

## Dairy Industry Horrors: It's Neither Wholesome Nor Humane

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The dairy industry is often presented to consumers as wholesome and humane. What actually goes on at dairy farms doesn't match up with the marketing message, though.

Dairy cows lead miserable lives from the moment they are born. Both male and female calves are taken from their mothers when they're just a few hours old. The females are destined to follow in their mothers' footsteps, while the males face early slaughter for the [veal](#) industry.

Furthermore, the dairy industry has a consistently harmful impact on our environment and health.

You might have seen the [memes popping up on social about lactose intolerance](#).



It's supposed to be funny, but it also conveys an important message. Cows produce milk to nourish their young — baby cows. The milk isn't intended for human consumption.

Based on the most recent statistics, [Americans consume an average of 276 gallons of dairy every year](#). That's a ton of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products.

Just because people consume dairy, though, doesn't make it a healthful choice as a beverage or a snack.

Let's take a deep look at the dairy industry and how it's impacting our lives, from the environment in which we live to the impact on our guts and overall health. Of course, we also need to talk about the dairy cows who live in factory farms and suffer because of it.

### **What Defines Dairy Farming?**



Dairy farming is defined as a commercial operation that raises cows or other animals for the purposes of collecting and selling their milk. Some dairy farms are small, family-run operations, while others might have thousands of cows at any given time.

The dairy industry can only continue to survive as long as people buy dairy products in the store. It might be a gallon of milk, a brick of cheese, and a cup of yogurt, or a bottle of creamer for your morning coffee.

It's important to understand, though, that animals suffered while supplying the milk that makes dairy products. The milk we use for human consumption never makes it into the bellies of baby cows — the ones who actually need it.

The mothers never get to bond with their babies or to nourish them, which leaves them in great distress. Mother cows will bray and scream and bash themselves against their fencing panels in an effort to reach their babies. It's heartbreaking to witness.

We've talked a lot about the dairy industry and its impact on animal rights. The picture is bleak. We continue to use cows as though they're nothing more than factory parts, and we're feeding ourselves a product that wasn't designed for us to begin with.

Again, why do dairy cows produce milk? To feed their offspring. They're not different from any other animal, including humans, who produce milk to nourish their young. Taking that right away from them disrupts nature and the cycle of life.

So why does it continue? One word: Profit.

How much does a farmer make per gallon of milk? It depends. According to recent studies, [most farmers can expect to pocket \\$18 per 100 pounds of raw milk](#). The more cows they have, the more cash they can make.

### **Why Is the Dairy Industry Bad for Our Health?**



Have you ever felt bloated or uncomfortable after drinking a glass of milk, eating lots of cheese, or scarfing down a large helping of yogurt? It's more common than most people think.

Lactose intolerance is loosely defined, but many people who aren't considered intolerant still experience digestive upset after consuming dairy. The body can't break down lactose properly, which leads to unpleasant consequences like bloating and diarrhea.

In fact, studies have shown that [up to 75 percent of human beings have some form of intolerance for lactose](#).

It's true that milk contains many of the essential nutrients we need to survive. However, we can find those nutrients through other foods or, if necessary, through supplements.

The research shows that high milk consumption is linked to teenage and adult acne, eczema, allergies, and even certain types of cancers. Though we're told to drink milk to build strong bones, studies have shown that women who drink milk in large quantities actually increase their risk of bone fracture.

### **How Does the Dairy Industry Harm the Environment?**

To understand the link between dairy farming and environmental decay, we have to explore how animals are housed and treated. [Factory farming involves unsanitary conditions](#) for the animals and workers.

For instances, cows often wade through several inches of manure sludge. The accumulated feces can even get high enough to contaminate the cows' teats, which can cause human health dangers when the milk is collected.

One of the most insidious facts about the dairy industry is that [cows can host microbes that don't make them sick](#), but that can cause illness in human beings.

What does this have to do with the environment?

Factory farmers have to dispose of animal waste in some way. The manure might be beneficial for nurturing plants when properly turned into mulch, but the feces attract flies, microbes, and disease.

This waste seeps into the groundwater around the factory farm and can contaminate areas meant for crops, human habitation, and more.

Additionally, manure releases greenhouse gases that destroy the environment over time. This is a major factor when it comes to climate change. Cows also release significant methane throughout their lifespans, which further degrades the overall air quality in a given area.

