Production Farming Issues

The goal was to discuss production farming issues and to develop a business plan for a safe and humane factory farm.

Tag Words: raising specialty beef, organic farming

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Summary

(Patrick Kuehne)
Farms used to be family owned with animals treated kindly and no antibiotics or inhuman conditions. However, with America’s obsession of overproduction and high economic value, factory farms have been developed instead. Factory farms started in the 1920’s with chickens, allowing farmers to raise them inside while feeding them vitamin supplements, vaccines, and antibiotics. During this time period the discovery of pesticides made it easy to produce the large quantities of food needed for these animals. From 1990 to 2005 the contribution of factory farms to world meat production rose from 30% to 40%. A factory farm’s goal is to produce massive amounts of food and meat to package and send off to big named industries such as Tyson and Purdue. However, the mistreatment of animals and the inhumane conditions of these farms is often overlooked. In order to keep up with production, these companies are manipulating innocent animals. There are no definite rules for agriculture animals. These farms get away with overcrowding animals and grinding them up alive when they are not considered useful. Also, the caging of animals has become a concern. Therefore, these issues need to be addressed and a business plan needs to be proposed to develop a tranquil farm.

Video Link

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3eDJOCWbY
The Issue: Farming Issues

Pigs (Patrick Kuehne)
Pigs in these industrial farms are confined to such a small space they can hardly lie down and can’t turn around at all. Many pigs develop mental disorders and even display suicidal tendencies, pigs are considered to be very intelligent animals and suffer greatly from not being able to turn around, socialize, and run around. They are also subject to having their tails and ears clipped in order to prevent cannibalism and tail biting. To go along with that the animals live most of their lives covered in their own waste and they are fed growth hormones, antibiotics, and vitamin supplements to fight infection from having so many animals so close together. Due to these extreme conditions the USDA estimates 10%, or 900 million, of animals raised for food never make it to the slaughter house. The conditions mentioned above are for all pigs, the sow’s, the mother pigs, are subject to the most cruel and harsh treatment of all. On top of being confined to the small space they are impregnated constantly for years on end, the pregnancy period is about 4 months after which the piglets will feed off their mother for about 2 to 3 weeks then be taken away to get fattened and the mother is re-impregnated right away in order to keep them 100% active. In addition, many pigs are so cramped that are unable to turn around. Meaning, any piglets they have cannot be warmly cared for.

Hens/Chickens (Alyssa Cook)
A common mistreated animal is the hen used to lay eggs. Hens are put in cages that are stacked along walls. Hens need about 303 square inches to bathe themselves and span their wings (http://advocacy.britannica.com/blog/advocacy/2007/05/the-difficult-lives-and-deaths-of-factory-farmed-chickens/). However usually eight to nine chickens are crammed into one little cage, so they cannot span their wings or bathe. Half of their beaks are cut off which is an extremely painful procedure for the hen to encounter. This is to prevent hens from hurting each other since they only have up to four inches of living space. After one year, the hens are not considered good quality to lay eggs and are sent to be slaughtered. However, many hens die well before this from being trampled on from the overcrowded situations.

Male chicks are considered worthless since they cannot lay eggs. Therefore, little male chicks are typically grinded alive, gassed, or suffocated. (http://www.farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming).

Chickens are genetically engineered to produce larger breasts and thighs. Many people prefer breasts and thighs as oppose to red meat, so they enhance these body parts. The chickens that are raised in this manner are called boilers. Enhancing the size of these chickens causes abnormal developing of the chickens. They can have skeletal deformations due to the larger size compared to their small structure. Also, there is an increase of heart disease for the chicken even before they reach 6 weeks old. Many Chickens die of thirst, because they are not capable of reaching water nozzles in the barns. The chickens themselves are competing against each other for food and water, so often times they trample on one another and kill others. These chickens are also de-beaked. Many farmers see this as a solution to prevent them from hurting other chickens, but it is a painful process and the living conditions are the same. In addition, the cages and barns are extremely filthy. The pile up coming from the chickens can have harmful effects on them. One example is ammonia burn. The ammonia from their waste can irritate their eyes and cause them
Chickens are considered to be slaughter age at 6 or 7 weeks when they reach a good weight for meat. The animals are then shipped to slaughter house. They typically stick them on a conveyor belt upside down and are put through electrified water which “stuns” them. Then their throats by a sharp mechanical blade are cut off and they are defeathered. Then they are boiled in a scalding bath. A common concern that is often overlooks is the idea that the electrified water sometimes is not a high enough voltage to completely stun the chicken. This means that the chicken will be fully aware of the blade coming to chop off their throats and will be placed into the boiler alive.

