

Feb. 2011



CARE FOR COWS

I N V R I N D A V A N



**VRINDAVAN
URBANIZATION**

SEO GAO REPORT

**THE COW WHO
SAVED HERSELF**



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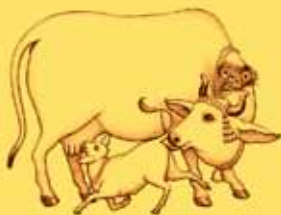
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CARE FOR COWS

IN VRINDAVANA

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

Dear Friends,

After ten years our Sundrakh facility is closed. Many thanks to Rupa Raghunath and Radha Jivan Prabhus for allowing us to use their property in the service of abandoned cows.

Our herd has been moved safely to Seo Gao and Kiki Nagla and plans are in effect to develop proper sheds in both places. Our facility in Belvan stands poised to accommodate more as well. What is lacking is a facility closer to town to host and treat injured cows. We hope to establish a clinic near Akshaya Patra in the near future.

The sad fact is, however, that Vrindavan is becoming urbanized at an alarming rate and this translates as hostility towards cows owing to changing values, toxic litter, traffic and apathy. Hundreds of billboards boldly and proudly promise more of the same...

Each of us must do our part to preserve Vrindavan. We may not be able to stop the change but we must at least not participate in it. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The CFC Staff

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





WHAT VRINDAV MEANS





AN URBANIZATION FOR COWS

Most of today's affluent pilgrims come from North India's flourishing urban areas and are of course accustomed to or aspiring for a modern western life-style. They come to this Holy Place to enjoy a Holi-day and bring with them their newly acquired tastes for Bollywood music, designer hip-hugger jeans, electronic gizmos, fast cars, fast-foods and fast-money.

The indulgence of Saturday and Sunday's pilgrims invariably ends up on Monday's streets as above. Convenience no longer permits clay cups and leaf plates -- they have yielded to their plastic and styrofoam counterparts.

All of this makes for an alarmingly unhealthy atmosphere for abandoned cows.



While ploughing oxen have largely been replaced by tractors, many still transport construction materials by cart competing for space with bicycles,





rickshaws, motor bikes, three-wheelers and a variety of autos. They remain surprisingly composed amidst the regular street chaos and pandemonium.





At one of Vrindavan's most crowded cross-roads people who still have a tinge of respect for cows offer them a five-rupee plate of grass or spinach by tossing it in the congested streets subjecting them to danger while attempting to serve them.









Directly Above: a new luxury hotel hosts weekenders with modern conveyances and treat uninvited guests (right) with their remnants free of cost.

Left and Above Left: abandoned cows live disoriented lives deprived of their natural habitat. The same conditions await those who inflict the injustice upon them.

Overleaf: Hundreds of billboards loudly promise an increase in urbanization.



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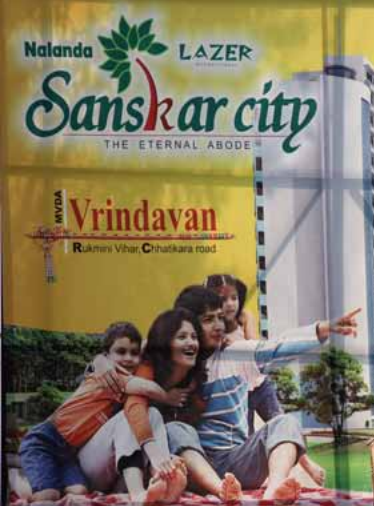


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Welcome at Vrindavan



Photograph

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Gualas happily pose while performing their chores

SEO GAO REPORT

In October 2010 we moved 79 cows and bulls to an area near Seo Gao which is approximately ten kilometers from Deeg in Rajasthan. There are several Go Sevaks developing this area for cow protection. Among them is the well-known Dattasarananad Maharaja who is providing for several hundred thousand cows in

Rajasthan. Other cow protectors assisting him in this project are Rajendra Dasa Maharaja (Vrindavan), Devendra Maharaja (Chandra Sarovara), Ananda Gopal Maharaja (Kosi), Giri Baba (Varsana), Haribol Baba (Varsana) and Sriman Rukata Ji (Jaipur).

The above Go Sevaks have acquired more than forty acres



which is bordered by 2,400 acres of hills which the cows can graze on. Fencing and construction are under way and I can attest to the fact that the cows are well-cared for.

Farmers in this area grow wheat from October to March and the rest of the year the fields are not planted so for six months of the year the cows can wander freely throughout the entire area.





One of the adjacent wheat fields



Two cows await their calves and the milk man



Spacious feeding pens with fresh air and sky



Center: Maharani, the former leader of the herd at CFC

In the valleys between the hills the villagers grow wheat and barley. All the hay from this area will go for feeding the cows being kept here which at present number six hundred.

