

Factory Farming



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The goal for factory farmers is to raise as much livestock as possible while minimizing potential expenses. Unfortunately, many of the cost-cutting measures these farmers use are inhumane and cruel and harm our planet. On factory farms, many animals are given antibiotics to limit disease spread; however, the use of these antibiotics actually helps to accelerate the development of antibiotic-resistant diseases, which not only puts the health of animals at risk, but also poses threats to human health. Factory farming is nothing new. In fact, Americans have been developing and using the factory farming process for over a century. In the United States, chickens were first mass-produced in the 1920s. The process of mass-producing meat gained momentum only after the fast food industry took off in the 1940s. However, it wasn't until the 1970s that the factory farming industry achieved great popularity.

Many animals suffer as a direct result of efforts that maximize profits and minimize expenses. On a typical factory farm, animals are crammed into incredibly tight spaces, often in the dark. Sadly, this has led to many animals being unable to obtain enough fresh air, get adequate amounts of sunlight, or spend time out in nature. Additionally, sanitation standards are alarmingly low, causing diseases to spread quickly among the animals. Although antibiotics have been used to prevent disease spread, antibiotic resistant diseases have been on the rise. In fact, research suggests that these antibiotic resistant diseases are a significant threat to human health. Not only are animals held in small, dark cages, but they are also subject to daily abuse. Some of the abuses animals face include genetic modifications to expedite growth and maximize productivity, such as the artificial acceleration of growth (chickens and pigs), or modifications to make animals more productive (such as making cows produce more milk). In addition, it is common for animals to be forcibly impregnated and separated from their newborns. It is also common for animals to have their body parts removed, all while they are alive and conscious! Sadly, it is rare for animals to receive any pain-relieving medicine, ointment, or other treatment before, during, or after such procedures take place. A couple of examples of this abuse include the removal of a pig's testicles, the de-beaking of chickens (this is when a chicken has its beak removed), the electrocution of turkeys, or the process requiring a turkey's head to be sliced off at the throat. Even fish are abused, as many are suffocated in air and sometimes cut open before they have died. These are just a few examples of the torture and abuse millions of animals face on factory farms on a daily basis.

Despite the extreme suffering of animals, the federal government has made a minimal effort to protect animal rights. As of May 2021, there have been a total of three acts, laws, or regulations that have protected animal rights on farms at the federal level. The first of these acts, known as the Federal Meat Inspection Act, was passed in 1906 and set standards regarding the sanitary conditions of meat processing. In addition, it outlawed products that were mislabeled. However, while this act was effective, it was passed before the factory farming industry took off. It is also important to consider that this act did nothing to protect animal rights and was passed only with the intention of protecting the human consumers.

The Humane Slaughter Act, which was originally passed in 1958 and was later revised in 1978, required some meat sold to the US government to be slaughtered humanely. In 1978, the revised act would additionally require imported meat to be executed humanely. This semi-effective act protected only some animals, mainly sheep, goats, swine, cattle, mules, and horses/other equines. While the law did help to ensure that some animals would be given a humane execution, the act did nothing to protect the animals' rights while they were still alive. Unfortunately, the act only provided protection for certain animals that were being imported or sold to the US government, so executions that were taking place for other reasons, such as religious practices, were not regulated.

The Horse Protection Act was passed in 1970 with the intention of reducing abuse toward horses. The act mainly applied to racing horses and outlawed the sale, auction, and event participation in competitions and other entertainment events (such as shows or circuses) if the horse had been subjected to soring. Soring is an incredibly cruel process that is used to artificially train a horse to run faster and jump farther. It works by making the horse feel pain when its feet are on the ground (perhaps by putting sharp objects on the ground or using chemical irritants), so the horse will lift its legs up at a faster rate and will jump a greater distance. While the act could make horses who had undergone soring less desirable, as they were prohibited from being sold, auctioned, or competed against, the act was essentially ineffective. Many horse owners and trainers found loopholes to "bypass" the law, by tricking inspectors. For example, during a horse's inspection, signs of soring include physical scars or injuries on the horse's foot, as well as fast reflexes when the bottom of their foot is touched. To

bypass inspections, some trainers beat their horses until their reflexes no longer kicked in during practice inspections, or used ointments and other artificial products to cover up scars. Unfortunately, many of these ointments cause infections, ultimately making the horse suffer even more. Even though the act was aimed at targeting a common type of abuse towards horses, it was ineffective, considering the amount of bypasses trainers have found and given that the act only bans the sale, competition, or display of horses that were subject to soring; the act didn't outlaw soring altogether. While there have been other regulations passed to protect animals with regard to research and other purposes, and there have been additional local and state regulations regarding animals, the lack of regulation from our federal government shows that the issue of factory farming is not in the forefront of many people's minds.

