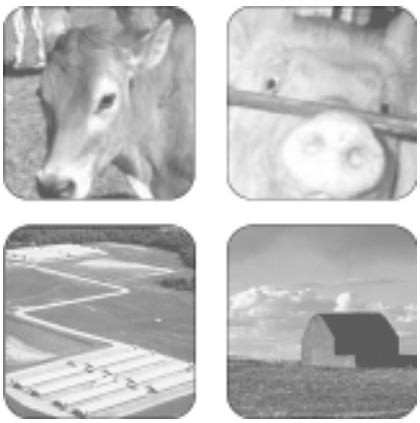
a teen activist's guide to factory farms



A Teen Activist's Guide to Factory Farms

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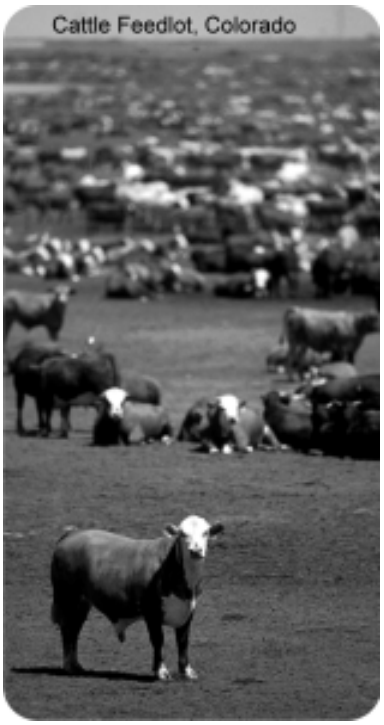

Cattle Feedlot, Colorado

A Teen Activist's Guide to Factory Farms was created to show you some of the many ways you can make a difference by promoting environmentally sound farming practices and opposing the factory farms that cause environmental and economic problems for the communities where they are located. For those of you in rural farming communities where factory farms may be moving in or where they already exist, this issue is a local one. You can work in partnership with others in the community to prevent a specific operator from moving in, or to ensure that an existing factory farm is obeying all regulations. Those of you in suburban or urban areas, you can help stop factory farms through your choices about what you eat and by educating others. Every one of you has the power to create change.

No matter where you live, you are affected by factory farms. And no matter where you live, you can affect factory farms. This is true, very simply, because everyone must eat. Your choices about food sources give you power over the agriculture industry—if you show farmers that you will not buy meat, eggs or dairy products that come from factory farms, they will change their methods. It's a basic idea of economics: if no one wants to buy these factory farm products, then the producer will stop making them because he isn't making any money. So the biggest task for all of you as factory farm activists, no matter where you live, is to talk to everyone you know about why they should not buy meat and dairy products that come from factory farms, and for you to make an effort to stop eating factory farm foods. As you read this guide, you will learn more about what it means to make this choice, and where you and your family can find food that is not raised on a factory farm.

Since factory farms are huge, wealthy corporations, trying to stop them can seem like an impossible task. But there are lots of things you can do, whether you live next to a factory farm or you are just an interested and concerned citizen. We created this guide for students who want to learn more about factory farms and become activists who work to stop the spread of unsustainable industrial agriculture.

No matter what your particular talents, interests, or location are, there is a way for you to help, and you are not alone in your concern about the dangers of factory farming. Being an activist means knowing about important issues and giving your time and effort to do something about them; any action, big or small, can be an activist action. By learning about factory farms and sustainability, you are taking the first step. The next step is to put this knowledge into action by teaching other people about factory farms, supporting (and eating!) sustainable food, and (if you live near a factory farm) opposing the factory farms that are causing damage to your community. Show your parents, teachers, classmates, and people in your community that you know it's important to stop the spread of these operations and to work for a sustainable future.

Tips for Using the Guide

As you read this guide, try to think of how you can apply these ideas and suggestions to your own situation. You might find it helpful to get a notebook where you can make lists and notes about your own ideas and information that is important for your location and specific interests. This way, you'll stay organized, which is important when you're dealing with such a complex issue. If there are any terms that you don't understand, write them down and look them up in a dictionary or encyclopedia, or ask your parents or teachers. There is a glossary at the end of this guide that defines and explains a lot of the more technical or confusing words and phrases. Words with a ° symbol next to them are defined in the glossary. You can also visit the GRACE Factory Farm Project web site at **http://www.factoryfarm.org** and use the search engine to look up words.

What is a factory farm? What is a CAFO?

In many agricultural regions in the US and around the world, huge agribusiness° corporations have replaced traditional family farms. These companies set up industrial sites for raising animals where hundreds or thousands of cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys or other farm animals are raised on plots of land that would traditionally be considered far too small for so many animals. These sites are commonly called factory farms°, confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs°), or animal feeding operations (AFOs°). The animals on these factory farms typically spend their lives crammed together or locked in pens or cages with little or no sunlight, fresh air or space to move around. Antibiotics° and hormones° are injected or mixed with feed to make the animals grow faster and to ward off the diseases that affect animals that live so close together in this unsanitary environment.

What are the problems associated with this way of animal and food production?

Factory farms greatly affect the communities around them. In addition to the cruel treatment of animals, they cause problems for the environment, human health and local workers. In traditional farming, farms are diversified° and have both livestock (animals) and different crops where the manure from the animals can be used as fertilizer. On factory farms, there are too many animals for the land to handle—some factory farms produce millions of pounds of manure every week! The manure, along with urine and the water used to flush the waste out of confinement buildings, is put into lagoons°, which are huge pits dug in the ground to hold the mixture (also called effluent°), until it can be applied to the land.

These lagoons leak and pollute streams and groundwater°, and since they're often not covered they also create air pollution and odors. Harmful bacteria, called pathogens°, from leaking lagoons can cause disease in humans; and the hormones and antibiotics that are fed to the animals may also get into streams and groundwater and can cause human health problems. (Under current regulations a lagoon is allowed to leak up to $^{1}/_{32}$" per day. This is equal to approximately 850 gallons of waste per day per acre of lagoon that leaks into the ground—that's 1.5 million gallons per year for a five-acre lagoon.)

The same bacteria, antibiotics and hormones that can pollute the water also end up in the meat and dairy products that are sent to supermarkets, restaurants and other establishments. According to a 2000 FDA° report, 76 million cases of food-borne illness (food poisoning) occur annually in the US, resulting in 5000 annual deaths. You are what you eat, and in this case, you are what your meat eats, too. When people consume meat and other animal products from animals that are not healthy, they are putting themselves at risk not only for food poisoning but also for effects such as antibiotic resistance°. Antibiotic resistance is when bacteria that cause illness are exposed to antibiotic medicines so often that they adapt to them and are able to survive treatment. This renders existing antibiotics unable to fight the new, changed bacteria, so medicine is not available to treat the people who are ill from these bacteria. It causes unnecessary work and strain for the medical profession, and it puts all consumers at risk.

Local workers at factory farms are typically paid little for very dangerous work. Meanwhile, independent family farms° are put out of business by these massive corporate operations. This causes poverty and pulls families apart, hurting the community economically and psychologically. Independent enterprise is one of the ideals that the United States was founded upon, and factory farms are major corporations that squash independent farms.

What does it mean for food to be sustainable?

