

BIG LIVESTOCK VS THE PLANET

ACTIVIST HANDBOOK



DID YOU KNOW?

**THE FIVE LARGEST MEAT AND DAIRY CORPORATIONS
EMIT AS MUCH GREENHOUSE GASES
AS EXXON MOBIL**

This handbook is for those who want a primer to the issues of industrial livestock farming, or what we call 'Big Livestock'. For a more in-depth perspective on these issues, you can find [our report](#) on the Feedback website.

Big Livestock vs The Planet is a campaign from Feedback, exposing the banks and investors providing financial fodder to industrial meat and dairy corporations. Industrial meat and dairy pose a significant threat to our environment, our health and our future. And just like the fossil fuel industry, these big companies are on the wrong side of history.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. To hear more from our campaign, [sign up to get involved here](#), and [follow us on Twitter](#) for regular updates.

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Full list of references online.

Animal agriculture is the single most significant driver of deforestation and biodiversity loss, primarily through its role in converting forests to farmland for pasture and feed. Globally, one-quarter of ice-free land is used for pasture, and another third is used to grow animal feed.

The consequences of clearing land for livestock are suffered most intensely by those on the front lines of the fires that clear it. Brazil is home to around 305 tribes today – of whom nearly all of their territories lie in the Amazon. Many Indigenous communities endure inadequate legal protection, resulting in land being grabbed, sold, and polluted by extractive corporations forcing evictions to turn their land into cattle ranches and soya fields.

In the Amazon and its surrounding regions, 5,800 sq km is felled annually for conversion into pasture for cattle ranching. 2019 saw the most active year for fires in the Brazilian Amazon in nearly a decade, with 70% of these fires occurring in buying zones of cattle slaughterhouses. A quarter of a million fire alerts occurred within estimated operating zones of JBS alone, while 66,000 fire alerts were attributed to Minerva, and almost 80,000 occurred near abattoirs owned by Marfrig.

The industry recruits some of the world's most vulnerable people to work their lines in order to keep meat cheap.

On average, one Tyson employee is injured and amputates a finger or limb per month.

1/3 of the industry's workforce are immigrants, and both Cargill and Tyson have exploited the unauthorised status of some employees, making them endure harsh and often illegal conditions. This includes exposure to extreme temperatures and high speeds of production, resulting in regular illness and high risks of injury.

DEFORESTATION & LAND USE

KEY ISSUES

HEALTH

From Cargill's long history of E. Coli outbreaks to Smithfield's lagoons of contaminated waste containing faeces and blood, Big Livestock's largest corporations have all experienced food safety scandals. Factory managers are pressured to keep lines running to meet increasing production targets, often at the cost of essential hygiene standards.

Deforestation, overmedicating livestock, and overcrowding farms create favourable conditions for antibiotic-resistant bacteria to persist and spread. The increased occurrence of viruses is closely linked to food production and its profitability.

WHAT IS BIG LIVESTOCK?

Big Livestock are the world's industrial meat and dairy companies. A small group of very large, global companies control meat and dairy supply chains around the world, with devastating impacts for people and our planet.

These companies, supported by investors, have grown rapidly, buying up smaller businesses and putting many farmers out of business. Their production systems require vast amounts of land, soy, water and carbon: the Big Livestock industry is so damaging that if they continue to grow, these companies could use up almost half our global greenhouse gas emissions budget to stay within 1.5 degrees.

THE CASE TO DIVEST

Industrial meat and dairy production is incompatible with a safe, ecologically sustainable life on earth. While curbing meat consumption can be a step in the right direction, it is not always in our own hands. These are choices overshadowed by the structural issues and corporate powers that monopolise the industry – from systemic racism in access to nourishing food, to the wild success of meat and dairy lobbyists. It's time we move beyond framing this as a 'lifestyle' issue and mobilise collectively against industrial agribusinesses.

Big Livestock relies on the financial, moral, and political backing of thousands of institutional investors and creditors around the world – university endowments, sovereign wealth funds, banks, asset managers, and public pensions. We must end funding to the industry and banks and investors that prop up this industry need to be exposed. Divesting from Big Livestock will not only cause financial damage to some of the world's worst polluters, but it will also open up new ways of thinking and talking about food. We must recognise this across society and make funding Big Livestock unacceptably risky and socially toxic.

CARGILL: 2011

Recalled 36mill pounds of ground Turkey linked to a nationwide outbreak of salmonella – one of the largest meat recalls on record. Long history of E. Coli contamination resulting in outbreaks linked to deaths and miscarriages.

TYSON: 2001

Tyson charged with conspiracy to smuggle undocumented workers onto its production lines. Later accused of hiring illegal immigrants on “starvation wages”.

JBS: 2017

‘Operation Carne Fraca’: one of many firms accused of bribing food sanitation inspectors, resulting in rotten meat exported worldwide.

TYSON: 2016

In 2016 Tyson employees stated they had been denied bathroom breaks so frequently that they started wearing adult diapers to work.

JBS: 2017

Fined \$7.7m for buying cattle on illegally deforested Amazonian land. Estimated area of forest felled for cattle this year: 23, 976ha.

SMITHFIELD: 2018

Smithfield accused of mishandling hog waste in North Carolina for years. Over 3,300 lagoons of contaminated waste containing faeces, urine, blood, and bodily fluids are causing fly swarms, a stench of ‘decomposing bodies’, and asthma. Damaging impacts on local health and wellbeing, particularly of the Black Caribbean community.

ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION: 2017

Most active year for fires in Brazilian Amazon in nearly a decade, with 70% of these fires occurring in buying zones of cattle slaughterhouses. A quarter of a million fire alerts occurred within estimated operating zones of JBS alone, while 66,000 fire alerts were attributed to Minerva, and almost 80,000 occurred near abattoirs owned by Marfrig.

FAKE FARMS

Major UK supermarkets, including Tesco, Aldi, Marks and Spencer, and Lidl, use ‘fake farm’ branding on own-brand products, disguising industrial chicken produced by the likes of Cargill and Moy Park behind names such as “Woodside Farms” and “Oakham” chicken.

DEFORESTATION BURGERS

McDonald’s, Nando’s, Pret a Manger and Five Guys sell British meat reared on soya shipped from deforested regions of the Cerrado. 91% of deforestation in the rainforest comes directly from animal agriculture.

WEST AFRICA MILK CRISIS

Cheap European milk powder is sold to countries in West Africa and mixed with water and vegetable oil to be sold as liquid milk. West African farmers are struggling to compete with the prices, driving them out of business.

SMALL-SCALE FARM CLOSURES

Between 2010 and 2016, 4,000 small-scale farms in the UK closed down, according to Defra.

FONTERRA: 2008

Fonterra’s Chinese partner, Sanlu Group, was embroiled in a contaminated milk scandal that affected 300,000 Chinese infants and killed 6. It was accused of using melamine in watered-down milk to cheat quality checks.

Feedback regenerates nature by transforming our food system. To do this we challenge power, catalyse action and empower people to achieve positive change.



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FOR FOOD THAT
NOURISHES THE PLANET