

Livestock and Animal Health

Information from MCE's 2014 St. Louis Regional Food Study



Mirroring national trends, much of St. Louis area livestock production no longer occurs on pasture. Instead, most animals are now produced for human consumption in industrialized Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, also known as CAFOs.

- Americans today consume 50 pounds more meat per capita than their 1950s counterparts. Yet, regional pastureland has decreased 53 percent over the past 82 years. Thus, we are producing more livestock on less land than ever before.
- Because animals in confinement eat grains and feed mixes with hormones and antibiotics, consumers can be exposed to pathogens and disease through animal products.
- CAFOs also generate harmful pollution including methane, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide gas, which are released into our environment. These chemicals not only pose risks to our land, water, and air, but also to the people working and living in and around CAFOs.
- Consolidation in the meat market has reduced opportunities for independent livestock farmers. Three companies control 90 percent of the beef industry, and four companies control 66 percent of the pork industry.
- Animal Feeding Operations employ industrialized methods to raise animals in confined spaces. Hogs and poultry raised in CAFOs spend their entire lives indoors, packed in expansive buildings. Cattle typically spend the first months of their lives on pasture before being shipped to feedlots to be fattened on grain prior to slaughter.
- The St. Louis regional foodshed is home to dairy, poultry, and hog CAFOs, which damage the quality of our environment, our livestock, and our animal products.

Consult moenviron.org for citations and the complete STL Regional Food Study

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How Do We Improve?

Out to Pasture

American Grassfed Association (AGA) certified farms offer an alternative to the CAFO system. By raising animals in open space on grass and forage and eliminating antibiotics and growth hormone treatments, we can make our animals healthier and safer for consumption.

Cutting CAFOs

The fight for healthier animals and livestock products means closing industrialized CAFO operations in our region. Instead, we must advocate for local, farmer-owned dairy, hog, and poultry farms.

Restricting Monopolies

Government action could ensure that industrialized CAFO corporations reduce their hold on our region's livestock market, thereby opening the doors to new, healthy, and local alternatives.



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