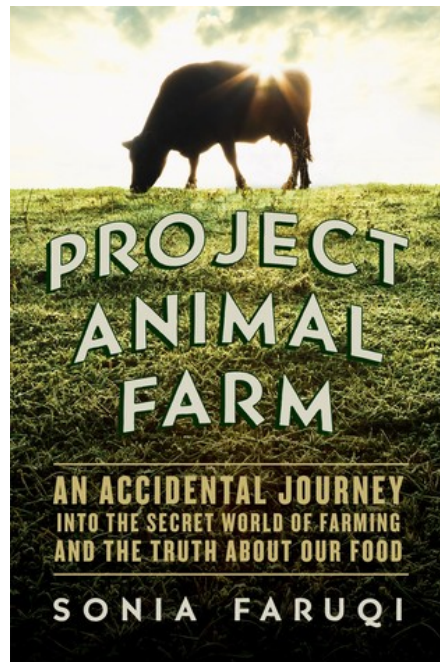




Project Animal Farm: An Accidental Journey into the Secret World of Farming and the Truth About Our Food

Sonia Faruqi

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Born out of a global expedition fearlessly undertaken by a young woman, Project Animal Farm offers a riveting and revealing look at what truly happens behind farm doors.

Sonia Faruqi, an Ivy League graduate and investment banker, had no idea that the night she arrived at the doorstep of a dairy farm would mark the beginning of a journey that would ultimately wind all the way around the world. Instead of turning away from the animal cruelty she came to witness, Sonia made the most courageous decision of her life: a commitment to change things.

Driven by impulsive will and searing passion, Sonia left behind everything she knew and loved to search the planet for solutions to benefit animals, health, and the environment. Over the course of living with farmers, hitchhiking with strangers, and risking her life, she developed surprising insights and solutions—both about the food industry and herself.

Lively and heartfelt, Sonia takes readers on an unforgettable adventure from top-secret egg warehouses in Canada to dairy feedlots in the United States, from farm offices in Mexico to lush pastures in Belize, from flocks of village chickens in Indonesia to factory farms in Malaysia.

Project Animal Farm: An Accidental Journey into the Secret World of Farming and the Truth About Our Food Details

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From Reader Review Project Animal Farm: An Accidental Journey into the Secret World of Farming and the Truth About Our Food for online ebook

Petra X says

Time for a proper review. What I have come away with from this excellent book is:

1. Any label of an animal product that features a wholesome countryside picture is almost certainly lying and there to deceive you that the animal had a lovely life.
2. Organic farming is a joke. Don't pay the extra for organic unless you check that it really is first. If it is a plant then consider its transport, does it get exposed in open crates to exhaust fumes, is it sprayed with ripening-retardants, is it packed in extended-life packaging that gives off chemicals? If so why pay the extra?
3. In one farm the author visited the farmer had gone organic so that he could exploit the market for it. The cows had to spend one day in every three outside, so they did. Standing on concrete. Inside they were in individual pens with a device above their heads that would deliver them a painful electric shock if they did not position themselves exactly right so that their excrement ran directly into the proper channel.

Pigs and chickens were treated much worse than the cows.

4. Abattoirs. It's all right to read Temple Grandin and how she has made a difference to the humane despatch of animals, but the (widespread) reality of it is that animals are killed with extreme cruelty. Stunning, if it is done at all, and quite often the slaughterers can't be bothered, wears off too fast. Animals are not killed with one stroke of a blade, they might even be pounded to death in an area where the slaughterers are standing in blood of previously killed animals. Chickens might be boiled alive as the stunning wasn't successful and the throat-cutting incomplete. Some slaughterers enjoy what they do in a very sadistic way.

All abattoirs must have a Federal Meat Inspector on the premises. These Inspectors are paid directly by the abattoir and may be sourced by them themselves. I.e. If the abattoir is not working to standards and the inspectors decide to enforce them, they are out of a job!

