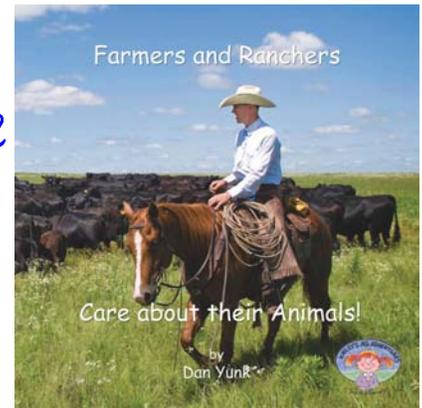


# All About Farm Animal Care: a Fun Fact Guide

Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals (Pre-3rd) was written to educate youth about the importance of animal care. This guide provides the principles of animal wellbeing, answers to frequently asked questions, key messages, fun facts, and additional resources for teachers to utilize in their classrooms.



## The Principles of Animal Wellbeing:

To promote animal wellbeing and produce animal food products of the highest quality, the Animal Agriculture Alliance recommends adherence to the animal care principles that follow. These principles are the essential building blocks for professional animal care. Owners and managers of animal operations are committed to these principles.

Food and Water: Provide access to good quality water and nutritionally balanced diets as appropriate for the species.



Health and Veterinary Care: Implement science-based animal health programs, including prudent product use, and provide appropriate veterinary care when required.

Environment: Provide living conditions sufficient to meet the wellbeing needs of the animal as appropriate to each species.

Husbandry Practices: Implement science-based husbandry practices appropriate to the species.



Handling: Ensure proper handling practices throughout the life of the animal as appropriate to each species.

Transportation: Provide transportation that avoids undue stress as appropriate to each species.

- Animal Agriculture Alliance,  
[www.animalagalliance.org](http://www.animalagalliance.org)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q: Why can't the animals have more space?**



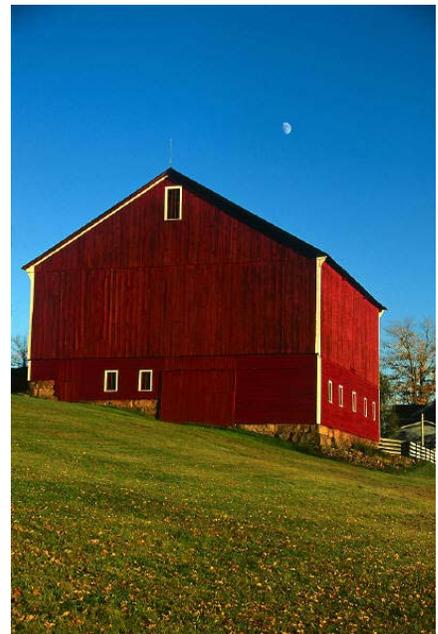
**A:** To humans, it may seem as if the animals are crowded in a barn. However, we must learn to separate our human needs from the needs of animals because those needs are different. It is not necessarily the matter of more space, but what is available in that space for the animals and how they can use it. Research shows that if you put a group of calves in a very large open barn, they choose to sleep very close to each other

and against the walls or gates for a sense of protection and sometimes even for warmth. Farmers also will not overcrowd animals because it is unprofitable for them to keep animals in conditions that cause stress. Stressed animals have a reduced rate of gain or a reduced rate of milk production.

We also need to remember that it is a farmer's responsibility to care for animals that sometimes don't know what the best choice is. For example, there are many accounts of turkeys drowning in rainstorms because they didn't know enough to go into the barn.

## **Q: Why are most farm animals raised indoors?**

**A:** Farm animals are kept inside for the same reasons pets are kept inside: health, comfort, safety, food, and water. Barns are designed to provide animals with the right environment, protected from the extreme weather and from predators. Most barns have fans to circulate the air and even water sprinklers to help keep animals comfortable in hot weather. Another reason most farm animals are housed indoors is for monitoring and care. It is much easier for a farmer or rancher to make sure that each animal is getting the right food, clean water, and the general care they need if they are inside rather than outside on pasture. However, some grazing animals, like sheep, horses, and beef cattle, do live outside with access to shelter, food, and water. Storybook images of farm animals, like chickens pecking in the farm yard or pigs wallowing around in the mud, paint an unreal picture that does not include the realities of extreme temperatures, unreliable food and water, and no protection from predators or diseases that exist with outdoor living.



**Q: Why do farmers and ranchers use antibiotics?  
Can those residues show up in my food?**



**A:** Consumers want food from healthy animals, not sick ones. Farmers and ranchers use antibiotics to prevent, control, and treat diseases. Farmers do not over-treat animals not only for the animals' safety and health, but also for their bottom line. These antibiotics, just like the ones prescribed to you from a doctor, are not cheap. Farmers, with help from veterinarians, only use health products when deemed necessary and appropriate. Animal health products are regulated by the U.S Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) to keep food healthy for consumers.

