

Beef from Dairy

From [Dairy-Truth.com](https://www.dairy-truth.com)

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Milk lies at the heart of every dairy farm and is the cornerstone of a massive global industry. But few pause to consider how this product flows from the udders of a single cow to cheese makers, food producers, and consumers the world over.



Milk production begins with the cow's pregnancy. The process of milk production traditionally relied on natural mating, birthing, and lactation cycles between bulls and cows. However, with the increasing demand for dairy products, the industry has shifted towards artificial insemination to ensure a consistent supply of pregnant, lactating cows. Consequently, this method has led to an overabundance of calves born on farms, surpassing the capacity for all to be accommodated.

The destiny of surplus calves, unnecessary for milk production, differs based on their sex. Male calves often face the unfortunate fate of being considered waste or by-products of the industry, with many ending up in [veal production](#) to extract more profit from the dairy industry. This practice emerged as a means of adding value to dairy calves and co-products, but it also highlights the harsh reality of how the industry views and utilizes these animals.

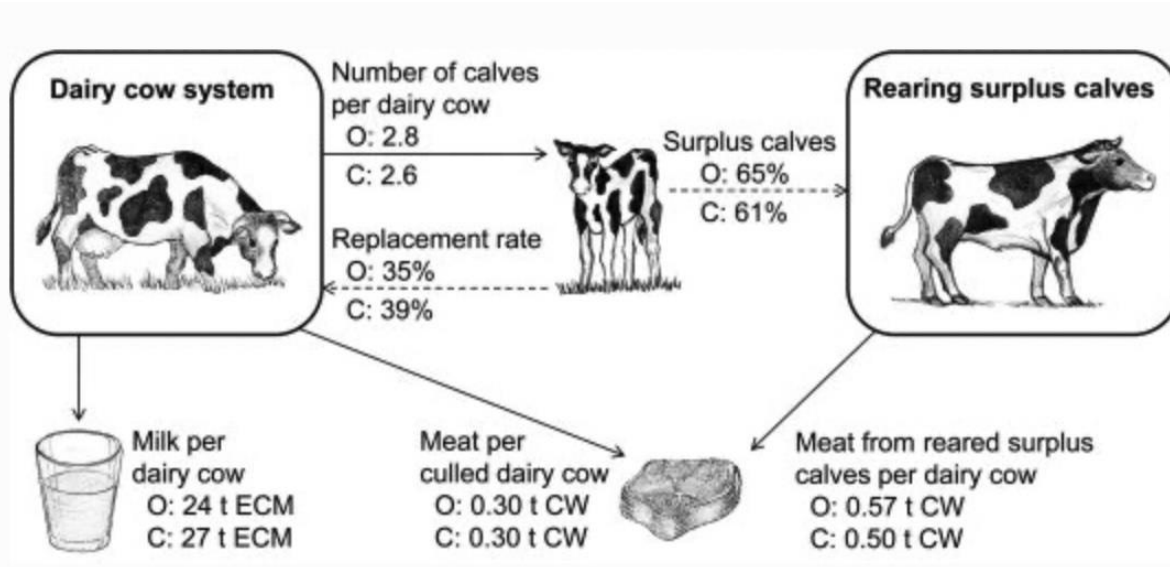
Similarly, less profitable cows pose a quandary for farmers. Declining milk output or health issues may make them economically unsustainable, leading to culling decisions.

The Meat and Dairy Connection

Culling is the calculated decision to remove cows and calves from the herd, a process influenced by economic, industry, and health considerations. When a cow's milk production dwindles, or when health issues arise, the farmer needs to decide if to continue investing resources into an unproductive 'asset', or decide to cull. The Dairy Herd Information (DHI) program [reports a range of culling reasons](#), including feet and legs issues, low production, reproduction problems, mastitis, disease, udder problems, among others.