Cows/cattle (Alyssa Cook and Amanda Adubato)
Milk cows are used for the mass production of milk. These cows are working hard in order for companies to obtain their milk to sell. They are constantly hooked up to an electric milking machine two to three times a day everyday. Dairy cows are also constantly pregnant in order to breed more cows. This means, instead of pregnant cows getting rest they are slaves to producing milk.

When calves are born, they are separate from their mother and by gender. The male calves are used to make veal and are fed an iron deficient diet to keep their meat white. Also, movement is restricted to keep their muscles tender. Conditions of these male calved with no enjoyment cause them to die before they are sent to the slaughterhouse. In contrast, the female calves are sent to become dairy cows and artificially inseminated. Both male and female cows are restricted to a melancholy and tired lifestyle.

At age four or five, dairy cows are sent to be slaughtered because they become too tired and weak to produce milk. A typical cow can live up to 25 years in a humane environment. When slaughtered, they are used for beef which makes approximately 40% of the beef industry.

Cows bred for the purpose of beef are also exposed to inhumane treatment as well. These cows often roam and fend for themselves. They are outside no matter the weather and find whatever food they can. These weather conditions leads to a common disease called ‘cancer eye’ which eats away at the eye and face of a cow. A crater is left inside the animal’s head if it is not treated. After they are on the range, they are either sent to be slaughtered or brought to feed lots. Feedlots are when the animal is in a tiny stall and fed massive amounts of food and hormones in so they can gain weight. Their diet should consist of grassy foods, but due to the fact that they are fed corn and hormones they develop metabolic disorders. They are also subject to respiratory diseases because they are in a crowded environment full of bacteria. Also, they do not have much room to move if they are in feedlots. After they spend a few months there, they are slaughtered for food. A standard slaughterhouse kills 250 cattle per hour. The cattle are supposed to be dead before the cutting of the different body parts. However, many are usually not and workers can see that these cattle die piece by piece.
Antibiotics (Alyssa Cook)  
70% of antibiotics in the US are given to farm animals, not people. The start of placing antibiotics into animals started in 1946. Animals are primarily given antibiotics to resist transmitting disease. The disease can transmit to humans by spread to environment, food, and other animals. If bacteria are continually exposed to an antibiotic it becomes resistant to it meaning the antibiotic will not work and there is an increased risk for disease. This is making it difficult to treat foodborne illnesses. The reason being, if the antibiotic is already resistant, then it makes it harder to find a drug that will cure these illnesses.

Another reason antibiotics are injected into the animals is because farmers cannot individually care for them. They think by simply injecting antibiotics it is easier. If one animal becomes infected then the whole heard is fed antibiotics. These are watered down since it would be too expensive to treat individually. Watering down antibiotics causes it to be less effective in treating diseases. This causes an increase risk of an illness sneaking into the food consumed by people.

An article from June 2010 by the WebMD health news discusses how the FDA should limit antibiotics in agriculture farms. The FDA proposed two standards that would be in effect to treat these animals
- Antibiotics should be given to food animals only to protect their health
- All animal use of antibiotics should be overseen by veterinarians.

These two guidelines would decrease the resistance to pathogens that are increasing in animals. The FDA also states that there is no problem treating animals with diseases using antibiotics. The key aspect in that is with diseases. The reason being, most receive antibiotics to make them grow faster or just to give it to prevent a disease that might occur. It is safest to treat an animal after they get a disease so they do not become resistant to it by just receive antibiotics all the time. There is no need to give animal antibiotics to make them grow faster. It is unnatural and inhumane. The FDA says that this process of providing guidelines to antibiotics will be slow, but worth it.


The over usage of antibiotics in animals create super-germs and diseases like mad cow disease, swine flu, and avian flu. Not only is the health of humans significantly impacted, but the health of the animals themselves deteriorates.

Hormones (Alyssa Cook)  
Injecting hormones into livestock is typically done to make the animal grow and gain weight as fast as possible. A factory farm wants their animals to grow at a rapidly in order to get more meat and so the animal can be slaughtered. (http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331268,00.html).

Around 2/3 of cattle produced are injected with hormones. Why? To increase profit and growth. This extremely selfish act has concerned consumers. Zeranol, Trenbolone, and Melengestrol are the typical synthetic hormones injected into the cattle. There has been questioning whether or not these hormones have been causing growth problems in humans and have contributed to breast, prostate, and colon cancer. The number of residual hormones found in cow milk is as much as 10
times higher than non-treated cows. Several studies have linked these high levels of residual hormones to an increased risk of breast, colon, prostate and lung cancer in humans. Europe bans hormones produced in foods but America still allows this to happen. (http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues/hormones/) The government continues to say there are no harmful effects when clearly, there are.

Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone is a typical hormone injected into animals. It causes the animals to reach a heavier weight as fast as possible and cows to produce more milk. Speeding up an animal’s growth is very dangerous. It can lead to organ complications and the animal will not be in a natural state. This specific hormone can also cause mastitis which is a condition where secretion of blood and pus go into the milk. Also, it is very painful for the cow since it is an udder infection. In addition, it is very interesting that this hormone given to agriculture animals is banned in Australia, Japan, and Europe. However, it is not in America. (http://animalrights.about.com/od/animalsusedforfood/f/AntibioticsrGBH.htm)

Human Health (Alyssa Cook and Amanda Adubato)
Most of America has heard about the swine flu. The swine flu has become increasingly popular within the last two years due to a pig’s living conditions. The animals used to be speared out and not crowded. However, now that these animals have been forced to live in overcrowded areas disease is spreading. The average number is 5000 pigs per factory farm. That’s a lot of pigs! The overcrowding leads to filth and feces throughout the grounds of these farms which means there is easy access for these pigs to encounter. All of these combinations are the root to the swine flu epidemic. (http://www.farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming)


Manure is a huge problem on these farms and a large concern for health. A single pig can produce two to four times more waste than a human, and a cow 23 times more. Too much waste for the land to absorb or neighbors to endure. Therefore, these farms contain massive amounts of manure. Feces contain a lot of bacteria. The farms have feces lying around all over the place. This means these pathogens are in the feces and go into the air or onto other animals. This can easily travel to humans and they can become infected with pathogenic bacteria. In addition, this excess manure on large farms produced toxins into the environment. A couple gasses are Hydrogen sulfide and ammonia. Hydrogen sulfide can cause itchy eyes, nose, and throat. Ammonia is an irritant and large amounts can cause death. Agriculture farms are the largest source of ammonia pollution in the United States. The air around the farms can cause dust particles which can cause asthma and bronchitis in humans. Currently, two federal laws, CERCLA and EPCRA that facilities that produce above a certain amount of pollution—based on human health effects—must report the amount of their emissions to the EPA and local emergency responders. Reports from several factory farms show pollution levels far beyond the triggering amounts, sometimes exceeding such triggers by 40 times. Lobbies have been proposed to have mandatory cleanup policies in these farms considering some produce as much manure as a small city. However, no laws have been put into effect. (http://www.hsus.org/web-files/PDF/legislation/gafs_manure.pdf)

A recent article distributed by fox news discusses a recall on beef that might affect human health. An inspector is supposed to look over the animals and remove the ones that might be diseased.
These diseased animals, called downers, are not to be used for food. However a recall in February 2008 has led many Americans to believe that their beef is not being checked. Diseased cattle were not inspected in this case and some of the beef was contaminated. This affects human health because some contaminated beef was in the food people consumed (http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331268,00.html).

The air inside hog factories is so dirty and polluted that workers who are exposed for simply a few hours a day are at high risk for bronchitis, asthma, sinusitis, organic dust toxic syndrome (ODTS) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). This is because the air inside has so much dust, dander, and noxious gases from animal waste (http://farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming/pork/).

Abuse (Alyssa Cook and Rachel Jackson)
There are many laws that protect animal abuse in the home, zoos, and pet shops. However, when it comes to production and profit there are none. Agriculture farmers are able to give the upmost harsh and brutal treatment to these animals, because it deals with production and profit. What makes these animals different from other animals? The government obviously just does not care. There are much generalized laws in 33 of the states including Pennsylvania and New Jersey. However, they are not on the same level as typical animal abuse laws. Compliance with guidelines for the humane treatment of farm animals is purely voluntary (http://www.ncga.coop/newsroom/animal-treatment). Ironically, animal welfare is overseen by U.S department of Agriculture. However, there are no federal laws about agriculture animals. The government fails to see these animals as typical animals because they get slaughtered. However, the treatment of these animals before they are slaughtered should be humane. The American public is in favor for having these laws to protect farm animals. According to a 2003 Gallup poll, 62 percent of Americans favor strict laws to protect farm animals. In another poll taken the same year, 82 percent of the respondents said that there should be laws protecting farm animals from cruelty. And in a survey conducted by researchers at Ohio State University in 2005, 92 percent of those surveyed believed that farm animals should be well cared for. (http://www.ncga.coop/newsroom/animal-treatment). Therefore, there are no federal laws but Americans think there should be so further protests about the treatment of agriculture animals will continue and that gives a slight glimpse of hope for the future.

The fox article also states that there has been a released videotape of employees abusing the animals. The employee was apparently kicking and deliberately abusing the animal. This demonstrates that abuse of these agriculture animals is prevalent and real. The employee was charged with illegal movement of a non-ambulatory animal. No one can be sure that these animals are not abused (http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331268,00.html).

