Veganism: Race, Politics, & Equality  
February 2012 Twitter Chat transcript  
Wednesday, February 29 @ 6pm PST/9pm PST

VegNews editors and our panel of experts discussed race, politics, equality (and more) that our movement is facing today.

**Special Guests:** Patrick Kwan (@PatrickKwan), Amie Breeze Harper (@sistahvegan), and Terry Hope Romero (@terryhope).

**OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT**  
(*beginning of chat starts at the end*)

- **about 12 hours ago @OlliesPlace** I was participating in the #VegNewsChat on Veganism, Race, and Equality. Big subject, hard to discuss in just 140 characters!

- **about 13 hours ago RT @VegNews: YUM! RT @PatrickKwan: #VegNewsChat** Q5 - In Chinatown NYC, you can get three big blocks of fresh, made-that-morning tofu for $1. #vegnewschat

- **about 13 hours ago @Miloni2020** I'm vegan, and have set foot in Whole Foods *once*. There are other options. #vegnewschat

- **about 13 hours ago** Anyone else still around? If you have questions about deep critique of race, veganism, and whiteness, feel free to contact me. #vegnewschat

- **about 14 hours ago RT @cherrycobbler: “@VegNews: Q1: Why did you go vegan? #vegnewschat” for the animals!**

- **about 14 hours ago RT @sistahvegan: Um, seriously, did any1 else realize that deep critiques of race and whiteness were ignored? ttyl. #vegnewschat**

- **about 14 hours ago RT @sistahvegan: correction: #vegnewschat**
• about 14 hours ago @sistahvegan I think that when people hear the word privileged they think rich, not "has access to clean water and medicine." #vegnewschat

• about 14 hours ago "@VegNews: Q1: Why did you go vegan? #vegnewschat” for the animals!

• about 14 hours ago @PatrickKwan @sistahvegan yeah, you two did well in critiquing the questions, but only so much from ultimately a lifestyle mag. #VegNewsChat

• about 14 hours ago @sistahvegan Hard to do so in 140 characters, but at least we tried, somewhat? :) #vegnewschat

• about 14 hours ago Um, seriously, did any1 else realize that deep critiques of race and whiteness were ignored? ttyl. #vegnewschat

• about 14 hours ago Goodnight! Thanks, @VegNews and @terryhope @sistahvegan @patrickkwan! #vegnewschat

• about 14 hours ago @VegNews A7: Two of my faves that embody positivity: @choosingraw @vegbooks #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @benjamin2971 I know the intention of the VegNews chat is well-meaning, but it has been hijacked by normative whiteness. #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago Good night everybody #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago We want to thank @sistahvegan @PatrickKwan @terryhope for joining us for this discussion! We're out of time. Good night! #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews Q7: Queen Afua, Supa Nova Slom, Itef Vita, Lauren Ornelas, Angela Davis, and Angela P. Harris. #vegnewschat
RT @VegNews: Q4: What are the best ways to educate on veganism and the vegan movement (food, legislation, outreach)? #vegnewschat

@VegNews the ultra-positive @patrickgoudreau #vegnewschat

And this goes back to my point that most in the USA are lacking a critical race literacy for the 21st century. #vegnewschat

what if veganism wasn't "normal?" that is, if it *wasn't* ok with no challenge to consumerism, white supremacy, etc.? #VegNewsChat

And this white midclass ontological framing of veganism is what this chat is about, but it is going unmarked. #vegnewschat

agreed - probably more than two. :) #VegNewsChat

Q6: Funny to think vegan is both associated w/ celebrities & not getting enough nutrition. Just make it a normal way of life. #vegnewschat

Definitely @PatrickGoudreau @choosingraw @MercyForAnimals @MFSanctuary @JLgoesVegan They're rock star activists! :) #vegnewschat

Yes. I see this in activists like Hip Hop vegans Supa Nova Slom and DJ Cavem who use hip hop to promote veganism. #vegnewschat

RT @VegNews: We have 10 minutes left in our chat! Our guest experts & readers, Q7: Who are some activists that inspire you? #vegnewschat
Think of it this way: we understand in order for ecosystems to thrive, a diversity of organisms is needed. Same for movements. 

right. veganism as a "choice" or in terms of "education" and "privilege" is a white racial frame

I feel like there are two different perspectives occurring as we all try to TALK about race and privilege. u? #vegnewschat

