

The meat industry - a good thing?



Pictured: One of our bovine brethren.

The cow and its meat industry masters are both loved and hated by environmental groups, Vegan groups, animal rights groups, meat enthusiast groups, and Hindus. This beast has been the subject of much controversy, including the claim that eating processed beef causes cancer and the murder of those who eat the creature in India. This page here exists to clear up some misconceptions and either endorse or demonize the beef industry.

First off, the claim that cow meat causes cancer:

The fact is, if the cow meat is processed (ie, beef jerky and corned beef), then yes, it is a carcinogen. Red meat that isn't processed is considered a "potential carcinogen", but otherwise, non-processed beef is very healthy and is rich in both nutrients and vitamins. You can eat it as long as you don't mind getting cancer a few decades afterward.

Secondly, the claim that cows damage our environment:

Yes, they do. Cows, it turns out, burp. A lot. This can be mitigated by feeding the cows a certain type of seaweed, however, few manufacturers currently feed seaweed to their cows. Despite this, the often mis-quoted and entirely incorrect claim that cows produce more emissions than the transportation industry is, as I said, incorrect ([Link 1](#), [Link 2](#)). All domesticated animals together produce about 9% of our total emissions, while transportation (including planes and such) produces about 22%.

Mooving on...

(I'm sorry, I shouldn't hoof made that pun, it was udderly terrible!)

There is an interesting bit of trivia revolving around how people in India are regularly murdered for eating cows, as the cow is an animal considered sacred. Those who eat cows in India are occasionally beaten to death by mobs for simply enjoying a bit of beef now and then.

Truly, this is indicative of the social situation in India, if nothing else.

Fourthly, to respond to animal right's groups. Are feedlots inhumane? Yes. Are cows relatively intelligent creatures? Also yes. Are they tasty? Yes. Love it or hate it the majority of the human population enjoys eating these things, so they will continue to be eaten. At least they are given nice, pampered lives on pastures, which I would consider preferable to living under the threat of being hunted every day in the wild, and the PR and quality benefits from raising on a pasture

don't go unnoticed: many high-profile meat-buying companies such as A&W source their cows from (more) humane pastures.

Verdict on the meat industry: A necessary evil to maintain our access to a healthy, if slightly carcinogenic food. Beef is an affordable source of nutrients in poor and middle-income countries, where it provides a tasty meal to hundreds of millions. I do not endorse them, but they should not be demonized either.

Sources:

Feeding cows seaweed: <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/cows-seaweed-methane-burps-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions-climate-change-research-a8368911.html>

Cow vigilantism: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cow_vigilante_violence_in_India_since_2014

Meat as a carcinogen: <http://www.who.int/features/qa/cancer-red-meat/en/>