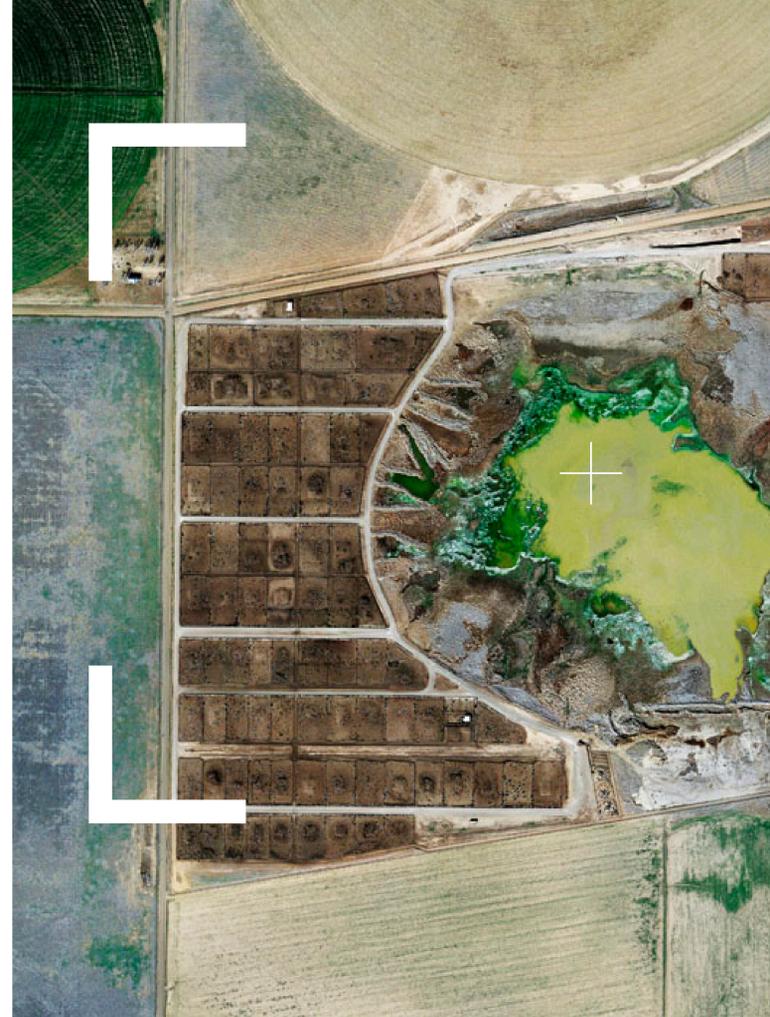




If Americans reduced their meat consumption by 25%, it would prevent 82 million metric tons of CO2 to enter the atmosphere and free up 23 million acres of high-quality, useable land and help reduce deforestation.

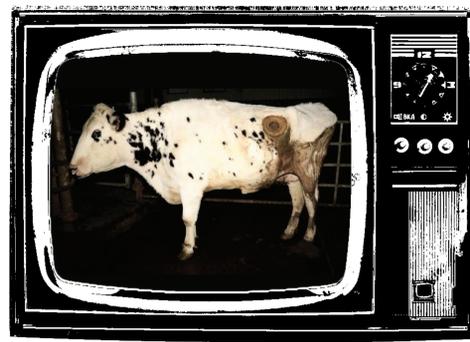
The New York Times, 2019



EAT FARM FRESH *



PHOTO: JAMES HENNER



In recent years, consumption of meat has skyrocketed. In the beef industry, corn is commonly used in the livestock industry to fatten cows quickly and increase their weight for slaughter. However, cows are not naturally evolved to digest corn, and this causes many problems for their digestion system. Cows have evolved to digest grass, and introducing corn to their diet creates a host of changes that must be managed with drugs and other technological fixes.