5. There are farmers out there who love their animals and treat them with respect. But it is up to the individual to research them and not trust labels, PR or what the supermarket or butcher says, they will lie to get a sale.
6. American feed manufacturers and breed specialists have exported their goods and animals to the third world where there are few if any government rules about animal welfare. If the US allows 5 birds to a tiny cage which is very cruel, the third world will cram in 8. Anything for money.
7. America is by no means the only country where animal cruelty is routine. However, along with Australia it has laws known as ag-gag laws, that forbid the acts of filming or photographing activity on farms without the consent of their owner. Thereby absolutely silencing whistle-blowers on cruelty and unhygienic setups. This is against free speech and is protection for an industry where the depths of its depravity towards animals can be covered up in the name of profits of where capitalism trumps health or welfare.

So, either accept that you are going to go for the cut of meat or poultry you want at the price you are prepared to pay in the supermarket and don't think about the animals or find a local butcher and check where

the animals are coming from. If you are lucky enough to live near farmers' markets, go locavore. Or vegetarian.

Notes written on reading the book. (view spoiler)

Read March 2016

Tony Parsons says

Sonia Faruqi (Dartmouth) gets let-go as an investment banker on Wall Street & decides to do something different in her life.

Her journey starts out on Michael Miller (57) & Irene Miller organic dairy cow farm. Their daughter Annie Miller (31) is part of the operation also. They have 3 other children.

The 2 farm hands are: Ken (29, 2 boys), & Danielle (18).

Arthur (40, Semex contractor) does the artificial insemination.

Next stop for Sonia Brick Roberts who runs a chicken laying egg farm. Jane Roberts is his wife. Nick Roberts (23), & Paul (50) were the hired hands. Will Roberts (14, son) helps out also.

Journey on Sonia visits Charlies pig farm. The breeding facility was separate & artificial insemination is used also.

Sonia heads out to Jane Roberts turkey farm.

Next stop for Sonia Roger Harley (50) pig farm.

Next stop for Sonia pierce (Dutch) & Mary Vela calf farm.

Sonia's journey next takes her to a sheep slaughter/processing plant owned by Abdul (Pakistani). Nader (Muslim), Moss & Victor work on the kill floor.

Her journey continues as she does her very best to get animal/organic farming industry to open up. But like all industries there are secrets.

The Jungle, Upton Beall Sinclair, Jr. 1 of my favorite books as a kid, now American schools won't let them read it.

Towards the end I felt it was jammed packed or hurried for a finish.

I worked in the slaughter meat packing business for 10 yrs. 2 years in production. I know what goes on. I also worked in the sale barn environment.

I did not receive any type of compensation for reading & reviewing this book. While I receive free books from publishers & authors, I am under no obligation to write a positive review. Only an honest one.

A very awesome book cover, great font & writing style. A very well written informative book on the -, & + of the animal/organic farming industry. It was very easy for me to read/follow from start/finish & never a dull moment. There were no grammar/typo errors, nor any repetitive or out of line sequence sentences. Lots of exciting scenarios, with several twists/turns & a great set of unique characters to keep track of. This could also make another documentary great movie, science, agricultural college PP presentation or mini TV series (A & E, History channel). I really enjoyed the book. There is no doubt in my mind this is a very easy rating of 5 stars.

Thank you for the free Goodreads; Pegasus books; Autographed; ARC paperback book
Tony Parsons MSW (Washburn)

Amy says

Even when you know that there's mistreatment among dairy and animal farms, as I do, this remains a shocking and detailed expose into the disheartening and mostly cruel world of food production. I dare any meat eater to read this book and not think about the farm to table process. Author Sonia Faruqi worked on Wall Street after graduating from Dartmouth College. When the market plummeted and she lost her job, she decided it might be interesting to volunteer on a farm for a bit. A vegetarian, Faruqi visited a dairy farm, a pig farm, a chicken farm, an organic farm, a pastoral farm and a slaughter house in Canada. She then traveled to Indonesia, Malaysia, Dubai, Singapore and Belize and then Vermont [primary agricultural state in New England] and California [second in the nation in animal agriculture behind Texas]. Both Vermont and California have no AG GAG laws—laws which prohibit undercover investigations on the conditions of industrial agriculture operations) to visit farms and factory farms there.

“Certain forms of enjoyment are dependent on drinking a drug of ignorance. Where suffering exists, it's always there in the shadows, ready to strike at a moment's notice. Our method of acquiring wealth says more about us than the wealth we acquire.”

