



Blog | Submissions and Style Guidelines

Overview

[The Vegan Society blog](#) was launched on 13 February 2015, and a new blog post has gone live every Friday afternoon from then on. Sometimes we have additional blog posts if they tie in with a particular awareness day or event. Thousands of people around the globe from all walks of life read The Vegan Society's blog, so we ask that bloggers try to keep their scope international if possible. However, you can direct your post to a particular and specific audience by following the 'pitch' submission procedures as outlined below.

Submissions

We welcome submissions throughout the year on a range of topics relating to veganism. All you have to do is email web@vegansociety.com with your pitch, with the email subject 'Blog pitch'. Recent editions of the blog have covered important debates such as the feminisation of care in animal advocacy, as well as providing a space for bloggers to tell their vegan story, for bloggers to write on current vegan issues and events as well as a space for 'fun' comment geared towards driving engagement. Take a look at past blog posts to familiarise yourself with topics and writing ability. Whether you wish to write about stock-free farming, global food security, the latest vegan news, personal advocacy and outreach, we are open to all vegan-related suggestions. However, we only accept vegan nutrition and health blogs from registered dietitians.

When pitching a blog topic to web@vegansociety.com try to include the following information:

- What is the aim of your blog post? Is it to provide outreach, to encourage debate, to drive engagement or to provide light relief?
- Who is the intended audience? Is it young vegans, new vegans, established vegans or non-vegans, etc.?
- What is the structure of your post? Will you provide images?
- What does this blog post hope to achieve? Does it have a call to action?

An example pitch could look like this:

"My blog post topic is entitled [‘tips to convince your family you’re serious about veganism’](#). Its objective is to provide outreach to its intended audience: young vegan-curious people living at home/with parents. It will be a fun article intended to provoke laughter as well as provide solutions to a serious issue. With that in mind, it will roughly be 600 words. I will provide a hi-res image of myself and my family having a vegan picnic to be used in the article, though I would like The Vegan Society to source the second image. Its call to action will be for the vegan-curious to search for local vegan groups, either through The Vegan Society’s website or through others’, to help them on their vegan journey."

[Click here](#) to see an example of an academic blog post that was aimed towards established vegans, with the intention to provoke activists into re-assessing internalised behaviour as well as encourage debate. Note: blog posts do not need to be academic.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to see examples of more fun-loving blog posts, our most typical kind of blog post, designed to inform as well as capture the reader’s interest and/or imagination.

If you’re interested in submitting a recipe blog, [this](#) and [this](#) blog demonstrates what we’re looking for: interesting bio on the author, then into the recipe(s). Try to liven up the recipes by making them more personable.

FAQs

What’s the word count?

Blog posts are usually between 750 and 1200 words, or more if you’re including recipes.

When’s the deadline?

We accept submissions all year round. However, if you wish your blog post to go out on a specific date and have confirmed this with The Vegan Society, first drafts need to be in two weeks before the agreed date. This allows time for the blog post to be sent back to you for editing if needed. Note: The Vegan Society reserves the right to pull or reschedule the blog post at the last minute.

How many images are included in the article?

Between one and three.

Can I include links?

We allow links to be included in blogs to provide further information on the subject. We ask that links lead to reputable sources, and that they do not lead to products

that would be suitable for the Vegan Trademark, but are not registered. Any external links will be checked and approved by The Vegan Society. We are happy to include links back to the author's website and/or social media as credit for the blog, in the by-line provided by the author.

How do I submit my work?

When you are ready to submit, please email web@vegansociety.com with your piece saved as an attachment. Accepted formats include MS Word document (.doc), (.odt) and (.rtf) files. If you have relevant images to include, you can attach them with your piece in the email, or you can upload any large images to your preferred file sharing site (e.g. Dropbox or WeTransfer) and share the link with us.

When will I hear from you?

We try to read and respond to every submission within four weeks, but sometimes it takes longer. Thanks in advance for your patience. If you haven't heard from us in a while and would like an update, please email web@vegansociety.com.

Will my article be edited?

Content may be edited, and the editor's decision is final.

How will I be credited?

