

Life Cycle of a Dairy Cow in America (Version-2)

In her lifetime, an American dairy cow experiences many lifestyle changes.

1st Phase - Birth

From the moment of her artificially induced conception to her birth nine months later, she exists in the nurturing environment of her mother's womb.

2nd Phase - Productive life

After birth, bonding with her mother lasts for no more than a few minutes to couple of days. Does a calf experience separation anxiety? We should know the answer to that question after hearing her tortured cry (I have experienced this during my visit to a dairy farm).

After the separation, the baby calf is force-fed between one and two gallons of colostrums by the human farmer. Without this first nutrient-rich bovine milk, she would succumb to illness and die in her first two months of life.

Does the mother accept that separation? Each year, tens of thousands of incidents are reported in which angry cows seek revenge upon dairy farmers. Each year, hundreds of dairy farmers are trampled, gored, attacked, and killed. Newspaper accounts blame such incidents on irrational unthinking beasts.

Cows live a lifetime of stress so long as they produce enough milk to be profitable to the dairy farmer. On an average an American Dairy Cow produces 24.5 quarts of milk per day. However about 50 years ago (in 1960) a dairy cow used to produce 8.0 quarts per day under natural living condition at the family farm. The high yield is accomplished by keeping all dairy cows pregnant continuously during their three to four years of productive life. Also every day hormones are injected in her body to produce more milk. This way the cow's body has to work very hard to produce 3 times more milk than her natural living way. Once she becomes less productive or unproductive (around 4 to 5 years of age), or once she becomes too diseased to be cured, she is culled (removed) from the herd.

3rd Phase - Unproductive Life Journey

About thirty percent of America's dairy cows are culled from herds each year. Hence the entire herd gets replaced with new cows within three to four years. To be culled is to be taken from the familiar surroundings of a farm and packed onto a truck with other non-productive or diseased creatures. The fear factor culled cows experience is extreme.

Most Americans would guess that at this point the cow is sent to a slaughter house. That is not so for most of the cows. Additional indignities await her. The true torture begins once the cow leaves the dairy farm. Her first stop is not the slaughterhouse but the auction ring.

Also, once a cow leaves a farm for her ultimate death, compassion is no longer a concern to human handlers called middleman. Cows are loaded onto trucks at the dairy farm. The ride to auction can be traumatic. Terrified creatures are unloaded from the truck after bumpy rides in which they receive no food or water and are guided into holding pens. Employees of auction houses are often low paid workers who have no interest in animal rights issues. Their job is to move the animals in the proper direction. The cows are led into rings while spectators sit in tiered bleachers and offer bids to an auctioneer's call. (I have visited such auctioning of cows places).

Many bidders sit in the audience, content to purchase a number of animals depending upon the size of their slaughter operation. Each cow or calf awaits its turn. (Twenty three cents per pound? Sold. Next..).

4th Phase - Final Extinction

The cow is now owned by the successful bidder. It is his job to get the animal loaded onto his truck and shipped safely to his slaughterhouse facility. After experiencing a first truck ride, no cow ever wants to again climb the ramp onto a man's vehicle. These are the most painful and undignified moments of a cow's life. Tails are grabbed and twisted. Nose rings are pulled and sometimes ripped from faces. Gentle creatures are stunned with high voltage electrical prods. Even the most stubborn of creatures eventually goes for her second and final ride.

All dairy cows are slaughtered in America when they are around 4 to 5 years of age while their life expectancy is around 15 years. Some are to be slaughtered in factories, while others are to be slaughtered in sheds. Some receive a bullet to the head while others are stunned. (I have visited the American slaughter house).

5th Phase - Recycled Phase

The first step in the slaughter house is to insert a cut in their throats so that they are bled. One can see that some cows are awake and conscious during the bleeding process. Spurting blood is collected in 55-gallon drums during slaughtering process. Blood is then dried and processed into powder, then packed into 50 pound bags. Dairy farmers buy this commodity as a protein supplement to be fed to future cows and their offspring. **American cows are no longer vegetarian cows. Their own blood protein is mixed with grains to feed the next generation of cows.**

Organic Milk:

The Organic dairy farm is generally smaller than the huge factory-style farm. It does not use antibiotics, pesticides, and hormones for cows. There are no milk additives added into the milk.

However there are no legal regulations that prevent organic dairy farmers from engaging in similar abuses such as keeping the cows in tie stalls and using electric milking equipment, etc. There are several organic farms that treat cows properly during her milk producing life.

But to ensure steady milk production, the organic dairy farms:

- Keep cows pregnant all the time through artificial insemination or other means
- Sell all male baby calves and about 25% female calves to veal or beef industry, where they are slaughtered in six months or around two years.
- Sell the adult cows to the slaughterhouses after four to five years when the milk production yield drops. One will not find any cow about six years or older in age in organic farms.

Hence the Organic milk is not cruelty free milk.

Conclusion

Every week 2.8 million four-legged animals (USDA data of week of May 10, 2008) and 189.5 million birds (Chicken, Turkey etc) get killed in USA. This is more than 27 million animals and birds together are killed per day in America.

During the productive life phase, the cows are forced to produce 3 times more milk than her natural life. Also at the age of 5 years they are slaughtered instead of living 15 years of natural life. If we raise the cows naturally as was done in the past, the milk would cost 9 times more than the current cost (simple arithmetic calculation).

Also the dairy industry directly supports the beef industry. If we do not consume dairy products then the cost of beef will be very high and the demand for meat product will be reduced significantly.

