Project Submission
All submissions must be made by email to me at Aline@becreaturekind.org.

1. A list of the goals that you ended up working on most during the fellowship, making note of if and how these changed from your original goals identified at the beginning of the Fellowship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMARTIE Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>To educate and advocate for lifestyle reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>Successful if 25 people come, food is made, outline is presented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>The Christian community is a challenging audience for this subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Not everyone from the church will come, but offering food, lecturing on a night with childcare, and not aiming to make all food myself will help make this goal realistic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time-bound</td>
<td>Will be either a one hour lecture or two one-hour lectures depending on church scheduling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Lecture will invite all members of church including children, minorities, and women. Will try to align with childcare so more parents, especially mothers, are available. I understand that this particular church space is predominantly white. I will include traditional dishes from cultures represented at our church (such as Peruvian and Mexican) to appeal to numerous groups. Lecture will highlight the injustices disproportionately endured by minority groups within the United States such as immigrant laborers and poor residents near CAFO's.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equitable</td>
<td>Lecture will address issues of egregious injustice against non-human animals, human laborers and victims of the animal agriculture industry and aim to educate and address these injustices.</td>
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I invited people outside of my church which wasn’t emphasized as much in my original proposal. We had a question and answer portion. The content was less comprehensive in terms of abuse and less persuasive in reference to specific scripture than I had originally planned. I believe this led to a less defensive audience and made them more receptive to adjusting their food habits.

2. A description of each of the projects/events that you have pursued this year including:
For my project, I presented a lecture/Q&A at my home church. The content focused on what a good Creation looks like, how modern agriculture diverges from this design and harms animals, people, and the environment, and finally offered practical and accessible habits we can adopt to help.

The group was composed of my church community, family, and worship night peers. The people who assisted me in my project included Janey Barends, Maria and Flavio Pennagio, Josh Foor, Feben Zwede, Susie Mehari, Cindy and Paul Krudy, Kelly Adamovitz, and Joy Merlino, and Mike Bartlett.

- what need/opportunity it was seeking to meet

Through this event, I wanted to offer some accessible information regarding animal agriculture and invite people to ask questions and consider habit adjustments.

- demonstrable changes you saw as a result of the effort

My goal was for 25 people to attend my gathering. There were 18 people there, and I was happy with the group. I believe this number would have been higher if I had more clearly communicated that my content was child-accessible. These 18 people represent my measurable accomplishments in this fellowship. I personally know many of the people who attended, and that this content is new to them or directly contradicts what they believe, so their attendance and participation was new ground for many of them. Besides these 18, 19 others have reached out for the content I presented today as well as those who read my blog post.

3. A discussion of each of the following questions (250 words per question):

- What was the most rewarding aspect of your fellowship?

I really enjoyed the process of writing the blog post. When I submitted my first draft, I figured it was close to perfect. How wrong I was. After talking to my coach, I realized that the lofty, academic tone I had adopted to make myself sound smarter was boring even myself. She encouraged me to add personal experience. I thought, “Why should I, as a white person, add another white story to the world?” She helped me realize that telling my experience with agriculture honestly - which includes calling out what I don’t know and relying on others’ stories on what I haven’t experienced - could actually have a greater impact on readers. Before this blog process, I had not clearly seen the impact that this draft-feedback-redraft process could have on the final product. Looking at my blog, I am proud of the final product.

- How has being a part of the CreatureKind Fellowship program impacted you personally? How has it strengthened your ability to impact your community both now and in the future when it comes to the welfare of animals farmed for
food? For example, what have you been able to discern for your ministry via your coaching sessions, your monthly sessions with your mentor, and your monthly cohort call with your peers? c. What was your favorite part of the CreatureKind Fellowship program?

One of the biggest lessons I learned from taking part in this fellowship is the power of constructive criticism. When I wrote my blog and sent it to my mentor, I thought it was nearly perfect. I had good evidence, strong scripture, and a logical progression. However, my mentor pointed out that my style - which I had learned from years of debate - was slightly obnoxious and exclusionary. I had not noticed that my “academic” tone did not highlight my lived experience with farmed animals nor uplift the human survivors of this industry. Through Sarah’s patient and positive feedback, I was able to hone my piece into a much stronger one.

