

Dairy Production

About Cows

Cows are social and sensitive animals. In nature they form large herds and bond closely to some herd members while avoiding others. To communicate, they "moo" and use different body positions and facial expressions. Bovines, in general, are known to be among the most peaceful animals in the world. India has 30% of the world's cattle, and because the cow is respected as a sacred animal, she is permitted to roam the streets of towns undisturbed. Gandhi has been quoted as saying, "The cow is a poem of compassion."



Dairy Industry

Milk production in the United States continues to rise as milk production per cow increases. Since 1970, milk production per cow has nearly doubled, from 9,700 pounds per year to nearly 19,000 pounds. Growing demand for cheese has been one of the biggest forces shaping the U.S. dairy industry. Per capita cheese use has risen to twice the level that it was twenty-five years ago.

Genetic manipulation, bovine growth hormones and intensive production technologies have made it possible for modern dairy cows to produce a hundred pounds of milk a day — ten times more than they would produce naturally. The effects on the cows of this unnatural level of production include mastitis, milk fever, Bovine Leukemia virus, Bovine Immunodeficiency virus, and Johne's disease

During each year of her life, a dairy cow is in milk-production for 300+ days. The female calves she produces are used as replacement dairy animals, while the male calves are used for the production of veal, or as a form of beef product.

Dairy Factories

At least half of the ten million cows kept for milk in the United States live on factory farms where they are crowded into concrete-floored milking pens or barns and milked two or three times a day by machines. Cows raised in modern dairy factories have limited, if any, access to daylight, fresh air, and pasture. They are kept in small stalls that limit exercise, weakening their bones and muscles. Common ailments affecting

dairy cows include infectious disease (e.g., mastitis, endometritis, and digital dermatitis), metabolic disease (e.g., milk fever and ketosis), and injuries caused by their environment. Antibiotics and pesticides are then used to mitigate the spread of disease and pestilence exacerbated by the intensely crowded living conditions.

What Happens to the Calves?

The calves of dairy cows are removed from their mothers within a day of being born so that the cows can be returned to the milking string--where they will spend 300 days of the year being milked two to three times a day. Their milk, intended by nature for their calves, will instead be consumed by humans. The dairy industry refers to dairy cows as “foster mothers of the human race.”

Dr. Temple Grandin, Ph.D, Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University commented on the separation of cow and calf. “That’s one sad, unhappy, upset cow. She wants her baby. Bellowing for it, hunting for it. It’s like grieving, mourning – not much written about it. People don’t like to allow them thoughts or feelings.”

After being separated from their mothers, female calves are often kept in tiny crates or are tethered in stalls for their first few months and enter the milking string as two year olds. Nine months after being artificially inseminated, they will produce their first calves of their own

Male calves of dairy cows are used for the production of veal, or are sent to barren feed lots where they are

raised to produce some form of beef product. The “genetically superior” bull calves may be raised to maturity and used as dairy breeding studs.

Veal calves, which are considered 'byproducts' of the dairy industry, endure eighteen to twenty weeks of torment, in wooden crates so small they can't even turn around, stretch their legs, or lie down comfortably. The calves are fed a liquid milk substitute, deficient in iron and fiber, which is designed to make the animals anemic, resulting in the light-colored flesh that is characteristic of veal.

Milking Machines



A rotary milking parlor

Milking machines enable a single farm worker to milk more than eighty-five cows in two hours. Cows are

hooked by their udders several times a day to electric milking machines, which often cause cuts and injuries, and in some cases give cows repeated electric shocks.

Artificial Insemination

To keep the animals at high levels of productivity, dairy farms keep them pregnant nearly constantly through artificial insemination, a practice that began around 1946. Two months after giving birth to a calf, the cow is impregnated again via artificial insemination. This cycle repeats itself until a cow's milk production declines, at which time she is declared "spent", and trucked away to the slaughter plant.

Bovine Growth Hormones

Bovine Growth Hormone (BGH), a synthetic hormone, is injected into cows to boost their milk production. As a result of hormones, milk production has risen by almost half since 1970, even though milk cow numbers have declined by about a fourth. The hormone can adversely affect the cows' health and cause birth defects in calves. The European Union, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have banned the use of all bovine growth hormones because of concerns about the risks to animal and human health.

