

animals crammed into each trailer, resulting in overcrowded conditions that are very stressful for the cattle and can result in injury, illness and even death.

- The extreme stress of long journeys, which often last days, weakens animals' immune systems, leading to bovine respiratory disease, which is often called "shipping fever." While more than 1 million cattle die annually as a result of respiratory problems, producers simply factor these losses into the cost of doing business.



FROM TRUCK TO KILL FLOOR

After hours or days spent traveling aboard packed semi-trucks, cattle are hastily forced into waiting pens or slaughter chutes by workers using electric prods, sticks or paddles. A standard slaughterhouse processes approximately 400 animals every hour, a kill rate that has increased eightfold since the early 1900s. Consequently, while the federal Humane Slaughter Act requires that cattle be stunned or rendered unconscious prior to slaughter, many cattle and calves are still fully conscious when they are sent down the processing line and dismembered.

American Meat Institute guidelines recommend that slaughter plants strive to stun animals on the first attempt (as required by federal law) at least 99 percent of the time. However, industry audits show that up to one-third of plants surveyed in recent years fail to even meet that goal, meaning that of the 30 million cattle slaughtered every year, hundreds of thousands of these animals are improperly stunned and suffer horribly prior to their deaths.

This is the truth behind beef.

For more information on what you can do to help cattle, please visit farmsanctuary.org.



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Farm Sanctuary is the nation's leading farm animal protection organization. Since incorporating in 1986, Farm Sanctuary has worked to expose and stop cruel practices of the "food animal" industry through research and investigations, legal and institutional reforms, public awareness projects, youth education, and direct rescue and refuge efforts. Farm Sanctuary shelters in Watkins Glen, N.Y., and Orland, Calif., provide lifelong care for hundreds of rescued animals, who have become ambassadors for farm animals everywhere by educating visitors about the realities of factory farming.

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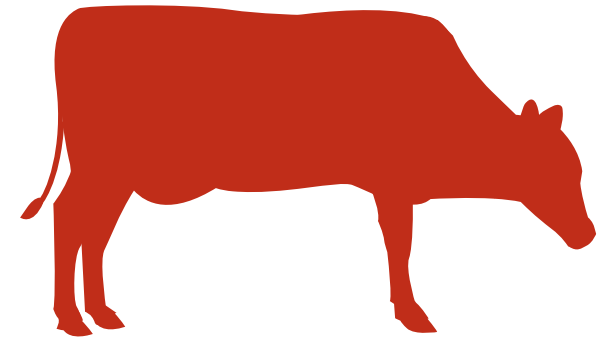


Photo by Jo-Anne McArthur



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The Truth Behind BEEF



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More than 30 million cattle are slaughtered for the beef industry annually in the U.S. Their lives are short and often marked by brutality, beginning with painful physical mutilations and ending when they reach the slaughterhouse kill floor, where many are dismembered while still fully conscious.



LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES

Living on the range, millions of beef cattle forage and fend for themselves for months, without even minimal veterinary care or adequate shelter. Each year, close to 4 million cattle die as a result of weather extremes, respiratory problems and other diseases. Hundreds of thousands of cattle arrive at slaughterhouses suffering from untreated “cancer eye,” a painful condition that eats away animals’ eyes and much of their heads.

PAINFUL PROCEDURES

Animal “husbandry” on cattle ranches typically involves performing extremely painful mutilations on calves. These procedures, typically carried out by untrained workers without the use of anesthetics, include:

- Burning or shearing off calves’ horn buds.
- Castration – causes acute pain and distress and, when performed with a knife, emasculator (a device with similar properties as pliers) or elastrator (a tight rubber ring), can lead to infection, persistent pain and/or flystrike (a disease caused by fly larvae infestation).
- Branding – most ranchers burn brands into the

animals’ skin with red-hot irons as a way of claiming ownership of them.

- Wattling – involves cutting chunks from the flesh that hangs beneath the animals’ necks as a means for ranchers to identify their animals.

SEPARATED AND SOLD

Many producers forcibly separate young calves from their mothers far earlier than natural weaning would occur and ship them to auctions, stocker operations or feedlots. The tremendous stress of forced separation coupled with rough transport causes many calves to become sick and die. Many others arrive at their destinations still bawling for their mothers and refuse to eat because they are so distressed.



ON THE AUCTION BLOCK

Because they are usually unaccustomed to being around humans, and are often handled roughly when they are, cattle are terrified when loaded onto trucks bound for auctions and stockyards. At these facilities, cattle are shocked, prodded and kicked as they are herded to holding pens or auction rings, enduring more extreme stress before finally being loaded back onto transport trailers. From the auction, older cattle are either taken directly to slaughter or to feedlots, while newly-weaned calves who are not yet strong enough to survive at a feedlot may first be sent to “stocker” operations to gain more weight.



AT THE FEEDLOT

Cattle are sent to feedlots for “finishing” – that is, to gain as much weight as possible before slaughter. In these squalid environments, thousands of cattle are crowded together in dusty, manure-laden holding pens.

- Feedlot air is thick with harmful bacteria and particulate matter, putting the animals at constant risk for bovine respiratory disease, which kills four percent of feedlot cattle annually.
- Cattle evolved to eat a grass-based, high-fiber diet, so fattening them on a regimen of high-protein concentrated grain and implanting growth-promoting hormones under their skin to make them gain weight quickly contributes to metabolic disorders, liver abscesses and other ailments.
- Consuming about 18 pounds of feed daily, cattle gain an average of three pounds a day, until they are slaughtered at around 1,200 pounds.

THE LONG JOURNEY

Beef cattle may be transported several times during their lives, sometimes traveling thousands of miles per trip.

- Federal law stipulates that cattle aboard transport trucks be provided with food, water and rest at least every 28 hours; however, this law has never been vigilantly enforced, and countless animals still endure immense suffering while en route to their destinations. Furthermore, regulations impose no limits on the number of