A few individual farm animal abuse examples
Pigs: they are kept in the dark for most of their lives “to get them to calm down”. The floor they stand on is grid so the manure falls through. However, they still smell like manure. Pigs are very sensitive to stress so they are constantly scared and sick going through the overcrowded dark days and the constant transport. Also, they cannot turn around to care for their young because they are so cramped (http://www.animalfreedom.org/english/information/abuses.html).
Cows: 10% stay in a stable their entire life. Calves are also restricted from their mothers so they can get ready for production of milk or slaughtered for meat.
(http://www.animalfreedom.org/english/information/abuses.html#cows)

Hens/Chicken: They are programmed to lay more eggs than they naturally can. They are laying eggs around the clock and are crammed inside cages.
(http://www.animalfreedom.org/english/information/abuses.html#cows)

A different type of abuse is neglecting animals and not caring that they are getting sick. For instance, there are viruses that can suppress pigs’ immune systems, and lead to bacteria that will further degrade health and result in death. However, these infections often go undiagnosed because farmers argue that “testing is expensive.” These farm animals have sicknesses that farmers don’t even attempt to identify (farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming/pork/).

Transport of Animals (Patrick Kuehne)
Many farm animals are transported numerous times throughout their short lives. Animals are transported in a truck sometimes many hours without proper care. What many people don’t know is most travel long distance. Transport contributes to the animal’s most stressful period in their lives. The reason being many animals are scared when they are in trucks and do not know where they are going. Especially if they live in harsh conditions in the first place. First off, they are shoved into these trucks and forced to cram in them. Farmers do not care how they get into the truck, as long as they do. So the abuse is typically high for animals entering trucks. They have close quarters, moving environment, and extreme lack of mobility. Many of these qualities the farm animals are already used to, but the stress increases during long distance transport. In fact, many animals do not even make it to the destination (meaning the unfortunately die). This is due to bruising from other animals, dehydration, and the spread of disease. Animal welfare regulation is extremely poor when it comes to road trips for these animals. The only law in the United States is that animals cannot be moving for more than 28 hours without a break. The break is hardly a break at all. These animals do not get time to move around and graze anyway, so the law does not have a big impact. Also, the law was created in 1873. It is time for an update. Again, like the other issues, the government does not see any harm in this and continues the 28 hour law. Regulation of this law is very low, because it is hard to keep track of the moving vehicles and determine whether trucks really stop or not. The law excludes transports by means of truck. It only includes rail carriers and common carriers Therefore; the 28 hour law does not apply to them. Reports show these animals are kept in trucks for up to 48 hours. The only update on that law was in 2006 when trucks were added as a common carrier. However, this is not greatly enforced. Trucks still get away with breaking the law. It is not hard to do in this terrible situation. (http://advocacy.britannica.com/blog/advocacy/2008/06/highways-to-hell-the-long-distance-transport-of-farmed-animals/)

More than a quarter of a million pigs die from transport each year. The incidence of broken bones in all animals is 95%. The animals with broken bones it is not like they have a doctor to help them. There is no treatment for these animals but the slaughterhouse. Many animals starve to death from being on the road numerous hours without breaks for food. There is also the forgotten physical, mental, and emotional stress. Therefore, the transport of animals is very stressful and a major cause of injuries and death in farm animals.
Overcrowding and Battery Cages (Rachel Jackson)
Twenty thousand to thirty thousand day-old chicks are placed on the floor atop coarse wood shavings in a barren shed. As they grow bigger, the crowding grows more and more intense. “Under standard commercial conditions chickens weight four and a half to six pounds have little more than half a square foot of living space per bird in their last two weeks of their forty-two to forty-seven days of life” (http://birdflubook.com/a.php?id=68&t=p). It is also noted that the increased number of intense contacts between birds with increasing flock density serves to spread and amplify disease agents like bird flu. “Increased stocking densities result in an increased burden of infectious disease agents” (http://birdflubook.com/a.php?id=68&t=p).

“In every stage of development on a factory farm, animals suffer needless mutations and cramped, confined living conditions. Scientists have even linked animal stress to food quality and safety. When an animal is subject to stress and pain, it is more prone to disease, and can produce lower quality meat, milk, or eggs” (http://www.sustainable.org/issues/animalwelfare/). Overcrowding on the factory farms is a significant problem. It is a result of the battery cages used to house the livestock. Battery cages are small wire cages stacked on top of each other inside massive warehouses. Chickens used for egg production live in a cage that is forty-eight square inches (half as big as a letter-sized piece of paper). The floor is concrete and is only sometimes covered with straw for cushion. The confinement of the battery cages is one of the lead spreaders of disease. This provides no comfort for any of the animals. Hens and chickens have four inches of “feeder space.” The birds cannot stretch their wings or legs, and they are constantly rubbing up against the wire bars. Then, they lose feathers and bleed all over.