Writers are invited to include a short by-line at the end of their piece which can be about themselves and what they usually write about, and a website URL, if desired, or mention of a book, product or service they provide. By-lines should be under ten words ideally, although occasionally we have enough space to print a sentence or two. Image credits will be made next to the image.

Does The Vegan Society pay for submissions?

The blog posts have been provided on a voluntary basis by our supporters, almost without exception. You will retain all copyright in all Work but grant us an irrevocable, royalty free, worldwide licence to use, copy, store, print, publish, display, reproduce, and distribute the Work in any current or future medium. The licence shall be exclusive to us from the date of creation until 90 days following publication by us of the Work. You warrant that the Work is original and that all relevant third-party clearances have been obtained, including for any images supplied by you.

Style Guide

The aim of this style guide is to improve consistency across all of our written communications and to serve as the unified document of reference on our house style. For anything not covered in this style guide, consult [Oxford Dictionaries](#) and [The Guardian and Observer style guide](#).

Images

- If you wish to include images rather than have The Vegan Society source them, please include generally positive, inspiring images of high resolution. In particular, note that we do not use images of animal slaughter or suffering on our site as a matter of policy.

Title of blog

- Titles should be roughly five words in length, but allowances are made for longer titles.

Summaries

- Summaries must be concise, consisting of two-three sentences, using short words to avoid large gaps.
- Don't just state the obvious – say something interesting!
- This is what will appear in large letters at the start of your blog, and as the link text on a web link of your post, so think carefully about how to make it attention grabbing.

Quotes

- Pull quotes should be used wherever possible to break up the text.
- Accuracy is paramount, but text may be omitted for reasons of space or clarity.

Call to action

- Posts should generally end with a further action that readers can take.
- Think: "Why are we publishing this article?"
 - To inform – use bullet points, include links, write with authority.
 - To entertain – use a new style that is bright, bold, and engaging.

- To persuade – include punchy, targeted messages and phrases.

Products

- Unless pre-arranged, only products registered by the Vegan Society's Vegan Trademark can be featured.

Consistency

Abbreviations and acronyms

- Use full stops after some abbreviations (such as 'e.g.', 'i.e.' and 'etc.') but not for titles (e.g. 'Dr'), or initials. Check the dictionary if unsure.
- Write 'e.g.' and 'i.e.'. These expressions should be preceded by a comma or written in parentheses. Do not write a comma after them. They are not interchangeable: 'e.g.' means 'for example' and 'i.e.' means 'that is'.
- Write any abbreviations in full the first time they are used with the abbreviation in brackets afterwards if it comes up again later. If only mentioned once, there is no need to include the short form. There is no need to spell common abbreviations such as 'CEO' and 'e.g.' in full.

Accents

- Do not include an acute accent on 'cafe' or other foreign words that have been anglicised or are commonly used in English. Check the dictionary if unsure.

Ampersand

- Only use if part of an official name (e.g. 'Marks & Spencer'). Otherwise, write the word 'and'.

Apostrophes

- Never use an apostrophe when forming the plural of a word by adding an S. This includes abbreviations (e.g. 'three CEOs'), single letters (e.g. 'the word has two Ts') and decades (e.g. 'the 70s').
- 'It's' can only mean 'it is' (e.g. 'I think it's going to rain') or 'it has' (e.g. 'it's stopped raining').
- 'Its' is the possessive form of 'it' (e.g. 'the society is changing its image') and never takes an apostrophe.
- All possessive nouns take an apostrophe:
 - With singular nouns not ending in S, add an apostrophe and a further S (e.g. 'Anna's cake').
 - With singular nouns ending in S, add an apostrophe afterwards. Add a subsequent S if you would pronounce it out loud (e.g. 'James's car'), but not if you wouldn't (e.g. 'Socrates' teachings').

- With plural nouns ending in S, add an apostrophe afterwards (e.g. 'Members' Area'). Do not add a further S.
 - With plural nouns not ending in S, add an apostrophe and an S afterwards (e.g. 'children's toys').
- Apostrophes should be closing single quotes (') and not straight quotes ("). Most word processors convert straight quotes into curly ones automatically, but this can be an issue in plain text and web editing.

