

## **VEDDAS**

### **Activity Report**

### **2009**

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VEDDAS is a prominent Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the animal rights movement in Brazil. Relying exclusively in the work of volunteers and small spontaneous donations, VEDDAS carries out pioneering projects of national and international repercussion, such as BAR VEDDAS, VEDDAS-MÓVEL, and ENDA (National Animal Rights Gathering).

VEDDAS works to promote the arguments in favor a lifestyle free from the exploitation of sentient beings based on the ethical acceptance that non-human animals are entitled to having respected their rights and interests. VEDDAS activities range from the production of informative materials and the direct distribution of these materials to the public, all the way to promoting campaigns, events, seminars, protests and other educational activities, most of them based on public outreach. VEDDAS also works in the legislative process when its skills are considered relevant for collaborating in this process.

The following pages report on the group's activities in 2009.

We hope this report can be useful for the purpose of outlining and presenting the scope of our activities and to inspire other groups and individuals to do even more in their struggle for having recognized the rights of animals and the urgent need for a shift to a vegan diet and lifestyle.

Sincerely,

George Guimarães  
President

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## Permanent Projects

### BAR VEDDAS

**BAR VEDDAS** is an awareness-raising project that outreaches to the public on the streets, inviting them to a reflection on the issue of animal rights and veganism. It happens weekly every Sunday and has been active since August 2007, on Paulista Avenue (the main avenue on the Financial and Arts district of Sao Paulo, which is Brazil's largest city – Pop.= 12 million).



Armed with a table, a few posters and a lot of energy to talk to passers-by, VEDDAS volunteers outreach to the public, inviting them for a talk about animal rights and veganism in a friendly, non-invasive manner. VEDDAS volunteers are trained in our Training Seminars and *in loco* by our veteran volunteers. The aim is to convey the message in a way that fits the profile of the person being approached. Each interaction lasts an average 8 minutes, but some may extend for over an hour.



Operating since 2007, BAR VEDDAS has become a reference point in the city of Sao Paulo on the topic and so far has brought awareness about animal rights veganism to thousands of people who may not otherwise had thought about these issues.



### VEDDAS-MÓVEL (VEDDAS-MOBILE)

**VEDDAS-MÓVEL (VEDDAS-MOBILE)** is a multimedia vehicle equipped with a large TV screen and sound system used to bring information to the public through the exhibition of videos depicting what goes on behind the closed doors of the animal exploitation industry, from food production to clothing manufacturing and all the way to the entertainment and animal experimentation industries.



VEDDAS-MOBILE was released in April 2008 and operates weekly on Paulista Avenue (the main avenue on the Financial and Arts district of Sao Paulo, which is Brazil's largest city – Population = 12 million).



VEDDAS-MÓVEL also offers support at protests and other public interaction events.

*All the investment necessary to bring the VEDDAS-MÓVEL project to life was obtained through the donations of activists countrywide, and complemented by the personal resources of VEDDAS President.*

## ENDA – Animal Rights National Gathering

Every two years, the **Encontro Nacional de Direitos Animais** [National Animal Rights Gathering] brings together in a single place those activists that make the animal rights movement in Brazil. It is the largest gathering of Brazilian animal rights activists who come from all over the country to learn, debate, interact and share the experiences that build the history of the animal rights movement in our country, making this meeting a forum to report progresses, discuss tactics, build networks, as well as serving as an important inspirational moment to recharge the spirits and advance in the fight for animal rights. In that sense, **ENDA** has been the birthplace of important initiatives that take form in different locations throughout Brazil.

In the 2008 edition, 200 activists from 13 different states gathered to be motivated, capacitated and inspired. This first edition was considered by the participants as a landmark in the history of the animal rights movement in Brazil.



