



## Lesson Plan 090105

### Frightening Factory Farms (Target: Grades 6-9)

#### Objectives:

1. Create awareness for how disconnected we are from our meat-related food sources.
2. Create awareness for existence of and conditions in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs, more commonly known as "Factory Farms").
3. Create awareness for alternatives to Factory Farms that provide sustainable solutions for food production and environmental safety.

#### Materials/Sources:

1. "Frightening Factory Farms" Information Page.
2. "Frightening Factory Farms" Web Resources Page.
3. "Frightening Factory Farms" Notable Quotes Page.
4. Computers connected to the internet/world wide web.

#### Methods:

1. Distribute "Frightening Factory Farm" Information Page to students. Have them spend 15 minutes reading and reviewing the information provided.
2. After students have read the Information Page, hand out the Web Resources Page and the Notable Quotes Page. Ask each student to choose one of the factory farm-raised foods (Beef, Veal, Pork, Poultry & Eggs, Dairy, etc.) for further research (as homework).
3. HOMEWORK: Using the Web Resources Page and other searches, students will conduct online research about how their chosen factory farm food is raised, treated and processed. Have them list 10 specific details about the farm-raised food they have chosen. It can be about either the animal or about the way in which a factory farm deals with the animal. Also, have each student read the Notable Quotes page and be prepared to discuss next class period.
4. NEXT CLASS PERIOD: Student-led discussion.
  - A. Before you start the discussion, ask for a show of hands to the following questions:
    - "How many of you think you should change what you eat after learning about factory farms?"
    - "How many of you weren't that bothered by this, and won't think about changing what you eat?"
  - B. Choose two students--one each that raised their hands to the questions--to lead a discussion within the class. Ask them to discuss these 5 questions:
    1. Should factory farming be legal? (Why or why not)
    2. Why do you think people are outraged by mistreatment of dogs and cats, but not farm animals?
    3. How would you try to better control the processes and activities at factory farms?
    4. Who do you think is more responsible for factory farm problems: the industry or the government? (Why)
    5. Do you think the price of our food reflects the true long-term cost of its production and distribution (healthcare, environmental impact, government oversight, etc.)?
  - C. After students have discussed each question,

choose students from the class and ask each to read one of the Notable Quotes, and give their opinion of what was quoted.

#### Background Information for Teachers:

1. Factory Farms are also called CAFOs, which stands for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation. Giant livestock operations are a growing public health threat all across the nation. These corporate-controlled units -- where tens of thousands of animals are "produced" in factory-like settings -- are polluting America's water and air.
2. What are the health impacts of livestock factories? Because livestock factories produce and store large quantities of animal waste in leak-prone lagoons, America's water is at risk. A 10,000-hog operation produces as much waste in a single day as a town of 25,000 people. Manure spills, fish kills and poisoned water supplies have become a fact of life for too many rural communities. Unhealthy tap water has sickened people across the Midwest and Southeast. And when the waste from a livestock unit contaminated the water in Indiana, public health officials confirmed that it resulted in six local women experiencing miscarriages.
3. Livestock factories also pose a threat to our air quality. In Texas, a child went into respiratory arrest and had to be rushed to the hospital due to airborne manure from a giant cattle operation. And in Minnesota, pre-schoolers were sickened when the odor from a hog waste lagoon brought high levels of hydrogen sulfide into their classroom.
4. What are the environmental impacts of livestock factories? Fish and wildlife suffer from manure spills. Last summer, toxic algae called Pfiesteria, believed to be linked to manure from giant chicken factories, polluted the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, killing thousands of fish and sickening more than a dozen people. The Mississippi River bears the brunt of the pollution from Midwest livestock operations, and the pollutants that flow down to the Gulf of Mexico have contributed to a "dead zone" the size of New Jersey.
5. What are the economic impacts of livestock factories? The huge corporations that run the livestock factories are edging out family farmers, who often use more environmentally friendly techniques. Every corporate unit replaces 10 family farmers. In other cases, small farmers enter contracting arrangements with the corporate giants, and are left shouldering the burden for the waste management. And whole communities lose when the agribusinesses don't support Main Street merchants, preferring to buy in bulk from their own corporate headquarters.
6. Homeowners can be hit just as hard as businessmen. Owning a home might be the American dream, but a hog operation in the backyard is a nightmare for property values. In one Illinois county, property near the smelly operations plummeted by 30 percent in value.

