



© WSPA/Colin Seadon

It doesn't have to be like this



© WSPA/Colin Seadon

Humane alternatives ensure that cattle have space and conditions allowing them to behave more naturally. They are fed more natural diets, endure fewer mutilations, and come under less pressure to produce high yields.

In partnership with Food Animal Initiative, the WSPA has set up the Model Farm Project (www.modelfarmproject.org), which aims to establish an international network of development and demonstration farms. These show that humane and sustainable cattle and dairy farming is a practical and viable reality.



What you can do

The WSPA is working with organisations throughout the world to end the suffering of intensively farmed cattle. YOU can help make a difference to cattle worldwide:

- If you buy animal produce, always choose free-range or organic red meat and dairy. In the UK, look out for certifications such as Soil Association and RSPCA Freedom Food.
- Watch out for misleading labels such as "fresh" or "farm assured" (unrelated to animal welfare) and question unclear labelling.
- Ask your local supermarket to stock more free-range and organic produce. Use customer comment cards and

helplines to tell suppliers you care about farm animal welfare.

- When eating out, complain if you see cruel products such as white veal on the menu.
- Send for the WSPA's Farm Animal Welfare Information Pack.
- Order and distribute copies of this leaflet.



© WSPA

To take action, visit wspa.org.uk

For more information, visit www.wspafarmwelfare.org – our portal for governments and animal welfare organisations.

WSPA, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7587 5000 • Fax: +44 (0)20 7793 0208

World Society for the Protection of Animals

The facts about our food: Intensive cattle & dairy farming



© WSPA

“Each year almost 300 million cattle are reared for meat and over 200 million cattle are reared for dairy worldwide.”



World Society for the Protection of Animals

© WSPA/Colin Seadon



Inside intensive cattle farms

The majority of cattle are farmed intensively in systems where they are confined, mutilated, overworked and unable to express their natural behaviours. The WSPA believes these intensive systems should be replaced by humane alternatives that are kinder to the animals, safer for humans and better for the environment.

Feedlots

In the feedlot system, thousands of beef cattle are fattened in grassless, manure-laden outdoor enclosures where they are fed an unnatural cereal diet. Very common in the United States, this system is spreading to countries such as Brazil, China, India, the Philippines and Australia.

In other zero-grazing systems, beef cattle are kept indoors at high stocking densities. Harsh concrete or slatted floors put strong pressure on their feet and legs, increasing the incidence of lameness.

Calves reared for beef are often confined in dry lots – barren, muddy pens where they suffer increased disease and mortality rates.

Mutilations

Dehorning and castration are routinely practised to reduce injuries from

aggressive behaviour. Often performed without anaesthetic, these procedures can cause severe pain.

Research shows that the best way to prevent injuries is not to remove horns, but to use polled (genetically hornless) cattle and to keep it in good conditions. Aggressive behaviour often results from overcrowding in barren enclosures – a basic management mistake.

Veal crates

In some countries, calves reared for veal are kept in solitary confinement, in crates so narrow that they cannot even turn around. They are fed an iron-deficient diet to produce “white veal”. This practice was banned in the UK in 1990 and throughout the European Union in 2007, but remains in many countries including the United States.



Inside intensive dairy farms

Overworked cows

In many parts of the world, dairy cows have been pushed through selective breeding and unnatural diets to produce around ten times their natural milk yield.

Because she is artificially re-impregnated while still lactating, a dairy cow spends 7 months of every year simultaneously pregnant and producing large quantities of milk.

The strain of this over-production can cause lameness, painful udder infections (mastitis) and metabolic diseases. In indoor cubicles, lameness is exacerbated by manure-laden concrete floors or by

permanent tethering. Cows are often sent for slaughter at only 4-5 years old.

Mutilations

Tail-docking is routinely practised to prevent dirtiness and improve worker convenience. Often performed without anaesthetic, this practice can cause long-term discomfort as well as short-term pain. Tail-docking is now banned in a number of European countries including the UK, but remains common in the USA.

Early weaning

Calves are removed from their mothers within a few days of birth, contrasting with 9-12 months naturally. This is thought to cause severe stress to both the cows and their calves.

Slaughter of the newborn

In many parts of the world, male calves are regarded as waste by-products of the dairy industry. Some are reared for veal or beef; others are shot shortly after birth.



Food safety

Antibiotics and hormones fed to intensively farmed cattle can leave residues in meat and milk. Red meat and dairy products can become sources of food poisoning from *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, which both cause gastroenteritis.

E. coli contamination of meat, sometimes caused by faeces coming into contact with carcasses during the slaughter process, can lead to severe illness and even death.

Diets containing high amounts of red meat – and therefore saturated fat – may increase cholesterol in the blood, risk of heart disease and risk of various cancers.

Milk from cows infected with mastitis can contain several million pus cells per litre and still be sold for human consumption.

The environment

Water: Liquid waste from dairy farms causes many times more pollution than human sewage. It contaminates groundwater with nitrate and may create greater risk of miscarriage in pregnant women. It also damages aquatic life and wetland ecosystems.

Land: In regions such as South America and Australia, large concentrations of intensively farmed cattle are putting pressure on land resources and leading to severe loss of soil fertility.

In South American countries such as Brazil, intensive farming has also led to felling of the Amazon rainforest to make grazing lands.

