

Introduction to sustainability - why eat well?

Cattle are born to forage on grasses. Nature did not equip them to eat pure grain. Given unrestricted access to a grain diet, cattle will eat until they harm themselves. This is similar to the way that an unsupervised child might harm themselves by overeating on candy. The digestive system of a cow is simply not designed to handle a high carbohydrate diet of grain.

But, after World War II, our nation was awash in corn as a result of cheap chemical fertilizers and the development of hybrid seeds. This overabundance of grain led to the development of today's industrial feedlot system. The beef industry quickly learned to use hormone implants and to added antibiotics to feed to help cattle utilize this artificial level of nutrition. A federal crop subsidy program has perpetuated this unnatural system.

This is not an example of eating well...not for the cattle or for the people who eat the beef from these cattle.

For people to eat well they must understand what their body needs, what foods fill these needs, and how these foods must be grown and prepared. The process requires time and focus. The historical diet of the species is our best guide to what should be eaten. Eating well is seldom the quickest or cheapest way to satiate hunger.



Will Harris

Eating well also requires an understanding of the impact that the production of food has on our environment. It should involve understanding how to use the clout that the consumer has in requiring that the meat industry treat our food animals with dignity and respect. It requires feeling the responsibility of not turning our food production over to soulless corporations, at the cost of losing our American family farmers.

Eating well is not an easy thing to do, but it is necessary for maintaining quality of life for us all. We can choose to eat well or we can choose to eat like a cow in a feedlot.

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