

## **Dairy farming and Hinsa (Cruelty) - Should we as Jains consume milk products?**

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## **1. Introduction to Speaker**

- Name: Pravinbhai Shah
- Profession: Retired since 2002 – previously Electrical Engineer – working for IBM (34 years)
- Residence: USA since 1967

## **2. Introduction to Topic**

- Dairy products
- Treatment the cows receive
- Personal Experience of visit to significant number of dairy farms (not just what he has read about)

## **3. When and Why Pravinbhai became Vegan**

- In 1992 Jina Shah told Pravinbhai about Veganism.
- At that time Jina was 21 years old. She explained everything regarding the topic of "Dairy farming and Hinsa (Cruelty)".
- Pravinbhai did not believe a word of what Jina said - He thought she was crazy - "It can't be like that". And he did not pay much attention to what Jina said.
- 2 years later his own daughter declared she was vegan.
- This woke him up to ask "Am I doing everything right or am I pretending to myself or cheating myself"
- Pravinbhai worked in Vermont state, USA where farming and dairy was big business.
- 6 months later he was driving past a dairy farm and decided to investigate because both Jina and his daughter had become Vegan.
- Generally these dairies do not let visitors in – but he was allowed. He went inside the dairy exploring all parts of the process.
- Since that day he became a Vegan – not gradually but just in one go – 100% Vegan from that day onwards.

## **4. What are cows fed?**

- Pravinbhai visited a significant number of dairy farms - both organic and non-organic farms.
- Was a Manager in IBM for long period – many of his staff were from farming families so they took him to visit farms
- This was farm where hogs are raised for slaughter.
- Once slaughtered the waste products (including bones) are used to create a product called "Protein".
- This "Protein" is mixed in a ratio of 80% grain and 20% "Protein" and fed to the cows. Cows are born vegetarian but due to human exploitation, they are now not vegetarian!

## 5. Visit to Western Commercial Dairies

- Dairy farm visit. 100% milk used for Ben & Jerry's ice-cream at this dairy.
- **Cow living environment**
  - Filthy - Farm gets by with whatever minimum health regulations they can
  - Cows cannot move much physically even though temperature is below freezing
- **Milking process**
  - 3 times per day
  - Milked by machines
  - Length of milking time set to 3.5 minutes
  - Not every cow produces same amount of milk – some produce less others more but milking timings are same
  - When cow does not produce enough milk and the machine is still pumping – you can see cows blood coming out into the milk
  - Regulations allow up to certain parts per million (ppm) blood (called somatic cell count) in milk! This can be tested using spectrometers
- **Every Cow kept pregnant**
  - Artificially inseminated
  - After delivery of calf the mother is given 2 months rest period before being made pregnant again - Continuous pregnancy means high milk production
- **Hormones**
  - Hormones are given regularly via injection/tablets etc.
  - If no hormones are given to the cows and they were allowed to live naturally including being pregnant they would produce only a third of the quantity of milk
  - Therefore the current methods produce 3 times more than a cow would produce under normal conditions
  - If you had slaves being made to work 3 times their capacity – how long would they last?
  - So even though the cows are fed these hormones - after 5 years the milk yield drops as the body is worn out
- **What happens to the calf that the cow gives birth to?**
  - New born calf kept with mother for 2-3 days only because dairy cannot afford to have calf drink that milk
  - At separation time – mother is distressed so much that they try to attack the guy separating them – the cow senses that they are no longer going to see the calf. The cow cries – the voice that comes out, even though so many years have passed by, Pravinbhai can still hear that haunting voice!
  - We are separating calf from mother so that we can have milk, sweets etc. to enjoy
  - When calf is separated – the cow is so shocked that for 2-3 days it does not produce any milk. Shock is similar to that if someone has died!
- **What happens to the calf?**
  - Used for veal meat industry. Veal is tender - a delicacy for meat eaters
  - How is calf treated to get large amount of veal on calf:
    - Calf is taken from mother and tied so it cannot move.
    - The calf is fed an iron deficit diet
    - They are kept in the dark for 6 months without any sunlight
  - After 6 months of this torture, the calves are slaughtered for veal meat
- This was Pravinbhai's experience of commercial dairies. After this visit Pravinbhai has seen at least 3 other dairies.

- **In India** – in Gujarat – Amul dairies is a giant – they don't keep cows – they buy milk from small dairies.

