

# Cow's Milk

## The Issue: Dairy

*“Dairy” is the common industry term for cows’ breast milk, and it is the term we will be using in this entry.*

## The Other Side

*“I can’t give up cheese, etc.”*

Do you think it is harder for you to give up dairy products or do you think it is harder for the animals who are suffering at the hands of this industry? What do you value more, taste or life? If you were in their position, wouldn’t you want someone to be a voice for you?

*“Cows naturally produce milk —it doesn’t hurt to take it.”*

Let people know that the process of dairy farming does hurt mother cows on an emotional and physical level, saying something like, “Cows only produce milk if they’re pregnant or have a baby. There are a host of plant-based milks including oat, almond, soy, coconut, rice, hemp, pea, hazelnut, etc. Would you be open to trying those instead?”

*“Soy has estrogen.”*

The estrogen in soy is a phytoestrogen, which provides health benefits to the human body. In any case, almost all soy grown in America is fed to livestock.<sup>1</sup> Estrogen found in Cow’s milk can cause increased disease risk in humans. Think about the hormones that are raging inside a pregnant cow

when she's giving milk. If you cannot consume soy due to an allergy, there are many other plant-based dairy alternatives to choose from.<sup>[2,3](#)</sup>

"I make sure to get ethical milk."

There is nothing ethical about what we do to cows when we selectively breed them, forcibly impregnate them, take their babies away from them, mutilate them, exploit them for their breastmilk, then send them to slaughter. The most basic practices done on any dairy farm are exploitative to the cows and therefore unethical.

*"There would be an overpopulation of cows if we didn't eat them."*

Dairy cows are bred into existence, so with fewer people supporting the dairy industry, the number of dairy cows on the planet will automatically decrease. This will be a gradual process as humanity shifts towards veganism, whereby the number of people boycotting animal products would increase slowly over time, meaning that farm animals would be bred less and less due to a decreased demand.

"I need milk for calcium."

The WHO (World Health Organization) recommends 400-500 mg of calcium a day, and yet the Dairy Association in America recommends 1,200 mg daily. Moreover, calcium from plants is better absorbed than calcium from cow's milk. Dark green leafy vegetables like kale, broccoli, and bok choy, are relatively rich in calcium, which is absorbed about twice as well as the calcium in milk. Furthermore, they also contain fiber, folate, iron, and antioxidants, some of the very nutrients lacking in dairy.<sup>[4](#)</sup>

## The Facts

### Animal Cruelty

- Cows only produce milk (lactate) if they have a baby or are pregnant. They make milk because they are mothers.

