

Viewpoint: Rethinking pros and cons of livestock ‘factory farms’

Large-scale or industrial farming or factory farms — whatever you want to call them, are farms designed to maximize efficiency, [just like a factory](#). The scale and the efficiency mean these farms require fewer resources, which also translates to lower greenhouse gas emissions. That’s a good thing. Proponents of Big Ag, industrial agriculture, whatever you want to call it — are happy to tout the efficiency of the system.

But everything is a tradeoff. When the factory product is meat, the widgets are animals. And everything gets a lot more complicated because each type of meat comes with its own set of costs, to the environment, the animal’s welfare and the surrounding communities.

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There are alternatives to factory farms for producing meat.... But for most of those systems to work, we also have to give up cheap and abundant meat. So when we talk about climate-food systems solutions, it’s not that we have to pursue the solutions that still rely on the factory farming model (albeit with policies that push for more sustainable models of intensification). It’s just that there really isn’t a set of solutions where consumers can just avoid thinking about the food system and not make any changes at all. Everything is a tradeoff, and we need to be thinking through these tradeoffs now. There’s no more time for delay.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)