, age was measured as whether or not a respondent was over the age of 18, and gender was measured as male or female. To determine how effective each video was at encouraging respondents to reduce and eliminate meat, eggs, and dairy, we calculated two scores—a “meat score” and a “byproduct score.”

The meat score reflects a respondent's consideration of making a change in meat consumption (reducing or eliminating one or more meat products) after viewing the video. Respondents were asked whether they planned to eliminate, reduce, or make no change to their future levels of consumption of three different types of meat products (red meat, poultry, and fish/seafood). For each meat group a respondent received a score of “0” if s/he planned to make no changes, a “1” if s/he planned to reduce consumption, and a “2” if s/he planned to eliminate consumption. Each respondent's score for all three meat groups were averaged to create their meat score. Higher values indicate a greater willingness to reduce and/or eliminate meat products. The byproduct scale was produced using the same logic but in regard to a respondent's willingness to reduce or eliminate eggs and dairy products.

Demographic differences: Being over the age of 18 was significantly related only to a respondent being more likely to state s/he learned something new from the video and wants to receive more information about vegetarian/vegan foods after watching the video.

⁵ P-value is the probability of obtaining a test value at least as extreme as the value that was actually observed in the survey. It is one of the most common and accepted tests for statistical significance.

Women were significantly more likely than men to consider *eliminating* meat from their future diets, but their overall “meat score” was not statistically related to gender, as they were no different than men in their consideration to *reduce* consumption of meat products. Women in this sample were significantly more likely than men to indicate that they currently “rarely” or “never” eat red meat, so it is unclear if this finding suggests women are willing to make more extreme changes than men (i.e., moving from regular meat eating to meat elimination), or if they are simply more likely to be meat reducers and so a shift to elimination is an easier step.

Education was significantly related to a respondent’s consideration of reducing meat as well as eggs and dairy. Those with at least a Bachelor’s degree were generally significantly less likely to be willing to reduce or eliminate meat products. We further investigated the relationship with an ordered logistic regression, a more robust test of significance.⁶ This analysis revealed no significant relationship, likely because the relationship between education and the meat score is not perfectly linear.

We found a stronger significant relationship between education and consideration of reducing/eliminating eggs and dairy products. Having at least a Bachelor’s degree decreased the likelihood that a respondent would consider reducing her or his egg or dairy consumption. This was also tested with an ordered logistic regression and the relationship remained strong. Because education is likely closely tied with age in this sample, we also controlled for age and the relationship of education remained significant such that those without a Bachelor’s degree were more likely to say they would reduce and/or eliminate egg and dairy products from their diets.

Differences between videos: There were significant differences in the amount of viewer engagement with each video. Respondents watched significantly less of *Farm to Fridge* compared with the other videos and watched significantly more of *A Life Connected* compared with the other videos.

Although some of the descriptive differences between videos appeared large, there were almost no significant differences between respondents’ attitudes and the videos watched. The only statistically significant relationship was in relation to considering reducing/eliminating eggs and dairy (i.e., the byproduct score); those who watched *Farm to Fridge* had significantly higher likelihood of considering reducing or eliminating consumption of eggs or dairy.

⁶ Due to the parameters of an ordered logistic regression, this test was not appropriate for all of the variables examined here. It is not reported in cases when it was not an appropriate test of significance.

Open-Ended Comments

The survey also included several open-ended questions where respondents answered in their own words and provided comments about the videos. This unstructured approach often yields valuable information, but it also leads to many one-off comments. This was especially true of the target audience for this survey (15-23 year olds) and some respondents did not answer the question directly or provided less meaningful responses. Fortunately, this was a small proportion of the comments.

The first open-ended question was posed to respondents immediately after viewing the video and asked them to “briefly tell us how you feel about the video you just watched.” Following are the major themes that emerged in the responses to this question, by video, and the approximate proportion of respondents who mentioned this theme⁷.