From The Sierra Club  
"Factory Farm Frequently Asked Questions"  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/factoryfarms/faq.asp>

Our society is showered with images of happy animals living on farms where the cows graze in lush green fields and the chickens have the run of the barnyard. This vision of free-roaming animals living out their days in sunny fields is very far from the reality. A majority of the animals that are raised for food live miserable lives in intensive confinement in dark, overcrowded facilities, commonly called "factory farms."

## The Evolution of Factory Farms

Factory farming began in the 1920s soon after the discovery of vitamins A and D; when these vitamins are added to feed, animals no longer require exercise and sunlight for growth. This allowed large numbers of animals to be raised indoors year-round. The greatest problem that was faced in raising these animals indoors was the spread of disease, which was combated in the 1940s with the development of antibiotics. Farmers found they could increase productivity and reduce the operating costs by using mechanization and assembly-line techniques. Unfortunately, this trend of mass production has resulted in incredible pain and suffering for the animals. Animals today raised on factory farms have had their genes manipulated and pumped full of antibiotics, hormones and other chemicals to encourage high productivity. In the food industry, animals are not considered animals at all; they are food producing machines. They are confined to small cages with metal bars, ammonia-filled air and artificial lighting or no lighting at all. They are subjected to horrible mutilations: beak searing, tail docking, ear cutting and castration. Even the most minimum humane standards proposed are thwarted by the powerful food conglomerates.

## Broiler Chickens

The broiler chicken industry produces 6 billion chickens a year for slaughter. This industry is ruled by only 60 companies which have created an oligopoly. Broiler chickens are selectively bred and genetically altered to produce bigger thighs and breasts, the parts in most demand. This breeding creates birds so heavy that their bones cannot support their weight, making it difficult for them to stand. The birds are bred to grow at an astonishing rate, reaching their market weight of 3 1/2 pounds in seven weeks. Broilers are raised in overcrowded broiler houses instead of cages to prevent the occurrence of bruised flesh which would make their meat undesirable. Their beaks and toes are cut off and the broiler houses are usually unlit to prevent fighting among the birds.

## Layer Chickens

There are about 250 million hens in U.S. egg factories that supply 95% of the eggs in this country. In these facilities the birds are held in battery cages that are very small with slanted wire floors, which cause severe discomfort and foot deformation. Between five and eight birds are crammed in cages only 14 square inches in size. Since the birds have no room to act naturally, they become very aggressive and attack the other birds in their cage; to help combat this behavior, the birds have their beaks seared off at a young age. The chicks are sorted at birth and newborn males are separated and suffocated in trash bags. The layer hens are subjected to constant light to encourage greater egg production.

At the end of their laying cycle they are either slaughtered or forced to molt by water and food deprivation, which shocks them into another layer cycle. Many birds become depleted of minerals because of this excessive egg production and either die from fatigue or can no longer produce eggs and are sent to the slaughterhouse.

## Pigs

It is estimated that 90% of all pigs raised for food are confined at some point in their lives. Pigs are highly social, affectionate and intelligent creatures, and suffer both physically and emotionally when they are confined in narrow cages where they cannot even turn around. Many pigs become crazy with boredom and develop vices like mouthing, and nervous ticks; others are driven to fighting and cannibalism because of their frustration. Pigs are born and raised inside buildings that have automated water, feed and waste removal. They don't see daylight until they are shipped for slaughter. Dust, dirt and toxic gases from the pigs' waste create an unsanitary environment that encourages the onset of a number of diseases and illnesses, including pneumonia, cholera, dysentery and trichinosis.

## Veal Calves

The veal industry is notorious for the cruel confinement of calves. Calves are kept in small crates which prevent movement inhibit muscle growth so their flesh will be tender. They are also fed a diet deficient of iron to keep their flesh pale and appealing to the consumer. Veal calves spend each day confined alone with no companionship and are deprived of light for a large portion of their four-month lives.