As indicated above, the decision to cull extends beyond individual cases; it's also shaped by broader economic movements. Rising feed costs, fluctuating milk prices, or shifts in consumer demand can all influence a farmer's calculus when it comes to herd management. In recent years, the US dairy industry has witnessed an [upward trend in culling rates](#), reflecting the mounting pressures faced by farmers in a competitive market landscape. Cows and calves culled from dairy herds often find themselves entering the meat supply chain, contributing to beef and veal supply.

All this serves to underscore that **the practice of sending cows and calves from the dairy industry to the slaughterhouse is not merely an incidental occurrence but an integral and often overlooked aspect of daily operations. The dairy and meat industries are deeply intertwined, with the fate of dairy cows directly impacting the broader meat sector.**



The Dairy System

The statistics below illustrate the significant contribution of dairy cows to the meat industry across various regions worldwide, including Canada, the US, the UK, the EU, and Oceania.

- Canada: 400,000 to 500,000 dairy cows, including calves (20% to 25% of the total beef production).
- USA: 1.5 to 2 million cows (15% to 20% of beef production).
- UK: 200,000 to 250,000 dairy cows, including calves (25% to 30% of beef production).
- Oceania: 200,000 to 250,000 dairy cows, including calves (20% to 25% of the region's beef production).

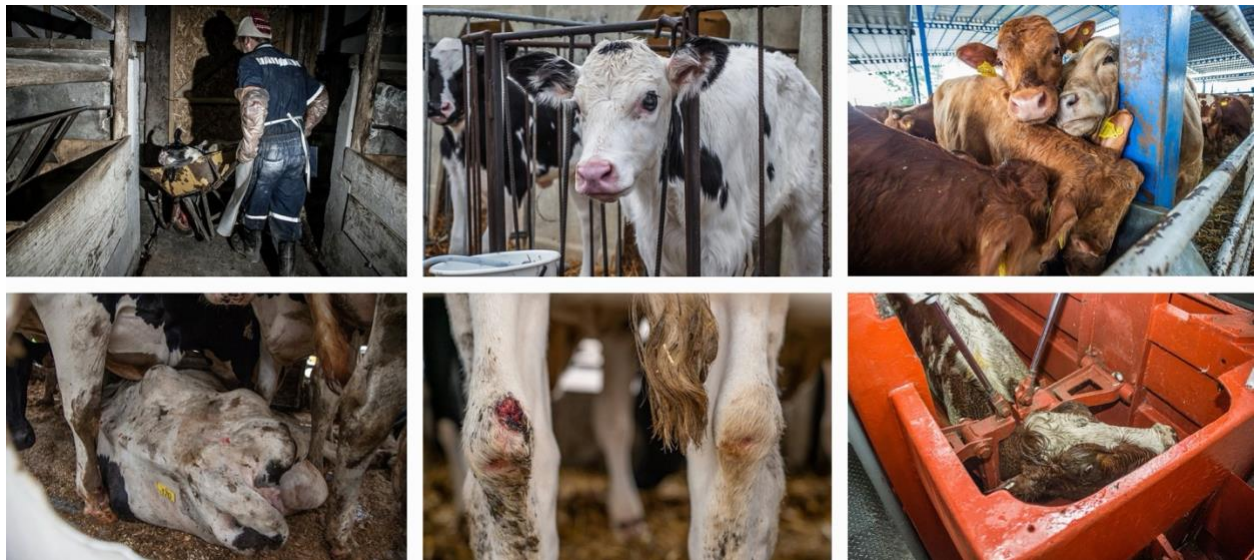
- In the EU, estimates suggest that several hundred thousand dairy cows, including calves, are processed for beef annually. Notably, countries like the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy heavily rely on dairy cows for beef production, contributing to approximately 30% to 35% of beef production in these nations.

From Dairy Farm to Steakhouse

The journey of dairy cows from the farm to the slaughterhouse is not merely a logistical process; it's a heart-wrenching saga of suffering and despair. These innocent animals, marked for culling due to declining milk production or health issues, endure a torturous journey filled with adversity. Confined in cramped trucks for agonizing stretches without food, water, or even a breath of fresh air, their plight is one of unimaginable hardship.

