

MAY 2008



CARE FOR COWS

IN VRINDAVAN

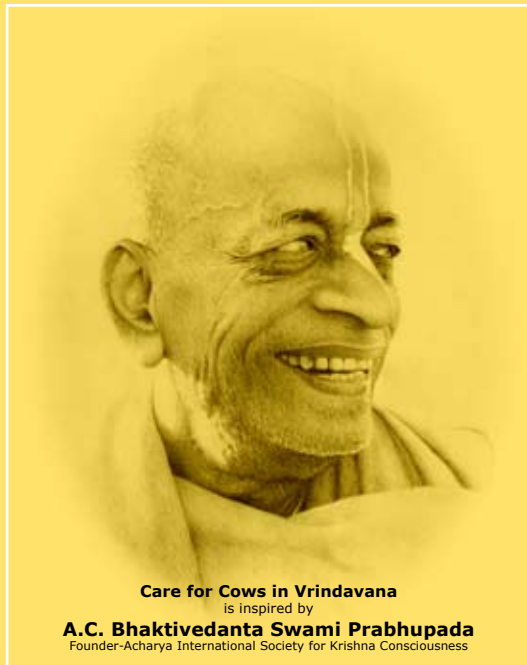
Gobar Art Gallery

Our Twins

A New Addition

Calf Captures Visitors

Our Cows in Vrindavan



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CARE FOR COWS
IN VRINDAVAN

Jaya Sri Guru!
Jaya Sri Gopala!
Jaya Sri Go Mata!

Dear Friends,

Lalita and Krsnamayi found a cow laying flat on the road in the glaring sun. They told the Vrajabasi owner that they wanted to try to help her. He mentioned that the vet had given her medicine that morning and was expecting her recovery.

The cow was close to death so they insisted she get further help. The bullock cart driver demanded triple the price to transport the cow, then feigned defeat and settled for double. Upon arrival the cow was laid on a sand bed under the fan and offered food and water. She refused and deliriously lay flat breathing heavily.

The owner arrived to announce that for six generations his family served cows in their home and that this cow was giving two liters of milk a day. He asked if he could milk her now. I looked at him incredulously and he dismissed me saying he would wait until morning.

That night she died and in the morning I told the owner we would bury her in the compound after offering Ganges water, a rose garland and incense. He folded his hands and asked what he could do and I said he could arrange for the garland and a chaddar to cover her with. He agreed, left abruptly and never returned.

The rude truth: An orientation toward profit coupled with the inability to give announce the presence of greed and the absence of bhakti.

The CFC Staff

careforcows.org

Care for Cows in Vrindavan is a Charitable Trust registered in India, USA, Holland and Switzerland.

