



BRUCE FRIEDRICH

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GOOD FOOD INSTITUTE

NationalJournal

Life in Brief

Hometown: West Lafayette, IN

Current Residence: Washington, D.C.

Education

- BA, Grinnell College
- MA, Johns Hopkins University
- JD, Georgetown University Law Center

Family:

- Wife, Alka Chandna, works for PETA
- Four children

Work History:

- Co-founder & Executive Director, The Good Food Institute (GFI), 2015-present
- TED Fellow, 2019
- Co-founder, New Crop Capital, 2015
- Director of Policy & Advocacy, Farm Sanctuary, 2011-15
- Teacher, Baltimore City Public Schools (Teach For America), 2009-11
- VP of International Grassroots Campaign, PETA, 1996-2009
- Community Member, Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, 1990-96

Past and Present Board Memberships and Advisory Roles:

- Member, Animal Rights Hall of Fame
- Advisory Board, Christian Vegetarian Association
- Founding Member, Society of Ethical and Religious Vegetarians

Quick Summary

Longtime animal rights advocate who began his career in vegan activism before pivoting to developing meat alternatives. Currently convenes entrepreneurs, investors, and scientists to promote “clean meat” and plant-based meat

- Became animal rights activist after reading about inefficiencies of cycling crops through animals, the impact of industrial farming on climate, and Christian arguments for animal welfare
- Earned reputation as a prolific PETA activist staunchly against use of animal products, resulting in highly publicized protests and numerous arrests
- Founded the Good Food Institute (GFI) in shift to entrepreneurial strategy; cites lack of progress in activism as catalyst for changing approach
- Rooting work in environmental stewardship and animal welfare, he has pioneered initiatives to promote “clean meat,” plant-based meat, and helped fund start-ups that act as alternatives to conventional ag companies

Approach and Motivations

Cites Effective Altruism (EA)

- Adopts EA philosophy that promotes using empirical evidence and reasoning to determine the most effective ways to benefit others
- Cites EA as driver behind his transition from brash activism to pragmatic development of meat alternatives and the impetus for starting GFI

Beliefs rooted in Christian faith on animal welfare, and concern about climate change

- Deeply-held beliefs about animal welfare derive from faith; believes God’s ideal is non-violence
- Strongly adheres to what he believes to be responsible stewardship of God’s creation through plant-based eating
- Views climate change as a global emergency exacerbated by traditional meat production process and sees recent efforts with clean meat and meat alternatives as a means to curtail climate change

Policy Positions and Areas of Focus

Focused on defending rights of animals and advancing policies promoting less meat consumption

Industrial Meat Production – Longtime advocate of reducing meat consumption due to many factors, including ethics and climate

- Concerned about industrial animal agriculture creating antibiotic-resistant bacteria; advocates for halting industrial meat production using antibiotics
- Advocates for replicating meat in a new way via “bio-mimic” meat produced by growing meat from plants (clean meat)
- Contends that clean meat removes need for antibiotics and reduces impact on climate while reducing cost

Venture Capital Ag Startups – Started New Crop Capital to invest in disruptive ag ideas

- Shifted focus from animal welfare activism to market-based incentives for reducing meat consumption, citing lack of progress through prior activism
- Believes factory farm market should be disrupted, by investing in entrepreneurs whose products/services replace foods derived from conventional animal agriculture
- Fund invested in companies like Beyond Meat, which has gained national prominence creating plant-based meat

Animal Welfare & the USDA – Scholarly writing criticizes USDA’s enforcement of animal welfare compliance

- Argued that USDA does not do enough to protect animals and pressed that it needs to use its statutory authority to protect poultry from slaughter
- Critical of the under-enforcement of the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act

Ag-Gag Laws – Opposes restrictions against ag industry whistleblowers

- Argues that laws prohibiting undercover investigations into ag industry were an unconstitutional restriction of speech
- Seeks more transparency in agriculture industry practices
- Lobbied heavily against proposed laws in Arizona and secured veto from Governor Doug Ducey in 2015

Core Communities**Ag Entrepreneurs and Investors – Contacts from funding meat alternative start-ups**

- Founded New Crop Capital fund alongside investment manager Chris Kerr and managing trustee Nick Cooney
- Ethan Brown, founder of Beyond Meat, received funding from his capital fund
- Invested in Memphis Meats and connected with co-founders Dr. Uma Valeti and Dr. Nicholas Geneovese
- Former GM CEO Jack Welch was an initial GFI funder
- Josh Balk, co-founder of food tech company Hampton Creek, serves on GFI’s advisory board

Animal Rights & Vegan Advocacy Community – Contacts from career as public face of animal rights advocacy

- Co-authored book on clean protein with wellness activist and vegan Kathy Freston
- Close with PETA President Ingrid Newkirk from working as VP for the organization
- Wife, Dr. Alka Chandna, is currently PETA’s Senior Laboratory Oversight Specialist
- Stefanie Wilson, attorney who worked with Animal Legal Defense Fund, co-authored law review articles on animal welfare

Core Communities Cont.

