

## Q&A

### PAUL WESLEY

**AS THE PROTAGONIST** Stefan Salvatore on TV's hit series *The Vampire Diaries*, Paul Wesley has earned millions of fans. Off-screen, Wesley is diving into a new role: ending the use of gestation crates in the pork industry. In February, he wrote the CEO of Seaboard Foods, the nation's third-largest pork producer, urging the company to quit confining sows in pens so small they can't turn around. He also tweeted his fans, asking them to push for better treatment of pigs.

Wesley, who in 2012 co-hosted the H-Couture fur-free fashion show, will receive The HSUS's Humane Generation Award this year. In this edited interview with senior writer Karen E. Lange, he talks about getting the word out about America's meat industry—and his new pet.



#### What got you interested in farm animal welfare?

I watched several documentaries, including *Food, Inc.* I was appalled at how little the general public knows. I looked through my pantry and refrigerator, and many of the products were sourced using factory farming. I realized that supporting factory farms was not a conscious choice on people's part, but they lacked information.

#### Did spending time in Poland as a child give you a different perspective on farm animals?

When I was younger, my grandparents and I did not go to grocery stores. If we wanted milk, we went to a farm. For honey, we went to the beekeeper. I think corporations have become obsessed with profit and in doing so have lost any and all ethics.

#### Can you trace your concern for animals back to your childhood?

I grew up with cats and as a child loved our family cats dearly. That's probably my first real experience of actually loving an animal. Also, one summer in Poland, when I was probably 9 or 10, I was on vacation and several miles down the road a large scary-looking dog was chained up to a farmhouse. One day, I snuck out, brought food, and he and I slowly became friends. For three weeks I spent every day sneaking him food. By the end, he would wait for me and we would hug and wrestle.

#### Do you have any pets now?

Earlier this year, on the night before the Atlanta snowstorm, I was walking home from the gym. It was well below freezing outside. I found an 8-month-old kitten crying for help under a car. Now she is my cat.

#### What impact do you hope to have with your advocacy work?

Using Twitter and other social media outlets, I hope I can educate the younger generation and hopefully reform the way we consume food in America. We need to respect all animals as if they were the pets we love at home.

#### IN THE SOUL OF ALL LIVING CREATURES,

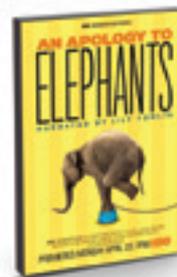
veterinary behaviorist Vint Virga recalls a variety of challenging cases from his career, including pets who experienced sudden behavioral changes and captive wild animals suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorders. Virga reveals how the most basic human actions and expressions, along with environmental factors, can influence an animal's attitude and behavior. While taking readers inside the minds of other species, Virga also ponders the ways that animals enrich people's lives and provide insights into our own behavior.

"When we reach out to animals, we embrace a part of our human nature that's as vital to us as our hearts and minds," he writes, "and that connection stirs our spirit."



**ON THE iPad:** Read an excerpt from the book.

**HUMANS HAVE** long been fascinated with elephants, but that hasn't stopped them from mistreating these highly intelligent, sensitive animals. The HBO documentary *An Apology to Elephants*, winner of an HSUS Genesis Award, examines the exploitation of the world's largest living land mammals, such as the cruel training behind circus tricks and the ivory poaching and habitat loss that are decimating wild herds. The film also highlights some bright spots: places like the Oakland Zoo, which is pioneering a more humane model for captive elephants, and the PAWS sanctuary in California. "Every elephant has a story," says Lily Tomlin, the film's narrator. *An Apology to Elephants* is making sure those stories get shared.



**FOR MORE** information and to order the DVD, visit [hbo.com/documentaries/an-apology-to-elephants](http://hbo.com/documentaries/an-apology-to-elephants).