- Cows who have given birth have to be milked because humans have selectively bred them to produce so much milk, but that does not justify the industry. It just proves how far the industry has gone.
- Apart from humans, no species drinks milk beyond the natural age of weaning or drinks the milk of another species. Cow's milk is suited to the nutritional needs of calves, who have four stomachs and gain hundreds of pounds in a matter of months, sometimes weighing more than 1,000 pounds before they turn 2 years old<sup>5</sup>.
- Breeds of cows used for dairy consumption include Holstein, Brown Swiss, Guernsey, Ayrshire, Jersey, Red and White, and Milking Shorthorn<sup>6</sup>
- Holsteins are the world's highest producing dairy animals. (They get slaughtered for "ground" or "roast" "beef" after milk production declines.)
- The United States has an estimated 9 million dairy cows in around 75,000 dairy herds, with an average herd size of 120 cows<sup>6</sup>.
- Of the 9 million dairy cows in the U.S., 3 million are slaughtered each year at only a fraction of their natural lifespan.<sup>7</sup>
- The dairy industry rapes cows starting around 12-18 months.
- First, the industry jacks off a bunch of bulls, using a hand or from an "electroejaculator."<sup>8</sup>
- Dairy farms are usually all female, so farmers usually obtain semen through the mail. Only 1/3 of cows are successful with getting pregnant on the first round.
- Cows are forcibly impregnated. This is done by sticking an arm in their anus, grabbing their cervix and inserting semen with a syringe, or by using a long steel device.
- To maintain lactation, a dairy cow must be bred and produce calves<sup>6</sup>. The dairy industry starts forcibly impregnating cows when they are around one year old. They are pregnant for about 9 months. They are repeatedly and forcibly impregnated throughout their lives to keep them lactating, and their calves are repeatedly ripped away from them.
- 97% of newborn dairy calves are forcibly removed from their mothers within the first 24 hours<sup>7</sup>. This is so that the mother's milk can be used for human consumption, as the calf would drink it if left with her.
- Male calves are either shot (because they're a by-product) or raised for veal (which exists only because of the dairy industry), and female calves go on to endure the same miserable fate as their mothers. Their bond is very strong and affectionate and the mother cries out for her calf for days.
- These calves typically spend the first 2 to 3 months of life confined in lonely hutches, fed a diet of milk replacer while humans drink the milk intended for them<sup>7</sup>.
- Cows are dehorned, disbudded, or polled. They are also branded and their tails are cut off.
- Each year cows go through aggressive hoof trimming, since their hoofs do not wear naturally in dairy farms.
- Cows have been genetically modified to produce an average of 10 times the milk they would produce naturally and are hooked up to milking machines, which commonly causes them to develop mastitis. As a result, pus, blood and bacteria contaminate the milk. Pasteurization reduces the bacterial count, but does not completely eliminate them.
- Cows receive countless drugs, antibiotics and bovine growth hormone injections, which also get transferred to the milk.
- After 3-6 years, the cows' milk production declines, and they are no longer profitable. Farmers call them "spent". Therefore they are sent to be slaughtered by being "stunned,"

hung upside down, having their throats slit, and bleeding to death. Their natural lifespan is from 20 to 25 years old.

- The dairy industry has worked their way into education systems, nutritional programs, and media to convince us that we need to consume milk from other species for good health.
- When you are in school learning about that, it is not because there was a panel of people who cared about your health that determined that, it is because the dairy industry pays lots of money for people to hear it in school, on TV, on billboards, on websites, and for doctors—who are not required to take more than a few credit hours of nutrition courses—to tell you to drink your milk.<sup>8</sup>
- Mothers make milk for their babies and for their babies alone. The only milk that one ever needs comes from their mothers' breasts.
- Animal milk is made by enslavement, torture, and murder of animals. Plant milk is made by soaking, grinding, and straining of nuts, seeds and grains.

## Environment

- The consumption of cow's milk is significantly more damaging to the environment than the consumption of any plant-based milk, since cows produce such enormous amounts of methane, and such large amounts of genetically modified soy go into animal feed.
- Cows produce about 150 billion gallons of methane per day. Methane is 25 to 100 times more damaging to the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>5</sup> It contributes majorly to global warming and also pollutes land, air, and water.
- It takes around 1,000 gallons of water to produce 1 gallon of cow's milk.
- We know that the agriculture industry is one of the leading causes of climate change. 1.3 billion cows take up 23% of the landmass on earth. If you want to help the environment, adopting a plant-based diet is the single biggest thing you can do to cut down your carbon emissions.
- Worldwide, humans drink 5.2 billion gallons of water and eat 21 billion pounds of food each day.<sup>9</sup>
- Most cows will drink 30-50 gallons of water and eat 140 to 150 pounds of feed (which needs to be irrigated and fertilized) a day.<sup>9</sup>

## Health

- Milk has high cholesterol and no fiber content (while plant milk has no cholesterol and high fiber content). All milk is stress milk, containing estrogen, IGF-1, saturated fat, trans fat, blood, and up to 750,000 somatic cells per mL (which is the USDA standard allowed in the US),. If not exploited to produce organic milk, cows are often injected with rBGH, and tons of antibiotics.
- Dairy is the number-one calcium source in the United States, but it's also the number-one source of saturated fat and a top food allergen.<sup>10</sup>

