



**CONNECTICUT**  
**FOR**  
**ANIMALS**  
Education Fund 501(c)(3)

# FACTORY FARMS vs SMALL/FAMILY FARMS

## THE PROBLEM

*On a macro level, factory farming has devastating effects on animals, the planet, and human health. However, local family farms can't feed all the people at our current consumption rate.*

*While Connecticut is not the home to many factory farms, we do consume tons of out-of-state food items and should be aware of the issues caused by our food consumption habits. How can we make better decisions for ourselves, the animals and the planet?*

Nationally, the ever-increasing appetite of humans for meat, dairy and eggs has led to 83% of farmed land being used by farmed animals. When combined with the land needed to grow corn and soy for livestock feed, one-third of the habitable land is dedicated to animal agriculture. This footprint is unmatched by any other industry in history. In addition, farmed animals eat five times more food than all the people on our planet, however meat and dairy combined provide less than one-fifth of a consumers' nutritional needs. The food grown to feed farmed animals is exponentially greater than the food made from those animals. The current system is an unsustainable model.

Understanding the key differences between factory farming and personal farms, often referred to as family farms/small scale farms, is the first step in making choices that can create a positive difference for the animals, human health and our planet.



## FACTORY FARMED ANIMALS FOR FOOD

- Cows/Cattle
- Chickens
- Pigs
- Sheep/Lambs
- Fish
- Goats
- Turkeys
- Rabbits
- Geese/Ducks
- Frogs
- Crustaceans

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## COMPARE: FACTORY FARMS vs SMALL/FAMILY FARMS

FACTORS	FACTORY FARMS	SMALL /FAMILY FARMS
Scale	Factory farms, also known as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), operate on a large scale, producing significant quantities of meat, dairy, or eggs.	Personal or family farms operate on a much smaller scale, often run by individuals or families.
Practices	They often use intensive farming techniques to maximize production. This can include keeping animals in confined spaces, using automated systems for feeding and waste management, and relying on antibiotics, hormones and genetic programs to promote rapid growth.	These farms usually employ more traditional and sustainable farming methods, such as free-range grazing, crop rotation, and organic farming practices.
Impact on Animals	The focus on efficiency and profit can lead to poor living conditions for animals, including overcrowding, limited movement, lack of light and restriction of natural behaviors.	Animals on personal farms generally have better living conditions, with more space to move, access to the outdoors, and opportunities to engage in natural behaviors, as well as potentially better veterinary care.
Labor Practices	Factory farms often employ large numbers of workers in physically demanding and sometimes hazardous conditions. Workers may face long hours, low wages, and limited job security.	Family farms often involve family members working together, sometimes supplemented by a small number of hired hands. The work can be physically demanding but is usually more varied and less repetitive than on factory farms.
Employee Health Risks	Employees are exposed to high levels of dust, chemicals, and animal waste, which can lead to respiratory issues, infections, and other health problems. The repetitive nature of tasks can also result in musculoskeletal disorders.	While there are still health risks, the smaller scale and more sustainable practices of family farms can mitigate some of these dangers.
Environmental Health	Pollution from factory farms, including air and water contamination from waste runoff from large manure lagoons, can negatively affect nearby communities, leading to health problems like asthma, allergies, and other chronic conditions.	Family farms typically use more sustainable farming practices, reducing the risk of environmental contamination. This can lead to better overall health outcomes for the surrounding community.
Environmental Impact	Factory farms can have significant negative impacts on the environment, such as water and air pollution from waste runoff, greenhouse gas emissions, and overuse of natural resources.	Personal farms tend to have a lower environmental footprint, using fewer chemicals, managing waste more sustainably, and promoting biodiversity.
Economics	The dominance of factory farms can lead to the decline of small family farms, reducing local employment opportunities, decrease in consumer food choices, and disrupting rural economies.	Family farms contribute to local economies by purchasing supplies locally, employing local workers, and supporting local markets.
Economic Model	They are typically contracted by large agribusinesses which prioritize cost reduction and high output through a vertical integration system which combines companies operating at different supply chain stages to gain greater control over the production and distribution process.	They often focus on local markets, cooperatives, direct sales, and community-supported agriculture (CSA), emphasizing quality over quantity.
Ethical Concerns	The treatment of animals in factory farms raises ethical concerns, which can impact the morale and mental health of workers who witness or participate in these practices.	The humane treatment of animals on family farms can positively impact the mental health and morale of those involved in farming, as well as the community's perception of farming practices.
Community	As factory farms consolidate agricultural production, rural areas may experience depopulation and a loss of community cohesion.	Family farms often foster a sense of community and connection to the land, promoting social cohesion and preserving rural lifestyles.

## LOOKING AT CONNECTICUT

Hillendale Farm in Bozrah is one of the state's only factory farms. They are one of the largest egg manufacturers in the U.S. and made the news in 2023 when more than 100,000 hens died in a fire. This sparked discussions about cage free legislation, but never made it to the Capitol.

While there are several small slaughterhouses in the state, there are no meat-packing facilities, which means that animals need to be transported out to NY or PA for large scale slaughter.

Currently, farmed animals are exempt from most animal cruelty statutes.



## THE SOLUTION

*There are many ways we, as individuals, can help to create change when it comes to not supporting factory farming and that begins with recognizing that animals are sentient beings and not products. **Every purchase is a chance to change our food system!***

**Eat less meat, dairy and eggs.** Nine billion land animals are slaughtered for food in the U.S. each year. Fewer than one percent of these animals are raised on pasture, with space, fresh air and sunshine. To give all farmed animals a life worth living and to create a sustainable planet, many individuals and families choose a vegan lifestyle or incorporate alternatives to meat and dairy into more of their meal choices. Consuming fewer animal products is

better for you, too, reducing the risk of several chronic, preventable diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity.

**Buy local & shop for higher-welfare foods.** Most animal products sold in supermarkets come from factory farms. You can avoid factory-farmed meat, dairy and eggs by shopping at farmer's markets or buying directly from small family farms.

**Decrease waste.** Twenty-six percent of animals slaughtered for meat go to waste. Help reduce waste by not buying more than you need, using up food before it spoils and utilizing leftovers.

**Keep the victims of ultimate cruelty off your plate.** Avoid eating these foods which are especially inhumane including milk-fed veal, frog legs, foie gras, crustaceans, live sashimi, shark fin soup.

**Advocate for stronger state and federal laws to protect farmed animals, farm workers and the environment.**

Work within your community and with your local and state legislators to create stronger laws to protect the welfare of farmed animals, farm workers and the planet.

## RESOURCES

[Shop with Your Heart](#) | [More Humane Shopping](#) | [Take Action](#) | [ASPCA](#)

[5 Ways You Can Help Farmed Animals – AWI](#)

[Farmed Animals: How does factory farming affect animals? Farm Forward](#)

Meat Racket - *The Secret Takeover of America's Food Business* by Christopher Leonard, Simon & Schuster, Published 2/18/2014

**REVISED 10/14/2024**