In the battery cage, the hen has to spend ten to twelve months in a small wired cage with three to nine other tormented hens. Battery hens develop the severe osteoporosis of intensive confinement named caged layer fatigue. Hens become paralyzed and die of hunger and thirst while being only a short distance from their food and water.

Battery hens also suffer from reproductive issues from a lack of exercise. Side-effects include eggs clogging their oviducts which become paralyzed and inflamed and formation of eggs that are too big to be laid. Fatty liver hemorrhagic syndrome is another disease that is produced by battery cages. This disease causes an enlarged, fat, friable liver covered with blood clots. Hens’ oviducts can get salmonella bacteria that enter during the production of the egg causing food poisoning for people who eat the eggs.

The atmosphere of battery hens consists of toxic ammonia. It rises from the decomposing uric acid in the manure pits beneath the cages causing ammonia-burned eyes and chronic respiratory disease. Ammonia can even be absorbed into the egg. The battery system depends on debeaking and antibiotics. To date, there are no federal welfare laws regulating poultry raising, transport or slaughter in the US (http://www.all-creatures.org/articles/egg-battery.html).

When vitamins A and D were discovered, animals no longer required exercise or sunlight for growth. This led to large quantities of animals to be raised indoors year-round. The spreading of
disease was always the greatest problem. Farmers found that they could reduce costs by using mechanization and assembly-line techniques. The obsession with high productivity is the reason for all of the overcrowding (http://www.idausa.org/facts/factoryfarmfacts.html).

Because of the overcrowding in battery cages, the chickens are so packed together that they become aggressive and may peck each other to death. They have no room to move about, so they just constantly peck at anything. Pigs that are stuffed in the cramped cages have barely any room to stand up or lie down, and they develop sores on their shoulders and knees. Pigs in confinement develop obesity and leg-crippling disorders. They are forced to live in their own droppings, urine, and vomit, surrounded by the corpses of other pigs. With no area to move around in, pigs develop mental disorders and even display suicidal tendencies. Pigs have no leisure of socializing, so they become depressed. Also, due to a lack of exercise, the animals have weakened bones and muscles (http://farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming/pork/).

Also, when sows are pregnant, they are restrained in small metal pens that are only two feet wide. After their four-month pregnancies, they are transferred to equally small farrowing crates to give birth. These crates have no straw or bedding. The poor environment for the pigs produces neurotic coping behaviors like repetitive bar biting and chewing nothing.

Environmental Impact (Amanda Adubato)
Large amounts of animals compressed on a farm contribute to environmental degradation. There is pollution of water, soil, and air by agrochemicals, manure waste, and the use of water and energy, which are limited resources. Agrochemicals are various chemical products used in agriculture including pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides (http://www.chemetchemicals.com/). Livestock production in general uses a lot of water. Approximately 8% of global human water use is for animal production.

Production of livestock also is a significant source of GHG Emissions (greenhouse gas). A greenhouse gas is a gas that traps heat in the atmosphere. Methane is the main greenhouse gas emitted from factory farming. Methane emissions can be a result of livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills (http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/index.html). The manure used for pigs emits methane and it also emits nitrous oxide when it is spread on fields. The manure also causes nitrogen pollution of land and water. Ammonia is another greenhouse gas that is emitted from poultry manure. When raising free-range poultry meat and eggs, greenhouse gas emissions are lower. Other equally sufficient impacts of factory farming are deforestation for animal feed production, pressure on land for production of high-protein animals, pollution of soil, water, and air by nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer. A different environmental issue that comes as a result of factory farming is diversity. Factory farming produces a loss of biodiversity due to eutrification, acidification, pesticides, and herbicides. Also, there is a worldwide reduction of genetic diversity of livestock and loss of traditional breeds, which can result in species extinctions due to livestock-related habitat destruction.

Raising Organic Beef Cattle (Rachel Jackson)
“Revelations continue to accrue about the health, economic, and environmental benefits of organically produced food, causing more and more consumers to turn to organic foods. Many
organic farmers are also local farmers and the support of local, organic farmers helps reduce potentially detrimental factory-farming practices” (http://www.ehow.com/how_7410486_raise-organic-beef-cattle.html)

For raising specialty livestock, growth hormones cannot be given to calves or cows. Farmers desire giving the livestock as much room for animals to roam as possible. This contributes to the health and wellness of the animals, in addition to the quality of meat. Farmers cannot use chemically made fertilizers, insecticides, or pesticides. However, if one desires, vitamin or mineral supplements may be given to the cow. Veterinarians are not permitted to give the organic livestock antibiotics or synthetic medicines, but vaccines are acceptable. If synthetic medicine is essential to save a sick animal, then the animal cannot be sold as organic. (http://www.ehow.com/how_7410486_raise-organic-beef-cattle.html)