Faruqi writes about her experiences at each farm with meticulous details and vivid descriptions. Interspersing her personal experience with facts and figures, Faruqi provides an eye-opening, devastating and shocking explanation of why the food industry must change. At these various farms, she witnessed animals living on top of each other, never getting outside, animals dying from abhorrent conditions. The farms reeked of ammonia as animals stood in their own waste. Dead animals often weren't located for days because of the over-crowding. In the egg industry, the norm is to slaughter hens at 18 months old. Hens are de-beaked with a hot blade. Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland and Denmark banned this barbaric practice. Animals get artificially inseminated and are bred with particular strains that serve one purpose: to feed the masses. Chickens have abnormally large breasts that make it difficult for them to move. Faruqi writes: “Artificial insemination is not only unnatural, but harmful. Millions of dairy cows today all over the world are the descendants of only a few dozen bulls. This is the equivalent to passing a complex, swirling pot of genes through a needle pinhole. Such narrow genetic limitation never occurs in nature, because the long-term survival of any species depends on genetic diversity.”

Most factory farmers don't need to interact with the animals or spend any time near the cages. Using a smart phone and various apps animals can be feed, watered and monitored. 70% of antibiotic use in the United States is in farm animals. Americans spend 10% or less of their salary on food while Europeans spend 50% of their salary on food. Throughout her journey, she meets people with various approaches to farming. Some extremely kind, some who treat animals as products. A few get stressed out by their jobs. Others turn the other way and ignore the negative impact farm life takes upon the animals. Interestingly many of the farm workers or owners are vegetarian. Faruqi notes: "I realized that I'd hardly ever heard about vegetarianism more than I had in this animal farming community that I happened to stumble into. It can't be a coincidence that some of the people closest to the system of meat production are boycotting meat."

"When animals suffer, people also suffer. Many farms I investigated were in the throes of disease."

One question I have is why we are crueller to animals than Europeans. Why does Europe have many more sensible and humane protections for animals and farms? Americans love their cats and dogs but it's completely different when it comes to how that hamburger or chicken breast arrived at the grocery store. Most choose not to think about it or to just think that the way it's always been done is fine.

If you don't care about the animals maybe you care about your carbon footprint: "a single factory farm can generate as much waste as an entire city." While Project Animal Farm commands the reader's attention through its well-written prose, conversational style and thorough research, it's so disturbing at times I had to leave it for a bit. The United States remains one of the worst offenders in humane treatment and protection of animals in the food industry.

Some other tidbits [and there are plenty, so read the book]:

- hens are slaughtered at 18 months
- 9 out of 10 sows in the United States and Canada spend their lives in crates.
- about piglets at a pig farm, Faruqi writes: "From head to hoof, they lived marinated in manure."
- the veal industry is a by-product of the dairy industry. If you support the dairy industry you support the disgusting practice of "raising" veal. Male calves aren't wanted by the dairy industry and are sold to veal farmers.
- eight and a half billion chickens, 239 million turkeys, 112 million pigs, 32 million cattle and 2 million sheep and lambs were killed for human consumption in the United States and Canada in 2013. "It is impossible not to view the raising and butchering of animals for food as wasteful and hopelessly inefficient." Approximately 50% of an animal is actually consumed.
- in Malaysia [population 30 million] there are 500 KFCs, 300 Pizza Huts and 300 McDonalds. Malaysians eat more fast food than Americans. 1/3 of Americans eat fast food once a week while 3/5 of Malaysians eat fast food once a week.
- Mexico [population 122 million] has 240 Walmarts, 150 Sam's Clubs, 30 Costco, 500 Dominos, 380 McDonalds, 300 KFCs and 180 Pizza Huts.

—review by Amy Steele

Sonia Faruqi will be reading and answering questions about Project Animal Farm at the Capitol Theatre in Arlington on Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 6pm.

FTC Disclosure: I received this book for review from Pegasus Books.

review posted at Entertainment Realm:

<http://entertainmentrealm.com/2015/07...>

Peacegal says

I have read a lot of books about modern agriculture, but PROJECT ANIMAL FARM is one of the best written, most evocative, and most thought-provoking out there. I would recommend it to omnivores as much as to vegans—both will learn something; both will have their worldviews jostled a bit.

