

Award-winning columnist and Shropshire-based producer Roger Evans is preparing to lose the view from his window for the next month and shares his thoughts on ill-informed vegans.

## Oh, the irony...

**I**t's the middle of November and the year is rapidly drawing to a close. Already I have heard the dreaded words 'Christmas tree'. Ours goes up on the first day in December. It always stands in the window, which means I won't be able to look outside until the middle of January. This year has been a memorable one, for lots of reasons. It reminded us that those of us who far are dependent on the weather. First we had the snow, followed by the late spring, and then the drought. As a consequence, forage supplies are tight. Just how tight depends on what sort of spring we have next year.

We probably needed that weather reminder, but 2018 was also the year that vegans raised their assault on livestock farming. That's not something we needed.

I've got no problem with those that want to be vegan, I respect their freedom to choose their own lifestyle, but they don't respect my choices. And because they are so sure of the merits of their own particular path, and recent claims that farm animals contribute to global warming has given them reason to redouble their efforts, they are comfortable taking the high moral ground.

They are so busy in their pursuit of their vision of a livestock-free future that they have no regard for the damage that they do along the way. Vegans like all things soya, but it seems inevitable that the more soya is grown the more trees are cut down.

They also like quinoa, but quinoa is a staple food in the countries where it is grown. Extra demand has led to higher prices – so high that native populations can't afford to buy it anymore. Chicken is now cheaper than quinoa, so native populations eat that instead. Just how bizarre is that?

I also bet that a vegan's ideal vegetable is organically grown. Yet the best organic crops are those grown with plenty of livestock manure. They haven't thought that through, have they?

I wonder just how vegan a diet is if the food is grown with a liberal application of cow manure under it. And how will any of their vegan food grow in their livestock-free future?

These pressure groups chip away at our very existence. We have the badger lobbyists on one hand, who are quite content to prolong the bovine TB issue, never mind how many cattle are slaughtered in the meantime. Then there are those that would cut sheep and cattle numbers by half and plant trees instead. And then we have the vegans who would do away with all livestock, come what may.

There are two maxims that I have used in my life, thus far, that have served me really well. One is the story of the young bull and the old bull. These two bulls are taking their ease at the top of a field, there is a herd of cows grazing down below them.

The young bull says: "Let's run down and make love to one of those cows." The old bull says: "Let's walk down and make love to them all." And the other maxim is: 'don't let the buggers beat you down'. Seems we will need a bit of luck in the future.