Free-range cows are bred later in the season so that calves are born when rich spring grasses are bursting up, and they spend less time in feed lots. When the animals roam more freely, they are protecting themselves from disease and stress. This farming style introduces sustainable ranching- a way of farming that will sustain the environment. Sustainable ranchers must meet certain environmental standards, use approved genetics, keep health records, and pass inspections. These researches have to think to make less work, better beef, a better environment, and more profit. (http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/beef100903)

Conclusion (Rachel Jackson)
The effects of factory farming have an impact on the health of the farm animals, consumers, human health, and environmental conditions. The overcrowding on the farms is causing health problems for animals and humans. The government has very little regulation on these farming practices. It is important to address this issue because there is a spread of disease and inhumane treatment of living creatures. Consumers should be aware of where their products are coming from. “With recent outbreaks of disease, like mad cow in Canada, and a larger trend toward organic and humane treatment of animals, those out West in big hat country feel the time is ripe to market beef with a known history” (http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/beef100903.cfm). If nothing is done about this issue, animals will continue to be poorly treated, more greenhouse gases will be emitted, and health problems for humans will continue. Introducing raising specialty livestock and better farming conditions benefits farmers and consumers. People will not mind paying more money for food that was properly raised.

The Service Project: Business Model (Amanda Adubato)

Business Plan:
Our business management firm will help promote the use of organic methods for raising meat products and will target NJ farmers and farming companies.

Our Big Idea:
The service we would provide includes helping a current small or corporate farm to update their meat farming practices to organic farming. We specialize in meat production farming and believe there are many benefits and is much money to be made in switching to organic farming.
Over recent decades there has been more focus and a higher market for environmentally friendly and healthy products. Included in this focus are meat products. Many consumers pay top dollar for free-range, organic meat that contains no hormones or antibiotics, and we would like to help farmers reach that market of consumers.

As a business management firm, our role would be to direct farmers and/or company farms towards obtaining the proper facilities, practices, personnel, and resources, along with organizing a model for their business plan and advertising methods. As the push becomes stronger for more environmentally friendly practices and people start to demand healthy products, businesses will be forced towards methods such as organic farming. There are many existing companies that claim to use organic methods, but many more people are becoming educated about these fraudulent companies and are searching for truly free-range products for their restaurants or for their personal use.

The ideal targets of our business management firm are New Jersey meat producing farms, either company or family-owned, that have been losing business over recent years and are looking to restructure their practices or methods. We believe these failing farms are a result of the transition from factory farming practices to free-range farming and we have the ability to save these farms by creating a working business mode specific for their farm to help them through the next few years of transitioning.

**Management Plan:**
We are a group of students posing as a business management firm that advocates the use of free-range meat product farming practices in the state of New Jersey to provide companies with possible incentive to move into the market for high quality meat. Although there are some farms that use organic practices while raising animals, this business management firm is requesting not only organic methods, but completely free-range methods that produce the highest quality meats. There has been a failure of farms to access these farming practices due to the initial costs and risk involved, however, we believe as more farms are failing and larger corporate farms have begun to control the market, a new viable market has opened up for high quality meat that is worthwhile to explore and control.

Our business management firm consists of four highly qualified experts in the science field. We have all studied environmental issues and have done much research into the topic of free-range farming. There are already some business plans out there for producing high quality meats, but as a management firm we will not only provide a plan but will work directly with the farm to create a viable strategy and provide resources for moving forward with free-range farming.

Once undertaken by a company our business management firm will travel to the interested farm to begin assessing the possibility of creating a free-range facility. The current facilities, farm condition, monetary value, expected costs and other variables associated with the farm will be taken into consideration before our management firm can move forward with a proper management strategy. An individualized report will then be created that will provide the farm with an individualized five year plan to get the farm moving forward into free-range farming. At this point, the farm may either accept or reject the proposed plan based on their financial situation and willingness to take the risk that comes with any business strategy change.
Market Description
The market for meat in the United States has grown rapidly over the last few decades. This has caused an increase in production farming, which is considered an unhealthy practice for animals and people alike. There are only a few large corporations that control most of the meat production in the United States; however, over more recent years smaller farms have been gaining back control by maintaining higher quality practices via organic and free-range farming. This is the market we will be aiming for.

