



THE TRUE COST OF DAIRY

What you are not told about your milk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 12-month investigation of dairy giant Land O'Lakes reveals cows languishing in tiny crates, dying from serious respiratory and digestive diseases, and, in one case, being eaten alive by maggots.

The investigation was carried out by the animal rights network Direct Action Everywhere (DxE). DxE investigators found that Land O' Lakes, which supplies major retailers such as Walmart and Safeway, is violating its own animal welfare standards at the Zonneveld dairy farm located in Laton, CA near Fresno. Zonneveld is a member of the Land O' Lakes' cooperative. Despite Land O' Lakes' claims that "100 percent" of its farmers comply with the minimal animal welfare conditions set by the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) program, a third party auditing group that certifies dairy farms, DxE discovered at Zonneveld:

- Disease and injury, including diarrhea, infection,
- open sores, pneumonia, maggots, dehydration, fever and impaired breathing.
- Extreme filth – many calves covered in feces.



A calf with diarrhea stuck to her back end. Diarrhea is a sign of dehydration, called scours. The number one killer of calves.

- Air reeking of ammonia and manure.
- No soft bedding – hutch flooring consisting of bare wooden slats, inches above a massive manure pit.
- Newborns exposed to the elements, including temperatures reaching over 100 degrees Fahrenheit and below 50 degrees Fahrenheit with apparently no systems such as heaters, fans or water-cooling to protect them from the extreme temperatures of California's Central Valley.

As is typical throughout the dairy industry, Zonneveld calves are denied any contact with their mothers and not permitted to suckle. Calves are housed in individual 6' by 4' hutches, which don't allow them to take more than a few steps.



Hutches the calves are confined to 24/7 are so small that baby cows can only take a few steps in any direction. It is hard to turn around.

Zonneveld is not the only Land O' Lakes supplier found to violate the animal welfare standards of FARM. Investigations of Land O' Lakes' suppliers in Pennsylvania by PETA and Compassion Over Killing found cruel conditions as well.

The Zonneveld Dairies investigation is DxE's 15th investigation of a "humane" farm to be made public since January 2015. The international animal rights network has documented sickening conditions at "cage-free" egg farms, "free range" turkey farms and pig farms. Media including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *ABC Nightline*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and numerous others have reported on their investigations.

THE INVESTIGATION

Green rolling hills with cows freely grazing on open acres and breathing fresh air. This is the image of animal care that the Land O' Lakes dairy cooperative presents to the world. Land O' Lakes, based in the



Photo from Land O'Lakes website

Minneapolis-St. Paul suburb of Arden Hills, Minnesota, is one of the country's largest producers of butter and cheese, supplying such stores as Walmart, Safeway and Winco.

In the company's [2015 annual report](#) they claim that members of their dairy cooperative "follow the best animal care standards." Land O' Lakes claims that 100 percent of its suppliers comply with high animal welfare standards set by the FARM program.

Investigators for the animal rights network Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) decided to see first-hand if the actual conditions matched the company's marketing. Under the cover of night, a team of women, all DxE investigators, paid five separate visits, from 2016 to 2017, to one of Zonneveld Dairies, Inc.'s farms, which is located in Laton, CA. near Fresno. Zonneveld provides animal products to Land O' Lakes. The year-long investigation focused specifically on the calves housed at this dairy. (You will find mostly female calves on dairies, as most males are shipped to veal auctions immediately after birth.)

ROSELYNN'S RESCUE

At the Zonneveld farm investigators found rows of calves, each in individual boxes too small to walk around in and separate from other calves. "Thousands of calves on this farm are exposed to the elements since the first hour they were born – it's like a prison for babies," said one of the investigators, Alexandra Paul, who is also an actress who starred in the television series "Baywatch." "The cruelty takes your breath away."

One calf in particular caught Paul's attention. She was smaller than the others, covered in diarrhea and close to death. Alexandra and her sister Caroline Paul, a former firefighter and best-selling author, rescued the animal and took her to a veterinary hospital to receive emergency care. A veterinarian confirmed the calf was suffering from numerous illnesses: pneumonia, a fever, maggots, an infection on her exposed umbilical cord and underdeveloped lungs. According to the veterinarian who treated her, she had not received the essential first feeding of colostrum milk, which is critical to healthy immune system development.

"In my job as a big city firefighter, I ran into a lot of burning buildings, but that little calf's life was in just as much danger, by simply being born there," Caroline said. "Carrying out that calf was once again my job, not as a firefighter, but as a human against cruelty of any kind."

At the veterinary hospital the young calf had to be placed on oxygen and receive 24-hour care. After weeks of



rehabilitation and care by a DxE team of animal rights activists, the calf they later named Roselynn recovered. She's now secure in an animal sanctuary with plenty of access to sunshine and friends – both human and nonhuman.