## Dairy Cows

Dairy cows are bred today for high milk production. For cows who are injected with Bovine Growth Hormone, their already high rate of milk production is doubled. Half of the cows in the national dairy herd are raised in intensive confinement, where they suffer emotionally from being socially deprived and being prohibited from natural behavior. Dairy cows produce milk for about 10 months after giving birth so they are impregnated continuously to keep up the milk flow. Female calves are kept to replenish the herd and male calves are usually sent to veal crates where they live a miserable existence until their slaughter. When cows become unable to produce adequate amounts of milk they are sent to slaughter so money can be made from their flesh. The cows are kept in a holding facility where they are fed, watered and have their waste removed mechanically and are allowed out only twice a day to be milked by machines.

## Chemicals and Factory Farms

Animals raised in confinement create an ideal setting for bacteria and disease to spread rapidly. Antibiotics were developed around the time of World War II and were soon adapted into the farming system. In the U.S., almost 50% of all antibiotics are administered to farm animals. These drugs form a toxic residue in animal tissue. It is much of this same tissue that is sold to consumers as food products. Each year, we see an increase in the number of salmonella poisoning cases from contaminated eggs, meat and milk. These strains of salmonella are difficult to treat because they are antibiotic resistant. Antibiotics are not the only chemicals administered to factory farm animals; many animals are fed growth-promoting hormones, appetite stimulants and pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides and aflatoxins that collect in the animals' tissues and milk.

**From:**

In Defense of Animals  
131 Camino Alto, Mill Valley, CA 94941  
<http://www.idausa.org/facts/factoryfarmfacts.html>



## General Factory Farm Web Links:

- <http://www.thematrix.com>
- <http://www.idausa.org/facts/factoryfarmfacts.html>
- <http://www.earthsave.org/news/ff.htm>
- [http://www.hsus.org/farm\\_animals/factory\\_farms](http://www.hsus.org/farm_animals/factory_farms)
- <http://www.factoryfarms/factsheets/>
- [http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet\\_display.asp?ID=103](http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet_display.asp?ID=103)
- <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8525632/site/newsweek>

## Beef Web Links:

- <http://www.factoryfarm.org/topics/cattle>
- <http://www.factoryfarming.com/beef.htm>

## Poultry & Egg Web Links:

- <http://www.chickenindustry.com>
- [http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet\\_display.asp?ID=99](http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet_display.asp?ID=99)
- <http://www.factoryfarming.com/eggs.htm>

## Pork Web Links:

- [http://www.hsus.org/farm\\_animals/factory\\_farms/the\\_pig\\_factory\\_farm/frequently\\_asked\\_questions\\_about\\_factory\\_hog\\_farms.html](http://www.hsus.org/farm_animals/factory_farms/the_pig_factory_farm/frequently_asked_questions_about_factory_hog_farms.html)
- <http://www.factoryfarm.org/topics/hogs>
- [http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet\\_display.asp?ID=119](http://www.peta.org/mc/factsheet_display.asp?ID=119)

## Dairy Web Links:

- <http://www.milksucks.com/index2.html>
- <http://www.factoryfarm.org/topics/dairy>
- [http://www.hsus.org/farm\\_animals/factory\\_farms/the\\_dairy\\_cow\\_factory\\_farm.html](http://www.hsus.org/farm_animals/factory_farms/the_dairy_cow_factory_farm.html)

## Veal Web Links:

- [http://www.hsus.org/farm\\_animals/factory\\_farms/veal/veal\\_fact\\_sheet.html](http://www.hsus.org/farm_animals/factory_farms/veal/veal_fact_sheet.html)
- <http://www.noveal.org>
- <http://www.factoryfarming.com/veal.htm>

## Factory Farm Water Pollution Web Links:

- <http://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/cesspools/cesspools.pdf>
- <http://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/ffarms.asp>
- <http://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/nspills.asp>
- <http://www.waterkeeper.org/mainarticledetails.aspx?articleid=87>
- <http://www.waterkeeper.org/mainbackgrounddetails.aspx?backgroundid=26>
- <http://www.scorecard.org/env-releases/aw>

## Comments from Concerned Leaders

“One should not assert as a general principle that non-economic considerations can be entertained only after probable profit maximization is calculated. Farm and performance animals are not machines or plants, but sentient beings. They can feel pain, distress, stress, and discomfort. All animals capable of experiencing negative mental states have an interest in not experiencing such states.”

