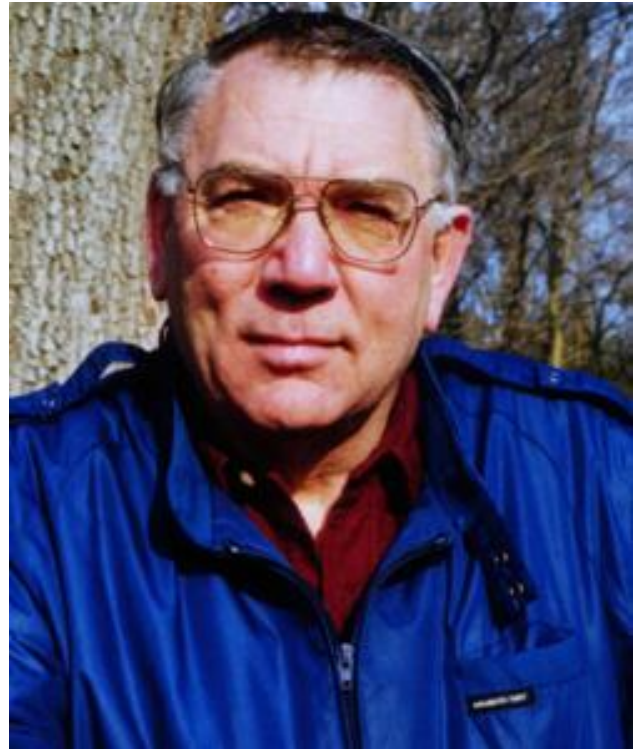


EVEN Interview with Howard Lyman

Animal Welfare Activist, Author, Mad Cowboy

Howard F. Lyman is a 4th generation family farmer (and vegan) from Montana. After 20 years of operating a feed lot, he sold his ranch and started working for farmers in financial trouble. He was a lobbyist in Washington, and ran for Congress in 1982.



He is the former Director of the "Beyond Beef Campaign" and the Humane Society of the United States' "Eating with Conscience" Campaign. Howard is the past President of both the International Vegetarian Union, and EarthSave International, and he is currently President of [Voice for a Viable Future](#).

Howard travels over 100,000 miles every year as a speaker and lecturer. A Feature Documentary on his life is now available on DVD, and Howard's new book, "No More Bull!" was published to wide acclaim. He currently lives in Ellensburg, Washington, with his wife Willow Jeane, and his cat, Ceasar.



EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Howard: In 1990 I was in Washington DC working as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill. I was overweight, my blood pressure was sky high and my cholesterol was over 300. At lunch I would get a nose bleed. Now I wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I knew I had a problem.

What was difficult was that I came from Montana, which is not overrun with vegetarians, so I decided in 1990 I'd become a closet vegetarian. I lost some weight, my blood pressure and cholesterol went down and I thought,

wow, if I did this being a *closet* vegetarian, just imagine what would happen if I did more. I had already lost 130 pounds, my blood pressure had gone to normal, and my cholesterol went from 300 to 135. So I was convinced it was the thing that was working for me. So I came out of the closet and went from being a closet vegetarian to a vegetarian proponent.

EVEN: Who was an influential person in your life earlier on that led you to veganism?

Howard: Jay Dinshah [*founder and president of the American Vegan Society*], a great friend of mine, probably did more for me to help me understand the context of being a vegan. It started because of my health, but I'm vegan today because of the animals. Even if someone proved it was healthy, I *still* wouldn't eat meat. What really makes my motor run is that when I look into the eyes of an animal, I can say unequivocally, "You have no fear from me." Because for the rest of my life, for as long as I live, I will never eat an animal. There is no need for them to die.

"Thoughtlessly, we kill animals, cut them up, and consume them. It shouldn't be surprising that there's something equally violent and thoughtless about the way we cut ourselves up in the hope of curing ourselves of the diseases caused by eating animals." - Howard Lyman, No More Bull!