~ PORTRAIT OF THE MONTH ~



~ MALATI ~



Sri Gobar Devi



Above: Detail from a mural



Gobar Art Gallery

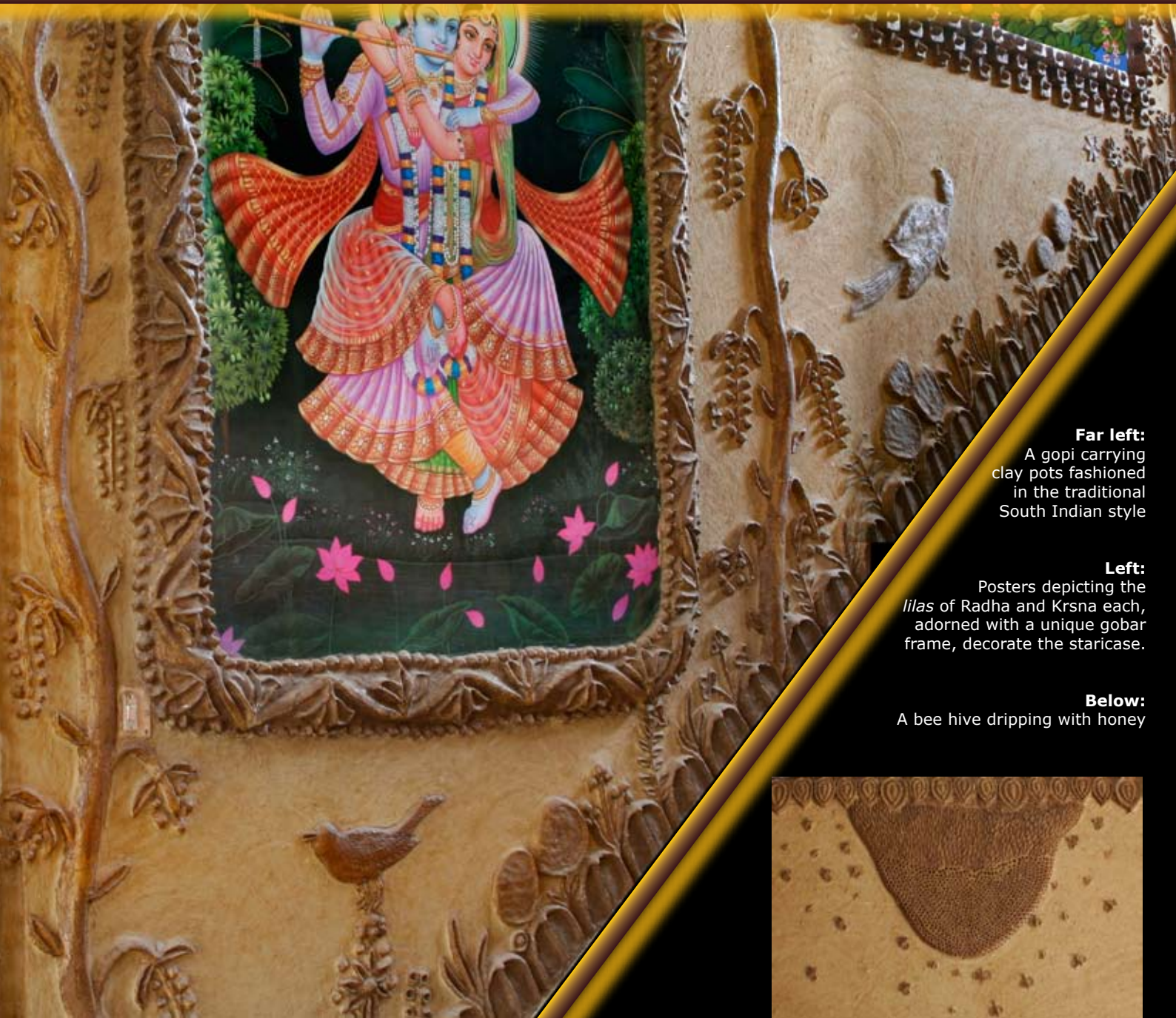
Gobar (cow dung) has been used for flooring and wall covering in the villages of India for millennia. Its antiseptic qualities, natural earthy color and soothing affect on the mind are well known.

Village women are

known to stack dried gobar paddies (*khande*) and plaster the mass with wet cow dung and thus create small huts of stored fuel for later use in cooking and heating. They often carve primitive decorative designs or motifs on the sides of

the huts to distinguish them from those made by their neighbors.

They often knead fresh gobar into a mass and form it into simple shapes which they stick on the walls for simple decoration. The more artistic women



Far left:

A gopi carrying clay pots fashioned in the traditional South Indian style

Left:

Posters depicting the *lilas* of Radha and Krsna each, adorned with a unique gobar frame, decorate the staricase.

Below:

A bee hive dripping with honey





Above: A mural of Krsna, Who is known as Vamsidhara (He who holds the flute) standing at

fashion gobar into intricate geometric designs for decoration celebrating various festivals.

Having lived in India for many years and appreciating the simple village life style, Aindra dasa has taken the traditional village decor to

new heights — into what is coming to be known as GobArt.