— Jerrold Tannenbaum, M.A., J.D., Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine

“Humans who enslave, castrate, experiment on and fillet other animals, have had an understandable penchant for pretending animals do not feel pain. A sharp distinction between humans and ‘animals’ is essential if we are to bend them to our will, wear them, eat them—without any disquieting tinges of guilt or regret. It is unseemly of us, who often behave so unfeelingly toward other animals, to contend that only humans can suffer. The behavior of other animals renders such pretensions specious. They are just too much like us.”

— Dr. Carl Sagan & Dr. Ann Druyvan, in their book *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*

“Never believe that animals suffer less than humans. Pain is the same for them that it is for us. Even worse, because they cannot help themselves.”

— Dr. Louis J. Camuti (1893-1981)

“On profit-driven factory farms, veal calves are confined to dark, wooden crates so small that they are prevented from lying down or scratching themselves. These creatures feel; they know pain. They suffer pain just as we humans suffer pain. Egg-laying hens are confined to battery cages. Unable to spread their wings, they are reduced to nothing more than an egg-laying machine... The law clearly requires that these poor creatures be stunned and rendered insensitive to pain before [the slaughtering] process begins. Federal law is being ignored. Animal cruelty abounds. It is sickening. It is infuriating. Barbaric treatment of helpless, defenseless creatures must not be tolerated even if these animals are being raised for food—and even more so, more so. Such insensitivity is insidious and can spread and is dangerous. Life must be respected and dealt with humanely in a civilized society.”

— Senator Robert Byrd (on the floor of the U.S. Senate, July 9, 2001)

“We can see that they [animals] are given into our care, that we cannot just do whatever we want with them. Animals, too, are God's creatures, and even if they do not have the same direct relation to God that man has, they are creatures of his will, creatures we must respect as companions in creation and as important elements in the creation.”

“Certainly, a sort of industrial use of creatures, so that geese are fed in such a way as to produce as large a liver as possible, or hens live so packed together that they become just caricatures of birds, this degrading of living creatures to a commodity seems to me in fact to contradict the relationship of mutuality that comes across in the Bible.”

— Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI)

“There is much evidence showing that animals have sophisticated systems for regulating their lives and that they are much disturbed if they cannot control certain aspects of what happens to them. There is also good evidence for elaborate systems for detecting and responding to painful stimuli.”

— A. F. Fraser, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and D. M. Broom, Professor of Animal Welfare at Cambridge, in their book *Farm Animal Behavior and Welfare*

## Comments from the Factory Farm Industry

“The breeding sow should be thought of, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery whose function is to pump out baby pigs like a sausage machine.”

— L. J. Taylor, export development manager for the Wall's Meat Company, Ltd., *National Hog Farmer*, 1978

“In a contemporary agricultural context, the role and value of animals are defined in terms of their economic efficiency and productivity (and the prices for their products). In this valuational context, animal welfare (and its study) is restricted to what has an effect on production and price.”

— Bernard E. Rollin, Professor of Physiology, Philosophy and Biophysics at Colorado State University, in his book, *Farm Animal Welfare: Social, Bioethical, and Research Issues*

“It's a damn shame when they kill each other. It means we wasted all the feed that went into the damn thing.”

— Herbert Reed, poultry producer, referring to chickens pecking each other to death in battery cages

“Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory. Schedule treatments like you would lubrication. Breeding season like the first step in an assembly line. And marketing like the delivery of finished goods.”

— J. Byrnes, “*Raising Pigs by the Calendar at Maplewood Farm*,” *Hog Farm Management*, 1976

“These animal rights people like to accuse us of mistreating our stock, but we believe we can be most efficient by not being emotional. We are a business, not a humane society, and our job is to sell merchandise at a profit. It's no different from selling paper-clips or refrigerators.”

— Henry Pace, owner of a livestock auction yard

“The object of producing eggs is to make money. When we forget this objective, we have forgotten what it is all about.”

— Fred C. Haley, president of a Georgia poultry firm, quoted in *Poultry Tribune*, 1974

“At higher egg prices, crowding always resulted in greater profits.”

— Robert Brown, “*Toe-Clipping May Help Hens Improve Returns in Crowded Cages*,” *Feedstuffs*, 1985

“We don't get paid for producing animals with good posture around here. We get paid by the pound!”

— Hog farmer J. Messersmith commenting on crippling leg deformities commonly suffered by pigs on factory farms

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