Q7: Jane Goodall she does so much to save the environment and does not show signs of slowing down. #VegNewsChat

There are "-isms" in every community, issue is whether we are working actively to confront it #VegNewsChat #vegnewschat

I feel many vegan commodities&their chain of production rely on 1st world privileged position of USA relying on NAFTA. #vegnewschat

Let's help our movement thrive by building diversity, ensuring wide spectrums of ideas, connections, strategies, approaches etc #VegNewsChat

Making vegan mainstream will help make it more normal and become accessible to everyone of all backgrounds #vegnewschat

If and when the dollar busts, people may be economically forced to eat vegan.

the question is not about expense; but the subjective meaning of dietary choices, calling it privilege is white privilege. #VegNewsChat

Absolutely! #vegnewschat
We have 10 minutes left in our chat! Our guest experts & readers, Q7: Who are some activists that inspire you? #vegnewschat

But which "people"? I am thinking about those who don't have access to produce and live in food deserts. #vegnewschat

RT @VegNews: Q6: Do you think the mainstreaming of veganism has helped people realize it's not a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat

NO but it is much more expensive. whole foods is $$RT @VegNews Q5: Do you believe veganism is perceived as a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat

Hello. Sorry Fabe's is joining the tail end of the #VegNewsChat -there are studies out now that show the US is eating less meat.

Very cool! RT @terryhope: Q3: Just wanted to add, 1st veg restaurant I saw not in suburbs of U.S., but Latin America in 80's #vegnewschat

A6: Not really, I think most of the vegans people hear about are still celebrities. #vegnewschat

Definitely. People are starting to see how vegetables and legumes can become a meal...and how accessible it can be! #vegnewschat

Q3: Just wanted to add, 1st veg restaurant I saw not in suburbs of U.S., but Latin America in 80's #vegnewschat

I am also thinking that choice is a privilege in the USA, when it comes to food and access, vegan or not. #vegnewschat

RT @PatrickKwan: #VegNewsChat Q5 - Some perceive veg as "privileged" cuz it's roped in w/ organic, natural foods. Truth is it's often cheaper. #vegnewschat
A: Yes, I run across the idea a lot. #vegnewschat

RT “@work4veggies: @VegNews A5: people don't realize veggies are actually very cheap, even organic ones (in season) #vegnewschat”

It's also insulting to people of color to suggest whites are privileged to be more ethical in contrast to POC's "everyday life" #VegNewsChat

It can be costly if you purchase a lot of faux products. But if you stick to the basics, it's very cost effective! #vegnewschat

Q5 Yes! Hear all the time that "fancy" vegan food is too pricey. Crazy that ppl believe veggies & tofu cost more than meat #vegnewschat

YUM! RT @PatrickKwan: #VegNewsChat Q5 - In Chinatown NYC, you can get three big blocks of fresh, made-that-morning tofu for $1. #vegnewschat

Q6: Do you think the mainstreaming of veganism has helped people realize it's not a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat

The question of the privilege of the vegan diet isn't about expense it's about the aestheticization of diet. #VegNewsChat

Q5 - In Chinatown NYC, you can get three big blocks of fresh, made-that-morning tofu for $1. #vegnewschat

Yes to those who do not understand reasons behind veganism see it that way. Some argue vegans are also elitist #vegnewschat

u must explain more. I know, hard on limited characters. :-). #vegnewschat
about 15 hours ago RT @terryhope: Q3: It can be hard to see in the US, but interest in the veg movement is growing over the world #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews It is a diet of privilege, and we are lucky to have the luxury to choose to eat ethically. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago RT @sam_metal: @VegNews lead by example! nothing inspires more than radiating positivity. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat Q5 - especially when dining out - veg lo mein is cheaper than chikn. veg burrito, falafels, etc are always cheaper #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Q5: Unfortunately it can happen. That's when it's important to showcase the real costs of meat vs. plant foods. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat Q5 - Some perceive veg as "privileged" cuz it's roped in w/ organic, natural foods. Truth is it's often cheaper. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @sistahvegan how can any anti-essentialist theory about race rely on a conflation of culture/race/diet? #VegNewsChat

about 15 hours ago RT @VegNews: Q5: Do you believe veganism is perceived as a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews A5: Yes a privilege even though people don't realize veggies are actually very cheap, even organic ones (in season) #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago No way! Many articles & campaigns promote $5 vegan meals RT “@VegNews: Q5: Is veganism perceived as a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat”

about 15 hours ago @VegNews decolonial? Critically reflecting on how colonialism shapes consciousness, desires, and trying to erase that 'damage' #vegnewschat
Absolutely...the diet is a luxury in many parts of the world considering all the options available here #vegnewschat

show ppl painful diseases & death lol. ppl think veganism is for snobs ironically