Sustainability° is a very important concept when it comes to protecting the health of people and the environment. An activity (a method of farming, for example) is sustainable only if the farmer can do it that way forever without negative impacts on the community or the quality of the environment in which he lives and operates his farm. This means that anything taken off the land or out of the environment is replaced, and everyone who's involved is treated fairly, including workers and animals. Methods like diversification°—that's when a farmer uses part of his land for growing different types of crops and part of it for raising animals—are sustainable ways of farming because the land is able to absorb all the waste, so no harmful pollutants° are released. The message you send when you buy sustainable food is that you support farmers who use sustainable farming methods. You also show the owners of factory farms that you do not support their methods. There are several sources where you can buy sustainable food. Small farmers often sell their products directly or through farmers markets, local stores

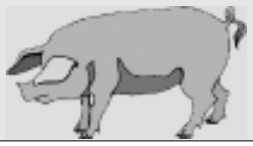
Animal Welfare

Factory farming has many unhealthy consequences for humans: contaminated soil and water, air pollution and poor food quality, to name a few. But the most severe and unavoidable consequences of factory farming affect the animals who live in these facilities, because they are treated like machinery instead of living creatures. As living creatures, farm animals deserve respect and humane treatment. Their needs are simple, but factory farming corporations are not willing to spend any money to create humane conditions. Here is a brief look at the lives of various farm animals, so you can see the difference between their natural habitats and behaviors and the way they live on a factory farm.

Pigs

In nature, pigs are very social animals. They use many different sounds to communicate, and sows° raise their piglets in small family groups. Scientists have said that pigs have a greater ability to learn than dogs—only humans, primates and dolphins rank better. Pigs like to keep their living areas very clean, and they enjoy contact with other pigs and with familiar humans. They don't have enough sweat glands to keep their bodies cool, so they often cover themselves in mud or water to cool off. They are foragers, which means that they spend most of their day nosing around for snacks like bugs and plants. When a sow is about to give birth she builds a secure nest, isolated from other animals, to ensure the safety of her piglets. Pigs can live about 12-15 years.

On a factory farm, pigs are not allowed to engage in these instinctual behaviors or to socialize naturally, because they are crowded into very small cages. They become agitated and show some of the same behaviors as humans who have been severely traumatized. They do things that are repetitive and pointless, like biting the bars of the cage. The pigs get very weak due to lack of exercise, unnatural diets, and constant breeding. They are often sick because of exposure to harmful chemicals in all the urine and manure produced by the thousands of pigs sharing a small area. Piglets are taken from their mothers just 5-20 days after birth, so they don't receive the natural antibodies and other nutritious components of the sows' milk. When the pigs reach a weight of about 250 pounds (generally at about six months old), they are slaughtered. Boars° often have their snouts bashed in by workers because if they are in pain they are unlikely to fight with each other on the way to slaughter. Hundreds of thousands of pigs die before slaughter in the US every year, but it is considered less expensive to allow this to happen than to just raise healthier pigs.



or CSAs° (Community Supported Agriculture). If you have a backyard, you could even start your own vegetable garden. It shouldn't be too difficult to find sustainable meat, vegetables and fruit if you just become aware of where your food is coming from.

One way that some people choose to oppose factory farms is to stick to a vegetarian diet, opting not to eat meat at all. Some people also give up eggs, milk, cheese and other products that come from animals. This is the right choice for some people, and we hope that those of you who decide to be vegetarians and those of you who opt to eat meat that is sustainably raised can understand and respect one another's views. Both of these lifestyles are helpful tools to show factory farm operators that you oppose their methods, and both can be healthy and sustainable as long as you pay attention to where your food comes from and what your options are.

Layers and Broilers

There are two types of factory farmed chickens: layers°, or egg-producing hens, and broilers°, chickens raised for meat. Off the farm, chickens live in large, organized flocks, each with a rooster as the leader and protector. Hens are attentive mothers who rotate their eggs many times each day, then defend the hatched chicks from potential predators and teach them to find insects and worms to eat. Chickens take dust baths to clean their feathers, and will bond with and recognize many other chickens and also members of other species, including humans. They can live for up to about 15 years.

On factory farms, chickens are crammed into small wire cages with 3-6 other birds. The cages are stacked in several tiers in a building that can be as big as a football field. Each bird has just a few square inches to stand on—less than the size of a standard piece of paper, and the wire bottoms of the cages cause painful irritation to their feet. The crowding causes them to become frustrated and aggressive. To prevent the birds from pecking each other to death, their beaks are partially removed (without anesthesia) when they are very young. This is a painful procedure that leaves their beaks deformed and often infected, and they frequently have trouble eating as a result. Instead of their normal diet of bugs and worms, the chickens are fed a mix of grain and ground up chicken, with antibiotics and hormones added. Poultry (chickens and turkeys) are specifically left out of almost every US law against animal cruelty, and it is relatively common for birds to suffer needlessly at the slaughterhouse just because it would take a little bit more time and effort to make sure that they are killed humanely.

Hens on the factory egg farm are not allowed to go through their normal molting° cycle—this is a resting period that allows their bodies to become ready to produce eggs again. Instead they are subjected to "forced molting", where farm operators deprive the hens of food and water for several days, and manipulate the hours of light and darkness in the confinement building to cause molting to occur rapidly. That way all the hens are ready to lay eggs again within a very short time and the egg factory doesn't have to wait for them. The constant strain of laying and forced molting, along with the unnatural, grain-based diet, causes the hens to be weak and generally within two years they are considered "spent", which means that they can no longer lay enough eggs to be profitable. Spent hens° are sold as low-quality meat for processed food products, because their bodies are bruised and broken. An estimated one-third of layers have at least one broken bone by the time they reach the slaughterhouse, and as many as 94% of them have broken bones by the time they are slaughtered.

Broilers live for an even shorter period of time than their egg-laying relatives do. Chickens are slaughtered at just 4-7 weeks old after being fattened to the point that often their legs are not strong enough to hold them up. These oversized birds suffer from bent and broken bones, as well as burns and sores from sitting in manure and rubbing against the wire cage. All in all, it's a short, painful life for factory hens and chickens—and these are the ones that are deemed desirable. Most male chicks are killed just a day or two after hatching because they are of no use to the farm operator.

Dairy Cows, Veal°, and Beef Cattle

Cattle have been a part of American identity since the days of the Old West. With all the advertisements for the milk industry in the past couple of decades, dairy cows in particular have gotten a great reputation as wholesome, lovable farm animals—which they are, when treated right. Cows (female cattle) have nine-month pregnancies like humans, and they nurse their calves around 16 times a day until the calves are around 7 months to a year old. They stay very close with their offspring even after they stop nursing, and they become very distressed if they are separated. Cattle live in large herds (as many as 300 animals), and within each herd the cows and bulls babysit for one another's calves so they can take turns grazing. They are herbivores, and they generally only eat grass and vegetables. Cattle are ruminants°, which means their stomachs are divided into four compartments and part of their digestive process involves regurgitating and chewing their partially digested food, which is called cud. Cattle generally chew their cud for around eight hours each day. They can live for 20 years or more.