Farm to Fridge	A Life Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Horried" or "disturbed" (19%) • Feel "upset" or "sick" (16%) • "Disgusted" (13%) • Expressed desire to hold people accountable (11%) • "Sad" (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Educational" or "informative" (24%) • "Good" or "great" presentation (12%) • Thought the video was not credible, "exaggerated" (10%) • Expressed intent/desire to change diet (9%) • Feel "empowered" or "inspired" (8%) • "Interesting" (8%)
Geico Couple	Maxine’s Dash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Inspirational" or "motivational" or "encouraging" (21%) • "Good" or "great" video (14%) • "Informative" (9%) • Expressed relation of veganism to weight loss and health (9%) • Expressed support for weight loss in general (9%) • Expressed happiness/admiration for the couple (9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sad" (23%) • Praise for shelter and caretakers (13%) • "Moved" or "touched" (10%) • Expressed opposition to abuse/cruelty (9%) • "Happy" (9%) • "Relieved" (9%)

Following are a few sample answers to this question from respondents:

Farm to Fridge:

- I am very mortified. I have never seen a documentary that was so graphic in showing what is done to animals. Usually it is just discussed and shown. I feel absolutely terrible for those animals and it makes me seriously consider going organic. [Male, age 21]

⁷ Open-ended comments are coded by hand and subject to interpretation by the researcher(s), so they are grouped into similar “themes” and the proportions are described as approximate.

- I thought it was disturbing and very sad. It definitely gave me insight into the world of animal abuse. I am definitely gonna try a vegan diet because I feel that for every dairy, meat, pork I buy another helpless animal dies. [Female, age 23]
- It was very disturbing how the US allows animals to be treated. There needs to be more laws to protect the animals and give them a better death and better living conditions. [Female, age not provided]

A Life Connected:

- It was really inspiring because there is a lot of cruelty against animals that shouldn't be done and it all can be avoided by becoming a vegan. [Male, age 22]
- I liked the tone of it-- it was informational and persuasive, but in an encouraging way. If it's geared for a television ad it's too long though. [Female, age 20]
- It made me really want to change my diet. I feel so sad that the world has gotten to the point it is at right now. [Female, age 18]

Geico Couple:

- The video was very inspiring. I don't think I would choose a vegan diet specifically, but it does make me more motivated to watch what I eat. [Female, age 23]
- I think it is interesting the couple decided to lose weight with a Vegan diet. I do not know much about the Vegan lifestyle but I am in no way interested in being a vegetarian. [Male, age 22]
- It was very interesting. The people in the video were appealing and easy to listen to. The before and after photos were very powerful without being overpowering... It was pleasant very non-offensive. [Female, age not provided]

Maxine's Dash:

- It makes me feel upset that I have been eating meat without knowing what happens to the animals. [Female, age 15]
- Like the story and pictures of the cow, but doesn't do anything to change my meat consumption. [Male, age 23]
- The video is very touching. Made me wonder about how many animals were slaughtered in order to provide the meat that my family and I consume. I am not sure if I want to consume the meat anymore. [Female, age 19]

The second open-ended question sought to determine which video(s) provided the most educational value and asked, "What new information did you learn from the video?" The table at the top of the following page shows the dominant themes that emerged for question, by video.

Farm to Fridge	A Life Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "cruelty" or "abuse" etc. animals face (16%) • The workers are bad people/ people are bad, "cruel," "disgusting," etc. (13%) • How animals are treated/ what they "go through"/ "the process" (7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veganism/ not eating meat helps the environment, saves water, land, etc. (10%) • Amount of "poop" generated by farm animals (8%) • Amount of water used (8%) • About the (state of the) environment/ planet (6%) • About "global warming" (5%)
Geico Couple	Maxine's Dash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veganism can aide weight loss (7%) • Vegan diets lower/ are low in cholesterol (7%) • Mentions weight loss, but does not mention veganism (7%) • How to eat healthy/ important to eat healthy (4%) • Important to eat healthy and exercise (4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of cruelty/ how cows are treated (17%) • That cows can be rescued/ there are shelters for large animals/ Farm Sanctuary (11%) • Animals/ cows have feelings/ awareness (5%) • There are people who care/will help (4%) • Animals have a "will to live" (4%)

Following are a few sample answers to this question from respondents:

Farm to Fridge:

- I learned how they throw males chicks away and harm poor baby pigs. [Female, age 20]
- How many animals I eat are just brutally killed and how everything they do actually ends up in my home. [Male, age 19]
- Animals are treated absolutely horribly in most facilities in which they are held. People are awful creatures. [Female, age 17]

A Life Connected:

- I learned that growing animals is hurting our planet more than anything else right now. We as humans are causing the destruction of our own planet because of the foods that we eat. [Female, age 18]
- Consuming animals is worse than automobiles polluting the environment. [Male, age 17]
- How much water is being wasted. How much water is used to make food and also how much you can save if you didn't eat meat. [Female, age 19]

Geico Couple:

- It reinforced in me what I already know. I'm only about 20 lbs overweight but my diet is horrible. This video has really instilled in me that I need to make changes. [Female, age not provided]
- Being a vegan can help you lose weight. [Female, age 15]
- I learned how eating vegan helps weight loss. [Male, age 17]

Maxine’s Dash:

- I learned that the way animals are being treated in farm houses for slaughter are very much cruel. That just like humans, animals also have the WILL TO LIVE. [Female, age 16]
- I was able to see how animals try to escape brutality that is posed upon them by humans and was reminded that there is a life behind each package of meat that I purchase. [Female, age 19]
- I learned that there are actually people who help these animals unlike the many that only abuse of them. [Male, age 17]

Lastly, those who indicated that they were making any dietary changes after viewing the video were asked to “briefly tell us what about the video motivated you to think about reducing or eliminating that type of food.” Again, the responses were substantially different for each video. The table below shows the major themes that emerged in the responses to this question, by video.

Farm to Fridge	A Life Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cruelty to animals" or for animals (24%) • Mentioned the images or sounds from video (4%) • Already reduces meat /eats "humane" meat already (3%) • Made me think or learned new information (3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the environment or the planet or pollution (16%) • Saving animals (11%) • "Opened my eyes" or "made me think" (6%) • Water waste (4%)
Geico Couple	Maxine’s Dash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to be healthier (8%) • Will reduce a specific food group (6%) • Motivating or 'made me think" (4%) • Red meat is not healthy (4%) • Weight loss (4%) • The couple's story was inspirational (4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioned "seeing" the pain/ fear/ etc. (6%) • Don't want to kill animal or "save" animals (4%) • Mention connecting with Maxine/ her story (4%) • Disturbed by animal abuse or suffering (4%) • To "help cows" or "for cows" (3%)

Following are a few sample answers to this question from respondents:

Farm to Fridge:

- The fact that those animals were practically tortured, because people are to lazy to give up one food group, was heart breaking. it makes me feel disgusted with myself even, to be honest. [Female, age 15]
- The graphic depictions of animal cruelty. I will never be able to eat meat again without those images in my mind. [Female, age 16]
- Didn't realize a lot of the details that went on, do not want to stop eating meat but do want to look harder into making sure the meat I eat is humane. [Male, age 21]

A Life Connected:

- I want the world to get better. I don't want it to be like a few years from now and there be barely any trees, floating dead fish in all the oceans, and all our best animals extinct. [Female, age 18]
- The film was beautifully produced and a pleasure to watch; that said it does not change my mind. [Male, age not provided]
- We eat too much red meat anyway, so if it helps the planet to reduce consumption, it's a relatively painless change to make. We already eat very little poultry, seafood, eggs, and dairy in our house. [Female, age 20]

Geico Couple:

- It just seemed as if the couple in the video seemed so happy about the changes they had made. Maybe I myself could do the same, and feel better about myself. [Female, age 15]
- Red meat is very high in fat and calories. I would like to slow my consumption and focus more on seafood for my meat consumption. [Male, age 22]
- Seeing the transformation of this couple's life and lifestyle was inspiring. Their matter-of-fact this-is-what-we-did-not-pushing-it-down-my-throat made me more inclined to hear their message and process what they were saying. Also the meals that were shown looked very appetizing and desirable. [Female, age unknown]

Maxine's Dash:

- I just didn't like the fact that for us to eat we have to kill and hurt animals. I don't think that's fair. [Female, age 15]
- Made me really consider the thought of ending another beings happiness. The fight to survive is a powerful and when you hear the story of a creature that makes it, it is very moving and beautiful. [Male, age 19]
- If cows are subjected to such harsh treatment because humans have such a high demand for beef, than I don't want to support that. [Female, age 19]

Discussion

There is increasing interest in the use of video outreach to advocate for vegetarianism and veganism. This interest has grown even further with the advent of “pay-per-view” video advocacy⁸, where viewers are typically paid \$1 to watch at least four minutes of a video about farm animal cruelty and veganism. Additionally, the increasing use of the internet as a video-sharing platform (e.g., on YouTube and Facebook) has created new opportunities to use video as an advocacy tool.