Aindra is very well known internationally for his excellence in *bhajan* and *kirtana* (devotional music) as he has been orchestrating the twenty-four-hour *kirtana* service

(*Akhanda Kirtan Mandala*) in the Sri Sri Krsna Balaram Mandir in Sri Vrindavan Dhama for more than twenty years. This involves organizing devotional musicians in shifts so that there is constant chanting of the Lord's names in



Top Govardhana Hill with His cows

the temple around the clock. His devotion to this service has attracted an international troupe of *kirtaneers* to reside in Vrindavan.

It seems that now Aindra is destined to become well known in the field of interior design as

well, using gobar as the principle medium.

Not being satisfied with the ordinary state of the *ashrama* decor and the effect it had on the moral of his troupe, Aindra transformed the area of the building in which they live by covering the walls



with a mixture of gobar and clay and then fashioning elaborate floral motifs, frames, murals and bass relief sculpture using gobar mixed with silicone. Once dried and varnished the final product appears like carved wood.

The scenes in the murals depict several famous pastimes or *lilas* of Krsna and His Gopas and Gopis (cowherd friends). The most impressive is a mural of Govardhana Hill showing Krsna playing the flute under an intoxicated

tree as the cows graze on the Hill. The sky is decorated with a stunning sun, clouds and flocks of birds. Several types of birds including parrots and peacocks decorate the landscape which display many kinds of creepers,



Above left: A mural depicting Krsna and His friends grazing the cows on Govardhana Hill.

Left: Detail of the Govardhana Hill mural — Krsna's friend Madhumangala hiding in a cave eating sweets.

Top: A photograph of Sri Sri Radha Syamasundara framed in gobar decorates the ashrama. Boardering the ceiling the Hare Krsna Maha Mantra appears in relief in five languages around the *ashrama*.

Above: An intoxicated peacock dances in the enchanting forest of Vraja.



Above: Detail of sari on Hamsadutta mural on right vines and even bee hives.

There are several large paintings and photographs depicting Sri Krsna's pastimes with Srimati Radharani and other dedicated residents of Vraja. Each is decorated with an intricate gobar frame of unique design.

Other murals depict the famous swan Srimati Radharani sent to deliver a message to Krsna (Right); Mother Yasoda watching as Gopal Krsna drinks milk directly from the teat of a cow who licks Him as if He were her calf (Bottom right); gopis carrying clay pots on their head; peacocks dancing, trees laden with fruits and many more. There is even a scene depicting a gopi making cow dung paddies! (→)

Everyone agrees that by using and improving traditional Indian village decor the *ashrama* has undergone an uplifting transformation positively affecting all residents and visitors. Aindra Prabhu has creatively demonstrated the wonderful and salubrious effect cow dung can have in making homes and residences warmer and more peaceful.





Our Cows in Vrindavan

by Madhava Dasa



Madhava Dasa , Srivas-kirtane with Vrinda

In the autumn of 2007, I had the great fortune of guiding my eldest son Srivas-kirtane (age 10) to Vrindavana for his first time. Due to my natural fatherly affection, I wanted him to

experience Vrindavana in a way that he would always remember. Because we are so far away from Vrindavana, our chances to visit are few and far between; keeping that in mind, I

wanted to give him a good dose and, at the same time, not push Vrindavana too hard on him.

After our first week of settling in and bringing Srivas to the more famous and wonderful places in Vrindavana, we finally made our way over to Care for Cows. This was also my first visit to CFC even though I had been to Vrindavana four other times in the past 25 years. I was a newcomer to the project as well.

I heard of the project by word of mouth. I was trying to find nice places to bring Srivas on his first pilgrimage to the dhama. We heard was how wonderful it was there, and so we grabbed a rickshaw, and off we went. We didn't know what we were about to experience; we were trying to imagine what it would be like. Our ride through the Madhuvana Colony was bumpy, and we noticed the heaps of garbage (now common

in Vrindavana) along the paths. Cows, pigs, and dogs were rummaging through the refuse. Our driver reached a gate, stopped, and said, "Kurma Rupa Prabhu here".