On a dairy factory, cows have little contact with the loving farmers you see in cheese commercials. They are fed, watered, and milked by machines, and are not allowed to graze in grassy pastures. Instead they are confined to indoor stalls or grassless pens, injected with rBGH° (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone), and fed a steady diet of grain and animal byproducts, both of which are unnatural and difficult for the cows to digest. Starting when they are about a year and a half old, the cows are impregnated constantly—this is because in order to produce milk, like all mammals, cows must first give birth. So the cycle begins: the cow is impregnated and gives birth. Her calf is taken away just a day or two after it is born. Because of the rBGH, she produces as much as ten times as much milk as her calf would have needed, all of which is instead taken for humans to drink. Other health effects of rBGH include chronic mastitis° (an infection linked to overproduction of milk, which causes her udder to become swollen and very painful) and hoof irritation. About two to three months after she gives birth, the cow is impregnated again. She has a break of just a few weeks between when she stops lactating (producing milk) and when she gives birth and starts the cycle all over again. After completing this cycle just two or three times, the cow's body can no longer keep up with the intensive milk production caused by the hormones, and she is sent to slaughter. Meat from the exhausted dairy cattle is considered very low quality, and is most often ground up and sold as hamburger meat.

Since dairy cows produce so many calves, there is a steady supply of very young cattle for the veal industry. Veal calves are taken from their mothers within the first two days after birth, sometimes even before they are able to walk on their own. "Milk-fed" veal, which is considered desirable by many people because of its white color, actually comes from calves that are fed a milk substitute that lacks iron. Iron is an important mineral in the diets of many animals including humans, and without it the animals become very weak. The calves are kept in tiny crates that don't allow them to exercise at all—because of the lack of exercise and the poor diet, the meat from these animals is very soft. The young calves are not able to play or run around, and they show signs of distress and frustration, like sucking on the bars of their crates. After just 4-6 months, the weak, malnourished calves are slaughtered.

Factory farmed beef cattle often receive the same outdated treatment they did in the days of the old cowboys. They are subjected to painful procedures such as branding (burning a symbol into their skin to show ownership), dehorning and castration°, all without any anesthesia or painkillers. Stress from mistreatment and early separation from their mothers causes health problems, and the meat of stressed animals is different in color from the meat of healthy cattle. At some point, often early in the steer's° life, he is sent to a feedlot to be fattened up on an unhealthy diet of grain, meat, and assorted junk that can include things like paper and manure. This diet causes digestive problems for the cattle, and can even be fatal. When the cattle reach a marketable weight (around 1000-2500 lb., depending on the breed), they are sent to slaughter. There are laws that state how the cattle should be slaughtered, to prevent cruel treatment, but these are not enforced very strictly and the penalties for violating these laws are small.

Now that you know what happens to animals on factory farms, think about the sustainable, more humane alternatives. What can you do to support the farmers who are treating their animals respectfully?

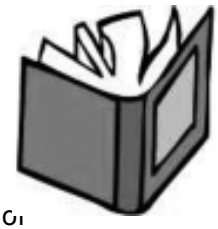
Step 1: Educate Yourself

Here are some methods and resources to help you educate yourself and others about factory farms. See the Resources Section for more detailed information.

THE INTERNET You can find a lot of information on the web, although you do have to think about where the information you find is coming from, since a lot of web sites are outdated or come from unreliable or biased sources. Look for sites that tell you when they were updated and that appear professional. A good place to start is the GRACE Factory Farm Project web site at www.factoryfarm.org. From there you can find links to other organizations and articles on various factory farm issues. If you have a slow connection speed, email factoryfarm@gracelinks.org and ask for a copy of the web site on CD-ROM.

BOOKS & PAMPHLETS Many of the organizations that oppose factory farms publish printed materials that they will send you for free or a small fee. Some groups even publish newsletters or e-newsletters that you can subscribe to. You can try browsing through the lists of publications on the various sites we recommend in this guide and on the GRACE Factory Farm Project web site. For example, the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE) has a wide selection of materials created for middle and high school students, and you can get free samples of some of them. From their homepage at www.humaneteen.org, you can click on Publications & Materials or Good Stuff to see what they have. You need a credit card to order these online, so your parents or advisor will have to get involved. You can ask for a free copy of their "Tips for Teen Activists" guide by calling 860-434-8666 or writing to:

Teen Scene Packet
P.O. Box 362
East Haddam, CT 06423-0362



CURRENT ARTICLES Read articles about current factory farm issues through online news sources and electronic newsletters like Farmed Animal Watch (www.farmedanimal.net). You can find a long list of links to useful online publications at www.factoryfarm.org/newslettersandmagazines.html. Most major newspapers also have searchable web sites, so you can try looking up "factory farm" on your state newspaper's site.

LISTSERVS A listserv is an email discussion group, where members can reach the entire group by sending one message. It is a tool that many activists have used to share information because it is quick and easy. You can do a web search to find out about listservs that might be useful to you and your group. There are also listings of environmentalism and other activist listservs on Envirolink (www.envirolink.org/categories.html?catid=11) and the Student Environmental Action Coalition (www.seac.org/seacnet).

FACT SHEETS In the Appendix and on the GFFP web site at www.factoryfarm.org/factsheets.html, you'll find an assortment of fact sheets and brochures that you can print or copy to educate yourself and others.

INTERVIEWS Talk with people who live near factory farms and to other teen activists who have started groups to fight factory farms. Record the times and dates when you spoke with them, and keep these records together in a notebook. Read what some neighbors of factory farms have already said at www.factoryfarm.org/takingaction-testimonials.html.

THE LIBRARY Learn what your rights are—what documents do you have access to, how can you access them, how do the laws in your state protect you from factory farms? Talk to your local librarians, teachers, and other adults you know who are interested or involved in law and government. Reference librarians are a great resource and can help you research just about anything. You can even email the Library of Congress reference librarians by going to www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-digital.html.

NETWORKING Find other people and groups who are opposed to factory farming or are involved with other related issues, and talk to them about what you're doing. Share whatever information and experiences you've had, and learn from what they have done. GRACE is planning to launch a teen activist section on their web site, to help you to connect with other students who are working on this issue. For now, you can work through groups in your community and also by emailing groups you find on the Internet. To find groups on the Internet, you can start with the GFFP site at www.factoryfarm.org/organizations.html or by looking through resources for your state at www.factoryfarm.org/region.html, or go to Idealist's site for kids and teens at www.idealist.org/kt.

SOME FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Yard Sale
Babysitting Night
Odd Job Day
Gift-wrapping
Raffle
Make and Sell Cookbooks
Ice Cream Social
Walk/Dance/Bike/Swim-a-thon
Car Wash

Now that you are aware of the problems created by factory farms, you have the power to do something about it. What you do is up to you, and the best course of action is different for each person, depending on factors like where you live and which aspect of this issue affects or concerns you the most. Here are a few suggestions for getting started:

START a group or campaign at your school. Seek out teachers who may be interested in acting as an advisor. Use available resources to publicize meetings, such as morning announcements, or the school newspaper, radio or TV station. Post fliers on bulletin boards or in other public places. Spend some time early on establishing the structure, purpose, and roles for your group so that you avoid confusion later on. Have someone take notes at meetings so all of your ideas are recorded for later use.

HOLD educational events to bring the factory farm issue to the attention of the school and the local community. (See the "Educate Your Community" section for some event ideas.)