Marketing Plan
The main modes of advertising will be popular networking sites like Facebook and Youtube along with spreading this business management plan through search engines such as Google. We will be promoting change among practices and ideals in college-level students and creating awareness about the negative affects of production farming. We will be doing promoting college student awareness by posting a video on Youtube concerning production farming and also posting links connected to this video concerning other alternatives to factory-farmed meat. By creating this business plan and putting our ideas out there for the public to see, we are hoping to facilitate lifelong healthy practices among listeners.

The following expense report is an estimate of possible costs and revenue based on expected values and does not represent a particular area in New Jersey. A farm that chooses to accept the management of our firm will obtain an individualized report for their area expenses and surrounding businesses.

Sales (per year)
COGS
Gross Profit
Variable Costs
Fixed Costs
EBIT
Taxes
Net Profit

Letter to New Jersey Farms (Amanda Adubato)

To Whom It May Concern:
Over the past several decades meat has become very common and cheap among grocery stores in the United States. There are reasons for this increased availability and decreased price. The reason is factory farming. As a farm owner, I am sure you understand what factory farming is, and I am even more sure that it has affected your business. It has become increasingly more difficult for smaller farms to compete in such a large market and many farms are being driven out of business. These farming practices, however, have many negative health affects on the animals involved and increasing research has shown that these negative affects spread to the health of consumers of these products.

Many advocacy groups have surfaced against production farming such as PITA and other animal rights groups and environmental groups have also begun to show their angst with these methods
and the sustainability implications that come with them. Although many people disagree with
the animal raising methods of these production farms and still more agree that mass production
farming is not the proper way to feed our population, it is undeniable that these methods provide
the cheapest meat to the largest amount of people.

The corporate farms stay in healthy business and drive out the smaller farms due to their ability
to keep prices so low because of mass production farming. Small farms can not compete with
such a market, and I am sure your farm has suffered some negative affects due to this practice.
There are choices for your farm, though, that may stop this cycle and lead to a change.

We are not asking that your farm desist meat production and moves towards vegetation farming,
however we are suggesting a drastic change: switching over to free-range farming. There has
become a large market over recent years for high quality meat. People are paying a lot of money
for this meat, and although the transition to free-range farming may be expensive, we encourage
you and your farm to look at the long-term benefits of such a change. There is a lot of revenue to
be gained from the sale of high quality meat. We encourage you to do some research and look
into the prices people are paying for free-range, high quality meat in this state.

With time your farm may be able to control the market in your area for free-range meat as
supermarkets and restaurants begin to request higher demand for these products. Please consider
the possibilities of high quality meat sales for your farm.

Thank you for your time and patience,

Amanda Adubato
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Appendices

IMAGES

stacked chickens

Pigs in factory farms

© Farm Sanctuary
Dear Editor,

Subject: Spreading awareness about the harms of factory farms

I would like to bring awareness about the dangers of factory farming to my local county newspaper, the Gloucester County Times. I believe this concern will be a useful tool for an upcoming article.

Factory farming is raising livestock for the purpose of producing mass amounts of food to be used in the industry and sold to consumers. The overproduction of food is an obsession for American companies such as Purdue and Tyson. These farms are inhumane to the agriculture animals. Many people are unaware of this issue or think it has no impact on their lives. However, the food that is produced on these factory farms is the food we eat and this awareness should be brought to Gloucester County.

Additions of antibiotics and inhumane labeling of foods from these farms directly impact consumers. Antibiotics are often injected into these animals for the purpose of preventing disease and forcing the animals to grow larger. However if we continue to eat products like this we can possibly become resistant to certain antibiotics. If we are resistant to an antibiotic and get sick, it is harder to find an antibiotic to cure the illness. Also, labeling of foods is not always correct. There is no set of rules to labeling concerning humane issues with animals. Therefore, a product labeled “cage free” or “free range” do not necessarily mean this is true. Many hens that lay eggs have their beaks cut off which is a painful process. Many animals die from the overcrowding by trampling from other animals. Also, after about a year they are considered useless and are slaughtered by grinding them alive. Consumers who purchase the products saying they are free range or cage free cannot be exactly sure the animal did not encounter any of these inhumane treatments. There is no agriculture animal bill in New Jersey with guidelines about treating animals on farms.

Therefore, factory farming issue should be featured in an upcoming article in the Gloucester County Times to bring about awareness to residents. The subject is very important, because we are the ones eating these products.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Cook
Rutgers University Undergraduate
634 Olympia St
To the Editor:

Subject: Alerting the Public about the Factory Farms Their Food Comes From

As a student of Rutgers University, I would like to address the issue of factory farming to Montgomery County. This will be useful to raise awareness about animal care. Factory farming is a large production of raising farm animals where copious animals are crammed at high stocking densities. This assembly has led to standardized animal cruelty, massive environmental destruction, and health risks not only for animals, but for humans as well. People who are affected by factory farming are people who buy meat, milk, or eggs. Although awareness for this issue has increased somewhat, there are still many people who know very little about the issue.