We entered the gate and took our first look around. We saw a *mataji* with a few local cowhands resetting a splint on a cow. We stood watching the care being given. Our hearts immediately went out to this cow, wondering how she came to this condition.

After she was done, Syam Gauri dasi, the one administering care for the cow, stood up and introduced herself, and we

asked if there was anyone who could show us around. She said she was busy but we were welcome to tag along as she made her rounds.

Of primary concern at the time of our visit was a new arrival from Radha-Kunda; her name was Mandakini, and she had suffered from a split hip from slipping on the stone paved lanes of Radha-kunda. Mandakini had just given birth to a calf three weeks prior and was helpless to care for her. As she lay there at Radha-Kunda over some days, uncaring persons would come and take her milk



Mandakini

and just leave her there. A local cow project in Radha-Kunda took her in but was unable to administer to her serious condition because of the difference in their medical facilities. She and her calf were then transferred to CFC where it was determined by Dr. Lavania that Mandakini would never walk again. Her young calf seemed confused to see her mom down and unable to give her the motherly care she expected, but at least they were together and no longer exploited on the streets of Radha-kunda.

The day we visited was Mandakini's 2nd day, and she was getting this most wonderful care and attention by all the staff. I was impressed by Syam Gauri's skill in caring for the residents and immediately the hearts of both my son and myself were completely taken by this project. Seeing the urgency of the staff's care for Mandakini made us

want to help, and I asked if we could sponsor her. Syam Guari said that they do not immediately put up urgent care residents for sponsorship because, unfortunately, they do not know how long they will be with us, but her calf, who we later named Vrinda, was equally in need of care.

Vrinda could no longer nurse from mom in her condition, and there was increased worry for her as she was not taking too well to the bottle-feeding method. She was eating a little grain with her mom, but she was very skinny and weak. We spent the



rest of the afternoon brushing, petting, and getting to know both of them.

On our way back to our rooms, images of what we had just experienced

flashed through my mind again and again. Never again will I look at the cows in Vrindavana the same. We sometimes have this idealistic view of Vrindavana that everything is transcendental.

Preconceived notions that cows wandering in the streets of 21st Century Vrindavana is a wonderful sight. At first glance we may think, "This is wonderful. Where else in the world would you see this?" Upon closer look, however, they are suffering from lack of love and care. Sure, the residents of Vraja don't kill and eat them, but exploitation is going on in many other ways.

As we passed the same garbage heaps on the way back, we took special notice of a cow rummaging through, and our hearts



went out to her. She, and every cow in Vrindavana, should receive the same care and attention as the cows we just met.

Getting back to our room I felt that our visit to CFC was the most wonderful thing that had happened to me thus far on my pilgrimage. I saw that my hearing and chanting improved and all my appreciations of the dhama increased. Even my son, whom I thought was still too young to really appreciate, showed intense emotion for what we just witnessed. He kept talking of how cute Vrinda was and how he could not wait to see her again. We decided then and there to go back the next morning.

The next day as we made our way over there we kept thinking of "our" calf Vrinda and her mom. What could we do for them? Will she remember us? Will she have eaten or drunk some milk? Worries of new parents for the

loved one filled our souls as we entered the compound.

The sun was just rising when we walked in, and there, lying in the sun, was this darling calf. The sight of her was the last straw to fully captivate our hearts for this project. We inched closer to her, trying not to wake her. We each sat down near her and began to stroke her soft but boney body. She was too tired and weak to really care who we were, and she rested her chin on my thigh as we gave her all the attention she deserved.

Srivas became a little bored with sitting and soon began to make new friends with all the curious CFC residents. Hanuman was a rambunctious calf who, once you start to pet him, will not allow you to pet anyone else. There was Radhika and Janardana, the Nil Gai. Then there was Krsna, the Padayatra Ox who was retired there. He was so stately and majestic, even in his old

age. Krsna has since left his body, and we both are honored to have met him.



