



MILKED

DISCUSSION TOPICS

A panel discussion that features local perspectives, such as dairy farmers, nutrition experts, and/or organizations working on climate change, or others who can offer their perspectives on the dairy industry in your region is always a useful way to learn more after a screening of the film.

Alternatively, each of the following topics includes quotes from the film and suggested discussion questions to use in large or small groups to deepen your audience's understanding. The shorter film chapters are also aligned with each of these topics.

TOPIC 1: THE DAIRY INDUSTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE

“Scientists warn that we’d need at least 5 earths by (2050) if everyone on the planet eats as much dairy and meat as countries like New Zealand & The United States.”

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“There are too many cows on this planet. And we we can’t keep farming them, even if every single one of them has farmed regeneratively. We cannot be having these land uses which are all about producing milk or all about producing meat, we have to diversify into plant based production. That’s what the science is telling us.”

Genevieve Toop

WATER

“All through nature for the 10,000 years that humans have been doing agriculture, it’s about natural balances. What we’ve done now is a one-way system. Where the way we have so many cows, is we put heaps of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer on made from fossil fuels. And we’re the biggest importer of palm kernel in the world. So we put all of this stuff on the farm to have this really high stocking rate, we could never have that stocking rate without all these inputs. And so the more you pour into a farming system from the outside, the more leaks out the bottom, and the leaking out of the bottom we’re seeing is the impacts on our waterways. If nitrate turned our rivers red, you know, we wouldn’t have the problem. It’s only because people can’t see it. They don’t know it’s there.”

Dr. Mike Joy

EMISSIONS

“(Dairy) is a global problem too. The top five meat and dairy companies, which includes Fonterra, produce more emissions than the whole of the United Kingdom and its 66 million people. That’s also more than the oil and gas companies ExxonMobile, Shell and BP.”

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Discussion Questions

- In your own words, describe your understanding of the impact of the dairy industry on climate change.
- What are some reasons you heard and saw in the film that the environmental impact of dairy is not more widely known?
- Which of these or other environmental concerns do you think is most prevalent in your region?

TOPIC 2: DAIRY AND OUR HEALTH

"I think it would be very, very beneficial for society as a whole if doctors were trained in nutrition, but they're not. They get very limited amounts of nutrition training. And so basically, what they teach is what's popular opinion. The main issue is that the majority of the world's population cannot digest the lactose in milk."

Shakul Kachwalla

"Everything that's contained in any of these dairy products or in any animal product, with the exception of vitamin b12 of course, comes from the plants essentially. And so by having the animals eat them first and then us eating the animals it's a very inefficient way of us getting to that nutrition which we could have just got from the plants in the first place. We don't need to filter our nutrition through animals, we'd do a lot better going straight to the source of the nutrition in the first instance."

Dr. Luke Wilson

"One study found that even moderate amounts of dairy milk consumption can increase women's risk of breast cancer up to 80%, and yet this isn't even mentioned on our national breast cancer foundation website, who are still promoting dairy products saying they're important for bone health – that same old idea."

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- What is new or different information to you about the health of dairy products?
- What did you see or hear in the film about how information about the relative health of dairy products is disseminated?
- What, if any, of the health issues raised in the film is of particular interest or concern to you?

TOPIC 3: THE ECONOMICS OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

"New Zealand's like your beautiful friend that's just gone and got cancer. And so what's the source of the cancer? Well, it's primarily the dairy industry. There's a particular New Zealand mode of economic development, where we have these bonanzas and the bonanzas are based on cashing in our natural resources. The dairy industry for the last 20 years has been a throwback to that 19th century style of development, where we cash something in, and what we've cashed in is our fresh water."

Peter Fraser

"We all just wanna make a dollar. And if it's better returns growing some alternative foods, show us the money. I think some farmers would be quite happy to hang up the apron and grow crops if that was a better return on investment. I don't mind changing. If I can provide a better future for my family, I'll change. I'll stop milking those cows and I'll jump ship. It's quite simple, really, innit?"

Chris Lewis

"I did some more investigating and found out even the country's nutrition guidelines are influenced by the dairy industry. Consultation with "Key stakeholders" meant that Fonterra had a say, and three out of the four issues they raised were changed - including the removal of milk alternatives."

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- What are the economic concerns and pressures that affect the dairy industry?
- In what ways does the film suggest that local and global markets influence the production, sale, and use of dairy products?

TOPIC 4: THE DAIRY INDUSTRY AND ANIMAL WELFARE

"Most people drive past paddocks just like this, and they just see cows eating grass, and they think that that's all there is to it. But when you kind of think about the fact that they're artificially inseminated, the fact that they are then pregnant and being milked for nine months and then they have a baby that's taken away from them every year. I think a lot of people don't know that that happens."

Debbie Matthews

"If the animal experimentation industry wasn't so well hidden and people could actually see the research and tests that cows are used in they'd know that it's not natural. If people who go and buy their natural milk from the supermarket saw a fistulated cow that looks more like a Frankenstein animal than a natural cow running about in a field like they probably imagine, it would be pretty clear to them that there is not a lot natural about the dairy industry."

Tara Jackson

"It's much more convenient for (the farmers) if they believe that the animals, just because they're bred for food, they're just things and they don't have these emotions. And of course, it's completely untrue."

Dr. Jane Goodall

Discussion Questions

- In what ways, if any, did this film change your idea about the welfare of dairy cows and their calves?
- Do you believe the welfare of animals should figure into the way they are raised for human consumption? Why or why not?
- Should humans consume animals and their products? Why or why not?



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