

Big View Small Window

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Meet Your Meat, Part 2: Why the Chicken Never Made It Across the Road...



Google "chicken factory farm" and you will find this image

For the past several years I thought I was doing my body well not to eat "red meat." I did not boast proudly of being a vegetarian. Instead of hamburger and pork, I opted for what I believed to be healthier meat: chicken, chicken, chicken, and, occasionally, ground turkey. I ate seafood sporadically and only when prepared at home.

I suppose there was always a subtle distrust of what went into my ground turkey but I could never place my finger on where the feeling came from. And I thought even less about my chicken. I just cut open packages, prepared meals, prayed over it and kept eating.

Today, I don't even remember where I once heard that poultry was *healthier* than beef. I suppose to some degree chicken is easier on the digestive system, but I was in for a surprise when I found out that information like [this](#) was available to the public. Like many others, I had no basis for placing mistrust in the supermarkets or turning into a skeptic when perusing a restaurant menu. Integrity is an expectation that most consumers have when purchasing a product. After reading [this](#) and other articles regarding modern farming techniques, I decided I did not need meat so badly that I was willing to risk putting my health in further danger. It had to end somewhere.

I am totally DISGUSTED in knowing that hens and chickens (even those raised for slaughter) are allowed to be kept in the dark from their time of birth. They are fed GMO-grains laced with antibiotics (used as a rapid growth stimulant), separated from their young (who are thrown into factory farm cages or possibly sent to slaughter for chicken wings), and their living conditions promote premature molting, as well as obesity, so they are ready for slaughter in less time than conventional farming.

Is it really worth treating these creatures this way just so we can stop by McDonalds and get chicken nuggets at all times of the day? Is meat with this kind of background worth the risk of bacterial infections just so we can eat it in excess any time we choose? As one consumer with one voice and a mission to eat food produced under more humane conditions, I say NO. It will never be worth it. Since I came into the knowledge of factory farm processes, there have only been a few instances where I have eaten commercially produced meat. Two or three times I have chosen certain restaurants where no USDA seal is present to certify that the meat was produced under humane conditions. But it was an **INFORMED** decision, not one made in ignorance at the whim of my hunger pain.

I can appreciate the difficulty of breaking away from supermarkets. I know the inner battle of reasoning over the convenience of prices and locations when it comes to grocery stores. If I had a family of 5, the decision would indeed be hard and compromising. Truthfully, Price Chopper and Walmart are more feasible than driving to farms or purchasing meat from an organic source. I am smack-dab-in-the-middle of this journey as I write this blog. Food produced with integrity (with its lack of commercial marketing and the threat of agribusiness on the doorstep of just about every farmer) is fairly priced.

If you want cheap chicken, the price is greater. If you want cheap chicken you will get a factory farmed bird, that may never see the light of day, that grows so rapidly its bones and internal organs can not support its weight, that's fed synthetic substances riddled with antibiotics, results to cannibalism under high stress circumstances, and is then slaughtered in a production line much like the one your car derived from. If you want chickens that are allowed and encouraged to live out their lives as chickens, rather than as purely a big business commodity, then be prepared to make sacrifices. One sacrifice I have found is to simply **eat less** food and concentrate on consuming only what's needed to survive. It takes a lot of mental and emotional discipline, but truly we do not have to be slaves to our hunger pains.

I will offer my opinion in that America is one of few countries that raises families on meat as the largest portion of a meal and offering meat at every meal. In some cultures meat is treated as a delicacy and a rarity. As Americans, we are often concerned with our "right" to do, think, say, and eat whatever we want. Sadly, this attitude has been the backbone of our deteriorated food industry. This mindset has produced a decadent, over-indulgent, selfish, and terrifyingly hopeless modern farming system that may NEVER be cleaned up. Humans are the only creatures hellbent on having their way at the expense of exploiting other creatures they are entrusted to protect, all the while pinching every possible penny out of the planet.

Against these odds, I do believe there is hope. There is an awakening, a stirring of the mindless masses that is as I once was- asleep at the table. Some solutions (like eating organic, locally grown foods) will be costly. But we can not look at the wastefulness and dehumanized process of our food production and think that the alternative is better. Hey, you don't have to be vegetarian or vegan to make a difference. Honestly, if we all stopped eating meat and byproducts, I don't think that would change the hearts of the greedy men and women who run this system. If you continue to go to supermarkets, restaurants and drive-thrus - at least choose organic where you can. Always know where your meat came from so that you're making an informed decision. Know what you are putting in your mouth and what the risks are. Look at the photo at the top and then the one below. If you have ever cared about your "rights" before, then you must make a connection between these two pictures, understanding that this is the reality of how our food is processed. And as long as consumers remain in the dark, then CAFOs will never cease to exist.



Up Next: What are CAFOs and what are they doing to our planet?