

L E T T E R S

**Reducing Red Meat?**

Thank you, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, for opening the door to discussion of the meat we consume, and thereby to examination of the treatment of the animals from whom that meat comes (“Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?” Spring 2010). Anyone seriously concerned about living and eating ethically should read Jonathan Safran Foer’s book, *Eating Animals*, a comprehensive and heartbreaking inquiry into the horrors of factory farming. Make no mistake: The neatly packaged steaks or chops we pick up in the supermarket carry an invisible history of filth, disease, brutality, and ecological disaster. We owe it to ourselves as ethical human beings not to support the industry that has produced this abomination.

Ruth Skoglund  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Guess Who’s Coming For Dinner?” does an incredible injustice to the American beef industry, which works very hard to develop and maintain high standards that make beef a healthful, safe, and environmentally friendly food source.

Rabbi Yoffie cites the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s finding that livestock production accounts for 18% of global gas emissions. What he failed to mention is that the 2006 report’s estimate for livestock contribution to emissions is a global figure, and as such not applicable to the U.S. or other developed countries. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the entire U.S. agricultural sector accounts for under 7% of U.S. annual GHG emissions; livestock production is estimated to

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account for 2.6% of total U.S. emissions.

Production agriculture in the United States is unparalleled throughout the world, and to denigrate it by singling out beef production is not a very Jewish thing to do.

Steve Gens  
Amarillo, Texas

The majority of U.S. beef (and chicken) is produced in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), which contradicts the Jewish moral imperative *tzar baal chayim* (humane treatment of animals) because of factory “living” conditions: the animals are pumped full of antibiotics and fed with corn grown in soil that’s depleted with fossil fuel-based nitrogen fertilizers and sprayed with environmentally hazardous herbicides and pesticides. The beef industry’s track record proves that “their livelihood” does not “rely on preserving

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