Arriving at the slaughterhouse, they face a series of procedures meant to render them unconscious before the final blow. Yet, despite regulations meant to offer solace, the [reality is far bleaker](#). The handling and stunning processes often miss the mark, subjecting these gentle creatures to excruciating pain and fear. Ultimately, they meet their fate in a system driven by cold demand and ruthless profit margins.

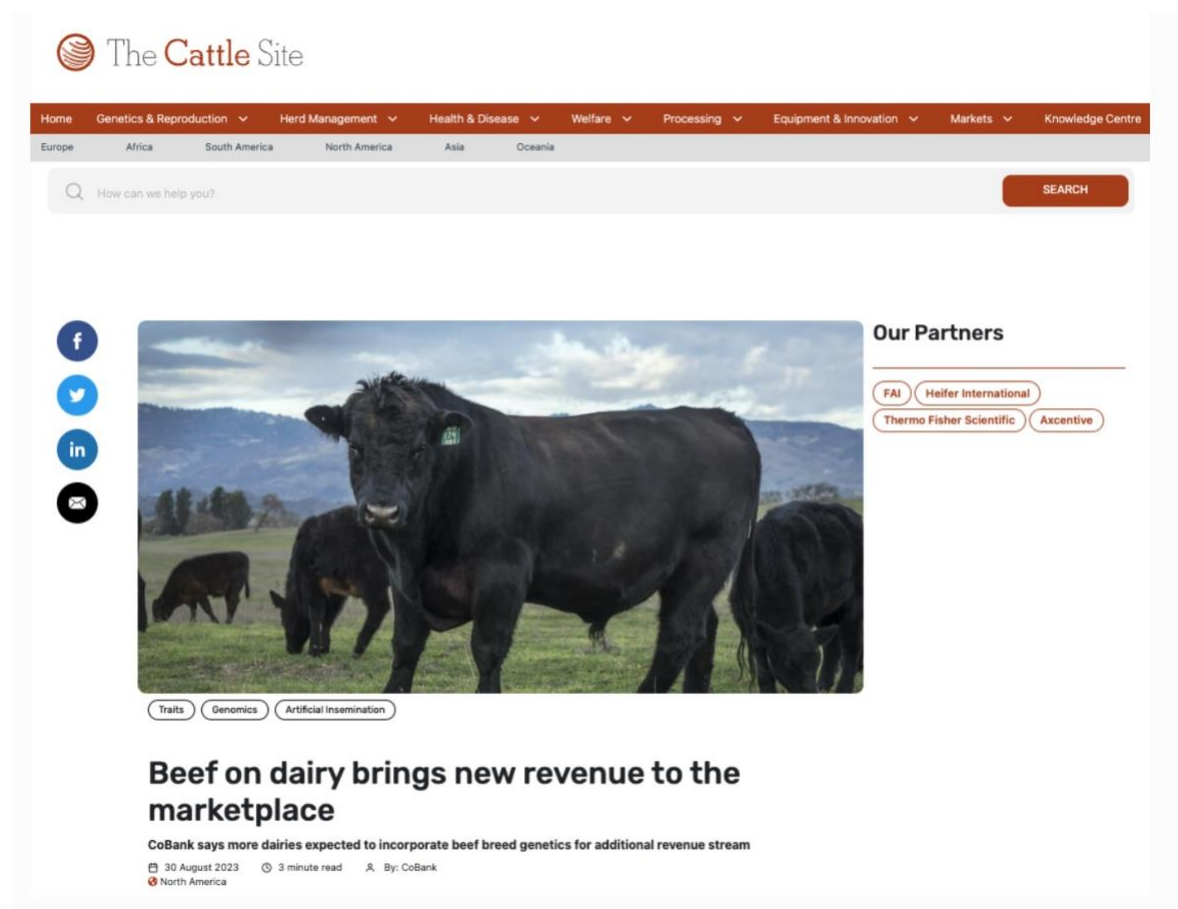
But the suffering doesn't end there. For dairy calves destined for veal production or slaughter, the journey is equally bleak. Torn from their mothers shortly after birth, these vulnerable beings embark on a journey fraught with anguish. Transported in cramped conditions for agonizing durations, they endure the torment of separation and isolation. Confined to stifling crates upon arrival, their freedom snatched away, they face a future devoid of hope. And when the time comes, they too are led to the slaughterhouse, their innocence sacrificed on the altar of human consumption.



