Meat +
the Environment

According to a 2006 United Nations Report, the meat industry is:

“...one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.”

Industrial Agriculture / Factory Farming

industrial agriculture is a more general term for all industrialized production of livestock, poultry, fish and crops

factory farming is the practice of raising farm animals in confinement at high stocking density, where a farm operates as a factory

Productivity
over sustainability = **BAD**

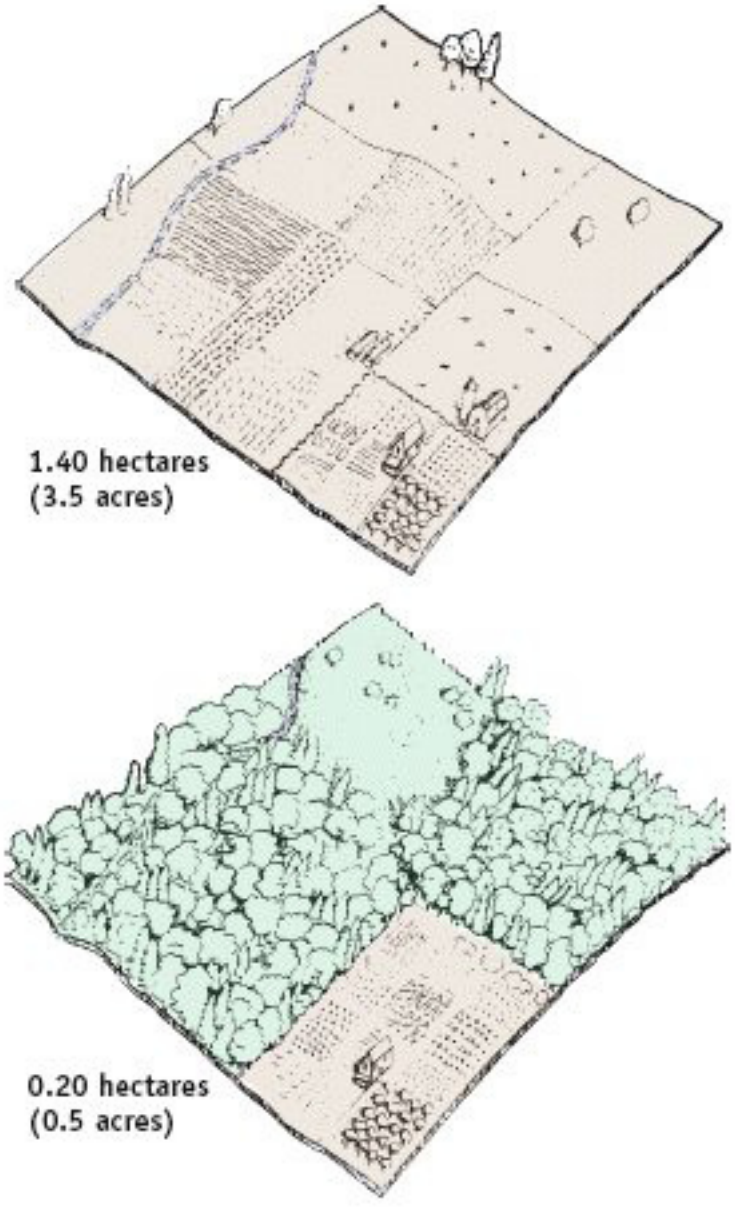
Wasted Resources

Land

80% agricultural land in the U.S. is used to raise animals.

A meat-based diet requires 7 times more land than a plant-based diet.

Expansion of livestock production is a key factor in deforestation.



Food

While animals eat large quantities of grain, they only yield small amounts of meat, dairy products, or eggs in return.

More than 70% of the grain grown in the U.S. is fed to farmed animals.

It can take up to 16 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of meat.

Cattle alone consume a quantity of food equal to the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people.