Bias

- Ask yourself, is it necessary to refer to personal characteristics such as sex, religion, racial group, disability or age? Are the references to group characteristics couched in inclusive terms? Do the references to people reflect the diversity of everyone reading? Is the use of jargon and acronyms excluding people who may not have specialised knowledge of a particular subject?
- All communications by The Vegan Society should be inclusive of non-binary genders as well as trans and intersex individuals. In circumstances when the use of non-binary language would detract from the clarity and effectiveness of our primary message (e.g. when referring to government nutrition guidelines that have been expressed in terms of gender) we will still strive to be inclusive (e.g. those who do not fit into the gendered binary should be advised to seek medical advice or to utilise their best judgement on nutritional issues).
- Use inclusive terms such as 'firefighter', 'police officer', 'spokesperson', etc.

Branding and in-house language

- Write 'The Vegan Society' (upper case T, V and S).
- When using 'The Vegan Society' as an adjective, 'The' can be omitted, e.g. 'Vegan Society leaflets'.
- If The Vegan Society has already been referred to before by its full name and the context is clear and unambiguous, 'the society' in lower case can also be used.
- The words 'trustee', 'staff' and 'volunteer' are lower case.
- 'Council of Trustees' is the proper name of the governing body of the charity (e.g. 'The Vegan Society is governed by the Council of Trustees'). In a generic sense, use lower case (e.g. 'the charity is governed by a council'). Write 'Council' with a capital C when referring to the Council of Trustees in short without an article (e.g. 'this was decided by Council'). Capitalisation of these terms has been inconsistent historically, but we should aim to be more consistent going forwards.
- Individual trustee titles such as 'Chair', 'Vice-Chair' and 'Treasurer' are capitalised.
- Senior Management Team (SMT) is capitalised.
- The title 'Ambassador' is capitalised.

- The name of our quarterly magazine is *The Vegan*.
- 'Members' Area' is capitalised.
- The Community Network (lower case T unless at the start of a sentence) is made up of Community Organisers and Community Advocates. When the context is clear, you can simply write 'the Network', 'Organisers' and 'Advocates'.
- Always check the website for the correct way to write the name of a campaign or event if unsure (e.g. 'Plate Up for the Planet', 'World Vegan Month').
- Upper case in 'Trademark Team' and 'Communications Team'.
- The name of our podcast is The Vegan Pod (upper case T, V and P).
- It is best not to use informal abbreviations such as 'TVS' or 'TM' in external communications.
- Refer to staff by name and role as 'Head of Communications Sam Calvert' or 'Sam Calvert, Head of Communications'.
- Job titles have capitals only when referring to a particular person (example from *The Vegan*: "You don't have to be a press officer at The Vegan Society to help to increase veganism's profile in the media.").
- We do not use the term 'cruelty-free' as this is a subjective term which does not acknowledge the use and abuse of humans as well as non-humans.
- '*In vitro*', 'lab-grown', 'cultured' and 'clean' meat all refer to the same concept. The way we refer to it is important. The more balanced approach is to avoid the negative connotations of '*in vitro*' and the positive ones of 'clean'. 'Lab-grown' and 'cultured' are accurate and neutral ways of referring to it.
- Use 'climate emergency', 'climate crisis' or 'climate breakdown' instead of 'climate change' to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation.
- Use 'plant-based' instead of 'plant based' or 'plantbased' unless it is the proper name of a brand, e.g. PlantBased magazine. Vegan should always be used instead of plant-based where the meaning is vegan except when communicating to professional audiences about the vegan diet such as dietitians or manufacturers and where using 'plant-based' aids clarity.

Animals

It is important to find the right balance between the use of language that does not promote or reinforce speciesism and language that is easily digestible for non-vegans, natural sounding and in line with our [brand guidelines](#).

- Try to avoid phrasing like 'humans and animals' and reinforcing the false human – animal dichotomy in general. Using phrases like 'human and non-human animals' is preferable. It is not ideal, but the unbiased and accurate language we need to discuss these topics does not currently exist.
- Use language that considers non-human animals a 'someone' rather than a 'something'. When referring to individual non-human animals whose sex you know, use 'he' or 'she' pronouns (example from *The Vegan*: "Archie No Tail was a young calf ... My attention was drawn to **him** because **he** stood in a corner of the barn looking inwards"). When referring to individual non-

human animals whose sex you don't know, use 'they/them' pronouns in the singular. Consider using the plural when discussing species in general to make the language more natural (so instead of 'the giant African snail uses their shell for protection', write 'giant African snails use their shells for protection').

