



THE PROBLEM WITH
**FACTORY
F FARMS**

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ABSTRACT

As a part of the outdoor industry, the state of the environment is important to us. We consider ourselves amateur environmentalists and do our part locally in hopes to make impacts globally. Over the years, a change we've made as a family and team is our meat consumption. Some have gone vegetarian, others stopped eating meat that comes from factory farms because of the environmental hazards they can create. We are interested in the reversal of climate change and realize how big of a task that is.

In this document, you will find our research about the impacts the meat industry makes on the environment and details on solutions we advocate to eat meat in a sustainable way.

The topic of meat consumption can be a controversial one, and we are not looking to convince you about the ethics of eating meat but rather demonstrate the long-term effects this industry has on our planet.



HISTORY

CAFOS

In the United States specifically, a majority of meat and dairy products sold come from factory farms, also known as CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations). The end of World War II shifted livestock coming from small, family-owned farms to a larger production due to the technological boom in agriculture machinery.

From there, it has grown exponentially. The production of meat from cattle alone in 2010 was 12 million – double the amount of the next highest producer worldwide, China. (FAO)

12 million
CATTLE
PROCESSED IN THE
USA IN 2010

FEEDLOTS

Today, the beef industry in the United States is the largest in the world at 80 billion dollars annually. (FoodPrint)

Some basics on the timeline of most beef cattle: Most start out on pastures where the farmers use various herbicides to maximize the growth of the cattle. They are then moved to a feedlot to get fully fattened up just before slaughter. They are kept in tight quarters here so they use less energy, and are fed high-calorie, grain-based diets with hormones and other additives to gain weight quicker. (FoodPrint)



GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



THE STATS

According to a study by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) associated with the livestock sector is the equivalent to 7.1 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide. This is 14.5 percent of all human-made GHG emissions. Most of this comes from feed production and processing, outputs during digestion, and manure decomposition. (FAO)

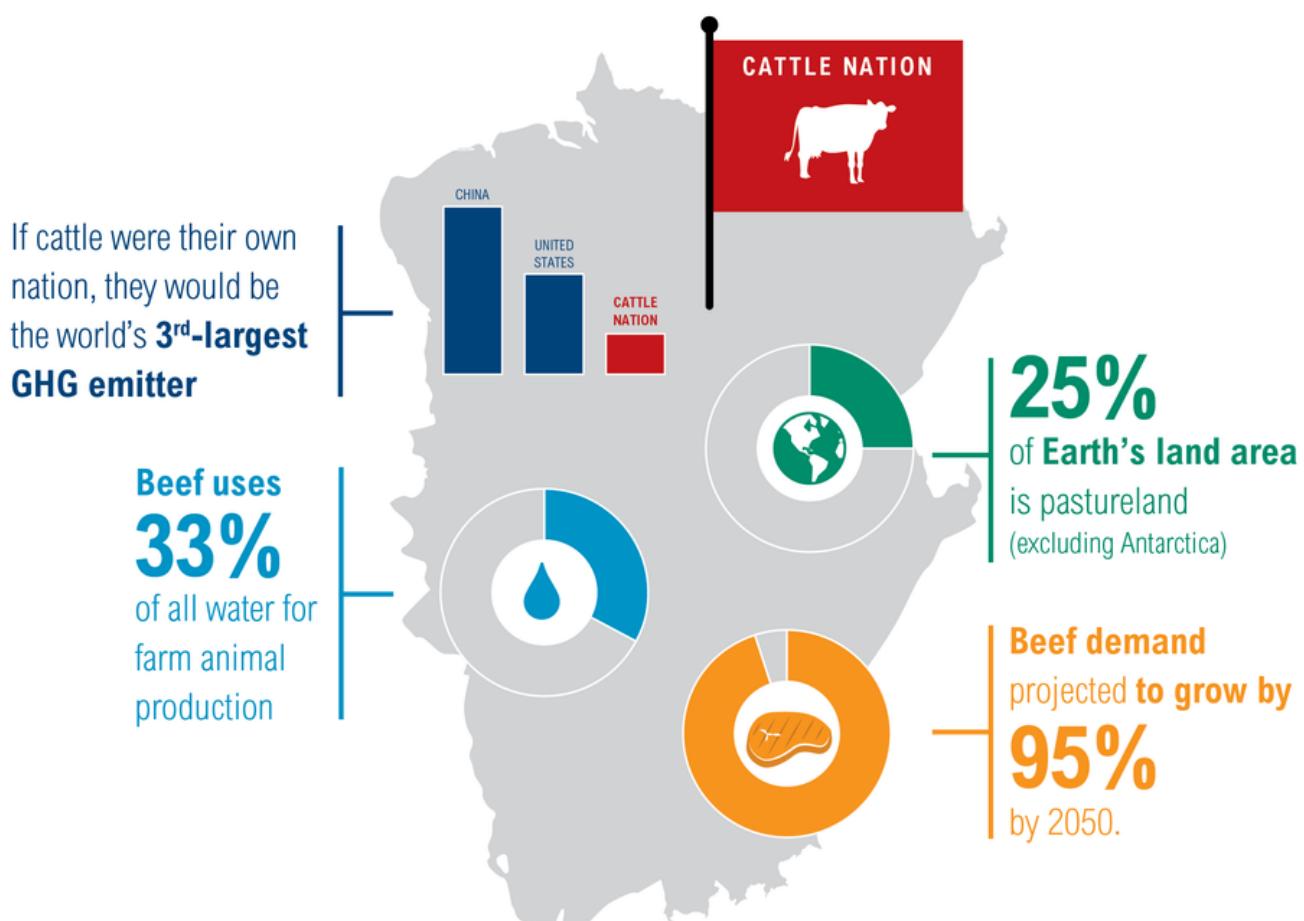
In the fifty years leading to 2010, the global GHG emissions from livestock increased by 51 percent, sparked from the 54 percent increase of methane from livestock manure. (Climate Nexus)

7.1
GIGATONNES OF
CARBON DIOXIDE

"When all of its impacts are added together, from clearing land to growing feed with fertilizer and managing manure, the global livestock industry generates more greenhouse gases than the transportation sector of the economy."

