

2018: A breakthrough year for Veganism & Animal Rights

Saturday 29 December, 2018

2018 has been a very successful year for the campaign group Go Vegan World. They used the year to display thousands of ads throughout Ireland, the UK as well as internationally. The group claims that the ads educate the public about the animals we use, prompting them to research the issues for themselves and supporting them to go vegan with a free vegan guide.

As we enter 2019 the group's activity shows no signs of letting up with more than two thousand ads showing on buses, billboards and streets across the UK and Ireland. The campaign includes a new ad that questions the notion of personal choice with photos of farmed animals next to the statement 'it's not a personal choice when someone is killed: use plants, not animals.'

The group, renowned for its fact-based advocacy, attracts a lot of public attention both from members of the public as they become aware of how other animals end up as food, clothing and even in our cosmetics and cleaning products, as well as attention from the industries that profit from using other animals. Unsurprisingly those industries have complained about the ads in an effort to silence and stymie the group's efforts.

Following on the success of the group's win in 2017, when the advertising watchdog approved the 'milk is inhumane' advert despite complaints from the dairy industry, they made another breakthrough in 2018 when the same watchdog approved the claim that animal research is torture.

The Advert and Complaint

The ASA decision followed a complaint about a Go Vegan World public information advertisement on a UK bus featuring a mouse holding onto a human hand, accompanied by the text *"They Trust Us, We Torture Them for Research"*.

A medical scientist asserted that it was misleading to say that we torture animals for research, because "scientific" research is regulated in the UK. However, Go Vegan World provided the ASA with evidence of the torture of millions of animals through research in the UK every year, even according to official statistics and legislative definitions.

The Ruling

The ASA agreed with Go Vegan World that there was sufficient evidence to support their use of the word "torture".

Commenting on the finding, Sandra Higgins, Director of Go Vegan World, stated

"Animal experimentation is the stuff of nightmares. We should not support it, any more than we should support killing other animals for food or any other use."

Research shows that most people disagree with frivolous experiments that cause harm, but many believe that experiments conducted on animals in the UK are necessary to address life-threatening human conditions; that is not the case. In fact, most experiments are unreliable because the results are not applicable to humans. Many of them are conducted for frivolous reasons and lack scientific validity. A 2017 analysis by the British Medical Journal cited a "systematic failure" to faithfully report the results of animal tests in order to secure funding and permission for human trials. Even in cases where there is a benefit to humans, we are morally obliged to find alternatives that do not involve using other animals."

Sandra Higgins of Go Vegan World commented on the ruling:

"Most people are against torturing animals. If we are opposed to torture, we should refuse to support it. If we buy products that have been tested on other sentient animals or that contain "ingredients" taken from their bodies, we are paying others to use and kill them for us."

For the most part, it is very easy to find products that are vegan friendly. However, at the moment our law requires that all medication be tested on animals. This must be changed. Experimentation on animals is morally wrong, does not produce useful data for humans and there are excellent alternatives that do not involve torturing other animals."

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Go Vegan World comments that *“this independent, legal finding substantiating our ad is hugely significant for animals used in laboratories and for the rights of all animals used as objects for human ends.”*

Ends

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