In addition to the violations of the FARM standards listed in the Executive Summary, investigators observed that some of the calves were so young they still had their umbilical cords attached. Many of the calves had



A baby calf with her umbilical cord still attached has already been taken from her mother and isolated in a small wooden cage

sores on their hocks from a lack of soft bedding. According to FARM literature: “Hock lesions (swelling, abrasion and even ulceration) are an important indication of inadequate bedding and lack of animal comfort.”

Land O’ Lakes’ animal welfare standards, according to FARM, include:

- Access to “soft and dry bedding.”
- Protection from seasonal weather extremes.
- Protection from wind and moisture.
- Shelter that provides “comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction.”



No bedding was provided in any of the calf hutches. All baby cows are forced to live and sleep on wooden planks for months.

The Zonneveld farm offered none of those protections, according to investigators.

FARM literature, “Dairy Farms: Where Cows Come First,” states that on their certified farms, “Veterinarians routinely visit dairy farms to conduct check-ups, administer vaccinations and treat illness.



The body of a dead calf in her wooden crate.

Farmers and workers observe the cows every day, so they quickly notice if an animal becomes ill. The veterinarian is called for a consultation if needed.”

Investigators found these claims hard to believe.

FORCED IMPREGNATION

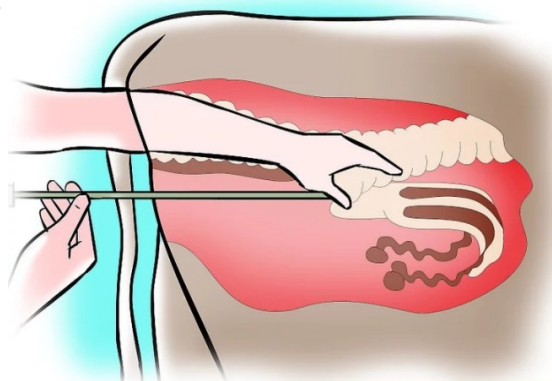


The picture on the package of Land O’ Lakes butter shows a young woman dressed in Native American garb offering up a plate of butter. The

background is a beautiful green forest. The image is one of wholesomeness and naturalness. It reinforces the general public’s belief that animals are not harmed by the dairy industry.

At dairy farms, cows are forcibly impregnated. To do

this a worker sticks one hand into the cow’s anus to locate the uterus, then inserts a stainless steel



Artificial

Insemination,

or A.I., gun into the vagina that contains a straw filled with cow semen and injects the semen into the uterus.

The dairy industry takes all of the mother cow's milk to sell. Human consumers don't get the "excess," or "left-over" milk as often believed.

Dairy cows are impregnated over and over until age four or five, at which point they are slaughtered. (Cows naturally can live to an age of 20 or 25.) The dairy industry turns the female reproductive system into, essentially, a factory.

"As a woman, I was appalled when I learned that in order to put milk on grocery shelves, we were forcibly impregnating cows and separating their newborn children at birth," said lead investigator Julianne Perry. "The dairy industry is a perversion of the sacred right of motherhood. You cannot be a feminist and consume dairy."

A RECORD OF ABUSE

Land O' Lakes suppliers have been investigated for animal cruelty by animal rights groups before. In 2009, PETA documented extreme filth, animals suffering from a variety of illnesses including pneumonia, parasites and respiratory disease at a Land O' Lakes' supplier in Pennsylvania. They videotaped instances of animal abuse

by one worker, who happened to be the owner's son, stabbing a cow. In 2017, Compassion Over Killing, another animal rights group, documented at another Pennsylvania Land O' Lakes' supplier extreme filth and animal abuse, as well as the mishandling of toxic chemicals including formaldehyde.



PETA Video: Cows Suffer On Land O'Lakes-Supplying Farm (VIDEO)

BIG BUSINESS

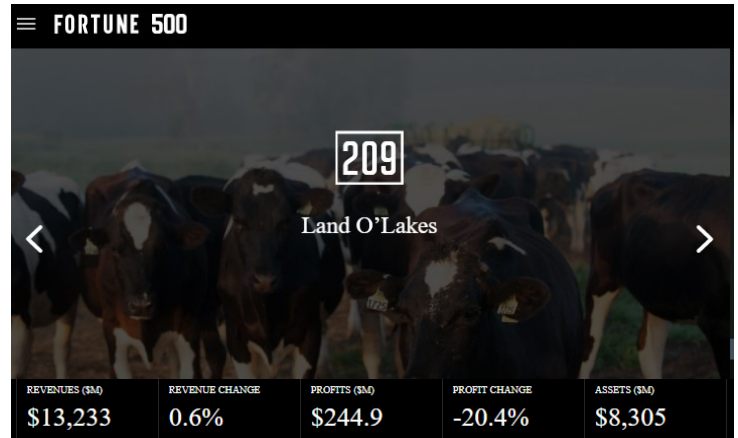
Zonneveld Dairies, Inc. is a family-owned operation. It owns six dairies with approximately 19,200 cows, according to a [December 2015 article](#) in *Cow Management* magazine. At the Zonneveld farm DxE visited, investigators found approximately 900 calves, although there were hutches for about 1,900.