I learned the most from the Disability Liberation module. I entered this fellowship believing that everyone should uplift a social justice cause and pursue greater equity in that sphere. I was correct that no one person can fix everything at once, but I had wrongly assumed that pursuing one cause at a time could effectively further capital “J” Justice. When my cohort began learning about disability liberation, I realized the interconnectedness of injustice. We have focused on racism, sexism, ableism, and speciesism. I have learned that pursuing justice in one of these at a time is not only not good enough; it harms each other injustice. I learned especially about this intersectionality through the Disability Liberation module. It showed me my own bias in what animals in the industry I deemed more worthy of rescue. I was embarrassed by and challenged to address my own bias and ignorance with the help of my peers.

4. Feedback for the fellowship: please list what went well, what are your suggested changes, and miscellaneous feedback. In what ways can we improve the program and better equip the next cohort of Fellows? Please include any ideas for what might feel supportive in your role as an alum of the fellowship.

I will complete this section following the final cohort call.

5. All contents of project

I will complete this section with my audio/visual recording following the final cohort call.

Celebrating Stewardship

When I was 6 or 7 years old, I had a chicken named Isis who would ride on my back while I went sledding. My duck, Spinach, and I could find our way home from ¼ mile away. I also hung
out with a pig named Zipporah, and a cow striped just like an Oreo. As many of you know, I was homeschooled (shoutout mom and dad) and living in the country meant that animal friends were often more accessible than human ones. It was a joy to grow up surrounded by these animals and to learn who they were. The farm I grew up on was small; it looked much like American farms have looked for centuries. Only recently have “factory farms” started producing the majority of animal products (Anthis et al). This is our plan for today: We will talk about God’s intent for the humans, animals, and earth of Creation, the impact of modern farming on this Creation, and how we can faithfully steward this Creation through our eating. I want to leave you with an accurate picture of where animal products come from and to recognize how the decision to eat animal products impacts the lives of others.

Creation

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good” (NIV Bible Gen 1.12-13).

So, let’s think about this together; “What comes to mind when you think of a “good” Creation?

- Clean Water
- Sunshine, Blue skies
- Green trees
- It smells nice, like warm grass, like flowers
- It sounds like pattering rain, twittering birds, and crackling leaves

“So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth” (NIV Bible Gen 1.21-22).

Hospitable: It suits the needs of those who live there

- Creatures are able to act in accordance with the instincts and desires God designed them with and use their bodies in the ways God ordained.
- Creatures are able to interact with each other and with their environment
- It offers a reasonably consistent and predictable habitat
• Zebras have enough space to evade predators, wolves can live in packs and have enough prey to eat, birds can migrate the same routes as their ancestors

“God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good” (NIV Bible Gen 1.24-25).

**Sustainable:** What has been created can continue.

• Recycling of energy, nutrients, and raw materials. Since no matter is added or removed, this recycling is crucial. There is no trash, no “waste” in nature.

• Oxygen in air and water is "exhaled" by plants through photosynthesis and inhaled by animals. Animals exhale carbon dioxide which plants inhale. God designed this incredible cycle, and it’s the reason each of us are alive!

• Diversity of organisms lends to maintenance of cycles and of homeostasis
  
  Coyotes strip meat and return nutrients to ground through their droppings, squirrels plant trees, elephant wallows deepen drinking pools for others.

Methods for farming animals should seek to emulate these principles outlined in Creation; if we farm at all. As stewards, it is our responsibility to support these cycles, interactions, and flourishing. So, how are we doing?

When you think of animal farms, what do you see?

Most animals eaten in the United States never graze on rolling green hills or rest in little red barns. Factory farms or Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO’s) now produce upwards of 95% of animal products (Anthis 1). A CAFO is defined as having “more than 1000 animal units or 1000 cattle, 700 dairy cows, 2500 pigs, 125 thousand broiler chickens, or 82 thousand laying hens” (NRCS et al). The most chickens my family of 8 ever cared for was 40, so the sheer magnitude of these farms is unimaginable to me. CAFO’s “confine animals for at least 45 days in a 12-month period, and have no grass or other vegetation in the confinement area” (NRCS et al). It’s important to remember that a farm can be both a “family farm” and a “factory farm.” I want us to remember the desires of these fellow creatures and the conditions our Creator designed for them.
Pigs

Pigs are mammals. Mother pigs nurse their babies and love to create nests for them out of straw, leaves, or other natural materials. Piglets are quick and curious. They love exploring with their mothers and wrestling with their siblings. Pigs also love rooting in soil. They are naturally omnivorous and eat plants, roots, and insects. Mother pigs have even been known to eat snakes who threaten their piglets. Because of their incredible sense of smell, pigs keep themselves clean. Even in small pens, pigs defecate as far away from their food and water as possible. Because pigs cannot sweat, they rely on mud baths to cool and protect their skin.