- Use terms like 'companion animal' instead of 'pet'. Likewise, use terms like 'carer' or 'guardian' instead of 'owner', unless trying to draw attention to legal issues where terms like 'owners' and 'property' are necessary to reflect the legal status of non-human animals.
- Use 'farmed animals' rather than 'farm animals' and 'free living' or 'free roaming' rather than 'wild' animals.

Bullet-pointed lists

Lists are a useful way of getting information across without overloading the reader. Here is how you do it:

- Introduce your list with a colon (at the end of the sentence above).
- Use a capital letter at the start of each new point.
- Make sure that each point makes sense on its own.
- Make sure that all the items are of a similar kind (e.g. full sentences or just nouns).
- Do not use full stops after each item if writing short items without internal punctuation (such as items in a shopping list or a list of ingredients in a recipe).
- Use full stops after each item if writing full sentences or using internal punctuation.
- The whole list should be indented (this is normally done automatically by your word processor).

Capitals

- Use only when needed. Common nouns (e.g. 'vegan') do not have capitals.
- Proper names – names for places, individuals, organisations, titles, etc. – are capitalised.
- Campaigns and events have capital letters as they are proper names (e.g. 'Vegan on the Go' and 'Just V Show', thereafter simply 'the campaign' and 'the festival' respectively).
- Brand names can sometimes present idiosyncratic capitalisation practices (e.g. 'iPhone' and 'WhatsApp'). Always check official sources for the correct spelling and capitalisation of branded terms.
- Seasons are lower case (unless part of a proper name such as a title, e.g. *The Vegan, Spring 2014*).
- The words 'parliament' and 'government', including 'the British government', are lower case. 'MP' is upper case, but 'member of parliament' is lower case.

- Do not capitalise the word after a colon unless it is a proper name or the colon introduces a quotation.
- Capitalise single letters in expressions like 'that word has two Es' and 'C-list celebrity'.
- Write 'Direct Debit' and not 'direct debit' or 'DD'. The phrase 'Direct Debit Guarantee' is also branded.
- See [Branding and in-house language](#).

Collective nouns

- Normally take a singular verb and keep the pronoun singular (e.g. 'the society has...').
- There are exceptions in common usage such as the word 'staff' or band names. This is called [notional agreement](#) and is not automatically wrong.

Commas

- Use commas in short lists the following way: avocados, bananas and carrots.
- Do not use the Oxford or serial comma (e.g. avocados, bananas, and carrots) except to eliminate ambiguity: compare 'I dedicate this book to my parents, Donald Watson, and Sally Shrigley' with 'I dedicate this book to my parents, Donald Watson and Sally Shrigley'.
- Do not use commas to separate two or more independent clauses without a conjunction ([comma splice](#)). Introduce a conjunction or use another punctuation mark such as a full stop, semicolon or en dash.

Commonly confused words

- Try not to use 'that' and 'which' interchangeably in relative clauses, although the distinction is not as clear in British English (see the definition of veganism, for instance) as in other varieties. In general, 'that' defines whereas 'which' describes. For a more thorough explanation, see ['That' or 'which'?](#)
- See [here](#) for a list of other commonly confused words and how to use them properly.

Dates

- Dates should be written in the following format: Friday 31 May 2019. The day of the week or the year should only be included if relevant.
- In running text, write 'from Wednesday to Saturday' and not abbreviations such as 'Wed–Sat'.

Exclamation marks

- Use sparingly; convey emphasis with the language chosen.

