

CONTEXT - HISTORY AND SYNOPSIS OF MODERN DAIRY FARMING

For centuries a symbiotic or 'mutually dependent' relationship has existed between cows and humans. It used to be that cows produced milk for their calves, and farmers would give them protection and provide land with lots of fresh grass, and in return, the cows would naturally produce more than enough milk. This excess milk was accepted by the farmer and his family to make myriad nutritious delicacies such as a cream, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, and enhanced their diet with lots of vitamin D and calcium.

With increasing industrialisation, modern man lost his sense of dependence on nature. His approach to the natural world in the last century gave way to corporate monopolies. The pursuance of economic growth now dictates that cows go through the most unimaginable suffering while the modern milk industry continues to make excessive profits.

The recent vegan movement has made inroads into addressing this, but globally people still use and enjoy dairy products, often unaware of the cruelty and greed dominating factory farming. Another tragedy of the industrial takeover has been the loss of vital topsoil, now dangerously close to total depletion.

Before industrialisation, fields were best fertilised with the by-product of sun, water and grass ie. cow manure. But now, with so many animals locked up in warehouses rather than grazing on the land, toxic chemicals have replaced natural fertilisers.

Farmers have been forced by fierce competition to go along with intensification methods, turning their backs on past tradition, and with pressure from governments and agricultural business, the result has been countless farmers have lost their livelihoods even after generations of working the land. The rising rate of suicide in farming communities is no surprise.

The goal of Ahimsa farming is to restore sanity and well-being in the farming community.

AHIMSA DEFINED:

Ahimsa (pronounced 'a-him-sa') is an ancient Sanskrit term meaning 'non-harm' or 'non-violence' and was the creed by which Mahatma Gandhi famously lived. The philosophy of Ahimsa includes the understanding that suffering given to another will return as suffering to oneself.

Dr. Neal Bernard P.C.R.M. (the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine) says: "The beef industry has contributed to more American deaths than all the wars of this century, all natural disasters, and all automobile accidents combined. If beef is your idea of 'real food for real people', you'd better live real close to a real good hospital."

VEGETARIANS, VEGANS & BIG BUSINESS

Many people are confused as to why vegetarians switched to vegan over the past decade. It's easy to see that the burgeoning vegan industry stands as testimony to the moral commitment of vegetarians to animal welfare.

But don't think that this new industry is necessarily concerned with ethical issues - when it comes to big business, profits always come first.

A vegan lifestyle has become popular but often overlooks the deforestation and fossil fuels used to produce vegan products such as milk substitutes.

Anyone who has seen David Attenborough's superb series 'The Blue Planet' will know all about this.

Chrissie Hynde

Singer/Songwriter of The Pretenders
and Patron of Rutland Farm



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THE AHIMSA MANIFESTO 2020-2030

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MANIFESTO PRINCIPLES:

1. NEVER KILL A COW

- At the heart of the Ahimsa manifesto is its primary principle of no slaughter of any cows, calves or bulls. A conscious approach to care for all animals rather than exponential expansion will arrest overpopulation and resulting slaughter.

2. CALVES SUCKLING FROM MOTHERS

- Calves should always be the first and foremost beneficiaries of their mother's milk, and be allowed to suckle for the first six months of life and never separated from their mothers.

3. MILKING BY HAND

- The Ahimsa model encourages dispensing with modern milking machines and /or primarily milk by hand.

4. GIVING OXEN MEANINGFUL WORK

- In China where people didn't traditionally drink milk and had a taboo against eating beef, oxen were used for draft work. This system does not use fossil fuels and has a positive impact on the earth, a win-win all round.



5. NATURAL INSEMINATION

- The forced extraction of male semen from bulls and posting it around the world is banished in the Ahimsa system. Cows are not artificially inseminated.
- Cows run with a live bull every two to four years. They are not pregnant every year.
- Cows have long lactation periods and can continue giving milk for years after having a calf.

6. SUSTAINABILITY / REPLENISHING THE SOIL

- Cow dung (AKA green gold), replenishes the soil. It is the highest grade of fertiliser, necessary for growing vegetables and grain.
- The Ahimsa principle is against using chemical inputs or artificial fertilisers which degrade the environment.
- Cows are fed on organic pasture, and the land farmed actively encourages wildlife and biodiversity.

7. RETIREMENT FOR COWS

- Cows are retired when their productive days are over and join the non-milking herd as elder members. There they pass their days peacefully, knowing they will be cared for.

8. ORGANIC SMALLHOLDINGS - THE MODEL OF THE PAST & FUTURE

- Ahimsa seeks to ensure the revival of family farms, and the end of industrial farming.

9. THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING COWS EVEN IF ONE DOESN'T EAT DAIRY

- Cows are simple yet intelligent creatures, and a joyful part of rural life.

10. THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

- The domestication and loving guardianship between man and cow and other fellow creatures creates a profound relationship, invaluable and indispensable to life on earth (add a cat, dog or child to that mix and you'll have one happy family).



JONATHAN WATTS, THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT EDITOR FOR THE GUARDIAN UK, REPORTS IN 2020

Over the past four decades, the biggest shift from small to big was in the United States and Europe, where ownership is in fewer hands and even individual farmers work under strict contracts for retailers, trading conglomerates and investment funds.

The concentration of ownership and control results in a greater push for monocultures and more intensive agriculture as investment funds tend to work on 10-year cycles to generate returns.

This is also connected to social problems, including poverty, migration, conflict and the spread of zoonotic diseases like Covid-19.

Smallholder farmers, family farmers, indigenous people and small communities are much more cautious with use of land. It's not just about return on investment; it's about culture, identity and leaving something for the next generation. They take much more care and in the long run, they produce more per unit area and destroy less.

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