HAVE a fundraiser. This can bring your message to people who might not hear it otherwise, and also help your group raise money to pay any expenses like buying educational materials or hiring a speaker. Look for books in your school or town library about fundraising or check out web sites that have ideas and information such as "About.com" (http://nonprofit.about.com/cs/fundraisinghelp) or "fundraising.com" (www.fundraising.com).

FORM a partnership between your group or class and an environmental group in the community. Get involved with an event or campaign held by another group. You can find out about environmental groups through the Internet (start with GFFP's listings at www.factoryfarm.org/region.html), or just ask around in your community. Talk to your teachers, parents, local farmers, and anyone else you think may have an interest in the topic. Check out community billboards for meeting and event announcements, and use these to publicize your own group's activities.

Step 3: Gather Information

Are there factory farms in your area? If so, where are they, who is in charge of regulating them, and how are they affecting your community?

When you begin—whether in a group or on your own—it's important to learn as much as you can about the issue, particularly in your own region or state. Being well informed is one of the most important jobs of an activist, because others will rely on you to supply accurate information. You don't need to memorize endless numbers and statistics, but to be effective you need to know what information is out there and how to get it. The first task for you or your group is to learn all that you can about current farming practices and regulations, environmental hazards, and sustainable alternatives.

It can be very difficult to find out if there are factory farms in your region, since they may be in a remote area; and unlike when a new store opens in town, a factory farm won't advertise the fact that it's moving in. To find out if a factory farm in your area has violated regulations, look at the Sierra Club's 2002 Rapsheets report at www.sierraclub.org/factoryfarms/rapsheets. General agricultural statistics can be found at national agencies' web sites, like the National Agricultural Statistics Service (www.nass.usda.gov:81/ipedcnty) or the Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/epahome/whereyoulive.htm). Also, if another group nearby is working against factory farms, they are likely to have local information, and you can work together to find answers to your questions.

Research agencies that regulate factory farms—talk to people who work there about how factory farms are monitored. This includes local government and health officials, EPA, Clean Air Authority, Water Quality Control Board and others. From the GFFP web site you can look for these agencies in your region by starting at www.factoryfarm.org/region.html.

Study the history of your area. Interview dairymen, farmers and ranchers who farm or farmed in a sustainable way. Learn about the history and quality of streams and rivers nearby. Speak with people who have lived in your area for many years and find out what has changed. How did people get their food 40 or 50 years ago? Ask your local librarian to help you find photos or books on your area, especially ones from many years ago. Compare these to what it looks like now. Ask a librarian or teacher if they know anyone in town who has lived there for a long time and knows about local history. Try visiting a senior center or nursing home.

Find out what laws are in place, who is enforcing them, and how. For example, what agency regulates water quality in your state? Do they have state regulations for CAFOs in addition to the Federal Nutrient Pollution Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES°) program? It might help to ask your parents or faculty advisor to help you figure out whom you should contact for information and how to contact them by phone, email, or mail.

Are there family farms in your area? Is sustainable food available? How can people get it?

Ask people in your family, at school, and in your community about local agriculture. If your parents shop at a local farmers market, go with them and talk to the farmers about agriculture issues in your region and around the country. If your parents don't shop at local farmers markets, convince them to.

To find out about sustainably raised food sources you can start at GFFP's sustainable food links page, at www.factoryfarm.org/sustainablesolutions.html, from which you can find various localized information about sustainable and organic food sources. For a listing of CSAs and farmers markets in your area, visit www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/ or www.localharvest.org.

What can you do about factory farms if you don't live near one?

No matter where you live, you can make a difference. Even if you live in one of the few states that has no factory farms at all, you can still be an advocate for sustainable agriculture by educating others and buying food that comes from sustainable sources. You can show your opposition to factory farming by doing many of the activities we suggest in the "Educate Your Community" and "Get Involved" sections of this guide and especially by supporting independent, sustainable producers when you buy groceries or eat out.

We can't stress enough how important everyone is in the struggle for a safe, humane food supply. We all must eat, so we are all affected by factory farms. And the choices you make about what you put in your mouth are what will win or lose this battle. So whether you live in rural Idaho or the middle of New York City, you can have a huge impact on factory farming.

Become involved with a group or groups in other parts of the state or country that are fighting factory farms by being a "sister organization" or a long distance group member. Look on the Internet on teen activist sites like Humane Teen (www.humaneteen.org) or ask the librarian at your school or local library how to find organizations at other schools. You can show them that people really do care about the problems they are confronting by offering your support. The "By Region" section on the GFFP web site lists local groups from each state. Pick a state you'd like to work with and check for local groups. Send them a letter or email and ask how you can help out. For example, you could write letters to Congress and to newspapers. This way, you can make a difference in the fight against factory farms while you learn about how people in other regions live. You might even make some new friends or pen pals!

Holding a Press Event

· Find a location that is convenient for everyone who you think should be there.
· Use a site that is interesting and relevant, if there is one.
· Invite reporters from the local TV, radio and print news sources—give them a few days' notice, but don't tell them so long in advance that they'll forget or lose interest.
· Offer to send printed information to media sources that cannot be there.
· Plan a backup location or date in case of very bad weather.
· Take photos, and tell the media if there will be photo opportunities so they are prepared.
· Prep spokespersons to be interviewed—rehearse questions that will probably be asked, and decide which information is should be emphasized.
·Distribute information about your group and issue at the event.
· Plan ahead for equipment like microphones or megaphones.
· For more detailed advice on how to hold a press conference, see GFFP's "How to Hold a Press Conference" at www.factoryfarm.org/guide/docs/holdapressconference.doc

Educate Your Community

Now that you and your group have educated yourselves and compiled all this information about factory farms and sustainability, it's time to share it with other members of the community. The following are some ways you can reach out to your community and share what you've learned.

Have a video screening at school, the local library, or another public space in town. Many organizations have produced videos on the dangers of factory farms. For some examples and information about how to find these videos, look at the GFFP Guide to Confronting a CAFO web site at www.factoryfarm.org/guide/1.html.

A few important words about videos: many videos about factory farming have footage of animals being treated cruelly, which can be graphic and upsetting. The ones in the GFFP Guide are recommended for adults for this reason, and many adults choose not to look at this kind of material. If you're working with a group your parents have formed, they can preview videos to make sure they're okay to show to your class or group; otherwise use your or your teacher's discretion. In the Resources section of this Guide, you'll find a list of a few videos that on the less graphic side; you should still make sure you preview any video before you show it to an audience. Also, it's a good idea to allow time to discuss the images before and after the showing.

Use factory farming and sustainable agriculture as topics for speech and presentation assignments in your classes or for a science fair project. Or create a board game, video, play, song, or mural about what you've learned.

Have a table at public parks, school and community fairs, and even yard sales and other events. Bring plenty of brochures and fact sheets to give out, and talk to people about the problems of factory farms. Connect with other groups like Future Farmers clubs, Earth Day Campaigns, 4-H or Students for Environmental Action who may have similar interests or be interested in joining forces for a future event.

Invite speakers to talk to your community about factory farms. Ask your parents and their friends if they or anyone they know has had experiences with factory farms and might be interested in talking to your group or at a community gathering. Get permission to use a space in your school or a local public building and publicize via local news, word of mouth, and by posting fliers in public places around town.