## 6. Visit to Indian Dairies

- The problems in the **small dairies** in India are similar to the ones in the western world - but worse as:
  - There are no rules and regulations for cow welfare and
  - Adulteration is far worse than western dairies
- **Male calves destiny**
  - No use except reproduction
  - Some dairies take some sperm out from bulls and store that but get rid of the bulls
  - Other dairies keep 1 bull to make cows pregnant
- **Hormones** used regularly – this is detrimental to cows health
- **Pregnancy – how?**
  - 70-90% of dairies use the artificial insemination - very painful – done using inserting a human gloved hand all the way inside the cow. Many u-tube videos are available
  - Every cow is pregnant – therefore high growth rate – what happens to the newly born?
- **Amul dairies CEO had interview**
  - Last 30 years milk production increased 4 times
  - But cow population increased less than 2 times
  - So cows made more efficient at the cost of cow welfare using:
    - A tailored diet,
    - Hormones and
    - Constant pregnancies
    - And after 2-3 pregnancies the cows are gotten rid of
- **Cow slaughtering:**
  - No legal slaughter houses in Gujarat
  - But many illegal slaughter houses – of which Pravinbhai visited at least 3-4
  - At the illegal slaughter houses, cows are slaughtered by draining out the blood from the cow whilst still alive for halal meat
  - This is done by punching holes into the cow using a sharp pointed fork. The cows suffer a slow and painful death
- **In Palitana** – Cows are brought to roam in open fields. At least 2-3 times per month cows deliver calves in the field. If the new born calf is male when the Rabari comes – he leaves the calf there to die but takes the cow away. The council is then called to pick up the dead bodies.
- **Beef industry compared to Milk industry**
  - From the cruelty point of view no difference is seen between meat and milk
  - In the beef industry cows are raised for up to 3 years and then slaughtered – here we torture the cows for 5 years and then slaughter it
  - Milk industry supports meat industry – low cost of meat is due to the revenue from milk production
  - So effectively milk consumers are subsidising meat consumers

## **7. Are Organic Dairies any better?**

- Visited 2 organic dairies in North Carolina
- No hormones are given
- Cows are constantly kept pregnant
- Cows are given large enough area to move around physically
- They are fed green grass – no use of 20% Protein substitutes used
- If calves drink the mothers milk then there will not be much left for selling
- So calves separated from mother after 3 days
- Calves taken to slaughter house for Organic meat industry
- After 6 years the cow is also sent to slaughter house for Organic meat industry
- Milk yield from cows is more natural compared to non-organic dairies
- Milking process is by hand or machine
- Whilst the cows are producing milk they are looked after very well
- Cruelty afterwards is the same as before

## 8. What about Ahimsa Milk (in UK) & Jain Dairy (in India)

- **Ahimsa milk - UK (details contributed by audience members)**
  - Ahimsa milk run by Krishna Consciousness – 200 cows at present
  - Cows artificially inseminated
  - Cows are not slaughtered at end of milk producing life – they are kept alive and treated as they are in Panjrapur
  - Milking is done using machines
  - Not fed any animal products
  - Cows looked after in same manner as organic farms
  - The question of what they do with the calves was not known
- To find the truth you need to go there and spend a few days to see the whole process
- **Jain Dairy - India**
  - Visited by two people – Pravinbhai and Rameshbhai Doshi (Rameshbhai not vegan at that time)
  - Jain Dairy run by Jain school – 30 cows kept
  - Children stay at the school and study Jainism
  - All 30 cows kept pregnant by use of 1 bull
  - Therefore 30 pregnant cows deliver 30 calves – by probability 15 male and 15 female
  - Calves kept with mother for a maximum of 6 months
  - The mother cow knows the day before separation that they are going to be taking their calf away – they are that sensitive!
  - When the calf is being taken away, the mother sometimes uplift the stake to which they are tied to or breaks the rope and tries to hurt the person separating them from their calf
  - The mother cow cries
  - For the next 2 days due to their distress no milk is produced by that cow
  - Male calves are of no use except for reproduction – they are given to the Panjrapur charity
  - Panjrapur is run on charitable basis in the same way as this Jain dairy is so why is calf separated? Because the cost of keeping the calves is too high using the welfare standards of the Jain dairy
  - During 6 month period when calf is kept with mother only 25% of milk is given to the calf. 75% is kept for humans
  - When Ramesh Doshi heard this said: I am now a Vegan - If even a Jain dairy does this, what of the others!
  - The remaining drink for the calf is made from a commercial powder called "Protein" mixed in water. We all know where this "Protein" comes from (see section "What are Cows fed?")
  - The milk from 30 cows is not enough to feed even 50% of students in that Jain school so 50% Commercial milk is bought
  - Cow numbers cannot be increased to 60 cows because cost per litre of milk is so high - 3-4 times the cost of commercial milk
  - School and dairy Trustees are business people so ask why is this done when commercial milk is so cheap?
- **Comment by audience member:**
  - Fundamentally whether you find a perfect way of raising cows and making them produce milk - its always going to be a commercial thing
  - We are talking about exploiting a 5-sensed being at the end of the day.
  - We must never forget that this 5-sensed being is being forced to be born into the world as our slave to produce milk for us. D
  - do we really need to do that if there are viable plant based alternative?

**9. Should we as Jains really be party to this cruelty / hinsa?**

- Don't become part of the problem
- If you are the cause of the problem by consuming dairy and then give to "Jiv daya" to look after the unwanted calves & bulls - the benefit of giving will not be realised no matter how much money you give!
- So to minimise the problem at least **I personally** should not be a part of the problem – then there is a hope