The atmosphere is serene in this remote area. No traffic or loudspeakers can be heard. There are peacocks and other birds living among the deer and neel gai.

There are several wells bored through the rocky soil which provide the herd their needs.

Plans are in effect to divide the cows into herds of two hundred and assigning one crew of gualas for each individual herd. In this way they can be better attended to.

Syami suffered a broken leg after being hit by a car and is healthy and happy here.



Ramya was rescued from the streets of Vrindavan emaciated and weak.



Gita was sent to us from Radha Kund and has a large hernia, but is otherwise healthy.



Looking at the camera is Bhima, son of the famous blind cow Sura Dasi.

THE COW WHO SAVED HERSELF

January 1, 2009 by Deb

"What you have done is who you are. What you do is who you will be."

That's the quote my yoga instructor started today's class with. I don't know who originally said it.

And in many ways it ties in with the story I want to tell today, about one cow by the name of Heidi.

Heidi was born in Florida on a dairy farm. The farmer didn't see enough profit in selling the babies for veal, so he would put the newborn calves into trenches and shoot them. Heidi was spared that fate only because a couple farmers from Virginia had come to visit the Florida farmer to give him information on goat dairy farming. In "payment", Heidi was given to these farmers, to be slaughtered for meat once she had grown up.

Heidi went to a small farm in Virginia that was a hobby rather than an occupation. These hobby-farmers made a clear distinction between the animals they grew attached to, and those they would kill for profit or convenience. They were running a goat-dairy, after all, and the baby goats get killed just as surely as the baby cows do on a cow-dairy farm.

And so Heidi lived there for her first year. When she was deemed large enough to fetch a profit at slaughter, the slaughter truck was called to pick her up but she but Heidi refused to get on it.

The farmers and the truck driver gave up, and the slaughter truck left without Heidi. Heidi lived, but the farmers of that small little hobby farm hadn't given up their determination to kill Heidi.

The next time they called the slaughter truck, they were prepared. They'd closed Heidi into a barn, and backed the truck right up to the doors. The only way out was onto the truck, and there is no way that those farmers would have been gentle in their persuasion.

Heidi broke out of that barn by jumping through a window.

Heidi wasn't quite safe yet, however. The farmers' next plan was to slaughter her on the property. Talk about people determined to cause death. One of their coworkers (remember, this farm was just a hobby for them) heard about Heidi, and somehow convinced the farmers to let her purchase Heidi so she could find a place for Heidi to live out her life.

When she called Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary, she was getting desperate. Terry and Dave would have one chance to bring Heidi home. They arrived at night with their trailer. Heidi was out in the field.

"You'll never get her on the truck," the farmers stated. Terry

didn't agree.

And Terry was right.

She had the farmers stay away from the trailer, away from the pasture where Heidi was. They got the trailer ready, and they called to Heidi. Heidi came right over and walked calmly onto the trailer. She knew, somehow, that these were people who would do her no harm, who were there to save her and take her home.

That is the story of how Heidi saved herself.

That aspect of Heidi defines her to a great deal. Knowing her story, it is impossible to look at her and not feel a sense of awe and amazement. I doubt anyone meeting her now would guess at her hidden depths, at least not of the jumping-out-the-window-to-save-herself variety.

Yet, it is unsurprising to learn that she's showing those depths in different ways now. "Heidi, the cow who saved herself" is what she did, it is who she is. "Heidi, the cow who looks after Emily, the blind calf" is what she does now, it is who she is becoming.

Emily was born on a small local beef farm. She was apparently blind from birth. And this, in the end, saved her life. Of course it almost killed her first.

On these small beef farms, the cows are out in the pastures grazing day in and day out. The "breeding females" are gotten pregnant pretty much every year, and their babies are killed at about 18 months old. Until

then, the mothers and babies are together. The farmers don't put much effort into caring for these cows; it is likely they are doing this for tax reasons as much as anything (suburb of DC, hello agricultural tax incentive!), so for their few head of cattle, they go for the minimal effort. In the cold icy February two years ago, Emily was in the field with her mother, but they somehow got separated. Emily was stuck in some ice, and the employees on this farm noticed and told the farmer. He reacted in a way that is both shocking and unsurprising. "Let her die," was essentially what he said.

This upset one of the workers, especially as Emily and her mother were calling back and forth to each other. Emily was not only trapped in some ice, but she was somehow on the wrong side of a fence. The worker was able to free Emily from the ice. Emily was sick by then, and it was finally clear to the worker and the farmer that she was blind as well. The farmer wanted nothing to do with this sickly blind calf, and he certainly didn't want her taking up space in his barn. The worker knew of Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary because she'd brought a chicken there once upon a time, and so she called the sanctuary to see if Emily could find a home.

