

Lucy Schwarz, "The Inefficacy Objection and New Ethical Veganism"

Abstract: Traditionally, both proponents and detractors have understood ethical veganism to be the position that veganism is obligatory and that eating meat is wrong. One of the most forceful objections raised against ethical veganism in recent years is the inefficacy objection, which says that no individual's choice to be vegan can be expected to impact the meat industry. I argue that the inefficacy objection, together with subsequent responses, prompts us to reconsider how we understand ethical veganism. Philosophers should take seriously a more modest version of ethical veganism, which I call "new ethical veganism." New ethical veganism is non-committal as to whether being vegan is obligatory but maintains that, either way, it is morally good to be vegan. I offer four theoretical precisifications of the claim that it is good to be vegan and argue that some of the most prominent responses to the inefficacy objection lend themselves better to a defense of new ethical veganism than of traditional ethical veganism.