Hyphen

Hyphenation practices can vary significantly from one organisation to the next, and it is not always easy to be perfectly consistent. It is difficult to write down hard-and-fast rules for hyphenation that apply across the board without covering many possible exceptions and delving into a level of linguistic and stylistic detail that becomes excessive for the purpose of this style guide. A lot of these differences are simply a matter of stylistic preference, but it is important to get hyphens right in instances when leaving them out can lead to ambiguity. End-of-line hyphenation is not covered as most of our text is left aligned and there is no need for it. Do not use hyphens in place of dashes. Below are some general guidelines:

Compound terms

- There are three types of compound terms: open (e.g. 'bottle opener'), closed (e.g. 'website') and hyphenated (e.g. 'make-up').
- There is a tendency towards closed compounds for common words ('email' is a lot more popular nowadays than the original 'e-mail').
- For compound nouns and verbs, simply check the dictionary for the correct spelling. When the noun and verb are the same, the tendency is to hyphenate the noun (e.g. 'a set-up') and leave the verb open (e.g. 'everything had been set up').
- Compound adjectives and modifiers are trickier, as hyphenation varies depending on position and dictionaries often cannot help. The general rules are:
 - Hyphenate compound adjectives when they precede the noun they accompany (e.g. 'vegan-friendly restaurants', 'gluten-free cake') but not when they follow it (e.g. 'the restaurant is vegan friendly', 'the cake is gluten free').
 - Do not hyphenate compound adjectives beginning with adverbs ending in '-ly' as confusion is likely (e.g. 'a poorly planned event').
 - Compound adjectives beginning with adverbs not ending in '-ly' can be hyphenated before a noun but not after. The tendency is not to hyphenate when there is no risk of confusion. Hyphenate when the adverb and adjective forms are the same to eliminate ambiguity (e.g. 'best-paid job' and 'best paid job' mean different things).
 - Unambiguous compound modifiers generally don't need to be hyphenated (e.g. 'animal rights march' and 'animal ethics expert').
 - When the compound modifier is a foreign phrase, only use a hyphen if present in the original language (e.g. '*in vitro* meat').

Prefixes

- Most prefixes do not require a hyphen (e.g. 'international', 'microbiology').
- Others are usually hyphenated, such as 'ex-' meaning former and 'self-' (e.g. 'ex-vegan', 'self-conscious'). 'Non-' is usually hyphenated in British English (e.g. 'non-vegan').

- Use a hyphen to separate a combination of letters that might be misread (e.g. 'co-op').
- Use a hyphen when the prefix stands alone (e.g. 'micro- and macroeconomics').
- Use a hyphen to distinguish meaning (e.g. 'recreate' and 're-create').
- Use a hyphen when a prefix precedes a capitalised word (e.g. pre-Renaissance, un-American) or numeral (e.g. pre-1980).

Numbers

- Use a hyphen for numbers twenty-one through ninety-nine.
- When writing compound terms with numbers, hyphenation guidelines are the same as those for compound modifiers in general. With ages, for instance, use hyphens when they precede the noun (e.g. 'a 30-year-old man') but not when they go after (e.g. 'the man is 30 years old'). When the age is a noun, hyphenate (e.g. '20-year-olds are more likely to go vegan').
- Do not use hyphens for spans or ranges. Use an en dash.

Italics

Use italics for:

- Titles of books, films, albums, etc. Single quotation marks (in roman) are used for sections of the above, for example newspaper articles and chapters in books.
- Newspaper names are often written in roman and 'the' is not capitalised (e.g. 'the Guardian').
- Website URLs (omit 'https://www.'). Make sure to remove the hyperlink and underlining for print material such as leaflets and the magazine.
- Email addresses.
- Foreign words and phrases, unless commonly used in English (e.g. 'a vegan cafe' but '*in vitro* meat').
- Bylines are italicised in *The Vegan*.
- Make sure punctuation marks outside the italicised phrase are not in italics.

Measurements

- Use metric weight measurements, with imperial in brackets if required. Try not to include recipes measured in American 'cups', or, if doing so, try to include a conversion to grams, millilitres, etc.
- Use figures, not words, for numbers in measurements.
- Abbreviated measurements should generally be separated from the figure by a space, just as if you were typing out the full word (e.g. '20 kg', '2 tbsp', '200 °C').

Distances can be imperial or metric. Always spell out 'metre' and 'mile'.

