The co-founders of the sanctuary were lesbian-feminists with a history of social justice activism. When the first hen rescued turned out to be a rooster, they began thinking and talking about the ways that people use animals to “naturalize” socially constructed gender roles. Since the structural purpose of homophobia and transphobia is the enforcement of the binary and hierarchical gender system, this was an important insight into links between exploitation of animals and oppression of LGBTQ people.

Our sanctuary community includes people from across the LGBTQ spectrum, along with plenty of non-LGBTQ allies. Sanctuary residents have included same-sex pairs, like foie gras factory survivors Jean-Paul and Jean-Claude, who bonded for life. Our educational work has always included efforts to build bridges between the LGBTQ and animal advocacy movements and to encourage everybody to understand and appreciate the biodiversity of sexuality and gender expression.

What you can do…

- **“Eat the rainbow”** yourself by going vegan! You’ll be healthier and happier and you won’t be participating in the sexual exploitation of animals.
- **Challenge toxic masculinity**, which wrongly equates maleness not only with meat-eating but also with hunting and other forms of violence.
- **Boycott zoos**, which force animals to breed and often separate homosexual couples.

For future reference…

- **The Oxen at the Intersection** by VINE co-founder pattrace jones
- **The Sexual Politics of Meat** by Carol J. Adams
- **Ecofeminism** edited by Carol Adams and Lori Gruen
- **Queer Ecologies** edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson
- **Biological Exuberance** by Bruce Bagemihl

The likeness of the rainbow flag denoting LGBTQ pride to the rainbow of fruits and vegetables prescribed by dietitians may be a coincidence, but **going vegan** really can make you better able to be yourself.

Coming out is all about being true to your heart’s desires. Growing up, most of us were taught to set aside our affection for animals in order to eat them. That’s just one of many sad ways that people are tricked or pressured into hurting others while being untrue to themselves.

When we say “yes” to love, whether by marching in a Pride parade or embracing a healthy plant-based diet, we free ourselves and others at the same time.
Meat & Masculinity

Whenever we talk about the cultural links between meat and masculinity, at least one man—and not always a gay man—will tell us about being called an anti-gay slur for not eating meat. The links between animal exploitation and masculinity go back to the days when men fought with each other to gain ownership and control of women, land, and animals. Many forms of animal abuse, such as sport hunting, bull riding, and cockfighting, reflect the same “toxic masculinity” that leads to rape, domestic violence, gay bashing, and assaults on transwomen. Vegan men of all orientations have an important role to play in redefining masculinity to include compassion and care for others, including nonhuman animals.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Like most of us, most bonobo apes are functionally bisexual. This is also true of male mallard ducks. In other species, like our own, some individuals seem to be exclusively homosexual while others are heterosexual. This natural variation in orientation may help animals avoid overpopulation.

**PARENTING AND FAMILY STRUCTURE**

As humans used to do before the false idea that only the nuclear family is natural became so widespread, animals construct families in many different ways. Oystercatchers parent their young in stable, bonded, mixed-sex trios. Same-sex pairs of flamingoes, penguins, or swans may adopt abandoned or orphaned chicks. Collective parenting is common.

**LOVE AND AFFECTION**

From dolphins deep in the ocean to vultures high in the sky, nonhuman animals court, show affection to, and experience physical pleasure with their same-sex partners in an astonishing array of ways. This proves, if there were any doubt, that animals have feelings rather than being robots programmed to reproduce.

*All Our Queer Relations*

“*The universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.*”

—biologist J.B.S. Haldane

*Hundreds of animal species enjoy same-sax coupling, courtship, or parenting, but nature shows on TV teach us that animals are automatons whose only goal is reproduction. This makes it easier to dismiss LGBTQ people as “unnatural” and to exploit animals.*

*At farms, zoos, labs and other facilities that breed animals, individuals are forced into heterosexual couplings regardless of their own desires, and no animals kept captive in such places are free to construct their own families.*