Another environmental issue to consider is the use of land to house factory farmed dairy cows. Improper feed sourcing can waste food that might otherwise feed human beings, and the farms themselves consume land that might otherwise provide natural fauna with a home.

The entire purpose of the dairy industry is to breed more cows to produce more milk. This process consumes resources that wildlife need to thrive. We're gradually destroying entire ecosystems by appropriating homes that belong to animals.

### **What Benefits Do Vegans Enjoy After Giving Up Dairy?**



If you've ever given up dairy, you might have noticed that you feel better. You have more energy, fewer sinus issues, and better digestive performance.

This is because we, as human beings, aren't designed to digest milk meant for baby cows. It goes against our biology and can wreak havoc on our intestines and stomach.

[Vegans do not eat dairy](#) or any other animal by-product. Consequently, they often enjoy better health as long as they design their diets around consuming whole foods full of varied nutrients.

Dairy products are known to thicken mucus, which can make asthma and allergy sufferers even more miserable. It's also been linked to breakouts, weight gain, and abdominal bloating.

### **Not Everyone is the Same**

It's important to know, however, that everyone's results will vary. Depending on your specific biology, you might not feel any different after giving up dairy. However, you won't feel *worse*, which is an important distinction.

You might have a strong gut that can handle foods that prove difficult for others to digest. This doesn't mean that you need dairy to survive.

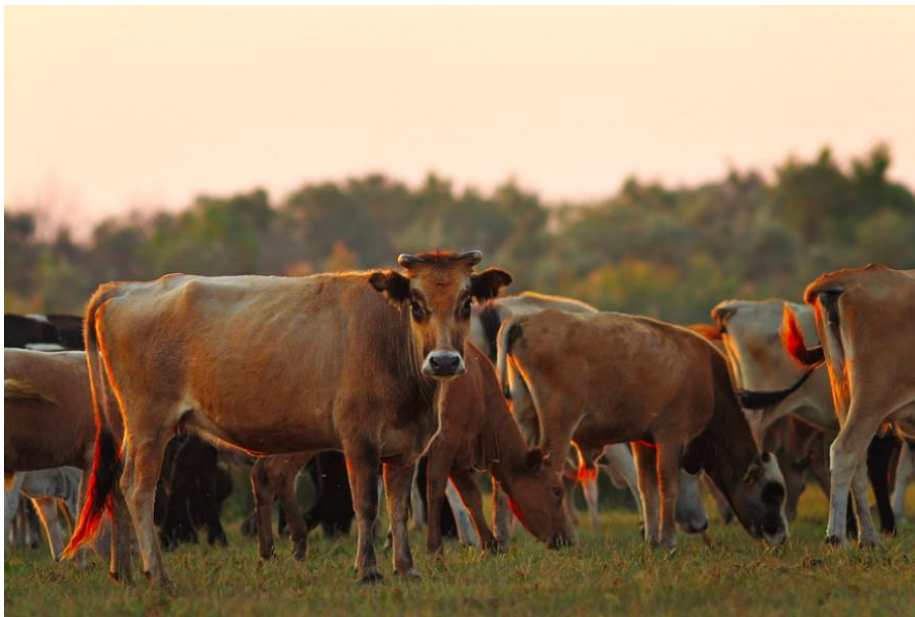
In terms of weight loss, consider the ways in which most of us consume dairy. It's a key ingredient in meals like pasta with cream sauce, pizza, grilled cheese sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, and cream cheese spreads. And let's not forget one of the most common forms: ice cream.

These foods can cause you to pack on the pounds. When you give up dairy, replace it with foods that provide more nutritive value without the empty calories.

You might eat whole fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Focus on adding foods to your diet that replace the nutrients you previously got from dairy. Consume navy beans and almonds to pick up some calcium, orange juice that's been fortified with vitamin D, and quinoa and lentils for protein.

If [you're thinking about going vegan](#), you don't have to give up dairy all at once. Start with milk and replace it with other beverages you enjoy — or a vegan alternative, such as almond milk. Ditch the cheese next, then move on to other dairy products until you've completely eliminated them from your diet.

### **How Do Animals Benefit from Veganism?**



Veganism is one of the best ways to [fight for animal rights](#). You're making a strong statement: "I won't use or consume any product that's made from animal by-products or meat."

The dairy industry depends on consumers' desire for dairy products. If we all stopped eating dairy and other animal by-products today, those businesses would vanish tomorrow.

