

The Environmental Impact of Animal Agriculture



Fecal runoff from a cattle operation

Pollution

Nationwide, 130 times more animal waste is produced than human waste. The 1,600 dairies in Central California produce more waste than a city of 21 million people. Cattle produce nearly 1 billion tons of organic waste each year. Feedlot wastes are up to 100 times more concentrated than human sewage. Because these animals are injected, fed, and sprayed with antibiotics and pesticides, their waste is filled with toxic chemicals. Much of it is washed by rains, untreated, into our waters. The average egg factory produces 11 million tons of manure annually, which can wash into streams and seep into ground water. 70% of the organic water pollution in the U.S. is attributable to animal agriculture.



Flooding causes animal waste to overflow from factory farms and drain into streams and rivers. The excessive nitrogen and phosphorus speeds algae growth, which chokes off aquatic life.

Depletion of resources

The meat and dairy industries consume over 50% of all the water used in the U.S. Most of the water is used to irrigate the pasture and crops that livestock eat. It takes 2500 gallons of water to produce one pound of meat but only 25 gallons of water to produce one pound of wheat.

70% of the U.S. grain harvest is fed to farmed animals.

It takes 40 times the fossil fuel to produce a pound of protein from feedlot beef than to produce a pound of protein from soybeans. The annual beef consumption of a typical family of four requires more than 260 gallons of fuel and releases 2.5 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, as much as the average car over a six

month period. Burning fossil fuels, which produces carbon dioxide, is also a major cause of the greenhouse effect.

1 pound of beef = 12 pounds of grain + 2,500 gallons of water + 1 gallon of gasoline

Plant-based food production requires only 5% of the farm land needed for animal-based production – another great reason to switch to a vegan diet!