Mastitis

Approximately half of the country's dairy cows suffer from mastitis, a bacterial infection of their udders. Mastitis has been called a "man-made" disease because of man's improper care of cows. Poor

milking procedures, over-milking, malfunctioning milking machines, poor housing conditions, and injuries caused by unsafe surroundings can all lead to mastitis. Growth hormones and unnatural milking schedules also cause dairy cows' udders to become so heavy and painful that they sometimes drag on the ground. A full udder can weigh sixty pounds and hold fifty pounds of milk

Slaughter of spent cows

In nature, cows live twenty to twenty-five years, but a typical factory-farmed cow reaches the end of her useful life as a milk producer in just three or four years. When a milk producing cow's production wanes, she is deemed unprofitable and sent off to the slaughterhouse, most likely to be ground up into low-grade hamburger meat.

In commercial dairy operations, cull rates (number of rejected animals removed from the herd) exceed 30% each year. Cows from organic dairies are treated similarly: they are slaughtered at the same processing plants and in the same manner as cows raised on factory farms. They are shackled by one leg and shot in the front of the head with a captive-bolt stunning device that renders them unconscious, before being hoisted upside down and having their throats slit with a knife. In some instances, cows may be fully conscious at the time they are dismembered.

Environmental Impacts of Dairy Production

Dairy production is a major contributor to global environmental degradation, through the growing of feed (often by intensive methods that use excessive

fertilizer and pesticides); pollution of water, soil, and air by agrochemicals and manure waste; and use of limited resources (water, energy). A thousand-pound cow produces an average of ten tons of manure per year. A dairy farm with 2,500 cows may produce as much waste as a city of four-hundred thousand people—and, unlike a city in which human waste ends up at a sewage treatment plant, livestock waste is not treated. Consequently, chemical, bacterial, and viral compounds from animal waste may travel in the soil and water, causing health problems for humans. Parasites, bacteria, and viruses may be spread and antibiotics that were given to livestock can create antibiotic-resistant pathogens. Air pollution from methane gas associated with manure management is also a major concern.

Dairy Goats

Goats are intelligent, curious, and affectionate. At Leilani Farm Sanctuary, the goats enjoy playing head-butting games with each other, jumping on rock piles, and reaching up for fruit tree branches on their hind legs. When visitors take walks around the farm, the goat herd follows along, every step of the way. The tamest goats like to cuddle and one young goat even sits on laps. Goats were among the first animals to be domesticated by humans, as long as 10,000 years ago. Today, there are an estimated 460 million goats in the world.

Goats Motherhood

The doe (female goat) will separate from the rest of the flock when kidding time approaches. After the kid is born, she licks the youngster clean of any afterbirth.

The doe may give a parturient call--consisting of a short, low- pitched bleating--either to call out to her young or to respond to the call from her kid. Constant contact between the doe and the kid, with much sniffing and licking on the doe's part, is necessary for the formation of an early close bond and imprinting.



Goat milk naturally contains small emulsified fat globules. This enables the cream to remain suspended in the milk rather than rising to the top, as in raw cow's milk.

Goat Dairies

Like cow dairies, goat dairies sell the male offspring of female goats for meat. In most rural areas, the law permits goats to be slaughtered at residents' homes rather than at a slaughterhouse; consequently, no oversight is in place to prevent cruelty.

Goats on commercial dairy farms are dehorned before they are ten days old. A very hot iron is used to burn the horn buds off their heads. This procedure is done for the farmers' convenience, to make milking easier. Dehorning is not only painful and traumatic for the goat; it's dangerous, as well. The kid's brain can be permanently damaged by misuse of the disbudding iron. Infection and tetanus can result.

A Happy Ending

Story of a Dairy Goat Saved from Slaughter

One February morning on the island of Maui, Bill, a friend of Leilani Farm Sanctuary, went for groceries at Foodland market, located just down the hill from a large dairy farm. As he walked across the parking lot, Bill heard crying coming from inside a car. In the back seat, he saw a goat hog-tied and in extreme distress. The car doors were locked, so Bill frantically waited there, making eye contact with the goat until three men approached. The men explained that they had just purchased the goat from a dairy farm and planned to butcher him that weekend for a Filipino barbeque. Bill pleaded with the men to relinquish the goat, but they refused. Unable to walk away, knowing the fate that awaited the goat, Bill decided there was no acceptable option for him other than buying the goat from the men.





Bill named the goat Ned and brought him to Leilani Farm Sanctuary where he has been living for six happy years. Ned, a sweet and gentle soul, seems to have forgotten his ordeal. He and his goat friends spend their days lounging under fruit trees in an orchard, grazing on lush grass in the pasture, and interacting with humans who give them endless love.