Numbers

- Write out numbers one to nine in full except in measurements, recipes and when they appear next to numbers above ten (e.g. 'one dog, two cats and three cows' but '1 dog, 2 cats and 73 cows').
- Use figures for 10 onwards, except at the start of a sentence.
- Write numbers like 'one hundred' or phrases like 'several thousands' in full.
- The abbreviation 'm' for million and 'bn' for billion (one thousand million) can be used when referring to inanimate objects, but spell out in full when referring to human and non-human animals (e.g. '12 million chickens').
- Do not use commas in numbers below 9999.
- From 10,000 onwards, use a comma to separate zeros.
- The pound sign is placed before the figure with no space. There is also no space before the abbreviation 'p' (e.g. '50p'). Do not include pence if it's zero (e.g. '£1' not '£1.00').
- Following the rules for the pound sign, other currency signs are written before the figure without a space (e.g. '€5', '\$20').
- Page numbers can be written in full as 'page 1' and 'pages 1–5' in running text without many references. See [Referencing](#) for page numbers in notes.
- Fractions should normally be written out and hyphenated (e.g. 'two-thirds') except in recipes or more technical texts with a focus on figures.
- Write the time as '5.45pm' or '4am'. Do not write a space before 'am' and 'pm' and do not include full stops in 'am' and 'pm'. Simply write 'noon' or 'midnight' (not '12 noon').

Percentages

- Use the percent symbol without a space next to figures, e.g. 32%.
- Use the word 'percent' (rather than the traditional British spelling 'per cent') when not using figures, e.g. five percent.

Quotation marks

- Single quotation marks:
 - Use single quotation marks when referring to a word or short phrase that is not an actual quote taken from another source (e.g. "The word 'government' is lower case").
 - Use single quotation marks rather than italics for sections of larger works such as a chapter of a book or a poem from a collection.
 - For quotes inside quotes: "The British Dietetic Association has affirmed that a well-planned vegan diet can 'support healthy living in people of all ages' in an official document signed by its CEO."
- Double quotation marks:
 - Use double quotation marks for short quotes from another source.
 - Use block quotations without quotation marks for longer quotes (approximately 50 or more words, although the decision should be made based on layout rather than based on the number of words). Introduce the quotation with a colon and indent the whole block quotation. Block quotations are often avoided in interviews and when writing in columns.

- When quoting multiple paragraphs at a time without a block quotation, the standard rule is to begin every new paragraph with opening quotation marks and only use closing quotation marks for the final quoted paragraph.
- Quotations can be introduced by commas (if the introduction is not a complete sentence such as 'He says'), colons (if the introduction is a complete sentence such as 'The book ends with the following sentence'), or no punctuation at all if integrated into the main sentence (e.g. "Kay Lovelle has always been freaked out by meat because it's 'way too close to what I'm made of'").
- In general, use reporting verbs such as 'say' or 'claim' in the present tense (e.g. "The Vegan Society includes 'as far as is possible and practicable' in their definition of 'veganism'").
- If you are trying to draw attention to the fact that someone's opinion has changed or you are referring to a specific moment in the past, use the past tense (e.g. "Shortly after moving offices, CEO George Gill said, 'When I joined the society back in 2009, I was one of just 10 members of staff.'"). If this same quote is used in a more general context at a later date, it can be reported in the present tense.
- Begin quotations with a capital letter unless the quotation is integrated into the main sentence.
- Most word processors automatically change straight quotes, single (') and double ("), into curly ones, single (') and double ("). This is not always the case when formatting text directly on web editors. Straight quotes should never be used in written communications (but they are essential in other areas such as coding).
- Unquoted final full stops and commas go outside the quotation marks in British English when not quoting a full sentence (e.g. "Kay Lovelle has always been freaked out by meat because it's 'way too close to what I'm made of'."). If you are quoting a complete sentence, final punctuation goes inside the quotation marks. This is also the case when you begin to quote mid-sentence but go on to quote a complete sentence.

Spellings

- Use British spellings.
- Use '-ise' and '-isation' suffixes (e.g. 'organise', 'organisation') rather than '-ize' and '-ization'. There are exceptions such as 'capsize'.

Tone of voice

- Our tone of voice is positive, inclusive, and inspiring.
- In general the blog should be informal, positive, authoritative, concise and conversational.
- Academic articles or expert opinion should be accessible and interesting to an engaged general public.