Satellite imagery of Zonneveld. Calf hutches on the left. No cows have any access to grass. No mothers have access to their children.

According to [Buzzfile](#), "Zonneveld Dairies is estimated to generate \$9.1 million in annual revenues..."

Land O' Lakes, Inc., which also owns Purina, is one of the largest animal agriculture corporations in the



country. It contracts with over 2000 dairies in the United States and throughout the world. Some of those dairies, including Zonneveld, are also cooperative members who share in company profits. The dairy division of Land O' Lakes produces butter, cream, sour cream, milk and margarines. The net sales of those products came to \$3.8 billion with a pre-tax earning of \$70.1 million, according to the company's [2016 annual report](#). Land O' Lakes is listed at #209 on the 2017 Fortune 500 list. The company's dairy products are sold around the country in various stores, including Walmart, Safeway, and Winco.

CALF SENTIENCE

From a calf's point of view, being taken from her mother and/or being placed in isolation are among the worst things that can happen, animal behaviorists have found.

The Zonneveld farms, as well as the vast majority of dairy facilities, do both.

A [2004 Cambridge University study](#) demonstrated cows becoming excited when they managed to figure out a problem such as opening a gate. Their heart rate quickened and some even kicked or jumped up.

In a presentation Weary gave on the [care of calves](#) in Holland, he said he and his colleagues found that calves kept in isolation were more fearful, less able to perform cognitive tests and were less able to cope with changes in their environment such as different foods.



Both these practices have been found to cause a depressive-like state in calves. But how does one know if a calf is feeling

down? Animal behaviorists tell us: 1) They do more poorly on cognitive tests; 2) When presented with an ambiguous situation, they are significantly more likely to assume a negative outcome; 3) They eat less. A 2014 study (["Separation from the Dam Causes Negative Judgment Bias in Dairy Calves"](#)) found that both mother cows and their calves were depressed immediately after early separation.

Many of the calves found in the individual hutches at the Laton farm had their umbilical cords still attached, indicative of calves quickly, if not immediately, separated from their mothers. The anguish cows and calves express at that moment has been [well documented](#). "The calves will engage in repetitive crying and become more active," Daniel Weary, an applied biologist and researcher from the University of British Columbia, told [Wired](#) magazine. "And sometimes you will see a decline in their willingness to eat."



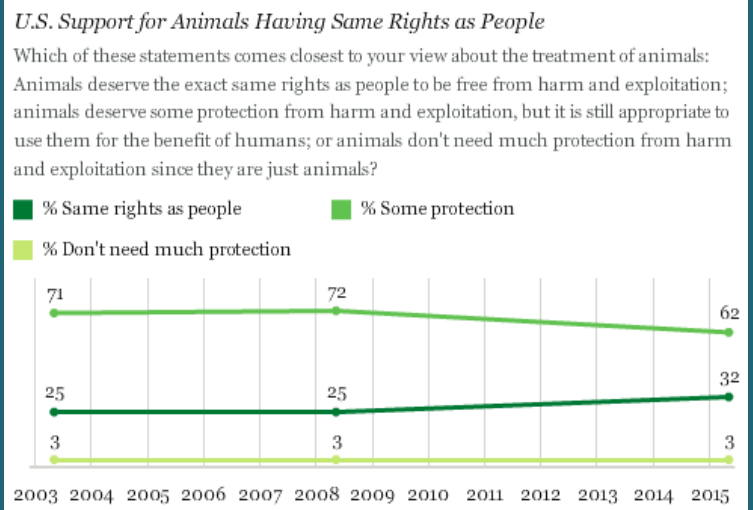
Two calves reach out of their hutch to connect with each other. Calves are physically isolated from birth for months.

Cows are not the dumb, passive beasts we have all been told they are. Researchers have found that they have both intelligence and emotions.

"It's interesting to us to come to understand how complex these animals are," Weary told *Wired*. "It's important to provide a good quality of life for them at an early age, not just in terms of their immediate ability to enjoy life, but also in terms of the long-term effects that we have on these animals."

THE PUBLIC CARES

A [2015 Gallup Poll](#) showed the vast majority of Americans believe that animals deserve protection, with almost a third claiming animals warrant as much protection as humans.