On average, it takes 11 years for an animal health product to get approved! Only one in 7,500 chemicals tested is ever approved! Farmers take pride in providing Americans a safe, affordable and abundant food supply.

**Q: Why are animals sometimes given hormones, which aren't used in preventing or treating sickness?**

**A:** These growth promotants have been used in the animal industry for over 30 years without causing human health concerns. The FDA approves the use of these, just like any animal health product. These growth promotants increase feed efficiency and improves the ratio of meat to fat, which consumers prefer. Growth promotants are usually in the form of estrogen-like substances. Estrogen is a naturally occurring hormone and these promotants enhance an animal's natural estrogen production.



In fact, there is more estrogen in a cup of green beans than in the same amount of beef from an implanted steer!

*"Today's farm practices are definitely a combination of good science, practical experience and common sense."*

- Farm Animals: Who Cares?

# Key Messages from Ag Challenges Initiative:

The American Farm Bureau established a strategic public relations program, known as the Ag Challenges Initiative, to mobilize and to empower grassroots livestock producers to speak out on issues related to livestock production and animal wellbeing issues.

The following are key messages from livestock producers:

## **Healthy animals mean healthy food for you and your family.**



For animals to produce meat, milk and eggs, America's farmers and ranchers must take all possible steps to ensure that animals are well care for seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

As farmers and ranchers, we recognize that superior animal welfare practices lead to the production of high-quality, safe and wholesome meat, milk and eggs, and we're constantly seeking ways to improve the well-being and comfort of our animals.

Simply put, without healthy and content animals, farmers and ranchers would not be in business.

## **Farmers and ranchers care deeply about the health, well-being and safety of our animals, and we ensure our animals' well-being through proper management and shelter.**

Farmers and ranchers provide adequate food, water and medical care to protect our animals' health.

We also provide appropriate shelter to ensure livestock can exhibit normal behaviors at rest and remain protected from disease, competition, injury and predators.

Quality Assurance programs at the national and state levels provide farmers and ranchers with guidelines for the production of safe, wholesome animals, including recommendations on necessary animal handling and facilities.

## **Standards for animal care should be based on the expertise of veterinarians, farmers, ranchers and animal scientists – the people who work with farm animals daily.**

American farmers and ranchers have been working with veterinarians, animal scientists, agricultural engineers and animal well-being experts to continually develop and support reasonable science-based guidelines and audits.

As the people who work with livestock 24/7, farmers and ranchers, as well as veterinarians and animal care scientists, provide the voices of experience and reason in addressing animal welfare issues.



## **Changes to animal well-being guidelines should be based on data, expert analysis and economic feasibility.**

Adding unnecessary costs to U.S. production will increase the amount of food imported from places that have an inferior record on food safety and animal well-being.

Overzealous standards will increase the price of food, negatively affecting all families trying to make ends meet.

- Updated March 10, 2008

## Did you know?

...All eggs are **antibiotic free**.

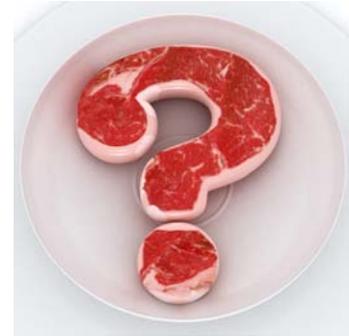
...Before reaching a grocery store, every meat product is first examined by a quality trained **USDA INSPECTOR**.

...98% of all U.S. farms are **family-owned**.  
(Source: Economic Research Service, 2005)

... U.S. consumers spend *a smaller percent* of their disposable income on food consumed at home than any other country. (Source: Economic Research Service)

...Today's American farmer feeds about **144 people** worldwide. In 1960, that number was 25.8. (Source: Agriculture Council of America)

...In 2002, more than **14%** of the U.S. population was employed in farm or farm-related jobs. (Source: Economic Research Service)



- Conversations on Care

## Resources to learn more about Animal Care

### Videos about Animal Care:

Numerous videos available from American Farm Bureau Federation:

<http://www.conversationsoncare.com/>

Videos about animal care within the pork industry from Pork Checkoff:

<http://www.youtube.com/PorkCheckoff>

### Useful Web Resources:

American Farm Bureau Federation

<http://www.conversationsoncare.com/>

Q&A, facts, testimonials, videos, and other educational material!

Animal Agriculture Alliance

[www.animalagalliance.org](http://www.animalagalliance.org)

Animal care principles, current issues, links and more!

Ontario Farm Animal Council

[www.ofac.org](http://www.ofac.org)

"The 'Real' Dirt on Farming" and "Farm Animals: Who Cares?" publications

*Provided by Kansas Farm Bureau to educate young people, parents and teachers about where our food comes from. America's food supply is safe, affordable and abundant but also vastly misunderstood by the consuming public. It is the intention of Kansas Farm Bureau to improve the public's knowledge about the importance farming and ranching plays in our quality of life.*

 **KANSAS FARM BUREAU\***  
The Voice of Agriculture®