

Beef

1. Are your cows raised on pasture? **Best answer: Yes, for their entire lives.**

Cows were designed to be raised on pasture with a diversity of grasses to eat and plenty of room to roam. Read some [Joel Salatin](#) for a fascinating and endearing look into what a cow's thinking.

2. Are your cows fed anything besides grass and hay? If so, what? **Best answer: Our cows only eat grass and hay for their entire lives.**

Cows are ruminants, which means that their stomachs are designed to eat and digest grasses. Ideally, you want cows that were only fed grass and hay. If the farmer had to feed anything besides hay and grass, make sure she used 100 percent vegetarian (and non-GMO) feed. Corn is obviously vegetarian, but if it makes up too much of a cow's diet, it can make them sick (God didn't design cows to eat corn). On factory farms, cows are fed animal by-products, lots of grain, and plenty of [other unsavory things](#).

3. How are your cows finished? **Best answer: Our cows only eat grass and hay for their entire lives.**

Finishing is the term for the fattening-up process toward the end of a cow's life before slaughter. Some farmers finish with grains, which they say creates the marbling texture that consumers want. But cows have a difficult time digesting grains, and you lose out on some of the many [health benefits](#) of grass-fed beef when you buy beef that isn't 100 percent grass-fed.

4. Are your cows given antibiotics? **Best answer: Our cows are only given medicines when they're actually sick.**

In factory farms, healthy cows are given antibiotics as a preventive measure, which is creating a [superbug health crisis](#). I think animals should only be given antibiotics and other medicines therapeutically, meaning only when they actually need them, just like people.

5. Are your cows given hormones? **Best answer: No.**

Conventional cows are given hormones to promote faster growth. The practice is unhealthy and unsustainable.

Dairy

The same questions as above for beef cows, with a few extras:

1. Are your cows given rBGH or rBST? **Best answer: No.**

rBGH and rBST are growth hormones given to dairy cows to increase their milk production. There are many health dangers associated with these specific growth hormones - [both for the cows and for humans](#).

2. How old are your cows? **Best answer: Varies, but how they answer the question is important.**

On conventional dairy farms, the cows only live 5-7 years, compared to up to 15 for more sustainably-minded farms. These farmers practice more sustainable practices, enabling their dairy cows to live healthier, longer lives (which in turn makes for better, more nutrient-dense milk).

Pork

1. How are your pigs raised? How much time do they spend outdoors? **Best answer: They're raised on pasture, except in the winters, but they always have access to the outdoors.**

Pigs love to roost and nest, so even if they're in a barn, they should have plenty of room and bedding material to do what they do best. Joel Salatin, a farmer whose practices I greatly admire, says it this way: "Respecting and honoring the pigness of the pig is a foundation for societal health."

2. What do you feed your pigs? **Best answer: We let them eat what they want and feed them vegetable scraps from the garden. When we have to supplement, we use non-GMO corn.**

Like factory farm cows, factory farm hogs are fed largely GMO corn and soybeans. Ideally, pigs should root around for roots and bugs (as God designed them to eat); the farmer might supplement their diet with table scraps and non-GMO corn and beans.

3. Are your hogs ever given antibiotics? **Best answer: Our hogs are only given antibiotics if they're sick.**

In factory farms, healthy pigs are given antibiotics as a preventive measure, which is creating a [superbug health crisis](#). I think animals should only be given antibiotics and other medicines therapeutically, meaning only when they actually need them, just like people.

Poultry (and Eggs)

1. How much time do your chickens turkeys spend outdoors? **Best answer: Our birds have access to fresh pasture nearly all day, every day.**

This varies based on the time of year and climate, but the important thing to remember with this question is that your farmer wants to keep his birds outdoors as much as possible - it makes for healthier, tastier chicken or turkey. Your farmer may use [chicken tractors](#) or [mobile hen houses](#) or something else entirely, but if they're serious about making sure their hens are free range, they'll be able to explain to you how much fresh air they get every day.

2. What do your chickens turkeys eat? **Best answer: Whatever is outside of their coop for them to eat that day.**

Chickens and turkeys are natural foragers, so they eat grasses, seeds, bugs, and grains. In factory farm settings, they're fed a stable diet of GMO corn or soybeans with other more [unsavory ingredients](#). If your farmer supplements her birds' diet, she'll be able to tell you exactly what she supplements with - and why.

3. Do you force molting? **Best answer: NO!**

I've never actually asked this of any of our farmers because it's obvious after the first two questions if they're people I want to do business with or not, but you should at least know what [forced molting](#) is. Eggs used to be (still are when raised traditionally) a seasonal item. The hens lay differently throughout the year. They molt naturally, typically in the fall, which is a time when they drastically reduce egg laying and grow a new set of feathers. It is triggered by the shorter days as we head into winter, but in factory farm settings with artificial lights, molting doesn't occur naturally. Read more about it [in detail](#), but basically commercial farmers force molting by withdrawing food and drink from the hens for up to two weeks to increase egg production.

4. Is your poultry given hormones? **Best answer: No, our poultry is never given any hormones, nor any growth supplements or additives of any kind.**

By law, poultry farmers aren't allowed to give their birds hormones; however, many commercial poultry farmers add supplements or additives that promote faster growth. We have no idea what effect those things have on the chicken/turkey - or on us.

5. Is your poultry ever given antibiotics? **Best answer: Our chickens turkeys are only given antibiotics if they're sick.**

In factory farms, healthy pigs are given antibiotics as a preventive measure, which is creating a [superbug health crisis](#). I think animals should only be given antibiotics and other medicines therapeutically, meaning only when they actually need them, just like people. It is very rare for a sustainability-minded farmer to give poultry any antibiotics, especially if they're truly free range.