**BYM Right Relationship with Animals Working Group
Annual Report (2023)**

BYM's Right Relationship with Animals Working Group has had an eventful year, in part because our mission--to achieve a peaceful relationship between humans and animalkind--intersects with other important concerns, including wanting to make right--

1. the grossly inequitable consumption of world resources

2. the wrongs imposed on our natural environment

3.  the damage the Standard American Diet inflicts on human health.

Last August at Annual Session 2022, we presented our first *Vegannual Challenge* to BYM, making us grateful for the work of Hood College's skilled culinary team and for the participation of more than seventy-five Friends, who either ate plant-based meals for some or all of the week, or just gave them a try.  We were cheered by spontaneous conversations with Friends at the Vegan Help Desk (kiosk) in Hood's dining hall, which were helped along by the cartoons about veganism decorating the space.  Also during Annual Session, our Working Group's vegan cookie ministry sweetened breaks during Meetings for Business.

As the winter holidays approached, we utilized BYM's website to issue tips for creating easy, delicious, plant-based holiday meals, with an emphasis on using animal-free ingredients to make the comfort foods that traditionally mark these occasions.

In January 2023, with the help of a few, non-yet-vegan-but-peace-oriented Friends, from Deer Creek and Menallen, who facilitated our conversations, we hosted our own version of *"Veganuary, the No-Pressure BYM Edition."*  Similar to Dry January, in which participants abstain from alcohol for the first month of the year, Veganuary participants make a concerted effort to rid their diet of foods derived from animals.  Approximately twenty Friends informed our weekly Zoom sessions, when we shared inspirations, easy recipes, and resources, while helping newcomers work through the challenges of resisting destructive cultural norms.  Others participated from a distance by joining our mailing list and reading weekly posts.

On February 1, 2023, we joined a group of like-minded Unitarian Universalists to host a stimulating webinar by Dan Jasper titled, *"You are what you eat:  how our food can help build a more peaceful, livable planet."*  Jasper is currently the Policy Advisor for Project Drawdown, where he works on multidisciplinary solutions for climate change and poverty alleviation, particularly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.  Prior to that, he worked for the American Friends Service Committee, advocating for peace with an emphasis on the U.S.'s relationships with North Korea and China.  In his talk, a call to action, Jasper drew connections between large-scale animal agriculture and environmental devastation, world hunger, and racism, cautioning his audience that hope is not an action plan.  Instead, we need to understand how power works.

Inspired by the popularity, and conversations had, during last year's Vegannual Challenge, coupled with this year's Veganuary Zoom gatherings, the Right Relationship with Animals Working Group invites Friends' voluntary participation in *Vegannual Challenge 2023*.  Please join us in drawing on the testimonies of Peace, Stewardship, Simplicity, and Equality, and give plant-based foods a try in the interest of creating a better world and promising futures for all.

Submitted by Dayna Baily and Margaret Fisher, Co-Clerks