Emily was 4 months old when she came to Poplar Spring, and she was very wary of humans. It was quite a while, and only

with the influence of apples, before she would let anyone but Dave and Terry (and some of the regular week-day workers as well) approach her.

As is typical with cows, Emily was accepted into the herd immediately. Yet Emily was a bit independent. She'd get lost in the woods. She'd be down by the creek on her own. Likely this is how she got separated from her mother in the first place. She is actually quite good at following and finding the cows, to a certain degree, using the secondary senses of sound and smell to guide her way. She has no fear.

However, having a blind cow potentially lost in the wooded areas of the 400 acre property made for some stressful and sleepless nights for the human caretakers of the sanctuary.

Terry looked into GPS collars, and was able to raise the money for a couple. There's a blind horse at the sanctuary as well, and though he is much more cautious and much less independent than Emily, and though he has a partner who wears a be-belled halter so that he can hear her as she moves, there is still the worry. GPS collars seemed a good idea.

And they were, but unfortunately they were also no longer made, which Terry found out months after she ordered them, and had her money refunded. A couple of us researched with our best search-term skills, and couldn't

find anything workable for this purpose.

And so time marched on, Emily adapted more and more, and though she still got separated from the herd, it was getting more predictable. The worry was still there, but so was the confidence that Emily did know how to take care of herself. A GPS collar would have made it easier to check up on Emily, but everyone adapted to the reality, which did not include such a collar.

Enter Heidi.

In recent months, Heidi has decided that she is the surrogate momma for Emily. Or maybe not a mother, really, but big sister or mentor of some kind.

Emily is stubborn, but of course we know that Heidi has a determined personality. When Emily hangs out near (and sometimes in) the pig barn, and the cows are beginning to move off, Heidi comes back for Emily and moos at her imperiously.

Naturally Emily, being Emily, tries to ignore the summons.

Eventually, though, Heidi is able to convince Emily to follow her.

Ever since Heidi has taken on this new role, Emily has not gotten lost. Emily has not gotten separated (other than to the extent that she insists on by her not-quite-as-social-as-average nature), and Emily is now able to stay with the cows as they wander the whole 400 acres.

Emily, as it turns out, does not need a GPS collar. She has Heidi.



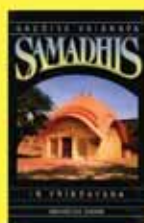
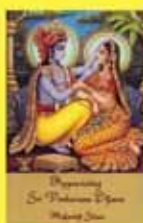
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NEW CALVES



Kalindi



Sakhi

Only one calf was born this month. She is the second calf born to Sakhi and is healthy and happy. She has been named Kalindi and sponsored by Sandipani Muni and Kanchan from United Kingdom.

Thank You From the Cows



The cows send their heart-felt thanks to those who assisted during January 2011

Abhirama Dasa	Gaurangapriya Dasi	Radhika Maripally
Amit Goswami	Hansavatar & Yogamaya	Rahul Sharma
Anjaneya Dasa	Harinaam Anand Dasa	Ravi Gopal
Anna Palijcuka	Iryna Lukyanenko	Rohinisuta Dasa
Anonymous	Jagannath Rao	Rose Bauco
Ariel Telford	Jai Simman	S. Parthasarathy
Bhakta Vidya Sagar	Kamala Melzack	Sandipani Muni
Carl & Stella Herzig	Kantilal Shivilal	Sergey Vasiliev
Chandricka Pasupati	Kitri Waterman	Shanti Green
Charles Power	Krishna Priya Dasi	Shirley Marie Bradby
Christian Kastner	Krishnaraj Varma Bangalorea	Smruta Sawardekar
Dace Ezermale	Leni Toepfer & Family	Straddha Rajkomar
Deepak Vishvakarma	Madhava Dasa	Suada Ajanovic
Derek Carroll	Madhava Priya Dasi	Tomasz Zulawnik
Devala Dasa	Mandira Mani & Sri Govinda	Tracy Molina
Devananda Pandit Dasa	Maria Larina	Venkata Venkateswaran
Devender Kumar	Mark Leigh	Vijay Sharma
Dhruva Maharaja Dasa	Mary Louise Valerio	Vikas Shah
Dmitrijs Germanovs	Nalini Gogar	Vladimir Ivanov
Doyal Govinda Dasa	Nayan Ruparelia	Vladimir Shlepkov
Elena Emelenko	NK Padayachee	Vyasapada Dasa
Elena Nikiforov	Padma Inc.	William Hiler
Enver Ajanovic	Podoleanu Irina	Yajnavalkya Dasa

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