Faruqi's words are clear-eyed and fair, perhaps because she is wholly new to the agriculture scene. She left a soulless job on Wall St. to write this book—she has no history in either farming or animal advocacy, so she brings no previous biases to the table. The author visits all kinds of animal farms, all over the world, so the book has the feel of a particularly urgent travelogue.

We meet animals and farmers. We step onto the premises of farms from the most bucolic pastures to the most industrial factory complexes. We see the entire gamut of animal emotion, and the surprisingly complex range of attitudes farmworkers have toward the beings in their care.

I have never seen farms described as successfully and hauntingly as they are in PROJECT ANIMAL FARM. The author is truly talented, her immediacy and use of language makes you feel as if you are standing right there in the chicken shed or the milking parlor with her. The section in which the author visits a factory pig farm is likely to make you wince the next time a dining companion orders ribs or a coworker brings a ham sandwich. The sheer demoralization of these famously intelligent animals in conditions whose crowding and smell defy belief...you just really have to wonder how we as a society have allowed ourselves to sink so low.

True, the author does get rather starry-eyed when touring pastoral farms, those extremely rare entities that see to animals' welfare before they see to their bank accounts. ("Free run," "family-owned," "natural," and "local" don't mean much and sometimes don't mean anything at all in terms of sustainability and animal treatment, as the author demonstrates times and time again. Don't rely on pretty websites and product packaging to tell you everything you need to know.) Pastoral farms still rely on the ultimate betrayal—the "one bad day" we'd never wish on friend or foe, and certainly not on our beloved pets. Faruqi's descriptions of what she saw at her visit to a slaughterhouse that probably services some of these small farms should amply confirm that. However, I'm a realist. I would much rather animals experience less cruelty than more cruelty. I am with the author in that I agree that pastoral farms are light years better than factory farms, and would much rather see omnivores supporting them.

Multiple times throughout the text, the author emphasizes that consumers have the power to change things. They can speak with farmers. They can seek out higher welfare animal products. However, it is my view after countless observations and discussions with people about food, is that higher-welfare needs to be the *only* choice. Generally speaking, the average person seeks familiarity, convenience, and low price when selecting foods. They don't want to extend themselves or take any special steps. Higher welfare meat, eggs, and dairy are frequently sold in "natural foods" sections in stores, and I have had multiple people—including fitness devotees—admit to me they've never even entered that section of the grocery store. Suggest to many people that they pay a few extra cents for cage-free eggs or source their meat more carefully, and they get that horribly put-out expression, like you've just asked them to bike to the moon.

So, for Faruqi's idea to work, higher-welfare needs to become the norm. Pasture-farmed meat, milk, and eggs need to be the *only* animal products available at grocery stores which once sold both factory-farmed and (a small amount of) higher welfare, and restaurants which only sold the factory farm-sourced stuff. There are so many impediments, both mental and societal, that keep even otherwise intelligent and kind people from making humane choices.

But the question is, could this work? The author believes it can, but she also acknowledges question of how much land would be needed if we were to raise all of the animals Americans alone currently use and consume in a free-range fashion—some estimates put it at more land than the continental US possesses! So clearly, diets will have to change too. Meat and other animal foods would have to go back to what they have been for much of human history, occasional ingredients instead of items to be taken for granted multiple times per day.

Not discussed in FARM, but a hot topic nonetheless, is the viability of lab-grown meat. If we get to the point that the majority of meat consumed is lab-grown, with some niche pastoral farms supplying specialized markets, it would be no more weird and unnatural than what is currently happening with factory farms dominating the scene—but it would be a heck of a lot less cruel.

Factory farms currently produce nearly all of the meat, eggs, and dairy people consume. But it wasn't always that way, and it doesn't have to be this way forever.

Chelsea says

This book is scarier than any horror film I've watched. 4 1/2 stars

The reason it is so chilling to read this is because it is reality - this is where your food comes from. The happy cow in a field with the sun shining down that's often depicted on milk cartons is not real. If they drew a depiction of where the milk actually comes from on the box, no one would buy it.

This isn't even a hidden dark side of the food industry - all it takes is a google search, a documentary, even just not immediately shutting down and zoning out when you hear things about the system from which your food comes from.