In most “pork” production facilities, mothers do not have access to nesting materials and are kept in cages where they are unable to move enough to make nests. Sadly, due to the tight quarters and lack of cushioning nests, piglets are often accidentally crushed by their mothers. Many farms amputate the piglets' tails because cramped conditions encourage the pigs to chew on each other to relieve stress. When the pigs are six months old, they are slaughtered. For workers at slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants, conditions are often brutal. Since their work requires sharp knives and heavy machinery, injuries are common. A 2017 report using OSHA data found “Two poultry and meat processing companies… reported among the largest numbers of severe injuries...(defined as involving amputation, hospitalization, or loss of an eye)” (NELP 1). “Further, the poultry industry as a whole” reported more severe injuries “than the saw mill industry, auto, or steel” (NELP 1). Ferocious line-speeds compel some workers to wear diapers at their work stations (“No Relief” 2). Ignacio Davalos, a worker at a pig processing facility said of the work conditions, “We’ve already gone from the line of exhaustion to the line of pain.…” (“When We’re Dead” 1).

Pig excrement from factory farms is stored in massive ponds called manure lagoons. These open-air vats often over-flow into local water sources during heavy rainstorms or other weather events. Unfortunately, pig excrement frequently contains E.coli and antibiotic resistant bacteria, which means leaky lagoons are a threat to safe drinking water. To take advantage of the nutrients in this manure, farm operators sometimes spray the waste onto fields. However, the untreated waste becomes airborne and has caused pig farm neighbors to board up their windows and stay inside to escape the smell (EESI et al.)

- Play video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqXxwYEkF1s 1:30-2:15

Rene Miller, a resident of North Carolina and neighbor to a large pig farm says, “My sister, she has asthma. Her brother (she points to a baby she’s holding), he has asthma. He’s three, and we don’t know yet what she has. I have asthma… I have sarcoidosis from bacteria. And I have a pacemaker, which is sick sinus syndrome. Mostly everybody in this neighborhood got asthma or even cancer. My neighbor there died from cancer probably just last year. My nephew down the street, he’s got cancer. He’s in terminal cancer stage four. Not a smoker, not a drinker. And it’s
not in his lungs. It’s in his lymph nodes.” She continues, “If you live here and saw what they do, you will eat no pork. We don’t eat bacon because I know what it comes from.”

The “...Duke University School of Medicine found links between exposure to waste from hog farms and acute blood pressure increase, impaired neurobehavioral and pulmonary function” as well as carcinogens (Sainato and Skojec et al). Because living near one of these pig farms is unpleasant and hazardous, they are often placed in communities where the people are unable to fight them or move away. A study by the University of North Carolina found that these farms are disproportionately placed in black, brown, and especially indigenous communities (Sainato and Skojec et al).

**Chickens**

Chickens sit on their eggs for 21 days before the chicks hatch. Once, my sister’s hen hatched a large brood of chicks on my parent’s farm. Though their mother’s feathers were a beautiful steely-blue, there were 3 white chicks, a few black babies, a couple red ones, and my rooster Alexander the Great; his mother’s twin. When chicks hatch out of their white or brown or even green shells, they immediately imprint on their mothers. This bond keeps them safe as their mothers teach them where to scratch for seeds and insects to eat. Their fathers will fight predators much larger than themselves to defend their young. In the wild, chickens can live up to seven years and those kept as pets can live up to 12 years; a lifespan is similar to a dog’s.

In the egg industry, chicks never get to meet their parents. Since male chicks cannot lay eggs, they are killed the day they hatch. CAFOs maximize efficiency by breeding animals to grow more quickly than ever before. “In 1955, the average weight of chickens sold on market was 3.07 pounds, while the number for the first half of 2016 was 6.18 pounds, according to National Chicken Council” (Lui et al.) These chronically obese birds suffer joint issues, heart attacks, and are frequently unable to walk by the time they are 8 weeks old. Chickens and other birds are not protected under the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which grants minimum protections in transport and slaughter for most mammals.

It’s common for hundreds of thousands of chickens to be kept in an industrial barn. Unfortunately, chickens raised in industrial farming aren’t the only one’s feeling trapped. Once a farmer enters the chicken business, it is almost financially impossible to leave. This industry is run by a handful of mega-corporations, so most new farmers sign a contract to work under one of these. First, farmers must build at least one chicken house which costs ~$300,000, “but most farms have four” (Sainato et al). The farmers' massive investment has gained them some incredibly specialized infrastructure, but has left them massively indebted to their parent company. Craig Watts, a former perdue contract grower said, “There’s a sense of hopelessness among farmers. Half a million dollars worth of debt makes a man very agreeable” (Sainato et al). Even if a farmer has concerns about the well-being of the animals on their own farm, they
receive much-needed bonuses for how many chickens they grow, so allowing the chickens more space or exercise would diminish their income. Farmers don’t technically own the chickens on their property and could be criminally prosecuted or intimidated for making changes.