Another [recent poll](#) shows 79 percent of Americans believe that animals must be protected from "all suffering and harm caused by humans."

In the face of increasing scrutiny of animal agriculture, consumers have come to rely on certifications and proclamations that animals are "humanely raised", with many willing to pay more for these products.

WHAT'S BEING DONE

Despite the fact that the public wants to see animals raised for food treated well, neither state governments nor the federal government do much to insure it. There are no federal definitions or standards for the terms “humane” or “sustainably-raised.” Moreover, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a legal responsibility to ensure accuracy in food labeling,

but the Food and Safety Inspection Service, which is part of the USDA, approves the use of animal welfare claims [with no supporting evidence](#) whatsoever.

Worse yet, the USDA’s negligent approval process has served as an obstacle for state authorities to independently regulate food-marketing claims. The courts have held that the USDA’s actions pre-empt state authority.

ABOUT DIRECT ACTION EVERYWHERE

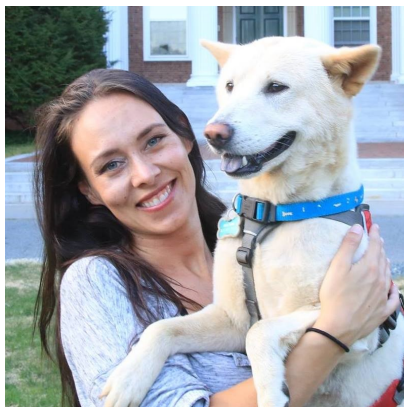
DxE is a grassroots network of volunteer animal rights activists. Started in 2013 in the San Francisco Bay Area, DxE protests have taken place in 177 cities in 34 different countries. The group uses creative nonviolent protest to challenge speciesism throughout society.

DxE’s numerous investigations into animal agricultural facilities including many touted as “organic” and “humane” have received widespread media coverage, including from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Guardian* and many more.

WHAT TO DO

This country has a problem with dishonest marketing of animal foods in this country. DxE urges local, state and federal action to stop the violent and deceptive practices that are endemic to the animal agriculture industry. As a member of the Compassionate City Coalition, DxE is asking cities, including Berkeley, CA, to pass legislation prohibiting the sale of animal products that engage in false “humane” advertising. This legislation will not only create integrity in our food system, but will also drive progress toward the coalition’s ultimate objective: an animal bill of rights.

While the idea of nonhuman rights might seem revolutionary, we already treat one class of nonhuman animals – our own feline and canine companions – with the respect and dignity that would be accorded to a family member or friend. And there are already laws to protect cats and dogs. It is time for us to extend that consideration to other species through legal or even constitutional action.



Investigator Julianne Perry with her dog Pao, rescued by DxE from a dog meat farm in Asia

“We will not stand by while the dairy industry dupes the public into thinking milk is harmless,” Alexandra Paul said. “The butter and cheese on grocery shelves is only there because mother cows are continuously, forcibly impregnated and each calf she bears is immediately torn from her. It is a dirty, cruel business.”



Investigator Alexandra Paul with rescued cow Roselynn. Cows enjoy human affection similar to dogs and cats.

Direct Action Everywhere is calling on all animal lovers across the country to join their Denounce Dairy campaign. On November 14, 2017 activists will hold an all-day vigil at the farm that Roselynn was rescued. Members of the investigative team will talk about their experiences at the farm during a livestream on the Direct Action Everywhere facebook page.

ROSELYNN

Being rescued from a dairy farm was just the first step for Roselynn.

When she was first rescued, Roselynn struggled to walk. She was so weak from illness and confinement that did not allow her muscles to develop, that she would take a few steps and collapse.

For weeks, DxE activists cared for Roselynn around the clock as she fought to recover from pneumonia, dehydration, and various infections.

She is now living safe at a sanctuary where she has acres roam and other animals to interact with. She has a best friend, another cow, from whom she is never more than a few feet away from. When he was taken for a veterinary visit, she cried out until he returned.

Roselynn has also grown attached to her human friends and often shows affection by cuddling. She can be seen below licking the arm of a DxE activist, Ateret Goldman, who helped care for her. When activists were helping her heal, she would often lie next to them and would even lay her head on their lap and fall asleep.



CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Leslie Goldberg is a lead researcher on the DxE investigatory team and former investigative reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner*. She was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. An artist, political cartoonist and writer, she holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary art from Goddard College.

Michael Goldberg is a lead researcher on the DxE investigatory team and was an investigative reporter and Senior Writer at *Rolling Stone* for 10 years. He has contributed to *Wired*, *Esquire*, *Details*, *The Daily Pitchfork* and other publications. His third novel, "Untitled," was published in August 2017.