## **Animal Rights National Conference (USA)**

The **Animal Rights National Conference** takes place annually in the USA since the 1980's. Being the largest and oldest in the world, this huge gathering of activists has served as an inspiration to our Brazilian version, ENDA (above mentioned), for its main objective is the exchange of experiences shared by the activists. The event brings together 90 speakers in over 100 lectures during the four days of the event, on which nearly 900 activists participate. Over the past five consecutive years, VEDDAS has collaborated with 10 lectures presented by its president George Guimaraes, ranging from discussions on foreign law to vivisection campaigns all the way to vegan outreach projects and campaigns, therefore presenting our work and discussing our strategies with the international activist community.

*All travel, food and lodging expenses were financed by personal resources of VEDDAS' president, George Guimaraes, therefore not costing the organization.*



## **McUnhappy Day Protest**

Every year VEDDAS holds a protest against the "McHappy Day," a date in which the fast food chain launches a national "misinformation campaign" through which it intends to associate the image of the company with the fight against cancer, which is nothing more than a tremendous hypocrisy for this company promotes a diet which can be directly linked to the development of the disease they claim to be fighting against.



The protest has the objective of denouncing the company's hypocritical stand, that while it promotes a diet that encourages the development of cancer, it tries to opportunistically promote itself as interested in helping entities that do legitimate work to support cancer patients, therefore deviating public attention from the reality of its commercial activities, as well as promoting the consumption of a diet rich in fats, refined carbohydrates and poor in fibers and protective substances. Their "campaign also fuels an industry directly responsible for the exploitation of billions of sentient animals every year.

The protest happens in front of the main stores located on Paulista Avenue and Augusta Avenue, drawing around 30 activists who are very loud about the company's practices.

## Protests in observance of the the International Animal Rights Day

Every year, since 1998, the 10th of December is remembered around the world as the International Animal Rights Day (IARD). In 2009, for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, VEDDAS organized a protest that took over 300 people to Sao Paulo's financial district. As the date coincided with the COP 15 summit (Copenhaguen Environmental Summit), this year's theme was the impact of livestock breeding on global warming.



According to data from the UN, livestock breeding is the main source of greenhouse gases emissions, generating 18% of the gases responsible for global warming (a responsibility larger then fossil fuels). Seven thousand leaflets printed on recycled paper (all our literature is printed on recycled paper) were distributed to the passing public.



The yearly IARD protests organized by VEDDAS are the largest in the country, gathering over 300 people in the streets of Sao Paulo. Many media groups usually cover the event, such as: R1 (electronic newspaper), Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper (the most widely read newspaper in the country), G1, UOL and Terra.

*Posters and banners were financed by Surya Brasil (vegan cosmetics manufacturer), the leaflets were sponsored by NUTRIVEG and VEGETHUS and all other expenses (helium gas balloons, which were collected afterwards, not released) were financed by resources collected by selling the group's t-shirts.*



## Other Activities

### Approval of the Bill that prohibits the use of animals in circuses

June 2009

For over a decade, different groups dedicated to the defense of animals have worked to abolish the use of animals in circuses. For the last two years, a bill has been waiting to be voted at the Education and Culture Commission of the Brazilian National Congress under the number 7291/2006, which prohibits the use of animals in circuses in national territory. On the eve of the voting procedures, VEDDAS, represented by its president George Guimarães, went to Brasília (national capital) bringing along a petition that was physically signed by 100,000 (one hundred thousand) citizens from all over the country declaring their position contrary to the presence of animals in circuses.

A few hours before the voting session, George Guimaraes, representing the petition's signers, was invited to a meeting with the legislator where he would define the substitutive text that would be presented at the final voting session. Among other issues, the new text determined the exclusion of domesticated animals (such as dogs, horses and donkeys) from the Bill. In other words, domesticated animals would be allowed to be used in circuses. The position of the activist was firm in not accepting to negotiate the matter, proposing the text should be presented in its integrity for that is what his organization and the 100,000 signatures requested. The text was defined, maintaining the prohibition of all animal species to be presented in circuses

The Bill was presented at the Congress Plenary Annex 9 under the presence of animal rights activists and circus owners. The Law Project was approved unanimously and is now awaits its turn to voted at the Federal Senate. There is no prevision for the date and VEDDAS is watching closely for the time when a new mobilization is demanded. Brazil should soon witness a complete ban on animal exhibitions in circuses.