The decision regarding which video to use to most effectively create behavior change among viewers depends on a number of factors including one’s target audience and which message or call to action the video will convey. This small study does not definitively answer which approach (graphic content, non-graphic appeal to compassion, environment, or health) is more effective. Nor does this study definitively state how many people will change as a result of watching the videos.

However, the study indicates that, for an online audience of 15-23 year olds, *Farm to Fridge* appears to be more effective than the other three videos. Interestingly, this finding was statistically significant with respect to reducing or eliminating eggs and dairy products, but it was not statistically significant with respect to reducing/eliminating meat products. In the absence of contrary evidence, HRC believes that short, graphic videos are a good choice for this audience, particularly when an incentive is provided to help overcome potential issues with engagement. *Farm to Fridge* is an excellent example and any outreach video selected should be of high production quality, although the length of the original video (11 minutes) is probably too long for most audiences and venues.

It should be noted, however, that the other videos included in this survey are also quite effective (as measured by self-reported consideration of dietary change) and may even be more effective with certain target audiences. Specifically, HRC believes *A Life Connected* will likely appeal more to educated audiences with above-average concern for the environment and *Geico Couple* will likely appeal more to older people and those with specific health or weight concerns.

The results of this study yield several recommendations for vegan/vegetarian advocates:

- Each of the four videos included in the study were effective with some viewers. The challenge for advocates is to match the most effective message with the target audience. Start by learning about your target audience and what motivates them.
- For younger audiences that are provided an incentive, the use of short, graphic videos (e.g., *Farm to Fridge*) seems most likely to lead to dietary change, including both reduction and elimination of animal products (most notably eggs and dairy products).
- The animal protection movement must continue producing high-quality undercover video footage to combat the notion that these practices are exceptions. Additionally, a large majority of people in the U.S. (73%) supports “anti-cruelty” investigations as a tactic⁹.

⁸ See the VegFund E-Newsletter, July/August 2012, <http://bit.ly/QTXK5s>

⁹ See HRC’s *Animal Tracker*, Year 4, <http://www.humaneresearch.org/content/animal-tracker-wave-4-march-2011>

- Videos should always include a call to action that specifically encourages reduction/elimination of animal products and provide specific resources to help people transition.
- Video outreach programs should track how frequently people stop watching the video to ensure that most respondents are hearing the message.

As mentioned previously, no single study provides a definitive answer regarding which type of video is most effective to create lasting behavior change. HRC's final recommendation is for advocates and scholars to conduct more research on the topic of effective vegetarian/vegan outreach. Specifically, HRC recommends further exploring the following research topics:

- How does a “captive” audience such as PPV participants compare with other audiences that are not incentivized to watch an entire video? The results of the current study suggest that simply keeping the attention of the target audience for an entire video segment may be as or more influential than the content of the video itself.
- How do other audiences respond to these sample videos (and other videos yet to be identified) regarding considering changing diets? Is the relative effectiveness of graphic video footage limited to the younger audience surveyed for this study?
- What is the long-term impact of viewing these video segments and how does that impact differ by type of message? Longitudinal studies are usually difficult to undertake, but they would allow advocates to understand how people change over time.
- How prevalent is vegetarian/vegan recidivism; i.e., how many people become vegetarian or vegan and then revert to consuming animal products, and why? Advocates can use this information to help support new vegetarians and vegans and limit recidivism.
- When using a “testimonial” approach, is it more effective to frame it as a positive or negative story? Is it more effective (and for which audiences) to tell stories about animals such as in *Maxine's Dash* or about people such as the *Geico Couple*?

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