RT @sam_metal: @VegNews lead by example! nothing inspires more than radiating positivity. #vegnewschat

Q5: Do you believe veganism is perceived as a diet of privilege? #vegnewschat

We can start with accessibility, at @HumaneSociety/@HSIglobal, we make content in Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, French #VegNewsChat

Explain how CRT problematizes this. #vegnewschat

I the @PETA Lettuce Ladies! RT “@VegNews: Q4: What are the best ways to educate on veganism & the vegan movement? #vegnewschat”

what about, ex., sea shepherd's blatantly imperialist and racist vegan campaigns? is veganism sometimes colonial? #VegNewsChat

Q4 Yes, passion about whatever method you choose but w/mindfulness how [un]privileges/social location shape it. #vegnewschat

Could you expand on decolonial theorizing? Thanks! #vegnewschat

agreed, but CRT problematizes "the black body" in ways that make it hard to argue about a decolonized diet, no? #VegNewsChat

Ah, thanks @PatrickKwan ! There's lots to do indeed! #vegnewschat
Q4. For me, I focus on using racism as a starting point, show veganism as anti-racist through decolonial theorizing. #vegnewschat

Ha. @TerryHope answered #VegNewsChat Q4 much more eloquently than I did. What she said!!! :) #vegnewschat

Q4 - I think it's important for folks to follow their passion + utilize their expertise. Lots of work to do! #vegnewschat

A4: I def think food is the number 1 way, but also outreach: leafletting/writing letters to newspapers. Info is power #vegnewschat

Q4: Whatever you do best: cooking, speaking, writing, talking, doing. Do what you can and love doing it, or you'll burn out #vegnewschat

RT @VegNews: Q4: What are the best ways to educate on veganism and the vegan movement (food, legislation, outreach)? #vegnewschat

@benjamin2971 critrace could question how blacks are 'animalized' within colonial logic #vegnewschat

@VegNews lead by example! nothing inspires more than radiating positivity. #vegnewschat

Q4: What are the best ways to educate on veganism and the vegan movement (food, legislation, outreach)? #vegnewschat

@sistahvegan Thus the "we" - we the movement? we the grassroots? we the leadership? we the veg media? All? #VegNewsChat #vegnewschat

@benjamin2971 It does not really do it YET. I and a few others like Angela P. Harris are making the critical cross connections. #vegnewschat
Q3 Who is "we"?

Q3 is complex to answer when most people don't understand all facets of race: racial formation, racialization, etc.

how does critical race theory inform ideas about the black body in relation to veganism?

Also need to ask: What are "we" doing to build diversity, outreach to communities + mobilize leadership?

Q3: Good question. Maybe there is not enough media covering these groups? Not enough support?

I feel most people in the usa mainstream do not have a critical race literacy 4 the 21st century.

movements representation in the media mainstream is affected by racialized hierarchies of power.

Polls show support for animal protection in communities of color. But why isn't movement more diverse?

Polls find 87% Hispanics, 84% African Americans more likely to find using downed animals unacceptable.

It depends. In SF, probably not. In Louisville, absolutely.

86% Hispanics, 87% African Americans agree farms be inspected to ensure animal welfare laws are followed.
• about 15 hours ago @Vegan15 the movement's representation in the media mainstream is affected by racialized hierarchies of power. #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews 6 years later, I still do. #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews A3: Nope, based on reading @brownvegan’s great blog! #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago Polls show great support for animal protection in communities of color. But why isn't movement more diverse? #VegNewsChat #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago yes. the question of "racial disparities" is about a misguided notion of color-blindness as the solution to racism. #VegNewsChat

• about 15 hours ago Q3: It can be hard to see in the US, but interest in the veg movement is growing over the world #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago Q3. Question is too vague. the vegan experience is 'racialized' just like most experiences in the USA. #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago right away mom started cooking vegan & buying vegan cookbooks. Dad was a meat cutter, but supported me wholly. #VegNewsChat