An Ignorant Sustainability Strategy

In a troubling distortion of sustainability, the dairy and veal industries promote their practices as eco-friendly solutions, masking their true ecological toll. Veal production is often heralded as a method of adding value to dairy calves and by-products, with industry spokespeople extolling it as a [sustainability role model](#). They argue that by utilizing dairy bull calves and feeding them co-products from dairy manufacturing, they are upcycling and creating a premium food product while minimizing waste.

However, this narrative sidesteps critical environmental realities, failing to acknowledge the intricate [link between milk and beef production](#) and the competition for land. While increasing milk yield per cow is presented as a solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it typically fails to address the broader impacts on beef production. **As the dairy industry becomes more efficient, requiring fewer cows to produce the same amount of milk, the beef industry faces a dilemma: either increase herd sizes to meet demand or adopt practices that intensify existing environmental pressures.** This interdependence between the dairy and beef sectors complicates sustainability assessments, as the environmental impacts of one industry are inevitably intertwined with the other. Consequently, these complexities are often overlooked, resulting in conflicting conclusions and underestimation of the true environmental costs.



The screenshot displays the homepage of 'The Cattle Site'. The navigation bar includes categories like Home, Genetics & Reproduction, Herd Management, Health & Disease, Welfare, Processing, Equipment & Innovation, Markets, and Knowledge Centre. Below the navigation is a search bar with the placeholder text 'How can we help you?' and a 'SEARCH' button. The main content area features a large image of a black cow in a field. To the left of the image are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. To the right is a section titled 'Our Partners' with logos for FAI, Heifer International, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and Axcentive. Below the image are tags for 'Traits', 'Genomics', and 'Artificial Insemination'. The article title is 'Beef on dairy brings new revenue to the marketplace', and the sub-headline is 'CoBank says more dairies expected to incorporate beef breed genetics for additional revenue stream'. The article is dated 30 August 2023, is a 3-minute read, and is by CoBank, with a location tag for North America.

Moreover, the recent trend of integrating beef genetics into dairy reproduction programs, known as '[beef on dairy](#),' serves as a stark illustration of the industry's misguided approach to sustainability. While touted as a means of enhancing profit margins and bolstering the beef supply chain, this practice further entrenches the interdependence of the dairy and meat industries, exacerbating environmental challenges. By prioritizing short-term financial gains over long-term ecological sustainability, the emphasis on beef-on-dairy perpetuates a cycle of environmental degradation. **Instead of embracing truly sustainable practices, such as reducing dairy and beef consumption and transitioning towards plant-based alternatives, the industry continues to prioritize profit at the expense of the planet.**

There's No Dairy Without Meat

Our mission is to educate about the harsh realities of the dairy industry and encourage individuals to make compassionate food choices. When we examine the most searched questions on Google, we uncover common concerns: 'Do dairy cows get used for meat?' and 'Are male calves killed?' These queries reflect a growing ethical awareness around our dietary decisions. In this post, we tackle these questions head-on, offering clarity and insight. The resounding answer is: yes.

Understanding that cows produce milk as nurturing mothers, not just because they're cows, brings to light the continuous cycle of birth and the surplus of calves. Coupled with the relentless pursuit of profit in the dairy industry, this reality paints a stark picture of the fate awaiting these animals.

Confronting these truths prompts us to reevaluate the morality of our food choices. Is it ethically justifiable to support industries that perpetuate such profound suffering? As conscientious consumers, we hold the power to effect change through our daily decisions. By opting for [plant-based alternatives](#) and advocating for compassionate food systems, we pave the way for a future where animals are liberated from exploitation and recognized as sentient beings deserving of empathy and consideration.