During the 3rd phase of their journey, the middlemen who are responsible for transportation of the cows are the most abusive of human handlers (This is worst in India because the cows have to be transported long distance to the state of Kerala or Bengal to legally slaughter them.), but they exist to serve the whims of the consumer. We eat the fruit of his abusive labor and we are complicit in their crime.

If and when we drink a glass of milk, eat ice-cream, cheese, sweets, or for meat eaters, the meal of a burger, or nuggets, or the Colonel's crispy wings, we are eating the suffering and death of once living creatures.

Jain Practice

For Jains, Ahimsa is our supreme principle, and yet we use dairy products such as milk, Ghee and sweet not only in our home but also in our temple rituals and religious (Swāmivātslyā and Pārnā) dinner.

A cow is a five-sensed (Panchendriya) animal that also possesses a mind. Cruelty to five-sensed animals is considered the highest sin as compared to the cruelty to vegetables and fewer sensed insects. As per

our scriptures, a person who hurts five-sensed animals is destined to suffer in the hell. In this situation a person acquires the following sinful karma:

- Narak Äyushya Karma (Future birth in Hell) –
“Panchendriya Vadha, Mahä-ärambha, Mahä-parigraha, and Raudra parinämathi Narak Äyushya Bandhäya chhe”. - Jain Darshan by Muni Shri Nyäya Vijayji
- Adattädäna Karma (Suffering karma due to stealing) -
We are responsible for stealing the cows' milk without her permission
- Antaräya karma (Suffering karma due to forceful separation) -
We are responsible for forcefully separating the mother and child.

There are more than 6 million Americans who are Vegan (New York Times Report), who do not use any animal products including dairy products such as milk, cheese, ice-cream, butter including leather shoes, silk garments, and fur coats etc. About 10 to 15% Jain Youth in America are Vegans who attend YJA and YJP conventions. No Jain youth in America has denied the cruelty that exists in the American dairy industry or in fact in the dairy industries of all around the world.

However there is a significant resistance among the adult Jain population in America, India and the other countries. The only argument they provide is that we do not kill the cow during milking operation and we have to remove the excess milk from the cow's body after delivery, otherwise she will suffer with severe pain.

Dr. Mukesh Doshi, a well known pediatrician of Chicago explained that under the natural living environment, 95% of cows and human mothers will produce just enough milk to feed their babies (no more or no less). 3% to 4% of cows and human mothers will produce less milk than what is needed for their babies. Only 1% to 2% will produce more than what their baby needs. (ref - Dr. Mukesh Doshi had provided this explanation to Muni Shree Jambuvijayji (near Shankheswar Tirtha) during his visit to India in October 2007 and I was with them.).

For meat production, the cows are killed immediately. For milk production, the cows are tortured during their productive life and during this time all their male babies are killed, and then they are slaughtered after four to five years of their productive life. From a cruelty point of view, there is no difference between milk and meat production under the current environment. The dairy cow has no chance to live her natural life. Please reflect on this. (please exclude the dairies run by religious organizations because their milk production percentage is much less than 1.0%. Also these organizations do buy other milk products from commercial market).

Jainism believes that every soul is individual and eternal. From time immemorial, every soul is in the spiritual stage of Mithyätva; meaning soul is ignorant about its true nature and ignorant about the true reality. In an addition to the ignorance about self and reality, he strongly believes in the opposite, meaning in untrue reality and its untrue nature. Hence he seeks pleasure and happiness from material possessions and considers his body is his soul and acts accordingly.

Believing that there is no direct cruelty to Panchendriya animals during 99% of the production of the milk under today's environment is the highest state of Mithyätva we possess in human life (note – I understand that highest state of Mithyätva exist in the souls of Nigod). If a person accepts that Panchendriya cruelty exist in more than 99% of the milk production of world but he needs to use it for a certain reason (health, his own weakness etc..) then there is a hope because Samyak Chäritra occurs in stages. However Samyak Darshan has no stages and hence there is no hope to come out of Mithyätva.

We earnestly request the Jain community at large to study the subject from a cruelty point of view. Significant literature is available on the Internet and in book stores worldwide. Jaina Education Committee can also provide some help to you.

My great reverence to Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and Pramodaben for their total dedication to practicing vegan life style and spreading the message of true Jain non-violence not only in America but throughout the world. I hope that the other Jain scholars study this subject rationally from the cruelty of Panchendriya animal point of view.

Hats off to Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and Pramodaben.

Hats off to 6 million Vegan Americans

Hats off to Jain Vegan Youth and Adults

The treatment of the majority of cows in India is worst in many areas of their life cycle. Only less than 1.0% of cows get sheltered in animal shelter places called Pänjarä-poles. Hence more animal shelters will not solve the problem.

The only rational solution to the problem is to eliminate the root cause of the problem. Eliminate the dairy products from our diets and religious rituals. Once the demand is reduced, the supply will be reduced and in turn less cows will be produced by the dairy farmers and hence less cruelty in the world. This will greatly help our environment also. Animal foods contribute about 55% problem to the environment while cars and other equipments contribute the remaining 45% of the problem.

Please introspect seriously our religious practices under the current environment. Do not follow the scriptures blindly otherwise our supreme ideal of nonviolence will not have any meaningful value attached to it. **America is a land where we can practice our religion rationally.** Our children will practice our religion rationally but we will miss the opportunity if we do not wake-up.

Please let me know if you find any error in the information described in this article.

If I have hurt any one's feeling with this article, I sincerely request forgiveness.

Pravin K. Shah,

Chairperson of JAINA Education Committee
Federation of Jaina Associations in North America
919-859-4994

Note

The majority information in this article is an abstract from the original article of Mr. Robert Cohen (<http://www.notmilk.com>). However I have visited several such places in America and in India.