CQ RESEARCHER

Beef Creates a Huge Environmental Footprint



wri.org/shiftingdiets

 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

FURTHER IMPACTS



HEALTH RISKS

These concentrated animal farming operations leave a giant footprint and can also pose as a health risk to nearby communities. Disease from livestock can spread to humans and the high use of antibiotics can result in an antibiotic resistance. Furthermore, irresponsible manure management can result in respiratory problems in humans and contaminate nearby rivers and waterways through the soil.

CAFOs have a huge impact on global deforestation. A journal from "Science Direct" says they are linked to 75% of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. Globally, the livestock sector produces nine times more sewage than humans - most of which is left untreated.

**GLOBALLY,
LIVESTOCK
PRODUCES**

9 X

**MORE SEWAGE
THAN HUMANS**

THE ALTERNATIVE

With this information in mind, now what? We realize it is unrealistic for the world to completely stop eating meat, but if we all made minor adjustments now and had a more conscious mindset on our consumption, pollution from livestock could significantly decrease.

Climate Nexus, a non-profit striving to change the conversation about climate challenge, says greenhouse gas intensity could be halved if the average American diet adopted a plant-based diet.

If the World's 2 Billion High Consumers Cut Their Meat and Dairy Consumption by 40%...

IT WOULD SAVE
AN AREA OF LAND
2X THE SIZE
OF INDIA



168 B TONS OF
FUTURE GHG EMISSIONS;
3X THE TOTAL
GLOBAL
EMISSIONS IN 2009

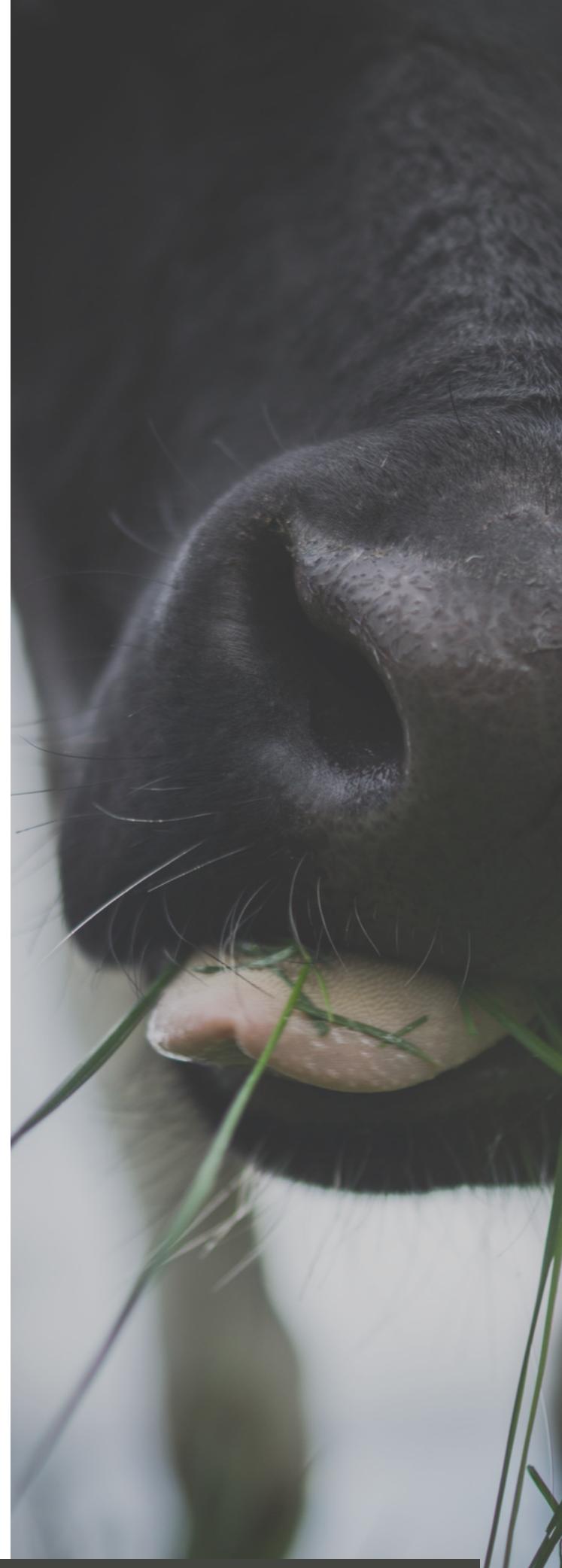
IN CONCLUSION

Some big farms are already making changes in their operations to improve poor living situations for animals and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, but consumers need to strongly consider changing where they purchase their meat from in order to make a global difference.

At Hyk, if we do purchase meat, we like it to come from a local, sustainable farm. We want to know the name of the farmer, what the animal ate, and how it lived. Other sustainable ways to eat meat include hunting your own, obtaining a permit to harvest roadkill, and specifically reducing your beef intake, as it is the most costly to produce economically and environmentally.

A great resource for finding pasture-based farms near you is EatWild.com.

The question does not have to be "to meat or not to meat," but instead "where did it come from?"



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All header photos courtesy of the free photo library on canva.com.

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