• about 15 hours ago I also wrote one for @VegNews years ago of how I went vegan, but I don't think it's online! #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago There are plenty of veg folks of all backgrounds, globally + in US, who are not part of the veg movement per se #VegNewsChat Q3 #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago MT @sistahvegan: why vegan? seems to fit my black feminism, anti-racism. Anti-Speciesism extends my decolonial consciousness. #vegnewschat
about 15 hours ago @sistahvegan Q2. Dad told me our town chicken factories were "concentration camps 4 chickens" when I was 9. He planted the seed. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Must-read this! MT @PatrickKwan: Q2 - Wrote a piece for Animals Agenda re: my experience going veg http://t.co/a37Y3kbi #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago I’d like to emphasize that there's veganism + there's the vegan movement #VegNewsChat Q3 #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews #VegNewsChat not really depends on the location

about 15 hours ago @VegNews #VegNewsChat Q2 Yes. Especially because I just had a baby, even more focus on getting enough protein and vitamins from the family #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @LindzNikkiB Some family still tries to offer meat. Keeps me young by making me feel 16 all over again during holidays! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago RT @VegNews: Q3: Do you think there is a racial disparity in veganism? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago RT @VegNews: Q3: Do you think there is a racial disparity in veganism? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Q3: Do you think there is a racial disparity in veganism? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat Q2 - I wrote a piece for Animals' Agenda re: my experience going veg that may be of interest http://t.co/F7SPzzYw #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews Q1 I am an environmentalist and buddhist, realized it was one of the best things I could do for the earth and health #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Fantastic! MT @terryhope Q2: Family thought I'd starve or become weak willed. Not much support, but now they want to be veg. #vegnewschat
No one has gave me a hard time about it but I live in Portland Oregon which is very vegan friendly. Also vegan family

RT @sistahvegan: why vegan? seems to fit my blk feminism, anti-racism. Anti-Speciesism extends my decolonial consciousness. #vegnewschat

2 yrs & mom still thinks I'm crazy. It's ok, the feeling's mutual :) RT “@VegNews: Q2:Did u have any push back from ur family? #vegnewschat”

how do you theorize "the black body" in relation to veganism and decolonization without relying on essentialism? @sistahvegan #VegNewsChat

LOVE IT! MT sistahvegan Q2: Was supported. Father, though omnivore, told me that life for "food" animals is hell on earth. #vegnewschat

for my health and fitness.

Q2: Of course! Family thought I'd starve or become weak willed. Not much support, but they got over it! Now they want to be veg #vegnewschat

@VegNews #VegNewsChat no

Q2: Was supported. Father, though omnivore, told me that life for "food" animals is hell on earth, so he understood my logic. #vegnewschat

Was vegetarian & then my daughter was diagnosed with egg & milk allergies (+ others) #vegnewschat

Q2: day 1! Went to buy a vegan cookbk at the store and the salesman made a snarky comment. #vegnewschat
about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat Q2 - That said, growing up in a Chinese, Buddhist family in Chinatown NYC, I grew up with soymilk, tofu, seitan

about 15 hours ago #vegnewschat My community is health conscious, my mother raised me #veg, and I work at a #vegan lifestyle center. http://t.co/tyn0UsEZ

about 15 hours ago RT @VegNews Q2: When you went vegan, did you have any push back from your family and/or community? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Because I finally took responsibility & found out where meat really comes from #CAFOs RT “@VegNews: Q1: Why did you go vegan? #vegnewschat”

about 15 hours ago @VegNews my boyfriend's first complaint was "we're never going to be able to go out to eat!" now he knows he was wrong :) #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago My family was so supportive. I was recovering from an ED at the time so they were down for anything that would help me! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat Q2 - everyone says going veg is hard for them. I think I have a harder time than most - my parents were chefs. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews want to go more plant-based diet for health reasons too! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Q2: When you went vegan, did you have any push back from your family and/or community? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago @VegNews I went vegetarian after reading Diet for a New America and went fully vegan thanks to podcasts from @PatrickGoudreau #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago We love all these reasons of why our panelists and readers went vegan! #vegnewschat
• about 15 hours ago “@theloveofkale: Q1: I went vegan because I wanted to fuel my body in the best way possible...but I stay vegan for the animals #vegnewschat”

