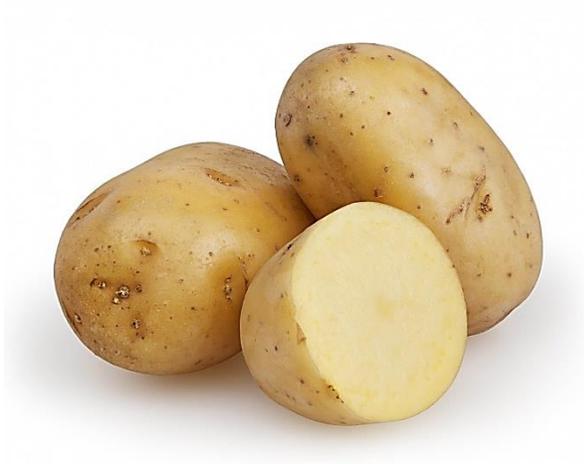


The Land of Meat and Potatoes? Animal Agriculture and Veganism in the Irish Discourse

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Highlights

- Legacy of Irish animism and vegetarianism
- Entanglement of colonial oppression and animal oppression
- Animal oppression in the making of the Irish nation-state
- Veganism in the modern Irish discourse

Irish Vegetarian Ethic

- Animist culture
- Limited 'hunting' and 'slaughtering'
- Mostly plant-based diets
- Dairy-based economy
- Both landscape and human bodies shaped by relationship to cows and sheep



Irish Vegetarian Ethic

- Under British colonialism, shifted to 'meat' and dairy based economy
- Ireland as an outsourced feedlot
- Reliance on a nearly vegan diet, heavy on potatoes, cabbage, and wild plants
- High food insecurity



New Irish Nation

- Many nationalists recognized role of animal agriculture in Irish oppression
- Some advocated vegetarianism to liberate bodies and country
- Irish also animalized to justify colonialism and inability to self-rule



New Irish Nation

- Rather than uproot speciesism in new Irish state, embracement of animal agriculture to achieve legitimacy and competitive edge in capitalist world system
- €3.7 billion meat and livestock exports
 - 1/3 of food and drink exports
 - €3.38 billion in dairy
- EU membership subsidizes
- Ireland exceeds emissions cap



New Irish Nation

- Cow population 1.8 mil at Great Famine
 - Today 6.3 mil
- Bord Bia “Foodwise 2025” projects €19b increase
 - 2% growth
- 2001 - 2011, meat consumption per head fell from 93kg a year to 77.5kg; 2016 – 96kg
- Dairy fell from 154 liters a year in 2001 to 135 liters a decade later (*The Irish Times*)



Animal Nationalism

- To challenge animal ag today is to challenge the state; unpatriotic
- Scholars ignore Irish vegan activism
- Today, unavoidable
 - Environmental pressures
 - Health crises
 - Western influence
 - Go Vegan World
- How is this reconciled in the media?