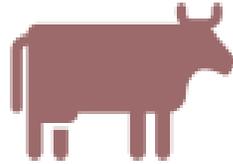
Factory farms harm our planet just as much as they harm animals. Not only are these farms a major contributor to water and air pollution, but they also use up essential resources, including water. One way these farms contribute to pollution is the improper management of animal feces. With so many animals, farmers need to dispose of animal waste effectively. However, because animal waste is usually contaminated with antibiotics and other medicine, these feces need to be disposed of appropriately to reduce potential harm. Unfortunately, it is common for waste to spill into fresh water sources, contaminating the water and killing any organic life within the lake or river. In addition, animals living on the farms and the waste produced by those animals can lead to a high concentration of greenhouse gasses, such as methane and carbon dioxide.

Factory farms also occupy large stretches of land; therefore, it is common for factory farm owners to advocate for the deforestation of trees to create enough space to carry out their activities. Additionally, factory farms can consume large portions of water. Since the farmers will need to grow crops and animals, their water consumption is alarmingly high. The farms already contaminate fresh water sources, so exaggerated water use is definitely undesirable because throughout the world more than 780 million people lack clean water. It is important to demand that factory farms respect not only animals, but also the environment.

Because factory farms aren't respectful of animals or the environment, they don't deserve your support. Even though it seems that boycotting these farms

could leave you with limited options, there are plenty of ways to get the products you need without supporting factory farms. One of the easiest ways to reduce support of factory farms would be to decrease your animal and dairy consumption. While it isn't necessary to permanently go vegan, increasing the consumption of other foods that aren't derived from the suffering of animals is a great way to start. Adding more fruits, vegetables, and other vegan sources of protein to your diet, while simultaneously removing meat and dairy products from your diet makes a big difference. When you are purchasing meat or dairy products, it is important to purchase from local farms, as they are more respectful of resources and generally treat their animals with care. In addition, most products from local farms are of higher quality compared those from factory farms. Although the cost of food from local farms might be slightly more expensive, the price you'll pay is well worth it, considering that the quality of the food is greater, and you will avoid supporting factory farmers. Most supermarkets or farmer's markets usually offer products from these local farms. Lastly, you can support people and nonprofits that are dedicated to fighting factory farms. You can provide financial support by making donations or you can provide other kinds of support by volunteering with these groups or simply spreading the word.

What are factory farms?



Factory farms aim to maximize profits and minimize expenses while raising livestock.



Meat/dairy products are often mass produced.



The factory farming industry really took off around 1970 as fast food was becoming popular, so demand for cheap meat skyrocketed.



However, chickens were being mass produced on farms as early as the 1920s.

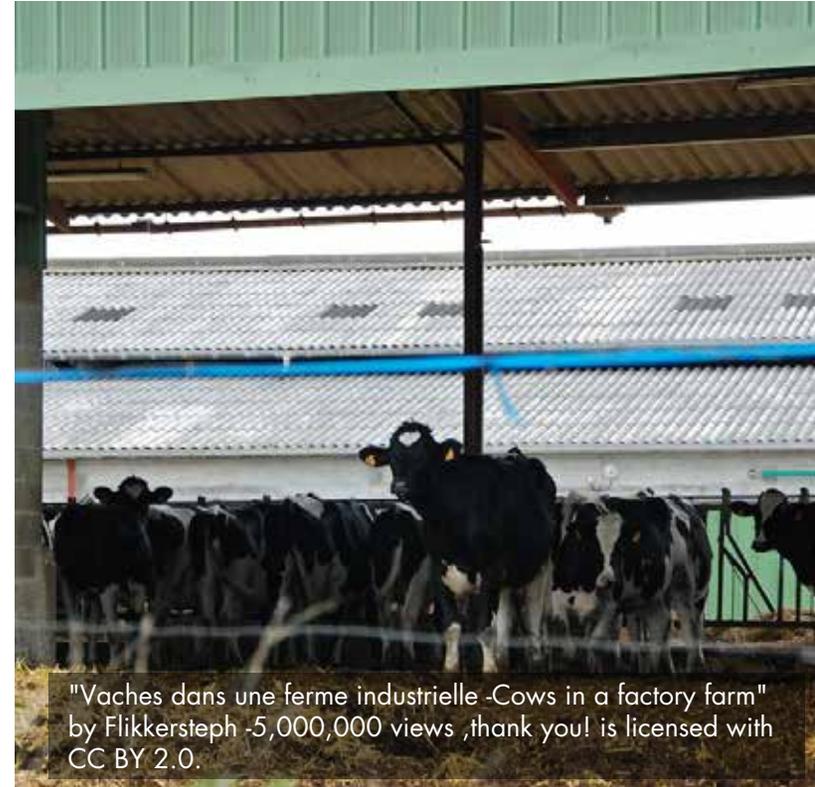


What are factory farms (continued)?