• about 15 hours ago #vegnewschat bc I have a lot.of food allergies

• about 15 hours ago Q1: I went vegan because I wanted to fuel my body in the best way possible...but I stay vegan for the animals #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews Monk go #vegan cause of Darwinian evolutionary principles directly impacting his psyche ..... #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews I went vegan because of a video of farmers beating the animals. Made me sick. 4.5 yrs later, still loving it. #VegNewsChat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews my second reason would be that it only seems to fit into an extension of black feminism & anti-racism activism 4 me #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago #VegNewsChat - I went vegan for animals. Like Isaac Singer said, went veg to disagree w/ the horrible treatmeant of animals. #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago Q1: Vegetarian at 16, vegan later seemed like a natural progression. Also meet more vegans & found great vegan food in NYC #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews #vegnewschat Finally woke up. Realized being veg didn't cut it.

• about 15 hours ago #vegnewschat. My #vegan evolution was for my body, mind, and spirit. http://t.co/dcaaV9Ev

• about 15 hours ago RT @VegNews: Q1: Why did you go vegan? #vegnewschat

• about 15 hours ago @VegNews Saw it through the eyes of vegan activist Queen Afua to decolonize the black body and reclaim a diet of love. #vegnewschat
about 15 hours ago Hi Patrick! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago I participated in a 2005 Satya mag article on race + the animal movement, glad to join #VegNewsChat to continue convo! http://t.co/sn6NbK1L

about 15 hours ago Hello Breeze! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Q1: Why did you go vegan? #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Joined! #VegNewsChat

about 15 hours ago Breeze Harper here. #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago Tonight, we'll be talking about Veganism: Race, Politics, & Equality with @PatrickKwan @sistahvegan @terryhope. Join us! #vegnewschat

about 15 hours ago correction: #vegnewschat

about 16 hours ago Hello world: testing out tonight's #VegNewsChat w/ @PatrickKwan @sistahvegan, so 'scuse the torrent of tweets to follow #vegnewschat

about 16 hours ago @PatrickKwan Welcome Patrick! He works as the New York State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. #vegnewschat

about 16 hours ago @sistahvegan Welcome Breeze Harper! She's the editor of Sistah Vegan and a PhD Candidate at UC Davis. #vegnewschat

about 16 hours ago @terryhope Welcome to Terry Hope Romero—VN columnist and vegan cookbook star with an international cookbook, out in the fall. #vegnewschat
• about 16 hours ago #VegNewsChat You guys and gals are all awesome! Also, pics of the HR department please.

• about 16 hours ago RT @VegNews: Don't forget! Only half an hour remains until tonight's #VegNewsChat! http://t.co/7U8HGn62

• about 16 hours ago RT @VegNews: Don't forget! Only half an hour remains until tonight's #VegNewsChat! http://t.co/7U8HGn62

• about 16 hours ago Don't forget! Only half an hour remains until tonight's #VegNewsChat! http://t.co/7U8HGn62

• about 16 hours ago 1 HOUR UNTIL #VegNewsChat: Veganism & Race w/ @PatrickKwan @sistahvegan @terryhope at 6pm PT. I'm excited to discuss this important issue!

• about 17 hours ago I'm participating in tonight's 9pm-10pmEST #VegNewsChat as a panelist; please excuse flurry of tweets from my normally low-traffic account!

• about 18 hours ago RT @SuperVegan: Tonight 9pmEST/6pmPST - Join @VegNews for #VegNewsChat on Race + Veganism with @PatrickKwan @TerryHope @SistahVegan! http://t.co/epzyfzI7

• about 18 hours ago RT @SuperVegan: Tonight 9pmEST/6pmPST - Join @VegNews for #VegNewsChat on Race + Veganism with @PatrickKwan @TerryHope @SistahVegan! http://t.co/epzyfzI7

• about 18 hours ago Tonight 9pmEST/6pmPST - Join @VegNews for #VegNewsChat on Race + Veganism with @PatrickKwan @TerryHope @SistahVegan! http://t.co/epzyfzI7

• about 22 hours ago don't look now: vegans talking about race! MT @PatrickKwan #VegNewsChat on Veganism & Race w/ @terryhope @sistahvegan at 9pm EST