

# Interview with Vegan Outreach Lincoln and East Midlands



Corey Wrenn, Roanoke Vegan Examiner  
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Ruth Sanderson of Vegan Outreach Lincoln and East Midlands  
**Credits:** Ruth Sanderson

In celebration of [World Vegan Month](#), I will be hosting a collection of interviews with vegan abolitionists from across the globe. I'm excited to have this opportunity to showcase vegan activists and give a face to our beautiful movement. Be sure to check back for regular installments throughout the month of November.

Today's featured vegan abolitionist is Ruth Sanderson, speaking on behalf of [Vegan Outreach Lincoln and East Midlands](#) in England.

*Note: This organization is not to be confused with the non-abolitionist, new welfarist, and American-based group, Vegan Outreach.*

## Ruth, please describe your organization...

Myself and my partner Marcus are both abolitionist vegans and the founders of [VOLE: Vegan Outreach Lincoln and East Midlands](#) (No relation to the USA based Vegan Outreach). Marcus has been vegan for over ten years. I went vegetarian at 14 as soon as I realised [who I was eating](#). As I learned of the suffering implicit in eggs, dairy, honey, silk, etc., I gradually cut them out of my life until one day, about four years ago, I realised I was a vegan. We also both have strong environmental consciences so the [ecological credentials of a vegan diet](#) are a great additional bonus.

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We attend events that might lend themselves to offering a receptive audience for non-violent, vegan education. We've had mixed results so far, but it's all a learning process. Our presence exposes attendees to a new meme that they may not have considered before. Whatever the reaction, that initial exposure has at least taken place.

We also keep a regularly updated blog, have put on a university film screening for World Vegan Day, and delivered several talks. We hope to continue along similar lines, whilst being open to new ideas on how best to get the message out there.

### **What do you think should be the focus of the non-human animal rights movement?**

We believe the [educative focus of the animal rights movement should be "veganism or bust"](#). No confusing, inconsistent messages. Instead, only a firm statement that all animal use, irregardless of the measure of suffering, is unacceptable. As such, all available resources should be put towards achieving the goal of abolishing animal use through creative, non-violent vegan advocacy.

### **What are some of the biggest obstacles to reaching our goals?**


A big obstacle we face are the cash-rich animal welfare groups [eschewing consistent vegan education in favour of emotive and simplistic single issue targets](#). These serve only to maximise fundraising profits whilst sending out a confused message of what constitutes one's obligations towards other animals. They often work hand-in-hand with the interests of those who are exploiting the animals in a mutually gratifying PR campaign. As such, they achieve very little. This way of doing things seems to have failed in taking just one glance at the statistics regarding numbers of animals used and vegans gained. A truly pitiful lack of progress.

We can actually give a personal account of where we believe things to be going wrong, as we were heavily involved in the local, single issue campaign opposing the [proposed USA-style super dairy at Nocton](#). Our research led us to believe that the scrapped plan for this dairy was only a hollow victory. Factory farming remains entirely legal and the proposal only failed on environmental grounds. It had nothing to do with animal welfare.

The campaign did nothing to address the huge demand for cheap, plentiful cow's milk. Further still, the ["Not in My Cuppa"](#) slogan went above and beyond in offering tacit approval to all other sources of dairy milk. This fundamental flaw, coupled with welfare and environmental standards remaining comparable to that of standard farming practices,

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## **Corey Wrenn's Preferred Links**

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- [Vegan Freak: Being Vegan in a Non-Vegan World](#)
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led us to question the actions of both local and big animal welfare groups. All of whom, meanwhile, were squabbling over who could claim public credit for a fundamentally worthless "victory."

### How is your activism impacted by where you live?

Marcus and I set up Vegan Outreach Lincoln and East Midlands within the last six months as we became increasingly frustrated at the lack of vegan education opportunities in a very welfare-centric, local group in Lincolnshire. We gave years of highly involved service: co-organising several events (including the [Lincoln Veggie Fayre](#)), procuring and preparing free food, sponsorship, etc. So, until the very end, we tried our best to steer things in the right direction.

However the said group's influential figures seemed to be ashamed of veganism, almost apologetically so. [They saw it as a "radical" concept](#) at odds with their establishment-centered, conservative inclinations. This made it difficult to properly welcome individuals deemed to be anarchists, "hippies", "pinkos," etc., or to attend their events when invited to do so. This discrimination denied vegan education to entire groups of people, many of whom are highly interested in [opposing prejudices such as speciesism](#).

With a penchant for ego-led self-publicity, the individuals involved also seemed [more interested in fundraising and maximising profits than promoting veganism](#). This is something we felt very much at odds with. In fact, apart from the group name, there was not even a definition of veganism on their website, nor any suggestion of why anyone should think to consider becoming vegan. Frustrated at the total lack of democracy and accountability, and after receiving an explicit statement that it was no longer to be considered a vegan group, we left and are happily "radical" advocates of non-violent vegan education.

### What are your other interests and activities?

We are avid fans of Sheffield Wednesday football club and particularly enjoy the music of The Smiths, Morrissey and Prince. We also enjoy walking our super fit and vegan rescue dogs, preferably amongst nature and away from the encroachments of civilization.

#### Suggested by the author:

- [It's World Vegan Day...so where are the vegans?](#)
- [Interview with Tom, abolitionist academic and blogger](#)
- [Interview with Dan Cudahy of Unpopular Vegan Essays](#)
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