Christian Vegetarians – *Motivation for eating less meat rooted partially in his Christian faith*

- Andrew Linzey’s book about Christianity and the rights of animals inspired him to dedicate life to veganism
- Founding member of Society of Ethical and Religious Vegetarians alongside founder Nathan Braun and other advisors including Roberta Kalechofsky and Keith

Selected Publications

Editorial – *Often uses platforms to advocate and educate about meat alternatives*

- [“Is in vitro meat the new in vitro fertilization?”](#) *Los Angeles Times*, July 2018
- [“Free speech and soy milk,”](#) *The Washington Post*, February 2017
- [“Nerds Over Cattle: How Food Technology Will Save the World,”](#) *Wired*, October 2016

Academic Articles– *Typically writes articles critical of ag industry*

- [“Coming Home to Roost: How the Chicken Industry Hurts Chickens, Humans, and the Environment,”](#) *Animal Law Review*, 2016
- [“When the Regulators Refuse to Regulate: Pervasive USDA Underenforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act,”](#) *Georgetown Law Journal*, October 2015

Financial Donations

Donates occasionally to Democratic candidates

Federal – *Donates largely to nationally prominent Democrats*

- \$100 – Cory Booker, 2019
- \$100 – Warren for President, 2019
- \$100 – Dibble for Congress, 2017
- \$100 – Hillary for America, 2016
- \$100 – Friends of Jared Polis, 2013
- \$250 – Nader for President, 2008
- \$750 – Dennis Kucinich, 2003-08

Media Appearances

Favors mix of traditional and new media to talk about clean meat and sustainable agriculture

Print/Online – *Talks often about the global threat of associated with animal-based meat*

- [I24](#) – Take30: Interviewed about UN report on biodiversity and the growing global food threat, February 2019
- [AgFunderNews](#): Interviewed about alternative protein startups and the founding of GFI. December 2016

Podcast/Radio – *Discusses the process and benefits of plant-based meat*

- [TED](#): Discussed plant and cell-based products that present an alternative to meat, April 2019
- [Eat for the Planet Podcast](#): Interview with Nil Zacharias about consumer perception of clean meat, and a more sustainable food system, July 2018

Speaking Engagements

Often speaks about advocacy in animal rights and debates the ethics of eating meat

Conferences

- Spoke at Effective Altruism Global conference about optimism of plant-based meat and clean meat revolution and his personal career journey, October 2018

Academic Institutions

- Spoke at 9th Annual Animals and the Kingdom of God lecture at Calvin University about diet as an invocation of Christ, March 2016
- Debate participant at Stanford University with Whole Foods CEO John Mackey on the ethics of eating meat, February 2016
- Speak at Princeton University about how eating meat is unethical, 2010
- Speaker at Harvard College Vegetarian Society about the negative impacts of eating meat, 2009

Criticisms and Controversies

Numerous arrests while working as an activist at PETA

Throwing red paint at fashion show

- Arrested and charged with criminal mischief and trespass in 2000 after he threw red paint at models during fashion show to protest fur

Profiles Others Have Written

Profiles have focused on his transition from activist to strategic investor

Nathaniel Popper: "[This Animal Activist Used to Get in Your Face. Now He's Going After Your Palate](#)," *The New York Times*, March 2019

- Focused on what prompted a change in approach to his overall goal of reducing animal meat consumption

Info From Formative Years

Active in advocacy since high school, but deeply held beliefs didn't fully form until after college

- Self-described policy wonk since high school, who got his start in politics while volunteering for Sen. Paul Simon's presidential campaign in 1987
- Initially focused on poverty, based on experience managing branch of global poverty network while in college
- Became vegan for environmental and human rights reasons in 1987 after reading the book "Diet for a Small Planet" and learning about the inefficiency of cycling crops through animals to feed humans
- Became an animal rights activist after reading "Christianity and the Rights of Animals" teaching him that people should make kind choices rather than cruel ones

Family Background

- Raised in Norman, OK and ate meat until 1987
- Grew up Lutheran and converted to Catholicism while working and living in a homeless shelter
- Father, Gustav William Friedrich, Ph.D., is a distinguished professor and former Dean at Rutgers University
- Mother, Erena Rae Bakeberg Friedrich, was an art director and graphic designer
- Married fellow PETA activist Dr. Alka Chandna
- Contestant on 2004 political reality TV show "American Candidate"