One hundred years ago, most farmers grew many crops and several different species of animals. These farms were healthier ecosystems because the species were able to interact with each other and their habitats.

Cattle
Cattle are some of the best mothers in the animal kingdom. After being pregnant for 9 months, a cow gives birth to one or rarely two calves. Mother cows bond with their calves through nursing and grooming. Though her newborn calf weighs up to 90 pounds at birth, her body produces all the sustenance he needs to grow. Cow’s milk, like that of all other mammals, is rich in fat, protein, and sugar so that her baby can gain weight fast. This ensures that calves grow rapidly so they are fast to escape predators and strong to survive winter temperatures. When the calf is in his mother’s womb, he becomes acquainted with her voice. Mother and baby cattle almost immediately recognize each other’s voices. Since cattle are herd animals, this identification is important so they don’t lose one another. To a calf, their mother is their world; she protects, cleans, and nourishes her baby. A cow’s natural lifespan is 15-20 years.

Since 1975, Mothers in the dairy industry have been bred to produce 2.5 times as much milk (Carter et al). This increase is reflected in udder size and causes frequent infection and makes walking difficult. Despite this excess of milk, most calves are taken from their mothers within 24 hours of birth (Early Separation et al). For dairy production, the calf must be taken from their mother so that her milk can be sold to human consumers. After a mother cow has labored, she is often too tired to fight to keep her baby and he is more easily taken. Ranchers report that this separation is done early to prevent bonding (Viitanen et al). Conveniently, a labored mother cannot defend her calf. When they are separated, female calves may be raised to replace their mothers in the herd. They are fed soy milk or other milk replacer. Male calves and unwanted females will be raised for beef, but more often the calves are killed for veal before they are 5 months old. Many newborn calves are killed on the farm where they were born and discarded because their only purpose was to make their mother lactate.

Sealife
With most of the earth’s surface covered with water, fish have plenty of habitat to swim. The ocean is home to the majority of life on earth. Fish, dolphins, sharks, whales, and a myriad of other creatures spend their lives at sea. Eating fish was a staple of Biblical times and is referenced often in the Bible. Jesus himself ate a piece of broiled fish to prove his risen body was not a ghost (NIV Bible Luke 24.42). Yet, in biblical times, fishers were much less “successful” in
their fishing. Jesus performed a miracle where the disciples caught a “miraculous” number of fish when they caught 153 fish (NIV Bible Luke 5.6). This number is child’s play in the era of industrial fishing. … We are literally running out of fish. “According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 90 percent of the world’s fish stocks are either currently overused or completely exhausted.” “To understand the health of fisheries, ecologists calculate “catch per unit of effort (CPUE)” or the amount of effort and resources it takes to catch a fish. Fishing boats today only catch about 20 percent of the fish for the same amount of effort as boats in 1950…”(Daley et al). Part of the reason for this drastic decline is due to bycatch or the catching of unwanted species. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that “nearly half of the world’s recorded fish catch is unused, wasted or not accounted for” (“Forty Percent” et al). Some of you may be familiar with the environmental impact of removing the wolves from Yellowstone. If not, I’d be happy to share this story and its happy ending over lunch. It serves as a reminder, however, that we cannot simply remove species from an ecosystem and not anticipate consequences.

**Stewardship**

Earlier, we talked about how the sun is the source of energy for life on our planet. Plants can use sunlight directly for energy, animals eat plants for energy, and other animals eat animals that eat plants that eat sun for energy. The more steps there are in this process, the more energy is lost at each step. Ninety percent of energy is lost from one of these trophic levels to the next. Both animals and plants need room to grow and live, so the more steps we climb, the more space we need to produce the same amount of calories. The landscape cannot support many consumers eating at the top of the pyramid because it takes so much space in order to feed them. We notice in nature that predators are much rarer than primary consumers. There are thousands of wildebeest per lion in the safari, many more deer than wolves, many more mice than hawks. It’s estimated that 80% of farmland is used to produce livestock who only supply 20% of the world’s calories (Ritchie et al).