Bring brochures on factory farming to local merchants and (with their permission) put them out for shoppers to take home. Also, see if you can leave some in the school cafeteria, at the library, and at any other community centers in your area.

Share fact sheets with teachers at elementary, middle and high schools nearby—find out when teachers' meetings are held and ask about getting on the agenda to share what you've learned and what you are doing about it. See if they will let you come in and speak to their classes.

Find a way to have your voice heard: write a letter to the editor of your school, local or state paper, make speeches to churches and clubs in the area, or get interviewed on public access TV.

Get your message across through the press: if your school has a television or radio station, try to get your issues aired; pitch story ideas to school and local newspapers or create a Public Service Announcement about your group's work. Ask your parents or faculty advisor to help you to get in touch with local print and TV news and to plan who should speak and what you will say.

Start a newsletter with facts and figures you have collected, along with writing and art by members of your group. (Remember to say where you found all the data you include, along with the date it was published!) See if the local paper will run part or all of it as a monthly column.

Start your own web site. Email accounts often come with some space for a free web site. If you aren't sure, check with your parents or look around on the web for servers that offer free space. (There are a lot of them.) Or, if you don't know how to make a website, ask a friend to help. Make sure to keep the site updated. If you want to be linked to the GRACE Factory Farm Project site, send your web site address and a couple of sentences about your group to factoryfarm@gracelinks.org.

Writing a Letter To The Editor

· Look at the letters-to-editor section of any newspaper you would like to write to before you start. Note how the published letters look. Most publications print the address, email or fax number where to send letters to the editor. Usually there is a word limit so check for length restrictions or other guidelines.
· If you don't see the information you need printed there, call the newspaper and tell them you'd like to write a letter. Get the exact address to mail it to, and find out if they have a length restriction.
· For more tips, check out the Endangered Species Coalition's letters-to-editor page at http://www.stopextinction.org/Team/Team.cfm?ID=68&c=2.

Start a section for sustainable agriculture in your school or local library. You can use money you raise from group fundraisers to help pay for the materials. Look in the Resources section of this Guide for some suggestions about helpful books and videos, or check out GFFP's recommended book list online at www.factoryfarm.org/books.html.

Help educate your local officials. Put together a packet of information on the factory farm issue and give it to your Senators, Representatives (state and U.S.), and other local officials like town or city council members, the town manager or mayor, and the district attorney. If you can, deliver the packet in person. Even though you can't vote yet, you can remind the officials that one day soon you will vote, and that your parents also vote. Don't be afraid to invite the press to join you. It's best to call in advance to set up an appointment—you might not be able to meet with the official, but one of his/her aides might give you some time to express your point of view. Remember to always be polite, whether on the phone or in person.

Get Involved

Following are examples of what you can do to make a difference in your efforts against factory farming and to show your neighbors how important this issue is. Use these as a starting point; be creative and use whatever resources you have in your group and community.

1. Is there a factory farm trying to move into your area? Talk to your parents and see if any opposing groups have formed. Help them to get organized. Volunteer to help keep the organization's files neat; paint signs for rallies and protests; help at town meetings by getting people to sign petitions, sign up to get involved or make a donation.

2. Start a letter-writing or phone campaign to your representatives on the local, state, or national level.

3. Plan a media event to let the public know what your group is doing, or get involved with a press conference that a group you're working with is holding. Ask your parents or faculty advisor to help you to get in touch with local print and TV news and to plan who should speak and what you will say. Practice in front of each other before the big event.

4. Get your family to eat sustainably. Educate your parents, other relatives and their friends about the dangers of factory farms and explain the available alternatives. Designate a day of the week to create a meal of foods that are grown or raised locally. Make special occasions sustainable; have a locally raised turkey for Thanksgiving or an organic Christmas ham.

5. Find out which supermarkets in your area sell meat that is raised sustainably and ask your parents to start shopping there. Tell the supermarket manager what you're doing. Tell supermarket managers who aren't selling sustainable meat and locally grown food what you're doing, too. They won't want to lose customers so they might start stocking what you want. Tell your friends to do the same, and tell them to pass the word on to other friends and family members. Take time during holidays and family gatherings to educate your family.

6. Start a farmer appreciation day in your town or area. Talk to business owners in the community and try to designate a day or week or month where local restaurants and stores will highlight locally grown, sustainably-raised food. Try to get the whole town involved. Invite friends over for a sustainably-raised meal, or see if your parents will host a dinner or cookout where all the food is sustainable. Take time during the meal to explain and discuss your issues. You could even invite the farmer(s) who grew or raised the food!

7. Ask your favorite restaurants to serve sustainable food. It helps if you become familiar with what is being produced nearby, so you can offer an alternative to their current suppliers. Visit www.iatp.org/eatwell for the Eat Well Guide for sustainably raised meat and www.localharvest.org for sustainable produce (fruit and vegetable) sources.

8. Volunteer at a local farm or farmers' market. For a national list of farmers' markets, go to http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm.

9. Start a garden at your school. It's a fun project that a lot of people can get involved with, everyone benefits from it, and it can get your classmates and community more interested in agricultural issues. Host a meal for your class so they can taste the food that you grow. Ask chefs at your favorite restaurants if they would be willing to come to your school and cook a meal for you, using the vegetables from your garden. Or ask your parents to contact the top chefs in your area. See if they will come and cook for free; you could also call a local farmer to see if he would donate some meat for the chefs to cook at your meal. Let the press know what you are doing and invite them to the meal. For tips and resources, check out the Edible Schoolyard Project at www.edibleschoolyard.org.

10. Create projects with younger kids at a nearby elementary school to show them the effects of pollution on the water, air and land. Talk to your advisor or school science teachers for project ideas.

11. Ask about what kind of food is being served in your school cafeteria. Ask your principal and the school board to avoid irradiated° meat and to buy from local sustainable farms. Start a campaign to get sustainable food in your cafeteria, and get other students and faculty to support you. Draft and circulate a petition around your school and get your classmates to join you in your efforts. (Public Citizen has an activist guide for opposing irradiated food in school cafeterias, which you can print out at

www.citizen.org/documents/schoollunchactivistpacket2.pdf. This guide is designed for parents, but it could be useful to you or you could pass it along to the PTA or other group of parents in your school district.)

12. Monitor your local streams for changes in water quality and pollution from factory farms. For information about water monitoring, check out the EPA's Volunteer Monitoring web site at www.epa.gov/volunteer/index.html.

13. Ask a local farmer to speak to your class or school about sustainable farming and humane ways to raise animals. Or bring your class to them; work with your teachers to arrange a school field trip to a sustainable farm.

Conclusion

The Teen Activist's Guide to Factory Farms is a place for you to start, but there are tons of ways for you to oppose factory farms and support sustainable agriculture. Be creative; brainstorm your own ideas for action with your group. If you would like to share your ideas or successes with others, please email us at factoryfarm@gracelinks.org. We'll include them in future updates of this Guide and post them on our web site.