EVEN: What advice would you give to a vegan advocate wanting to become more of an activist?

Howard: When I talk to a person who is an advocate of being vegan, I would say the most important thing to do is to walk your talk. You will affect more people by what you do than what you say. So for me to be an activist, I have to LIVE what I believe and if I do that, people will ask me why I do what I do. And then I get the opportunity to tell them with them *listening* rather than me pointing a finger at them. When you point at someone you have one finger pointed at them and three back at yourself. I guarantee you they will come and ask you why you are vegan, and then you have a great opportunity to educate them.

EVEN: What do you think makes veganism hard for people?

Howard: It's really hard for most because they have no understanding what a vegan is. It sounds like someone who came from Mars. What I always try to do is to explain it to someone by talking about myself. So I tell them why it works for me. Weight, blood pressure, cholesterol --- being vegan has helped me with my life! And what is great is that I can be a friend to every animal on the planet!!

Also, it is important to make someone comfortable by using humor --- *The problem with being a vegan is that you have to attend more funerals than the meat eaters do.*

“For those who are still merely vegetarian and not yet vegan, I ask, what in heaven’s name are you waiting for?” - Howard Lyman, No More Bull!

EVEN: What, in your opinion, is the most misunderstood idea about veganism?

Howard: I think what is most misunderstood is that people believe it's something that is very difficult to achieve. That you can't go out into polite company. The fact of it is that all you have to do is consume a diet with nothing that had a face, a liver or a mother. Being vegan is easy. It's like falling out of bed. As soon as you learn to enjoy the benefits of a vegan lifestyle, it couldn't be better.

EVEN: What one thing from your thinking in childhood do you wish you could change?

Howard: When I look back on my life I wonder what it would have been like if I had had the same opportunity back then that my grandchildren have today. Imagine being born and raised a vegan, being brought up without eating any animals. My grandchildren may live forever!

EVEN: If you were to mentor a younger person today, what guidance might you offer? What encouraging words might you share with a newbie?

Howard: When I talk to them today I tell them how fortunate they are that they do not have all the bad things in their bodies or the guilt on their conscience of abusing animals. And instead you have a pure body--- a temple--- that is not defiled. How fortunate can you be?

EVEN: Do you have a favorite vegan meal or food you can tell us about that really makes veganism work for you?

Howard: My favorite is rice and beans and cabbage with jalapenos and tomatoes. It's like dying and going to heaven! Even a lousy truck stop still has that meal. Why worry about what I'm going to eat? You can get it anywhere!

"You don't really want to know where your food comes from, you say?"

Let me suggest that if you don't want to know where something comes from, maybe you shouldn't be putting it in your mouth."

- Howard Lyman, *No More Bull!*

EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Howard: What's worthwhile for me about being a vegan is that I just absolutely love good food! What better way of enjoying it than knowing nothing had to die for me to live? They could probably put that on my tombstone.

EVEN: Any opinion or insight on the future of veganism in today's world?

Howard: People talk about the problems facing the United States and the number of people in the world and ask how in the world are we going to feed them? Most of the problems in the news today could be solved with nothing more than a vegan lifestyle! The one thing we could do to make the problems all manageable would be to bring it down to a vegan lifestyle. Just start feeding the crops to people not animals. In my opinion---I'm 74, I'm middle-aged--- I believe before I die, the majority in the US will be vegan and subsisting on a plant-based diet. There is not a doubt about it. There is no other way that we can deal economically with our future unless people are vegan.

Just like abolishing slavery or women getting equal rights with men or finally facing up to dealing with civil rights all took hundreds and hundreds of years. I believe an adoption of a plant-based diet is going to happen within my lifetime. No one in the world is more optimistic than I am. Remember the only thing that changes human behavior is crisis. If you look at the number of crises we have in the United States, the answer to the majority of them is to adopt a plant-based diet.



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