What are some ways we could bring redemption to our eating? How do we submit to God in our food choices?

**Farmed Animal Products:** If you are going to buy animal products, purchase them from small farms where the animal’s lives look similar to how they would look if they were free. Small is important because farming animals at large scale almost always prevents proper care. Imagine the care you could offer your pet if you had 6 dogs. Or 75. Or 230,000. Be willing to pay higher prices for welfare. If you want eggs, consider keeping chickens or ducks in your own backyard.
Beware of coded language like “cage free”, “natural”, “humanely slaughtered” and of close shot images, those of green grass pastures, or of smiling caricatured animals. “Local” “Organic” “Family Raised” do not reflect meaningful improvements to animal welfare.

Question what the farmers tell you. “Babies are separated so their mothers don’t step on them.” “Why don’t mothers have enough room to avoid stepping on them?” Question financial incentives when farmers tell you that animals are happier indoors, in cages, alone, separated from family, or in conditions otherwise different from the ones God designed for them.

Slaughter: Research slaughter practices; how are the animals you eat dying? Are you comfortable with these techniques? Why or why not? Ask yourself, “Am I paying someone to do something I’m uncomfortable with?” Question, who works at my slaughterhouse? And do they have the choice to do this job?

Hunting, Fishing: Natural, free life largely un-dictated by another species. Aim for a swift death, recognize that death is not painless, nor does the animal want to die. The animal does not learn to trust and depend on you before being killed. Support the hunting and fishing rights of indigenous peoples who have been sustainably harvesting for millenia and learn from them.

Plantbased : This lifestyle almost eliminates animal suffering. Organic products and those farmed with mostly hand tools protect insects, mice, and birds who balance each other's populations, support soil health, and prevent excessive weed threat. Buying from farms with a healthier ecosystem submits to the cycles which God set up in nature; especially respect for God’s creatures.

The ability to adjust food habits is more accessible for some communities than for others. Many people in this country do not have access to fresh food because it is too far or too expensive. Those of us who, like myself, are blessed to have transportation to a grocery store and the means to purchase fresh food should aim to remove barriers for others rather than pretending that any lifestyle change is equally accessible to everyone.

Leaving animal products off your plate is not a silver bullet to an ethical lifestyle, but it is a great step. Try to buy local when possible and bonus points if you grow your own! Research how people are treated in certain produce industries. Avoid plastic. Explore studies on the links between plant-based eating and lower risk of heart disease, and cancer.

Earlier, we talked about what a “good” Creation looks like. Minister Randy Woodley encourages Christians to pursue shalom on earth. Woodley writes that shalom can also be defined as “wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, and soundness…”(Woodley 271). “God's design for and delight in diversity are embedded in the creation narratives, which describe order,
relationships, stewardship, beauty and rhythm as the essential foundations for shalom, the way God designed the universe to be” (Woodley 271). There is joy in participating in the shalom which God intended in this world; “a chance to participate in the grace that saved us.” (Robinson 124). Let’s practice what we preach with our eating.

References


6. In 2-5 sentences, write a summary of your fellowship project focusing primarily on quantitative results.

This interactive and visual lecture aims to encourage Christians to examine their food habits out of respect for their Creator and fellow Creatures. Exploring the lives of industrially farmed chickens, cattle, fish, and pigs, the presentation shares straightforward, modest, and non-gory facts to reach an audience of any age. Finally, the presentation considers how we can submit to Creation’s design to respect non-human animals and humans disadvantaged by the food industry through our eating. The project was originally presented to 20 Christian people, the majority of whom do not currently follow a plant-based lifestyle. We enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions over a delicious plant-based potluck.

7. List any less quantifiable results you want to share (i.e. was your Christian faith strengthened? Did you have meaningful conversations with colleagues, coaches, or mentors? Did your experience help you identify a better approach to the welfare of animals farmed for food?)

I entered this fellowship excited to learn, but perhaps arrogant about what I thought I already knew. I looked forward to exploring how veganism and Christianity relate and especially to set aside time to prepare a presentation. I thought I just had to organize the content already in my head. But, I learned that the success of this movement is not dependent only on me and whether I told omnivores the perfect things. It has been freeing to learn that this is false. Making myself the hero helps few animals and fewer people.

8. After the conclusion of your fellowship, do you have any interest in continuing to partner with us (i.e. donor, Speaker or Lecturer, Fellowship Selection Committee member, Senior Fellow, volunteer, etc.)?

I can’t commit to anything else at this time. I hope the organization will be blessed and I look forward to engaging in CreatureKind content in the future.