Then came the twice-daily festival of feeding time. All the residents knew when this time was. They would line up near the gate and wait for the staff members to come and open the gate and lead them to the "prasadam hall." Once opened, a stampede would commence. The dust would rise and visions of "this must have been what it was like..." flashed over my mind.

We finally had met Kurma Rupa Prabhu on our third visit. It was amazing to see how the residents have so much affection for him. They walk up to him and nuzzle to him. His love for them, and theirs for him, was wonderful to see.



Srivas admiring Sati and Rukmini



Srivas bonding with Vrinda



Vrinda blessing Srivas



He finally was able to get Vrinda to take some milk from a bottle. She also was introduced to another cow who had recently given birth and was allowed to get milk directly from her. That was a relief to all involved.

So each day, sometimes twice a day, Srivas and myself would come to CFC, check on Mandakini and Vrinda, and absorb ourselves in the association with the greatest of all Vraja's residents. This is the Vrindavana mood—love and care for Gopal Krsna's cows.

One day, when we were down doing some shopping in Loi Bazaar, Srivas said, "Let's go there!" He was pointing to Gangotri's cloth shop. I thought to myself, "But I'm a loyal patron to Ganga Prasada... what does he want in there?" I did not protest, and so we entered. Srivas pointed to a T-shirt. "I want that one," he said. It was a beautiful print of a cow and her calf on a bright orange T. "Are you sure you don't want another color?" I said. Srivas replied, "Nope, this is the one."

The next day as we prepared to head out to CFC, Srivas grabbed his *gamcha* with him. I wondered what on earth for, but I did not want to interrupt his mood, I was starting to catch on...

Dressed in a *dhoti*, a bright orange cow and calf T-shirt, and then tying the *gamcha* around his waist, Srivas entered CFC now dressed exactly as the other local staff members. I could see how CFC touched my son, and I felt great fatherly affection for both my son and for CFC.

Srivas spent the rest of that visit feeding leaves to the cows from the over-hanging trees that were out of reach of their mouths.

As our visit to Vraja was coming to a close, we purchased some stainless steel containers. We were ready to go and collect some dust of Vrindavana like most pilgrims do. Instead of immediately going to the usual places, like the Yamuna, Krishna-Balarama Mandir, or any other favorite *tirtha* in the *dhama*, I tucked my container in my bag. I had another place in mind, not found in the guidebooks.

Our last visit to CFC was tearful as we said good-bye to our darling Vrinda. We embraced Mandakini and wished her well. She was doing better by now but was still under close watch. Just as we were about to leave, I lifted Vrinda's hoof up and collected a container full of sand and dust. Of all places in Vraja, I felt most inspired and Krsna conscious right there in the CFC compound. The love and devotion flowing from that small *tirtha* is enough to soften the heart of even a hard-hearted soul like me.

Having returned to the West from Vraja, one of the first things we did was to log onto careforcows.com and see Vrinda again. I was excited to share our experience with my wife, Guruseva, and our other son, Ramai. It was my first time to visit the site and we quickly downloaded many pictures, which now plaster my desktop and screen saver.

Mandakini was doing better, enough that she was adoptable, and we at once put in the request to sponsor her to keep our love flowing



Srivas collecting natural snacks for the cows



Vrinda resting in the winter sun



Vrinda with winter coat



to Vrinda's mom as well.

However, a few months after that, Mandakini left her body. She succumbed



Mandakini

to the fact that downed cows just don't have a great chance. Srivas and I cried. She was now like a close relative to us. Her and Vrinda's photos accompany our Giriraja and Nimai-Nitai Deities. We were glad to have been able to support her for her brief time at CFC, but we know for certain that she had the best care, perhaps outside of Krsna's hand Himself. Or rather, I believe Krsna's hand is

directly taking care of these cows by the Care For Cows project.

We have now adopted another cow, Gaura Purnima, the granddaughter of Jatila, and we hope to adopt more and more as we are able. I hope my account of our precious memories and realizations will inspire others to take part in this wonderful *seva* that, in my mind, is no doubt very, very dear to Gopala Krishna .



