

## Deceptions of Dairy

**There is overwhelming evidence that milk and milk products are harmful to many people, both adults and infants. Milk is a contributing factor in constipation, chronic fatigue, arthritis, headaches, muscle cramps, obesity, allergies and heart problems.**

— Dr. William Ellis, an osteopathic physician who has researched the effects of dairy products for 42 years

My family raised dairy cows on our small farm in southern British Columbia. Twice a day, we would make our way up to the barn to milk our Jersey cows. They were great, gentle creatures with large, fuzzy bellies that kept us warm on even the coldest winter mornings. I also attended many of our cows' births. The bond between each mother and her calf was unforgettable. She would lick them affectionately and tirelessly, often getting caught up in the moment and licking us, too.

Our cows were wonderful mothers and demonstrated a deep connection to their calves, though their lives were not entirely idyllic. We did take their calves away from them to ensure they got just the amount of milk they needed while we got the rest. This separation was very difficult for the new mothers, who would bawl sorrowfully for days afterward. And their male calves, after a relatively happy year and a half of roaming about our pastures, wound up as our winter supply of beef. No mother likes to see that happen.

Years later, as I became more aware of the plight of animals everywhere, my heart ached for the commercial dairy cows and calves I learned of that were stripped of their autonomy and subjected to great suffering. It all seems so far away from the little farm I knew.

### A Common Misconception

People frequently defend their dairy consumption, saying they could never live without milk and cheese and arguing that nothing has to die or suffer in its production.

Nothing has to die? Cows die. Dairy cows make up over 40% of the United States' hamburger consumption. In New York State, that figure is over 75%.<sup>1</sup> After 4 or 5 years, once dairy cows aren't producing a peak quantity of milk, they are slaughtered. Under natural circumstances, they could have lived to be 25.<sup>2</sup>

And calves die. Virtually all male dairy calves become veal, the production of which involves, arguably, the most suffering of any commercial farming practice. Within days of birth, they are tethered to a tiny stall where they can't walk or lie down, while being fed iron-deficient meals so that their muscles won't develop<sup>3</sup> and their meat will become pale and soft.

In order to produce milk, dairy cows must be kept continuously pregnant. In this competitive industry, a cow must produce. When not able to produce, she is slaughtered. Along the way, cows are subjected to overcrowding, distended udders, injuries and illness.

But everywhere, on milk cartons, billboards, delivery trucks and buses, advertisers show us

- Dairy Truth: [www.dairytruth.com](http://www.dairytruth.com)
- Inside Dairy Production: [www.insidedairyproduction.com](http://www.insidedairyproduction.com)
- Mercy for Animals — dairy and veal: [www.mercyforanimals.org/dairy\\_and\\_veal.asp](http://www.mercyforanimals.org/dairy_and_veal.asp)
- Milk Imperative: [www.milkimperative.com](http://www.milkimperative.com)
- No Veal.org: [www.noveal.org](http://www.noveal.org)
- Not Milk.com: [www.notmilk.com](http://www.notmilk.com)

pictures of happy cows and frolicking calves. People continue to believe what they are told about their milk and cheese: that it comes from a blissful utopia. It doesn't. Even on an organic family farm, the cows must be kept pregnant to produce milk, and you still have the male calves to contend with.

**More Importantly**

It's time to look beyond our shock to a place in our hearts where we can create a new coexistence with these gentle creatures. Not eating them and not drinking their milk might be a good start.



DEREK GOODWIN FOR FARM SANCTUARY

A rescued dairy cow at Farm Sanctuary.

**Milk Facts**

- No other species on Earth, besides humans and their domesticated animals, drink milk beyond infancy. Nor do any drink the milk of another species.
- The American Gastroenterological Association cites cow's milk as being the number one cause of food allergies among infants and children.<sup>4</sup>
- 30-50 million Americans suffer from lactose intolerance (painful bloating, indigestion and asthma caused by cows' milk), including up to 90% of all Asian-Americans and 75% of all Native and African-Americans. A 2005 Cornell University study found that 60% of the world's population is lactose intolerant.<sup>5</sup>
- Autism and schizophrenia in children have been linked to the body's inability to digest the milk protein casein. Two 1999 studies at the University of Florida observed that symptoms of both diseases diminished or disappeared in 80% of children who switched to dairy-free diets.<sup>6</sup>