Water

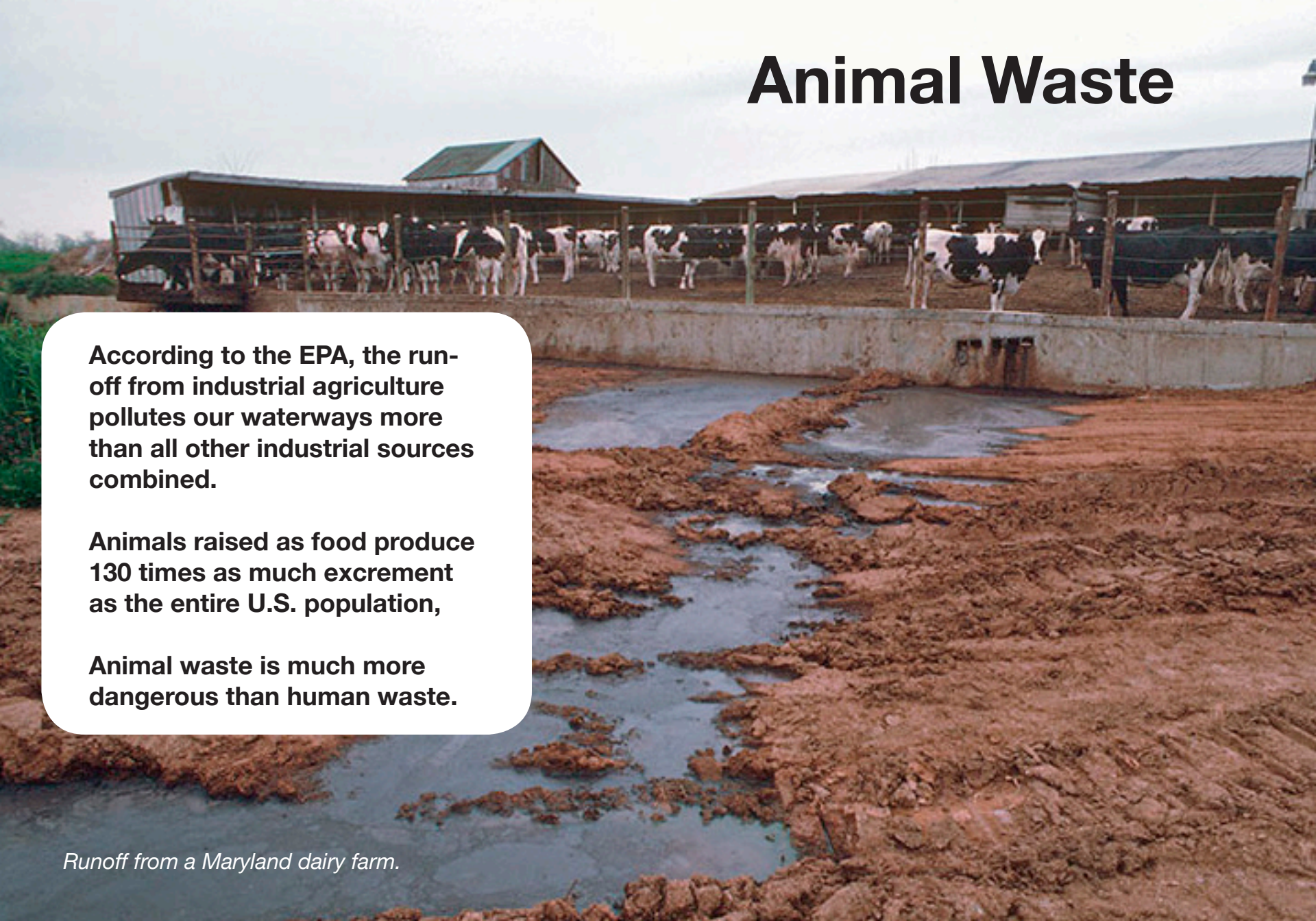
- Nearly half of the water used in the U.S. goes to raising animals for food.
- It takes 2,000-5,000 gallons of water to produce just 1 pound of meat, while growing 1 pound of lettuce, tomatoes and wheat requires only 25 gallons.
- You save more water by not eating a pound of beef than you do by not showering for a year.

Pollution + Climate Change

Livestock is responsible for about 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Average meat eater is responsible for 3,000 lbs more CO2 emissions than a vegetarian.

Animal Waste



According to the EPA, the run-off from industrial agriculture pollutes our waterways more than all other industrial sources combined.

Animals raised as food produce 130 times as much excrement as the entire U.S. population,

Animal waste is much more dangerous than human waste.

Runoff from a Maryland dairy farm.

Only about 1/5 of manure is utilized.

Because animal waste is difficult to transport, producers put more on nearby fields than the crops can absorb, causing excess waste to leach into groundwater and run into nearby rivers/streams.


Manure Lagoon

Flooding in North Carolina. Raw feces and urine is discharged into the river.

* Methane:

Produced in the process of digestion, and 20 times as powerful as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in our atmosphere.

* Nitrous Oxide:

Nitrous oxide is about 300 times more potent as a global warming gas than carbon dioxide. The meat, egg, and dairy industries account for a staggering 65 percent of worldwide nitrous oxide emissions.

Pesticides, growth hormones and antibiotics

- 80% of all the herbicides used in the U.S. are sprayed on feed crops for cattle (which ends up on your plate, in some form)
- Pesticides adversely affect non-target organisms like the surrounding wildlife.
- Animals confined to small spaces in increasingly larger numbers makes them more susceptible to disease and illness, and antibiotics are often used.
- Growth hormones still used in the U.S. (though banned in the EU) may affect fertility.

Alternatives 

Eating low on the food chain reduces the amount of land and resources needed to support your existence.

While being vegan or vegetarian would be best, even eating a little less red meat is better for the environment.

Eat locally and organically grown.