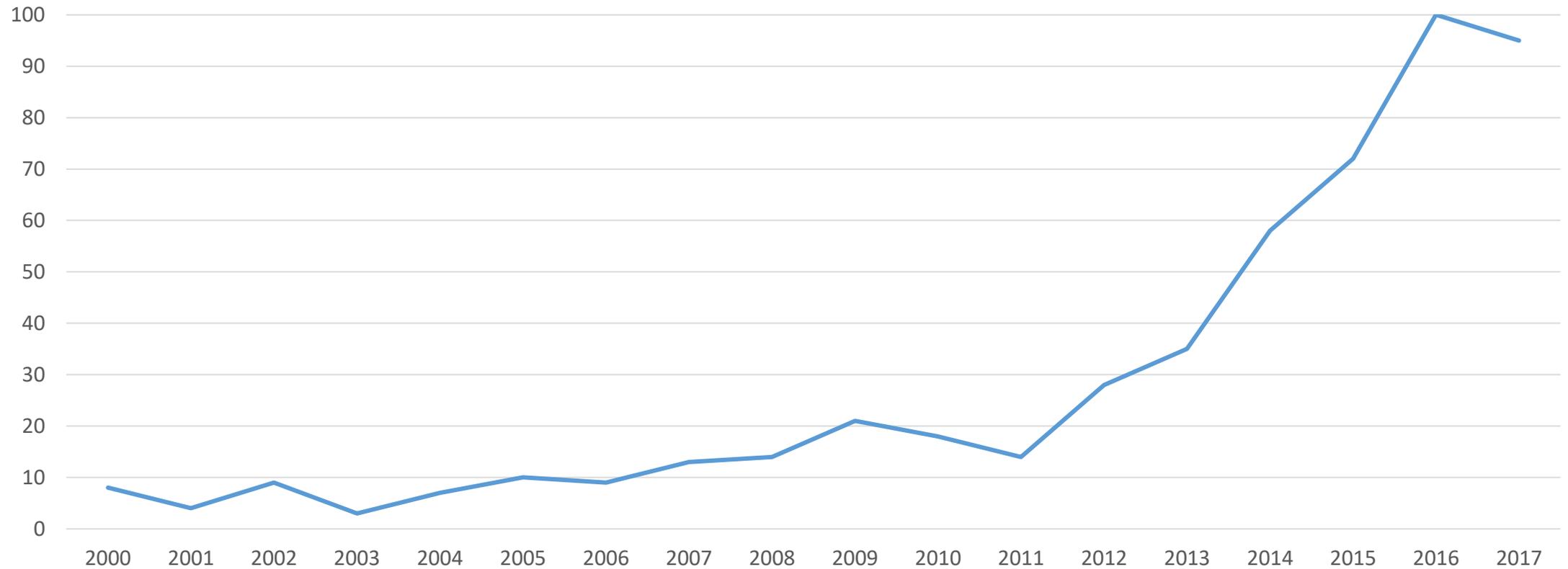


Methodology

- Content analysis of *The Irish Times*, 2017 keyword search for “vegan”
 - Methodology based on: Cole & Morgan (2011) “Veganphobia: Derogatory Discourses of Veganism and the Reproduction of Speciesism in UK National Newspapers.”
- Convenience sample of recent media coverage in other papers, television, and radio

