

THE MOTHER

Three months after the loss of her calf, and while she is still producing milk, the cow is usually made pregnant again. She is put through this exhausting procedure not once but three or four times², until she is deemed to be of no further use to the farmer, whereupon she is killed. More than 20% of dairy cows sent for slaughter have been found to be pregnant and more than a quarter of these pregnancies were in the third trimester.³



THE CALF

Female calves are often kept to replace old cows and endure the same conditions as their mothers did before them.

Male calves of pure dairy breeds are considered too scrawny to rear for beef so are usually sent abroad for veal or killed as useless by-products of the dairy industry.



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ORGANIC MILK PRODUCTION

It is important to differentiate between organic and cruelty-free. Organic does not mean cruelty-free.

On organic farms the dairy cow still has to deal with continual pregnancies, forced separation from her calf and slaughter. Castration and disbudding of calves may still be carried out⁴ and both can be acutely painful⁵.

Under the organic system calves cannot be exported for veal. A small number are raised in the UK to produce rose veal, which involves less confinement and a better diet for the calf⁶, but the calves are still killed at a fraction of their normal life span so that humans can eat their flesh.

ENVIRONMENT

The production of one litre of milk requires an average of 990 litres of water⁷ and produces the equivalent of 1kg of CO₂⁸. With the average UK dairy cow producing 7,000 litres of milk per year⁹, this adds up to a staggering amount of water use and to significant greenhouse gas emissions.

The United Nations states that

“THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR EMERGES AS ONE OF THE TOP TWO OR THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MOST SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, AT EVERY SCALE FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL”¹⁰.

ALTERNATIVES TO COWS' MILK

Soya milk or other plant-based milks can be used in drinks, on cereal, in cooking or on their own. In fact you are spoilt for choice when deciding how to replace cows' milk. They come in a range of brands and flavours, so experiment until you find the one you like best. (Sweetened is most like cows' milk.)

There is also a fantastic range of dairy-free alternatives to cheese, cream, yogurt and ice-cream: have a look in your local health food shop and contact us for more information and recipes.

The farming of animals treats them as commodities and does not respect their individual needs or preferences.

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