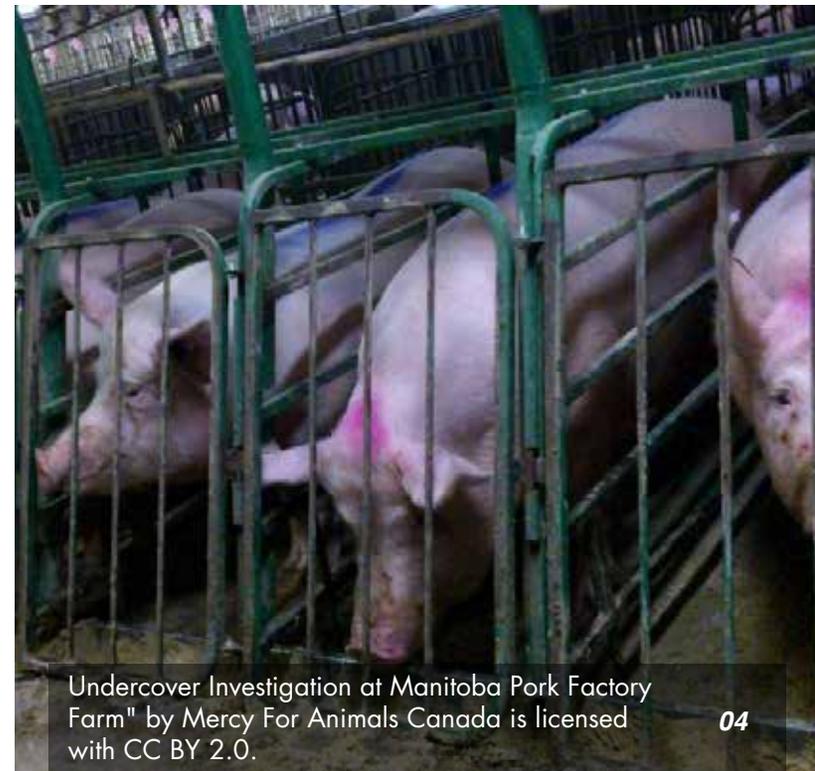
Factory farms usually raise many animals at the same time.

The animals usually don't receive much care or attention, and are held in crowded and dirty conditions.

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What happens on factory farms?

Many animals are neglected and abused on these farms.

- Animals are held in uncomfortably small spaces and are unable to breathe fresh air or spend time in the sun.
- Animals are given antibiotics and other drugs that harm their health and that of their human consumers.
- Genetic modifications are used to expedite animal growth or production.
- Animal mothers are forcibly impregnated and separated from their newborns.
- Animals might have their body parts removed while they are still alive.



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Which laws help regulate factory farms?

Federal Meat Inspection Act

- Set minimum standards regarding sanitary conditions of meat processing.
- Did little to protect animal rights.

1906



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Humane Slaughter Act

(1958, revised in 1978)

- Required that some animals were to be killed humanely.
- Protected only sheep, goats, swine, cattle, mules, and horses that were being executed on farms (in 1978; it was revised to also protect imports to the US from international farms).
- Failed to protect animal rights being killed for some purposes, including religious ones. It also provided no protection for the treatment of animals before their execution.

1958



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Horse Protection Act

- Prevented horses that were subject to an abuse known as soring from participating in races and entertainment events and from being sold/auctioned.
- Many found ways to bypass the law—mainly by tricking horse inspectors.

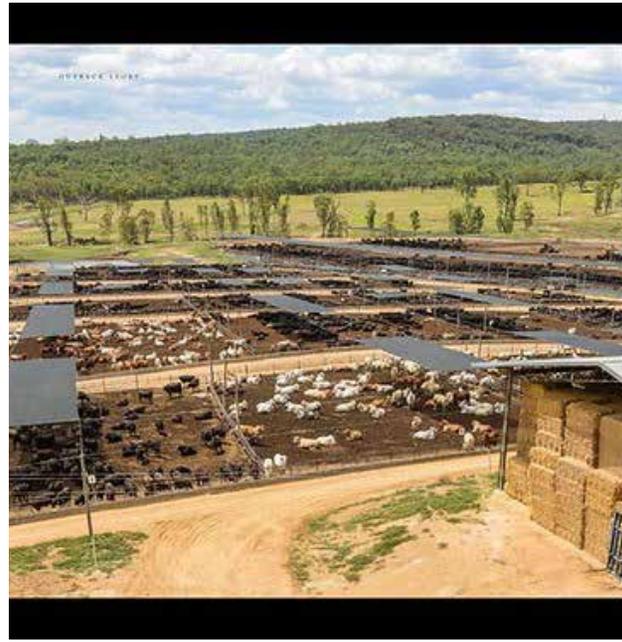
1970



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"Ford Motor Factory, Eagle Farm, Brisbane, 1967" by Queensland State Archives is marked under CC PDM 1.0.



"Best Wagyu producer in the world? Factory farming prisoners." by MarkFangMingBourne is licensed with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.



"Animal agriculture is the leading cause of global warming." by alisdare1 is licensed with CC BY-SA 2.0.

How do factory farms harm the environment?

Factory farms take up large sums of land, and many farms require significant deforestation to make space available.

Factory farms consume large amounts of water and do little to conserve it.

The improper management of waste often leads to unnecessary and unintentional pollution of air and water.



How can I prevent continued support of factory farms?

Changing

- Changing your diet to include less meat/dairy

Buying

- Buying from local or high-quality farms

Spreading

- Spreading awareness

Supporting

- Supporting non-profits
- Donating
- Volunteering
- Other activism

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