Writing a Letter To a Government Official

- Find your Senators' and Representatives' phone or fax numbers, mailing addresses or email at www.senate.gov or www.house.gov. For state and local officials, check your state government web site for contact information (ask a librarian or use a search engine).
- Ask how they view factory farms and how they will protect your environment. Tell them what you think.
- Be well-informed and give current information.
- Be brief and specific. Limit yourself to a page, and don't stray to a different topic.
- Be neat—type if you have access to a computer or typewriter. Print and sign your name legibly, and don't forget to include your address and phone number on the letter (not just on the envelope).
- Write thank-you letters when your elected officials support your cause.
- If you're using email, keep it as formal as a letter. Don't use symbols or shorthand. Write in complete sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation. Put the topic of the letter in the subject line.

Creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA)

- Contact your school, community, or nearby college radio or TV stations. Ask them if they read PSAs (and ask if it's free—it should be since you're not trying to sell anything), and if they do, get their mailing address(es).
- Stations generally accept 10, 30 or 60 second PSAs, so your best bet is to make one or more of each length. Practice reading them aloud at a speed that is slightly slower than you normally speak (you want everyone to hear exactly what you're saying), and edit them to make sure they're just about the right length. A 10-second PSA will only be about two to three sentences long, so it has to get right to the point, advertising your group or event in a way that is specific and easy to understand.
- Look in the library to find books with PSA-writing suggestions or see what you can find about PSAs online. People who deal with PSAs at the radio or TV stations should also be able to give you some tips.

Writing Media Pitch Letters

The pitch letter is the basic tool for pitching stories to the media. It is a letter from your group to an editor, a reporter or a producer telling them about your group and your cause and why they should be interested in covering it.

· A pitch letter should be short and to the point. It should contain persuasive points that will encourage the press to cover your issue.
· Try to concentrate as much as you can of your pitch in the first paragraph of the letter.
· Send your pitch letters with some information about your group and your issues (e.g. fact sheets,

Writing a Press Release (or Media Advisory)

A press release is used to make announcements for news and events; a media advisory is used to inform the media about an event and serves as an invitation.There are a few simple rules for writing an effective press release:

· At the top of the page, write "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" followed by the date you want the news to be released.
· Include a contact person (with phone number and email) that the media can call to get more details.
· Write a catchy title that summarizes the contents of the release and attracts attention (similarly to newspaper headlines)
· Try to gather all the important information in the first paragraph (called *lead paragraph*); the rest of the release should be used to give more information.

Holding a Press Conference

Press conferences are 'difficult' events as the media must see the value of attending as opposed to getting the same information from a press release. To be successful a press conference calls for a few important elements, e.g. an announcement of something new and vital for your cause that demands the media's attendance and cannot be communicated as effectively via a press release; and the presence of an authoritative spokesperson or a 'celebrity.'

· You should play up the fact that teenagers are organizing the press conference; that alone may attract press attention.
· Find a location that is convenient for everyone you think should be there.
· Use a site that is interesting and relevant, if there is one.
· Invite reporters from the local TV, radio and print news sources through a media advisory—give them a week's notice, but don't tell them so long in advance that they'll forget or lose interest.
· Offer to send printed information to media sources that cannot be there.
· Plan a backup location or date in case of very bad weather.
· Take photos, and tell the media if there will be photo opportunities so they are prepared.
· Prep spokespersons to be interviewed—rehearse questions that will probably be asked, and decide which information is should be emphasized.
· Distribute information about your group and issue at the event.
· Plan ahead for equipment like microphones or megaphones.

For more detailed advice on how to hold a press conference, see GFFP's "How to Hold a Press Conference" at http://www.factoryfarm.org/guide/docs/holdapressconference.doc

PROJECT IDEAS

- Compare the lifestyle and length of life of a cow (or pig, hen, chicken, turkey, etc.) on a factory farm to one on a sustainable farm.
- Research your watershed° area—show your class what a watershed is and what yours looks like, using a map.
- What happens when something goes wrong on a factory farm? Learn and report about one of the "unnatural disasters" caused by factory farming.
- Research diseases that develop in factory farmed animals. How do they affect humans?
- Research the history of a major environmental regulation, like the Clean Water Act°, Clean Air Act° or other national or state law or act that interests you. What was the original goal? What has changed as a result of these regulations?
- Track the history of a factory farm.
- Find out about the sustainable food sources in your area. Include CSAs, food co-ops, sustainable farms, restaurants and stores that sell sustainable food. Make up a list of all the resources you've discovered and publicize it to your community.
- Open a CSA in your area. (Unless you want to remain in charge of it for the indefinite future, it's best to do it with a church or other local group. That way, you can pass the project on to the group when you are no longer able to run it.)
- Research poorer communities in your area. Do they have access to fresh meat and produce? What can you do to help out? Help start a farmer's market in the poor area, or tell people how they can get fresh, sustainable food.

Factory Farm Information/Groups

GRACE Factory Farm Project	http://www.factoryfarm.org
Sierra Club	http://www.sierraclub.org/factoryfarms
Farmed Animal Watch	http://www.farmedanimal.net/

Running your organization or campaign

Idealist.org	http://www.idealist.org/kt
Clean Water Network's "How-to" page	http://www.cwn.org/docs/howto/howtopage.htm
Humane Society of the US Student Action Guide	http://www.humaneteen.org/sag/default.shtm

Books and Pamphlets

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser
The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and the World by John Robbins
Farms as Factories by the Humane Society of the United States
(available online at http://www.humaneteen.org/farms_as_factories/Farms%20as%20Factories.pdf)
Cesspools of Shame from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Clean Water Network
(read it online or order it athttp://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/cesspools/cessinx.asp)
Top Ten Reasons for Rural Communities to Be Concerned About Large-Scale, Corporate Hog Operations by John Ikerd
(read online at http://www.factoryfarm.org/guide/docs/top_ten.pdf)

Videos

A Time to Act for Family Farms! from the Time to Act campaign
(available at http://www.cwn.org/docs/issues/feedlots/TimetoAct.htm)
The Pig Picture, from the Humane Farming Association.
(available at https://www1519.boca15-verio.com/hfaorg/catalog/index.html)

Sustainable Food Directories

GFFP Sustainable Solutions page	http://www.factoryfarm.org/sustainablesolutions.html
USDA Listing of CSAs by state	http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/csastate.htm
Local Harvest Organic Food Sources Directory	http://www.localharvest.org
IATP Eat Well Guide	http://www.iatp.org/eatwell

Glossary

AFO: **Abbreviation for Animal Feeding Operation, which is an agricultural business where animals are raised in confined situations and fed an unnatural diet, instead of allowing them to roam and graze. The EPA determines whether an agricultural business is an AFO based on regulations created by the Clean Water Act.**

Agribusiness: **A fairly new term that combines agriculture and business. In the past, agriculture has been treated as something completely separate from other types of business. Over the past 50 years, factory farm companies have been replacing traditional agriculture, so now we need new words and new ways of thinking about agriculture to describe where our food comes from.**

Ammonia: **A chemical that is produced when urine or manure is mixed with water. It has a strong odor and as an air pollutant it can cause or worsen skin, eye and respiratory (breathing) problems, and other illnesses.**

Antibiotic resistance: **Bacteria's ability to mutate in order to survive treatment with antibiotics. Over time, bacteria are able to change their characteristics so that antibiotics cannot kill them. This process happens faster when antibiotics are used very frequently, especially at low doses over long periods of time, which is common on factory farms where antibiotics are added to feed.**