- Milk products contain cholesterol. Diets high in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol increase the risk of heart disease, which remains the world's top killer.
- Milk increases the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease. Studies have also linked dairy to an increased risk of breast, ovarian, and prostate cancers.11
- Milk consumption has been associated with an increased risk of early puberty in girls and endometrial cancer in postmenopausal women.
- According to the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research, there is no association between milk intake and decreased hip fracture risk in women.12
- Harvard researchers found that drinking cow's milk can even increase the risk of hip fractures in men.13
- A study following almost 53,000 North American women over almost 8 years show that those who are drinking 2- 3 cups of cow's milk a day, which is the amount currently recommended by the USDA guidelines, increases the risk of breast cancer by as much as 70- 80%. 14
- All plants contain calcium. Calcium is an essential plant nutrient.15
- Animal protein leaches calcium from the bones, leading to its excretion in the urine. 15
- Typical cheeses are 70% fat.11
- Infants and children produce enzymes that break down lactose, the sugar found in breast milk and cow's milk, but as we grow up, many of us naturally lose this capacity. Lactose intolerance is common, affecting about 95 percent of Asian Americans, 74 percent of Native Americans, 70 percent of African Americans, 53 percent of Mexican Americans, and 15 percent of Caucasians. Symptoms include upset stomach, diarrhea, and gas.11
- Approximately 75% of the world's population is lactose intolerant.15
- The majority of Earth is lactose intolerant and as a human species, we have only consumed cow's milk at all in the last 10,000 years.
- Pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and dioxins are other examples of contaminants found in milk. Dairy products contribute to 1/4 to 1/2 of the dietary intake of total dioxins.11

## The Lingo

- Bovine – refers to cattle or buffalo.
- Cow – a female bovine that has had a calf, or is more than three years old.
- Bull – a male bovine.
- Calf – a young bovine from birth to weaning (six to nine months old).
- Bull calf – a male calf.
- Heifer calf – a female calf.
- Steer – a castrated male bovine more than one year old.
- Heifer – a female bovine that has not had a calf, or is aged between six months and three years old.
- Herd – a group of cattle.
- Calving - when a cow gives birth to a calf.

- “Vacation”- this is what some farms call the time before the cows’ first forcible impregnation/rape.
- Weaning – the process of separation of young animals from their mothers when they are no longer dependent upon them for survival.
- Calf Weaner- a spiked nose ring put on calves, which results in the mothers rejecting the calves’ attempts to drink their mothers’ milk.
- Calf hutch- where baby cows are moved shortly after birth. It is outside and usually plastic or fiberglass, with a bottle and bucket rack built in.
- “Breeding box” or “rape rack”- A euphemism for a the contraption female cows are held in while they are bred.
- “AI” or artificial insemination - the most common way dairy farmers impregnate female cows. Specifically, through the Introduction of semen into the uterus or oviduct by other than natural means.
- Electroejaculator - rectal probe and power source to apply current to nerves to promote ejaculation.
- Mastitis - a painful infection of the udders.
- Antibiotics - medicines that are used to fight bacterial infections. Cows in the dairy industry are given these if they’re not organic, which encourages the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone )- increases milk production (and also the cow’s chances of getting mastitis). It’s illegal in the EU, Canada, and other places, but not in the US.
- Milk fever - an illness in cows, goats, etc., that have just produced young, caused by a calcium deficiency - when people are stealing too much milk. (It is not really a fever and can be fatal.)
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (aka Mad Cow Disease) - this is caused by cows being fed meat-and-bone meal (MBM) that contained either the remains of cattle who developed the disease or scrapie-infected products. It’s a neurodegenerative disease of cattle with symptoms including abnormal behavior, trouble walking, and weight loss. There are around 4-5 years between infection and onset of symptoms. Spread to humans is believed to result in variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (vCJD). Symptoms include psychiatric problems, behavioral changes, and painful sensations. Life expectancy is 13 months after symptoms show. Both are caused by prions (misfolded proteins).
- Downer - what the industry refers to when a dairy cow is too physically and emotionally exhausted to go on and collapses. She is dragged out and lifted by heavy machines or whatever means to a truck that will take her to the slaughterhouse to be made into “ground beef.”
- Spent - this is a term used by the dairy industry to refer to cows that are no longer economically viable to keep, and are ready for slaughter.