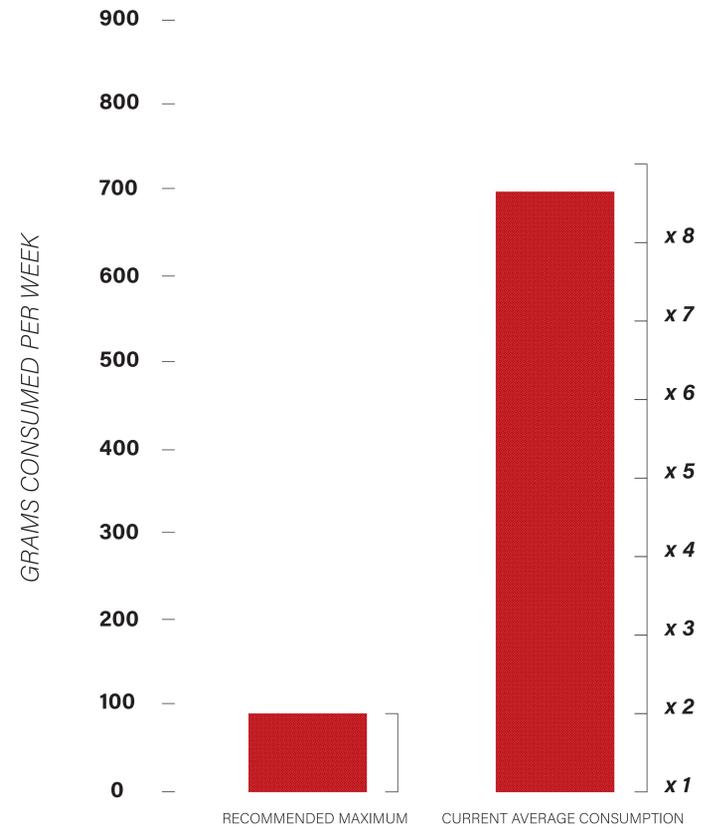
To prepare cows for the corn-based diet, ranchers introduce them to corn in a backgrounding pen, where they must be taught how to eat it.

However, even with these measures, cows are still prone to diseases such as bloat and acidosis. These issues arise due to the excessive richness and starchiness of corn, which disrupts the cow's digestion system.

This is partly fixed through putting 'porchholes' in the side of a cow, which allows for gas to release and so ranchers can reach into their stomachs if necessary. The procedure is extremely painful as it is often done without pain medication in large scale operations, but it helps prevent asphyxiation from severe bloating.

Additionally, cows on a corn-based diet are prone to liver damage, which can lead to liver abscesses. To prevent this, ranchers must administer antibiotics to limit the incidence of liver disease. These drugs are used to manage the negative consequences of feeding cows a diet that they are not naturally adapted to digest. Overall, the article highlights the problems that arise from industrialized agriculture and the negative impacts on animal welfare and health.

US MEAT DIET



What exactly am I looking at?

"I first came across these feedlots on Google Earth and had no idea what I was seeing. The mass and density of the black and white dots seemed almost microbial. To understand what they were I had to learn about the meat industry and its methods for maximizing yield in the minimum amount of time for the highest profit.

It used to take five years for a cow to reach its mature weight, ready for slaughter and processing. Today, since the structures and processes of feed yards have been perfected, that has been reduced to less than 18 months. Such speed requires growth hormones and antibiotics in cows' diets, and efficient feedlot architecture. Farmers can turn to reports to help calculate the maximum number of cattle that can fit in each pen, the minimum size of run-off channels that carry away thousands of tons of urine

and manure, and the composition of chemicals needed to break down the waste as it collects in lagoons and drains into the soil. Different chemical mixes explain the varying toxic hues of each lagoon.

These pictures were made by stitching together hundreds of high-resolution screen shots from publicly accessible satellite imaging software. The results are prints of great clarity and detail that capture the effects of feedlots on the land.

The meat industry is a subject loaded with a moral and ethical charge. But when I think of these pictures, I don't just see gigantic farms, I see an attitude toward life and death that exists throughout contemporary culture. These images reflect a blueprint and a horror that lie at the heart of the way we live."

Mishka Henner