Coverage in *The Irish Times*

Mentions of Veganism

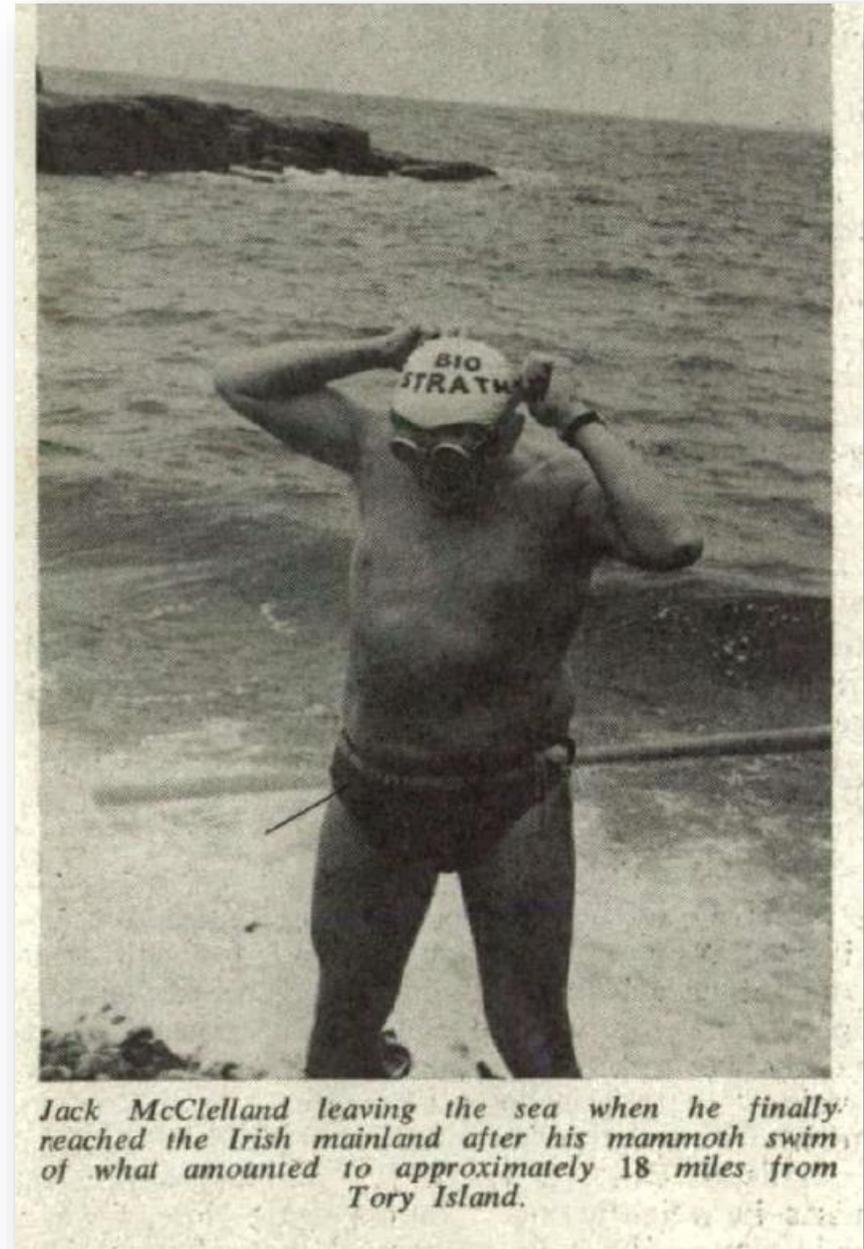


2017 Coverage in *The Irish Times*

- 72% food, 13% animal rights, 11% environment, 7% health
- Only 9% positive, with 62% neutral (mostly passing mention)
- 29% negative
 - Most framed veganism as difficult, ascetical, or ridiculous

Sideshow Veganism

- As a fringe movement, considered a curiosity
- Extremists
- Spectacles



The Vegan Threat

- Vegan message frequently juxtaposed with animal ag authority
 - Irish farmers as sensible and authentic Ireland
- Go Vegan World ads refused by Dublin Bus and Irish Rail
 - “overtly emotive and provocative”
 - Accepted anti-vegan National Dairy Council ads
- NDC identifies vegan “influencers”



Terrorism

- Veganism as foreign, terroristic threat to state
 - Dalziell & Wadiwel (2017) & Laura Wright's (2015) *The Vegan Studies Project*
- Go Vegan World as “ISIS” or “Militant”
- Sensationalizing vegan protest
 - “Farmer Subjected to ‘Frightening’ Online Abuse By Vegan Campaigners” – *Independent.ie*

HUMANE MILK IS A MYTH

The dairy industry took all her babies & all her milk.
Now it will take her life for meat, leather & byproducts.
She is 6 years old. Her natural lifespan is 25 years.



Civilizing Ireland

- Non-veganism framed as key to evolution of Irish bodies
 - Veganism would lead to a “nutrient deficit population;”
“massive population health issue” National Dairy Council
on Pat Kenny Show
- And Irish society
 - Famine as evidence to the fallibility of vegetables
 - Vegan claims of climate change framed as hoax

Defining the Irish

- Irish farming as superior
 - Evoking farmer tradition, family heritage, and mummies
- Animal cruelty narratives used to otherize
 - Muslim recipients of 'live export'
 - Travellers

Win a Man!

No, this is not a competition. It's a gentle hint. Cheese makes a man feel great. So use a little cunning. Serve a man cheese. And win his heart.

Cheese is manfood!

NDC National Dairy Council KENNYG

Just Food

- Vegan food is largest theme
 - Animal rights and environmentalism rarely discussed
 - Depoliticizing
- Often linked with travel or trendy restaurants
 - Exotifying / non-Irish



Positive Portrayals

- Many articles curious, welcoming, even celebratory of new Irish vegan cuisine, products, and restaurants
- Many neutral mentions, as though vegan options were normally expected



Conclusion

- Post-colonial Ireland's economy and identity bound to speciesism
 - Despite long history of animism and vegetarianism
 - And nationalist recognition of intersecting oppression
- Veganism granted relatively frequent media space
 - Although infrequently positive