# The Resources

1. [https://ourworldindata.org/soy#:~:text=More%20than%20three%2Dquarters%20\(77,%2C%20edamame%20beans%2C%20and%20tempeh.](https://ourworldindata.org/soy#:~:text=More%20than%20three%2Dquarters%20(77,%2C%20edamame%20beans%2C%20and%20tempeh.)
2. <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/is-soy-healthy-for-breast-cancer-survivors/>
3. <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/who-shouldnt-eat-soy/>
4. <https://nutritionfacts.org/topics/calcium/>
5. <https://www.peta.org/blog/reasons-why-almond-milk-is-better-than-dairy-milk/>
6. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dairy\\_cattle](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dairy_cattle)
7. <https://freefromharm.org/dairyfacts/>
8. <https://youtu.be/UcN7SGGoCNI>
9. <https://watchdocumentaries.com/what-the-health/>
10. <https://nutritionfacts.org/topics/calcium/>
11. <https://www.pcrm.org/good-nutrition/nutrition-information/health-concerns-about-dairy>
12. <https://asbmr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jbmr.279>
13. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24247817/>
14. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=roIWg4ntj9k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roIWg4ntj9k)
15. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4243668/>

## Additional Resources

- Dairy Is Scary: <https://youtu.be/UcN7SGGoCNI>
- This is how the dairy industry lied to the world:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roIWg4ntj9k>
- Milk: Make Your Own Mind Up: (  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5wabeFG9pM&t=20s>)
- Dairy Destroys Families: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B\\_z4XhFPvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_z4XhFPvM))
- MILKED - White Lies In Dairy Land: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCwpsMtmMhM>)
- The Herd: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejs6NdZ5Bo0&t=335s>)
- 73 Cows (<https://vimeo.com/293352305>)
- A Cow At My Table: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Kkp\\_XfmuBg&t=32s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Kkp_XfmuBg&t=32s)) ??(MAKE SURE VIDEO IS WORKING)
- Vegans go UNDERCOVER at a Dairy Farm: (  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vate7NI6glo>)
- Cow (buy or rent): (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCAetHQQJio>)

- What the Dairy Industry Doesn't Want You to Know: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3c\\_D0s391Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3c_D0s391Q))
- Why Dairy Is Never Humane: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvppRx41YDU>)
- KIDS! Just Say No to MILK!: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDEc87fomio>)
- Got Calcium? Dairy Free Vegan Calcium Sources | Dr Michael Greger of [Nutritionfacts.org](https://nutritionfacts.org): ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ANCusVd\\_Kk&t=239s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ANCusVd_Kk&t=239s))
- What the Health: (<https://watchdocumentaries.com/what-the-health/>, Netflix and Amazon also)
- 10 Dairy Facts the Industry Doesn't Want You to Know: <https://freefromharm.org/dairyfacts/>
- All the Reasons Why Almond Milk Is Better Than Dairy Milk: <https://www.peta.org/blog/reasons-why-almond-milk-is-better-than-dairy-milk/>
- Health Concerns About Dairy: (<https://www.pcrm.org/good-nutrition/nutrition-information/health-concerns-about-dairy>)
- Milk intake and risk of hip fracture in men and women: A meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies: <https://asbmr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jbmr.279>
- Milk consumption during teenage years and risk of hip fractures in older adults: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24247817/>
- Calcium in Plants: (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4243668/>)
- Lactose intolerance: diagnosis, genetic, and clinical factors: (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3401057/>)
- Dairy cattle: ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dairy\\_cattle](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dairy_cattle))

## Dairy Dates

- February- Febudairy
- June- National Dairy Month

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