*The airline ticket was donated by Surya Brasil (vegan cosmetics company) and all other travel expenses were financed by personal resources of VEDDAS' president, George Guimaraes, therefore not costing the organization.*



## Animal Rights National Conference: reporting to local activists

October 2009

Every year after the *Animal Rights National Conference*, VEDDAS organizes a presentation to local activists to report on the experience and learning enjoyed at the Conference. As in previous years, the presentation gathered approximately 100 activists that work as individuals or collaborate in local groups.



## Scouting: 52<sup>nd</sup> edition of JOTA (Jamboree On The Air)

October 2009

On 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of October, the **União dos Escoteiros do Brasil** (Brazilian Scouts Union) held the 52<sup>nd</sup> edition of JOTA, on which scouts from all over the world meet and discuss issues related to the environment. In Brazil, the Scout Group Tibiriçá reminded the participants of the importance of vegetarianism in the preservation of our natural environment. VEDDAS collaborated with the event by presenting a lecture and videos followed by debate. The scouts group prepared a vegetarian lunch where many of them tasted for the first time products like soya meat. This event marked the first ever vegetarian scout event officially recognized by the Brazilian Scouts Union.



## Poster Exhibits on subway stations in Sao Paulo

October 2009

In an unprecedented partnership with the Mayor's Office of the City of Sao Paulo, VEDDAS was responsible for organizing two exhibits at subway stations in Sao Paulo: one on "Veganism" and the other on "Animals in Entertainment". Over that same period of time, subway trains equipped with TV monitors exhibited a short video produced by VEDDAS with the theme "Animals are not merchandise," which called the commuters' attention to the topic of meat consumption.



With a population of 12 million people, the subway system of Sao Paulo transports 3.3 million (3 million and 300 thousand) passengers per day! The posters and videos were exhibited for 15 days and reached literally hundreds of thousands of people.

## Seminars in partnership with the City of São Paulo

October 2009

In conjunction with the subway exhibits, VEDDAS coordinated with the Mayor's Office of the City of Sao Paulo a full week of lectures and activities, entitled 1<sup>st</sup> Animal Cultural Circuit. Totaling eight lectures on issues related to animal rights, the seminars were publicized by the city of Sao Paulo at the main cultural and information locations throughout the city.

## Intervention during the Foie Gras Festival

December 2009

Upscale restaurant *La Brasserie Erick Jacquin* promoted from during the month of December 2009 a gastronomic festival, the *Foie Gras Week*.

Few people know what happens behind this expensive and "exquisite" food. The *foie gras* (foie – liver, gras – fat), or goose liver pate, is actually the result of an inhumane practice. Ducks and geese are subjected to a long and painful process with the objective of making their livers become abnormally expanded and sick. The bird is immobilized between the manipulator's legs, with its neck extended, allowing the insertion of a thick metal tube that measures up to 40cm (15.7 inches). Right after, a motor force feeds the food (about 2.2 pounds at a time) down the animal's throat, taking it to the bird's small stomach. Some breeders utilize elastics that are placed around the bird's neck to prevent that the bird vomit its feeding. This torture is repeated 3 times per day during a period of 3 to 4 weeks. After this period the animal is killed so that its sick liver can be transformed in pate.

VEDDAS activists visited the restaurant dressed as wealthy costumers (the festival was being served for a 100 US dollars starter price) and as soon as they sat down, they stormed the place to distribute leaflets depicting the reality behind this "exquisite" food. Before they were escorted out the door, one leaflet was specially handed to Sao Paulo's ex-governor, ex-presidential candidate and current National Congress Representative as he delighted himself with a dish made out of sickened goose liver. Once outside, the VEDDAS activists caged themselves depicting the life of a Foie Gras goose and continued to distribute leaflets until they were asked to leave by the police 30 minutes later (too much political influence from the establishment's costumers, perhaps).



## Protest in observance of the International Animal Rights Day

December 2009

See report on page 5.