However, we still live in a world of meat- and dairy-eaters, so that probably won't happen any time soon. The best thing you can do is lead by example.

If you [decide to eat a vegan diet](#), your friends and family members might ask about it. If you handle the conversation delicately, you could inspire those people to try veganism for themselves.

As more people jump on the vegan bandwagon, more dairy cows will find themselves safe from a life of servitude, pain, and depression. These animals can't protect themselves, so they need human champions to fight for their rights.

Animals benefit from veganism because fewer of them are needed to produce milk. The dairy industry might want to create as much product as possible, but only when there's sufficient demand.

If they produce too much milk — more than the market will buy — they lose money from an operational standpoint. Every glass of milk you *don't* drink could contribute to a cow's freedom and happiness.

### **What's the Best Way to Remove Dairy From Your Diet?**



If you love dairy foods, you might struggle to give it up at first. The best way to say no to the dairy industry is to find foods that satisfy the things you love about dairy.

Take cheese, for instance. It's a common dairy food that people add to numerous dishes. You could replace it with something equally creamy and satisfying, such as tahini spread, pesto, or sweet potato sauce.

Vegan hummus is an excellent dairy replacement because it's just as versatile. Add it to salads, sandwiches, wraps, casseroles, and other foods to make them more palatable.

It's true that vegan cheeses exist, but they're not the healthiest option, and you can't expect them to taste like cheddar or ricotta. Milk substitutes, however, often come extremely close to tasting like the real thing. Try several brands to find one you like if you need milk in your diet.

In terms of ice cream, yogurt, and similar foods, substitution isn't always the best option, primarily because they're not the healthiest choices for your body. If you're craving dessert, consider eating a fruit bowl instead of vegan ice cream. It's just as sweet, but it won't do nearly as much damage to your waistline.

When you first remove dairy from your diet, eat at home as much as possible. Once you become more familiar with foods that contain "secret" dairy, you'll have more success at restaurants or when dining at others' homes.

In some parts of the world, vegan restaurants flourish. That isn't the case everywhere, but more venues are opening every year to serve the people who don't consume meat or animal by-products. With any luck, the availability of these businesses will encourage even more people to eat vegan diets.

### **Is the Dairy Industry Really Dangerous?**



The dairy industry is inherently dangerous because it disrupts nature and its natural cycle. When we breed animals for the exclusive purposes of using them until they die, we commit a crime against animals in general.

But let's start with human beings. The agriculture industry in general is extremely dangerous, contributing to thousands of injuries every year. Indeed, [injuries are more common among workers in animal production](#), according to a 2013 study.

When human beings decide to control several-hundred-pound animals, they're likely to get hurt, especially in environments that render the animals fearful and desperate. Farm workers get kicked, bitten, trampled, and thrown against hard surfaces.

Animals get injured, too — sometimes purposefully. Farm workers cut off their horns and allow their hooves to grow so long they can no longer stand up. They receive little or no veterinary care, and they often injure themselves because of their mental states.

These horrific results don't need to happen. If the dairy industry no longer exists, cows don't have to live in fear and pain. They can give birth to their calves, nourish them as intended, and participate in their upbringing.

What many people fail to discuss about the dairy industry is that cows are social. They band together in herds to protect one another because they're stronger together than apart.

Calves often spend their entire lives with their mothers. They bond just like humans do, and they need socialization to feel content and safe.

The dairy industry seeks to take away those rights.

## **Conclusion**

Imagine that the dairy industry doesn't exist. Cows aren't enslaved by humans who want to steal their milk, and human beings don't expose themselves to the dangerous world of the factory farm.

That's the type of world in which many of us would like to live. Unfortunately, the demand for dairy ensures that the dairy industry can continue to thrive.

Empirical evidence suggests that [dairy farms aren't safe or healthy](#) for human beings — let alone the nonhuman animals. People — especially those who live in rural areas — must drink water that might have been contaminated by manure sludge. They breathe air contaminated by greenhouse gases.

This isn't a sustainable way to take care of our planet. We need to stop breeding animals just so we can take what morally belongs to them and focus on feeding the planet with fresh, whole foods. [Dairy cows consume copious amounts of grain](#) — grain that could feed people who have no access to reliable nourishment.

If you agree that the dairy industry does more harm than good, consider switching to a vegan diet starting today. Eliminate milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and other foods that contain dairy so you don't contribute to the problem. Instead, you become part of a healthier, safer, more humane future.