

Why eat pasture-raised animal products?

Information from <http://www.eatwild.com>

Back to the pasture

Pasture-raised animals live on the range where they forage on their native diet. They are not sent to feedlots to be fattened on corn, soy or other grains which they do not normally eat. Pasture-raised livestock are not treated hormones or feed them growth-promoting additives. As a result, the animals grow at a natural pace. For these reasons and more, grass-fed animals live low-stress lives and are so healthy there is no reason to treat them with antibiotics or other drugs.

More Nutritious

A major benefit of raising animals on pasture is that their products are healthier for you. For example, compared with feedlot meat, meat from grass-fed beef, bison, lamb and goats has two to four times more omega-3 fatty acids. Meat and dairy products from grass-fed ruminants are the richest known source of another type of good fat called "conjugated linoleic acid" or CLA. When ruminants are raised on fresh pasture alone, their products contain from three to five times more CLA than products from animals fed conventional diets. Grass-fed meat also has more vitamin E, beta-carotene and vitamin C than grain-fed meat.

Factory Farming

Raising animals on pasture is dramatically different from the status quo. Virtually all the meat, eggs, and dairy products that you find in the supermarket come from animals raised in confinement in large facilities called CAFOs or "Confined Animal Feeding Operations." These highly mechanized operations provide a year-round supply of food at a reasonable price. Although the food is cheap and convenient, there is growing recognition that factory farming creates a host of problems, including:

- ▶ Animal stress and abuse
- ▶ Air, land, and water pollution
- ▶ The unnecessary use of hormones, antibiotics, and other drugs
- ▶ Low-paid, stressful farm work
- ▶ The loss of small family farms
- ▶ Food with less nutritional value

Unnatural Diets

Animals raised in factory farms are given diets designed to boost their productivity and lower costs. The main ingredients are genetically modified grain and soy that are kept at artificially low prices by government subsidies. To further cut costs, the feed may also contain "by-product feedstuff" such as municipal garbage, stale pastry, chicken feathers, and candy. Until 1997, U.S. cattle were also being fed meat that had been trimmed from other cattle, in effect turning herbivores into carnivores. This unnatural practice is believed to be the underlying cause of BSE or "mad cow disease."

Environmental Degradation

When animals are raised in feedlots or cages, they deposit large amounts of manure in a small amount of space. The manure must be collected and transported away from the area, an expensive proposition. To cut costs, it is dumped as close to the feedlot as possible. As a result, the surrounding soil is overloaded with nutrients, which can cause ground and water pollution. When animals are raised outdoors on pasture, their manure is spread over a wide area of land, making it a welcome source of organic fertilizer, not a "waste management problem."

(See reverse side for important health benefits of pasture-raised animal products)

The health benefits of pasture-raised animal products

Meat

- ▶ Meat from grass-fed animals has two to four times more omega-3 fatty acids than meat from grain-fed animals.
- ▶ When chickens are housed indoors and deprived of greens, their meat and eggs also become artificially low in omega-3s.
- ▶ Eggs from pastured hens can contain as much as 19 times more omega-3s than eggs from factory hens.
- ▶ When ruminants are raised on fresh pasture alone, their products contain from three to five times more CLA than products from animals fed conventional diets. CLA is a fatty acid that has recently been studied as a potent cancer fighter.
- ▶ The meat from the pastured cattle is four times higher in vitamin E than the meat from the feedlot cattle and, interestingly, almost twice as high as the meat from the feedlot cattle given vitamin E supplements.

Milk

- ▶ Unfortunately, 85 to 95 percent of the cows in the United States are now being raised in confinement, not on pasture. The only grass they eat comes in the form of hay, and the ground that they stand on is a blend of dirt and manure.
- ▶ Milk from a pastured cow can have five times as much CLA as a grainfed animal.
- ▶ Milk from pastured cows also contains an ideal ratio of essential fatty acids or EFAs. Studies suggest that if your diet contains roughly equal amounts of these two fats, you will have a lower risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, autoimmune disorders, allergies, obesity, diabetes, dementia, and various other mental disorders.
- ▶ When a cow is raised on pasture, her milk has an ideal ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids. Replace two-thirds of the pasture with a grain-based diet and the milk will have more than five times the amount of omega-6 fatty acids than omega-3s, a ratio that has been linked with an increased risk of a wide variety of conditions, including obesity, diabetes, depression, and cancer.
- ▶ Grassfed milk is higher in beta-carotene, vitamin A, and vitamin E. This vitamin bonus comes, in part, from the fact that fresh pasture has more of these nutrients than grain or hay. These extra helpings of vitamins are then transferred to the cow's milk.

Raw dairy products - another step up

- ▶ Raw milk is an outstanding source of nutrients including beneficial bacteria such as lactobacillus acidophilus, vitamins and enzymes, as well as the finest source of calcium available.
- ▶ Pasteurizing milk destroys enzymes, diminishes vitamin, denatures fragile milk proteins, destroys vitamin B12, and vitamin B6, kills beneficial bacteria and promotes pathogens.
- ▶ Raw milk is not associated with any the problems of pasteurized milk, and even people who have been allergic to pasteurized milk for many years can typically tolerate and even thrive on raw milk.

Free-range (pastured) eggs

When compared to commercially raised, supermarket eggs, free-range eggs have:

- ▶ 2/3 more vitamin A
- ▶ 7 times more beta carotene
- ▶ Up to 19 times more omega-3 fatty acids
- ▶ Significantly more folic acid and vitamin B12

(See reverse side for important reasons to buy pasture-raised animal products)