The main issue with factory farming that consumers need to know about is the over-usage of antibiotics in the livestock. The antibiotics create super-germs and diseases like Mad Cow Disease, Swine Flu, and Avian Flu. Not only is the health of humans significantly impacted, but the health of the animals deteriorates as well. Livestock raised in factory farms have weakened bones and muscles due to lack of exercise and regular moving behaviors. Farmers who select birds for their faster growth rates and higher meat yields make birds’ immune systems less able to cope with infections, and the spread of disease more likely.

Keeping the health satisfaction in mind for both animals and consumers, it is important to inform the public of the detrimental effects of factory farming. Shoppers can help by purchasing cage-free eggs, or even helping to sign petitions or write letters to Congress. Regulations have not been specified or strict enough for farmers, and this needs to change.

Sincerely,
Rachel Jackson
Rutgers University Undergraduate
1361 High Avenue
Roslyn, PA 19001

Patrick Kuehne

...You are what you eat

In this country, and in many places around the world, there is an ever growing problem people should be aware of. This problem is the effect the size of our population is having on the food demand, particularly with meats. Many people are completely unaware of the quality of their food, what is really in their food, or the treatment of the animals. The problem that arises from the growing population is that we are trying to raise as many animals as fast as possible in the shortest amount of time, quantity not quality.
When the whole problem is examined there are many different issues that need to be addressed. Starting with the feed, the grown food in the feed is grown with chemical fertilizers and many of the plants are transgenic or genetically modified (GM), added to that are a mixture of antibiotics, growth hormones, and synthetic vitamin supplements. The antibiotics are in a low dose which promotes an environment favorable for antibiotic resistant microbes, many of you have heard or seen of these breakouts on the news. These microbes are one of the many risks the workers deal with at these factory farms. The growth hormones are in such high doses it causes the chickens to get so big they can no longer stand, many illnesses and disorders come from the animal’s organs being so enlarged. There are more issues than just what these animals are eating.

It is probably hard for many people to imaging the amount of animals needed to feed a school, a town, city, state, rather try imagining the amount of room these animals would take up. In these factory farms it is common for 25,000 swine, or more, 10,000 dairy cows, and 100,000 broiler chickens or laying hens, to be raised in one industrial operation. It is actually regulation that with this amount of animals they are not permitted access to sunlight, the animals spend most of their lives covered in their own feces. In the case of the pig they are confined to such a small place that it causes mental disorders which make the pigs bite their tails, so their tails are cut off. With the sow, mother pig, they spend most of their life lying on their side unable to turn around, rarely standing up, in order to produce the most pigs the piglets are often weaned early to get the mother stated on her next cycle. Now we have all these animals in one small area, what happens with all that waist?

All of the waist from the animals, after spending almost a week on or around the animals themselves is stored just outside the warehouse in a big pool, untreated and unregulated. These large scale farms are federally exempt from many pollution laws, such as the national superfund act, clean air act, water pollution control act, solid waste disposal act, and others. The main chemicals found are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium they are all biodegradable and safe in the proper treatments are taken, but they are not these chemicals are found at well above toxic levels at these cesspools. These chemicals contribute to animal sickness and worker illness as well, reported cases of lung infections are common at every site along with a variety of other conditions.

If what we eat really does reflect what, or who we are, then how can we just sit back and allow ourselves to expose our bodies to these toxins. These animals are exposed to such harsh and cruel treatment all so the average person can afford to eat. It really is a harsh tradeoff but if we want to move forward as a culture we need to improve our standard of living first, what better place to start than the dinner plate.

______________________________________________________________________________

Amanda Adubato
Editorial: Production Farming
11/3/10

Over the past twenty years, more people have become aware of that the food industry of the United States is focused on mass production of goods rather than the quality of products. This mass production does not exclude the use of animals in agriculture.
United States citizens have been made increasingly aware of the mistreatment of animals as a result of this production farming; however, these same citizens have also become so desensitized by the separation they have from these animals that most do not bother to think about the animal used for their meats.

When walking through a supermarket and seeing the aisle of meat products, do you think about the animals that were killed for that meat? Do you think about the number of animals killed and used for one package of chicken?

Most people are not interested in where their food comes from, allowing these unregulated processes to continue.

There is little legislation surrounding factory farming, and in most states animal cruelty rules do not apply to animals used in agriculture.

I implore you to think. Think about where your meat comes from and what type of process the animal is being raised by. Check your local legislation on factory farming and you might be surprised to see the lack of animal cruelty laws and waste management regulation being implemented.

Submitted to: [http://www.courierpostonline.com](http://www.courierpostonline.com)