

Cows cause global warming? Incorrect. Beef production accounts for less emissions than you might think.

July 13, 2012 by [factsaboutbeef](#)

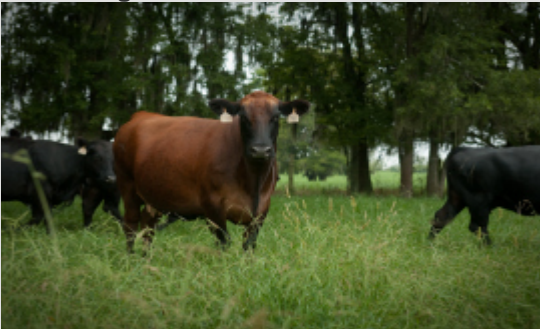
Myth: Cows cause global warming

Beef and cattle production have been targeted as one of the United States' biggest producers of greenhouse gas emissions. Many of the numbers say that livestock or cattle contribute as much as 18 percent of our overall greenhouse gas emissions.

The Facts: Beef production and the environment...the truth

Cattle are not the major cause of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. In fact, their contribution to greenhouse gases is much less than most people think. According to numbers from the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA), cattle production is not a top contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

▪ **According to the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011:**



- Agriculture = 6.9% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Livestock = 3.1% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Methane from livestock = 2.8% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Methane from beef cattle = 1.5% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

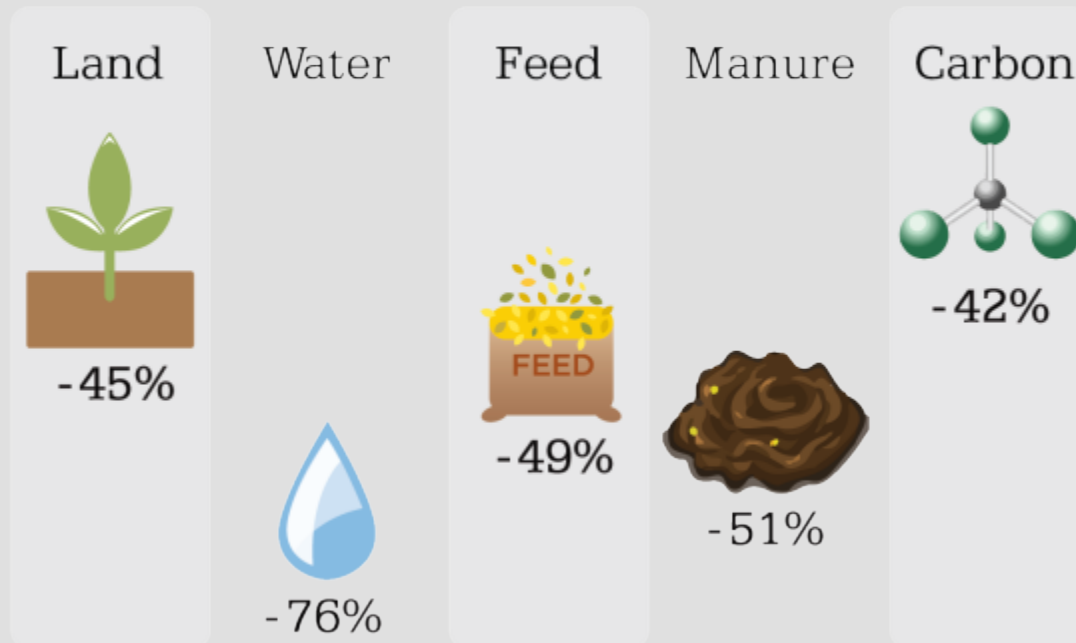
▪ **To compare with other industries:**

- Electricity Generation = 33% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Transportation = 26% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Industrial Use = 11% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
- Residential and Commercial Use = 8% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Always Improving.** The beef community agrees that taking care of the environment is very important. Cattlemen and women believe beef and the environment can exist together without damaging it. The beef industry recently completed a first-of-its-kind [life cycle assessment](#) (LCA) — certified by NSF International — that provides benchmarks on economic, environmental and social contributions in the United States and a roadmap for the journey toward more sustainable beef. After two years of data collection and research, the beef community has proven it's on the right path forward with a 7 percent improvement in environmental and social sustainability from 2005

to 2011—specifically, greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 2 percent during this time period. [Learn more](#) about the beef community's sustainability efforts.

Grain-Finished Beef Uses Fewer Resources and Produces Less Manure/Carbon



Percent Less Than Grass-Fed

- **Grass-fed beef isn't better for the environment.** Many people claim that grass-fed beef is better for the environment; however this is not the case. According to a Washington State University study, if all cattle stayed on grass instead of going to the feedyard, the industry would produce even more greenhouse gas emissions