Antibiotics: **Medicines created using microbes or fungi that are weakened and taken into the body to destroy harmful bacteria.**

Boar: **Male pig.**

Broiler: **A chicken raised for its meat. Typically weighs between 3.5 and 6 pounds.**

Bull: **Male cattle.**

CAFO: **Abbreviation for Confined Animal Feeding Operation, which is an agricultural business where animals are raised in confined situations and fed an unnatural diet, instead of allowing them to roam and graze. This is an operation that is considered more hazardous than an AFO for one or more reasons, such as the number of animals or the location of the facility, its proximity to surface water and potential to discharge waste into that water. The EPA determines whether an agricultural business is a CAFO based on regulations created by the Clean Water Act, and special permits have to be given for the owners to operate a CAFO legally. Enforcement of these regulations has not been very strict, which has caused many problems.**

Castration: **Removal of a male animal's testicles, a common practice in cattle raising. This prevents males with undesirable qualities from breeding and causes the animals to be less aggressive.**

Clean Air Act: **Set of laws passed in 1970 to regulate air pollution in the US. The goal of this act was to improve air quality, and it was revised in 1990 to be more detailed about issues such as the hole in the ozone layer and acid rain.**

Clean Water Act: **Set of laws passed in 1972 to regulate water pollution in the US. This was the first-ever federal regulation of water pollution, and it gave the EPA the right to set standards and enforce them. The goal of this act was to completely stop the discharge of pollutants into the Waters of the United States and make all bodies of water in the US fishable and swimmable. Making this happen is very difficult and expensive because it's not always easy to find out who is polluting.**

Contract grower: **Farmer who makes an agreement with an agribusiness company, giving the company the power to make all the farm's decisions, including which animals are raised there, what they are fed, and how they are treated. In return the company pays the farmer and buys the supplies.**

CSA: **Abbreviation for Community Supported Agriculture, a system in which consumers support a local farm by paying in advance for agricultural products. This reduces the financial risks for the farmer because the costs of seeds and planting crops are covered in advance by consumers. Throughout the growing season, CSA members receive a portion of the farm's harvest each week. Members share the financial risks and the bounty of the harvest—if it is a successful growing season, they receive a lot of food; if there are fewer crops, they receive less. Members are also encouraged to visit the farm and some even volunteer there.**

Diversification: **Method of farming that involves more than one agricultural product.**

Downers**: Animals that collapse during transportation or at the slaughterhouse, too stressed or sick to continue walking. Because normal animals fetch a higher price at the market, downers are frequently kicked or prodded in attempts to force them to move. Those that do not move may be left on the ground without food or water for days before they die. Downers are routinely processed for human consumption.**

E. coli**: A species of bacteria that lives in the intestines of people and other vertebrates (animals with spines). Although the bacteria that naturally exist in your intestines are harmless and helpful in digestion, eating or drinking E. coli that comes from outside, such as in polluted water or meat that has not been processed safely, can cause severe food poisoning or even death.**

Efficiency**: An economic term for conditions that create the biggest possible profit with the smallest possible costs. This is an important idea in industry, since the goal of any business is to make as much money as possible and avoid wasting anything—think of wastefulness as the opposite of efficiency.**

Effluent: **Liquid waste, often from a factory or sewer. This is a term that is often used to refer to the urine and manure that is pumped into or out of a lagoon.**

EPA**: Environmental Protection Agency. A part of the US federal government that enforces environmental laws and provides information and guidance to policy makers.**

Factory farm**: A large-scale industrial site where many animals (generally chickens, turkeys, cattle, or pigs) are confined and treated with hormones and antibiotics to maximize growth and prevent disease. The animals produce much more waste than the surrounding land can handle. These operations are associated with various environmental hazards as well as cruelty to animals.**

FDA**: Food and Drug Administration. This government agency regulates industries and labels food and related items such as medicines and cosmetics.**

Fishkill**: Sudden death of a significant number of fish or other aquatic life such as crabs or shrimp within one area. A fishkill can be caused by many different changes in the environment, including pollution, temperature change and change in acidity.**

Free range**: This term refers to animals (usually poultry, and the eggs that they produce) that are not confined, meaning that these animals are able to go outdoors to engage in natural behaviors. It does not necessarily mean that the products are cruelty-free or antibiotic-free, or that the animals spend the majority of their time outdoors.**

Genetic engineering**: The science of changing the DNA of a plant or animal to produce desirable characteristics. Examples of desirable characteristics include fast growth and unusually large size. This is a very controversial science that many believe has not been adequately tested and studied. In addition, not everyone agrees that the plants and animals that are genetically engineered are safe for humans to eat or safe for the environment if released.**

GMO**: Genetically Modified Organism. This is a plant or animal that has been genetically engineered. Many industries support the development and use of GMOs while many consumers and organizations question their safety and have called for adequate and independent testing of GMO products. It is legal for farmers in the U.S. and some other countries like Argentina to produce and sell certain GMOs for human and animal consumption, but in other places like Europe and Japan, they are banned until further testing can be done to prove they are safe.**

Groundwater**: Water that exists beneath the earth's surface in underground streams and aquifers.**

Heavy metals**: Metallic chemicals like cadmium, arsenic, copper and zinc that can be harmful pollutants when they enter soil and water. These chemicals are put into animal feed to help make animals grow faster. Heavy metals are present in human and animal waste and can enter the environment if waste is released without being treated. Animal waste is never treated to remove heavy metals. Once in the environment, heavy metals are almost impossible to get rid of because they do not decompose.**

Hormones: **Chemicals found naturally in animals' bodies that control processes like growth and metabolism. Synthetic (man-made) hormones have been developed for a number of purposes, including treatment of hormonal disorders in people, and also for promotion of unnaturally fast growth in farm animals. One of the most well-known and controversial hormones used in farming is recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone or rBGH, which is genetically engineered and injected into dairy cattle. (See rBGH.) Scientists have linked excess hormones to cancer.**

Independent family farm: **Farm on which the ownership and management are controlled by at least one family member who lives on the farm, not by a corporation or absentee owner.**

Irradiation: Exposure to radiation. Meat is sometimes irradiated to kill micro-organisms and reduce the number of microbes present due to unsanitary practices, but this process alters the nutritional quality and creates new chemicals that can be harmful to the humans who consume the meat. Many believe that there has not been enough testing to know whether irradiated food is safe for humans. For more information on this topic, visit Public Citizen's food irradiation page at http://www.citizen.org/cmep/foodsafety/food_irrad.

