

Vegan Beauty: hype or here to stay?

adapted from an article by Andrea Cheng

- 1 *The Economist* declared 2019 as the year of the vegan, reporting that a quarter of millennials identify as vegan or vegetarian. Outspoken celebrities like Beyoncé and Jay-Z are encouraging fans to become vegan, if not for ethical reasons, then because of health and environmental benefits. In a 2018 report, the vegan food industry recorded 20 percent growth over the previous year, with sales peaking at \$3.3 billion. This demand for all things vegan has made other industries take notice, especially beauty.



- 2 There's a lot of confusing jargon around vegan beauty — 'cruelty-free' is one example, with many people assuming that they're one and the same. Plain and simple, vegan beauty means the absence of animal ingredients, while cruelty-free refers to a product that doesn't test on animals. 12, it's possible for a vegan item to have been tested on an animal and a cruelty-free product to contain animal ingredients.
- 3 Common animal-derived ingredients found in beauty products include honey, beeswax, lanolin (wool grease), squalene (shark liver oil), carmine (crushed-up beetles), gelatin (cow or pig bones, tendons or ligaments), allantoin (cow urine), ambergris (whale vomit) and placenta (sheep organs). They're harmless, but the thought of smearing on the animal parts found in moisturizers, cosmetics and shampoos may be a 13.
- 4 But the term 'vegan beauty,' which is synonymous with 'plant-based,' can be 14, too. It conjures up images of virtuous greens and, in turn, healthiness, which is not necessarily the case. "Chips are accidentally vegan, but they're not healthy," Sunny Subramanian, who started a Vegan Beauty Review back in 2007, said. "It's the same with makeup. Just because it's vegan and cruelty-free doesn't make it healthy. Its ingredient list can be chock-full of unhealthy chemicals and fillers."
- 5 In the 30 years that Kathy Guillermo, a senior vice president of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), has campaigned to end the use of animals in laboratory experiments, she can pinpoint two industrywide shifts that spurred vegan awareness in beauty. The first was in 1990, when Estée Lauder and Revlon stopped testing on animals. Unfortunately, the very same companies began to sell in China, where animal testing is required on many beauty products. It caused backlash

and consumer demand for cruelty-free products, which eventually led to the development of instrumentation to replace animal testing.

6 The second is occurring now. In October, Unilever, the parent company of Dove, Axe, Dermalogica and many more, announced that it has committed to a policy of no animal testing across all of its product lines. "The big companies that held out for so long are now making a change," Ms. Guillermo said. For many brands, she said, concern about the ethical and environmental impact of their products is the No. 1 consumer question they encounter.

7 Perhaps the biggest benefit to come out of the vegan beauty movement is that it's pushing consumers to assess ingredients. Ms. Subramanian used to know every vegan beauty brand. Now, she said, it's impossible to keep up. The future of the beauty industry is vegan and not animal-tested. Ms. Guillermo said: "Not every company has realized this yet, but a lot of them have, and those are the ones that are going to get ahead and stay in business. We're in discussions with enough of them to know that this is, without question, the trend."

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