Gaura Purnima



Vrinda



A deer was injured by a pack of dogs and brought to CFC for treatment

A New Addition

A full-grown deer was brought to our clinic from Kosi by a servant of the Forest Department. The deer had been attacked by dogs and suffered a severely broken limb, loss of one eye and several gashes. An attempt was made to

save his limb but it had to be amputated owing to gangrene. He is now recovering and adjusting to living in the *goshalla*. We are hopeful he will be able to live in captivity. He has regained his health and is feeding well

Street Calf Captures Visitors



Upon arrival the calf was barely conscious



Her face was covered with mud from lying flat in the street



Dr. Lavania gave an intravenous injection to combat blood parasites



The three foreign pilgrims were on their way to find some breakfast when they saw a white calf lying on the side of the road almost lifeless. After examining her they appealed to the many passersby, but not knowing the language met with either helplessness or apathy. But the calf required help so the three persisted and soon found out about Care for Cows, called and arranged for us to pick them up.

Syam Gauri called Dr. Lavania who arrived shortly after and announced that the calf was blind, dehydrated and indeed in very serious condition. She couldn't even lift her head. He diagnosed her as having a blood parasite and administered an intravenous injection while the three pilgrims continuously chanted the holy names of Krsna around the calf.

Dr. Lavania then administered a glucose drip and after thirty minutes the calf gained strength. Oh! How they cheered!



Eka Gopi, Arya Kula and Guna Mala shoo flies from Surabhi and encourage her to recover

The three women were visiting from Venezuela, Mexico and Uruguay and began an animated conversation in Spanish. They organized so that one or more of them would be with the calf for the rest of the day and cheered further as she got the strength to stand and walk in tight circles. They brought her spinach, bananas and carrots and hand fed her as mothers do their own children. The love, concern and encouragement they

showed boosted the calf's moral and she sped towards recovery.

They thanked Dr. Lavania for saving the calf but he refused to take the credit and attributed her



Surabhi, still blind and walking in circles



Surabhi, now able to see, is well on her way to recovery



recovery to the chanting of the Lord's holy names and to the concern the pilgrims had for the patient who they named Surabhi.

During the remainder of their pilgrimage the women visited Surabhi daily and Eka Gopi, who lives in Austin, Texas promised to

sponsor her maintenance and in this way stay connected to Sri Vrindavan Dhama and the memories she shared here.

Twin Report



On March 13, 2005 Gauri gave birth to twin calves, one male and one female. One was reddish, the other white so they were named Madhava and Malati after a creeper found in Vrindavan which bears red and white flowers. The twins have been perfectly healthy during the last three years and, like their mother, are very gentle and mild-mannered. They are being sponsored by Ananda dasa from Guatemala.



Thank You From the Cows



The cows send their heartfelt thanks to those who assisted during April 2008

Alessandra Petrasi, Italy
Ananda dasa, Guatemala
Anon, Singapore
ChandraMukhi Dasi, USA
Chitraketu Bharati, India
Christian Kästner, Germany
Constance, Germany
David Kasanow, USA
Dhruv Singh, India
Dhruva Maharaja dasa, India
Dina Sarana dasa, USA
Dominik Bletz, Germany
Donia Salem, USA
Eka Gopi, USA
Elle Mitchell, USA
Goloka Chandra Dasa, Malaysia
Hemanth Ramanna, USA
Irmantas Žemaitis, USA
Jagannath Dasa, India
Jean Farrow, UK
Katyayani Dasi, USA
Kesinisudana Dasa, Malaysia
Khin Palae Khin Zeyar Danti, USA
Kiran Gusain, Qatar
Labangalatika dasi, India
Manish Vanodia, USA
Marianna Polonski, USA

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one or more
of our
many
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CARE FOR COWS
IN VRINDAVAN

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Vir Nanda, USA

**May cows stay in front of me; may cows stay behind me; may cows stay on both
sides of me. May I always reside in the midst of cows. —Hari Bhakti Vilas 16.252**