Lagoon: **A huge, manmade hole in the ground created to hold a mixture of water and animal waste until it can be applied to land. These can be as big as several square acres (1 acre = 43,560 square feet) and hold 20-25 million gallons of liquid waste. This is equivalent to more than 98 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Lagoons are generally not covered and frequently leak into the surrounding soil or groundwater, so they are associated with air, water and soil pollution.**

Mastitis: **Common bacterial infection among dairy cows that causes the udder to be painful and swollen. It is associated with overproduction of milk, and cows that are injected with rBGH are prone to mastitis. Mastitis is treated with antibiotics, which contributes to the problem of antibiotic resistance because traces of the drugs end up in the milk.**

Mad cow disease: **Common name for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), a cattle disease that causes the brain to waste away. It takes about 4-7 years for cattle to show symptoms of the disease after being exposed to it, but once symptoms become visible the cattle die within weeks. One way this disease is spread is by feeding the meat from infected cattle to other cattle (meat from infected sheep may also cause the disease). This was a common practice on factory farms until the 1980s and 1990s when it was outlawed in most countries because it was found to cause BSE. At that time, thousands of cattle believed to have been exposed to BSE were killed to prevent further spread of the disease. Consuming beef from infected cattle causes a brain-wasting disease called new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) ° in humans.**

Methane: **A gas given off by animal waste. It can be used as fuel, but the process to turn it into fuel is very expensive, so this is not done very often. Methane is a greenhouse gas, which means that it contributes to global warming.**

Molting/Forced molting: **Part of a hen's natural reproductive cycle. After laying eggs for about a year, a hen loses her feathers and rests for a few weeks as new feathers grow in. This is called molting, or a molt, and it usually happens at the beginning of winter. On factory farms, hens are subjected to forced molting, where farm operators cause this process to happen rapidly by depriving hens of food and water for several days and altering the schedule of light and darkness in the confinement building. This way, all the hens molt simultaneously and over a very short time period.**

Natural beef: **Meat that should be free of synthetic hormones, growth additives and antibiotics. There are no legal guidelines as to how this label should be used, though, so the label doesn't really mean anything.**

New variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD): **Disease in humans that causes the brain to waste away, caused by eating meat infected with Mad Cow Disease (BSE) or other related animal diseases. It was first detected in 1994, and although it is still not known how much time it takes for symptoms to show up after a person is exposed, some scientists say it may take up to 40 years, so it is still not known how many people have been infected.**

Nitrates: **Chemicals made up of oxygen, nitrogen and other elements. When chemicals containing nitrogen (for example, ammonia) combine with water, nitrates are usually formed, and these nitrates can cause serious illness or even death if large amounts are consumed. Nitrate poisoning is usually caused by drinking water**

contaminated with nitrates. The primary sources of nitrate pollution are human waste and manure, especially runoff from factory farms. Processed meat also often contains nitrates, which are used to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria and to enhance the color. Eating meat that has been treated with nitrates may cause health problems including cancer, migraines, high cholesterol and hyperactivity.

Non-point source pollution: **Harmful substances that are carried by rain and snow moving over and through the earth and end up in groundwater, rivers, lakes or the ocean. These substances come from various sources and can be natural or man-made. They're called non-point source because instead of being dumped directly from a house or factory into a body of water, the pollutant is diluted and transported by the natural cycle of precipitation.**

NPDES permit: **NPDES stands for Nutrient Pollution Discharge and Elimination System. The EPA requires industries that create harmful waste products that need to be disposed of to apply for an NPDES permit. This permit sets personalized rules and limits for how much of each substance the company can legally release into a body of water. It also creates a system of monitoring and reporting back to the EPA to make sure the company is sticking to the rules. Unfortunately, monitoring and enforcement of NPDES permits has not been very strict.**

Nutrient pollution**: Contamination of water by too many nutrients, which often come from fertilizer or waste runoff. In surface waters, this can cause overproduction of algae (this is called an algal bloom), which uses up all the oxygen in the water and suffocates fish and other marine life.**

Organic meat and dairy products: This term refers to meat and dairy products from animals that have been raised without the use of hormones, antibiotics or genetic engineering, and which has not been irradiated. Vaccines and medicines are allowed for treating illness, but the meat cannot be sold as organic if certain prohibited medicines are used. All feed must be 100% organic. Animals cannot be confined except under certain temporary circumstances such as illness. Organic products must meet very strict standards; national standards for organic food have been passed into law and can be found at http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards/ProdHandReg.html. Or you can find a fact sheet on the topic that's more concise and easier to understand at http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/FactSheets/ProdHandE.html.

Pathogens**: Micro-organisms that cause disease.**

Pollutant**: Any substance that causes harm to the environment when it mixes with soil, water, or air.**

rBGH**: Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone, also called recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST). This is a genetically engineered hormone that is injected into dairy cows to increase their milk production. Cows injected with rBGH have shorter life spans and are much more likely to suffer from udder infections. rBGH is only legal in three countries: the United States, South Africa, and Mexico. RBGH has been banned in Canada, the European Union and elsewhere because of inadequate testing and some evidence that it leads to cancer.**

Ruminant: **A hoofed, often horned, animal with a four-compartment stomach. Examples include cattle, goats, deer and giraffes. During digestion, ruminants regurgitate and chew their partially digested food, called cud.**

Runoff**: Water from precipitation or irrigation that flows over the ground and into bodies of water. It can contribute to soil erosion and carry harmful pollutants.**

Salmonella**: A type of bacteria that causes food poisoning and is commonly found in meat and animal waste, particularly poultry.**

Small farm/Family farm**: Farm that earns no more than $250,000 per year and on which the day-to-day labor and management is provided by the farmer and/or farm family that owns or leases the production or production equipment. This does not necessarily mean that the farm is organic or cruelty free, or even that it is not controlled by a major agricultural company. Many family farmers have become contract growers°.**

Sow**: Female pig that has produced a litter of piglets.**

Spent hen: **A hen that is no longer able to function as a factory egg-producing machine—usually about two years old. These hens, which frequently have broken bones and badly bruised bodies, are sold cheaply for use in frozen dinners or canned soups, or are discarded.**

Sprayfield**: Land where animal waste from the lagoon is applied. High-powered hoses are used to spray the animal waste up in the air; the waste particles can travel many miles before settling onto the land.**

Steer: **Castrated male cattle.**

Surface water**: Water that sits or flows above the earth, including lakes, oceans, rivers, and streams.**

Sustainability**: The ability to provide for the needs of the world's current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. When a process is sustainable, it can be carried out over and over without negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved.**

Sustainable agriculture: **Farming that provides a secure living for farm families; maintains the natural environment and resources; supports the rural community; and offers respect and fair treatment to all involved, from farm workers to consumers to the animals raised for food.**

Tail-docking: **Common factory farm practice of cutting off half or more of an animal's tail, frequently performed on cattle and pigs. This prevents pigs from chewing one another's tails and cattle from hitting workers with manure-covered tails. This is a painful procedure, which is not necessary when animals are not confined since they do not exhibit these behaviors.**

USDA**: United States Department of Agriculture. The USDA, which was founded by Abraham Lincoln, supports rural development, food safety, nutrition and research for agricultural technology. The agency is also in charge of national forest and rangelands and works to reduce hunger in the US and internationally.**

Veal**: Beef from calves that are less than six months old—usually slaughtered at about 16 weeks of age.**

Vertical Integration: **Economic term that is often used to describe a trend in the agriculture industry. When an agriculture corporation is vertically integrated, it is involved in more than one phase of meat production. Many of these big businesses have their own feedlots, slaughterhouses, meatpacking plants, and distributors, so they have complete control over the lives and deaths of the animals they raise.**

Wastewater**: Water that has been used and thrown away from residential, business or industrial sources. It can contain a variety of waste products like soap, chemicals or manure.**

Watershed: Area of land that contributes runoff to a particular, common body of water. (To understand this concept better, you can find a map of the watershed you live in by going to the EPA web site at http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm.)

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