Sonia Faruqi decided to volunteer at a dairy farm for fun, expecting it to be like Little House on the Prairie. Of course, she is in for quite a shock when confronted with the harsh reality of the dairy industry. Impulsively, Sonia decides to seek out the truth of animal agriculture as an industry, getting an inside look at pig farms, veal production, slaughter plants, and factory farms in Malaysia, just to name a few.

I have researched the topic of animal agriculture heavily. I've been vegetarian on and off since I realized what meat was and I've been vegan for a year and a half with no intention of stopping. I consider myself highly versed in this topic and can rattle off any number of disturbing statistics at a split second's notice (trying not to do that as much though lol).

Even with my prior knowledge, Project Animal Farm: An Accidental Journey into the Secret World of Farming and the Truth About Our Food still managed to shock and disgust me.

Sonia is coming at this from a complete outsider's perspective, so she's learning alongside the reader. Her shock at the conditions in these farms truly permeates the text. The slaughterhouse chapter was one of the most vile things that I have ever read.

It's becoming harder and harder for me to accept the fact that society seems so determined to remain ignorant to the true conditions of the farms their food comes from. Why? Is it too hard to hear? Is it so they can claim plausible deniability?

I'm tired of seeing people tweet about how dogs deserve the world before shrugging on their Canada Goose

coyote fur-lined coat. I'm tired of clicking on a video of an adorable piglet playing to find someone felt the need to comment a gif of roasting meat (the people who do that, I imagine, likely are the most insecure about their meat eating habits).

Books like *Project Animal Farm* remind me why I need to keep advocating and fighting for the animals of the world. Yes, it's difficult to read, but that's all the more reason that it needs to be read.

This book is incredibly well researched, but it's also a personal journey. Sonia is brave and a bit reckless in her pursuits. She is brutally honest and gives the facts while trusting the reader to be able to make their own conclusion from the information provided.

The beginning is captivating - I felt caught up in Sonia's horror and propelled by her determination to learn more despite the dangers. It loses a bit of steam in the last 100 pages, but it's still by far one best books on this subject that I have read.

I really hope that if you've stumbled upon this review, you'll perhaps look a bit more into the topic of factory farming. If you're new to this subject, *Project Animal Farm* and *Eating Animals* are great introductory books on the subject. I can't wait to share this book with others!

Kristy K says

4.5 Stars

An amazing look into the world of agriculture and farming. Very eye-opening.

Sonia Crites says

I truly believe everyone should read this book and be informed about factory farming. It's destroying our health and the environment. Not to mention the horrific animal abuse it normalizes.

Ellen Christian says

I switched to buying organic as often as possible years ago both for health reasons and because to me, organic means nicer. After reading *Project Animal Farm* by Sonia Faruqi, I realize that's not always the case. When I see the word "organic" on my milk carton, I picture pretty cows in a field of grass on some small farm in Vermont. I'm sure that's probably what a lot of people think.

Really though, not all animals that are raised as organic are treated well. There is horrible abuse, disinterest and a lack of caring even on some organic farms – especially the large ones. That abuse extends from the farms to the "kill floors" and beyond. Instead of running away, Sonia Faruqi tried to change these conditions. As disturbing as her story is, I'm very glad I read it. Because it makes me want to make a difference even if it is buying more things from our local farms where I know the farmers and know the conditions aren't like the ones in the book.

I hope that you'll take the time to read *Project Animal Farm* by Sonia Faruqi and maybe make some changes

yourself.

Edison G.S. says

Eye opener and heartbreaking

Sonia Faruqi reveals a world that most don't know exists and the few who do, choose to ignore its reality. That is the world of animal farming, if this can still be called farming and those poor beings can still be called animals. Farming has become a inhumane industrial process. Animals are seen and treated as pieces of the production process and not like living beings. As pieces, when they get damaged (sick) or are not producing, they are simply thrown away (killed). What's worse is that the farming industry as it is managed has negative effects on animal well being and health, human health, the environment and even the economy. If the industry changed its way of doing things, they would have more income. Yet the local governments turn a blind eye in this inhumane, no productive, and damaging industry. I assume because farmers support the local government in the first place. The book is well researched. Part 1 was very informative, but part 2 started to feel too repetitive and dragging. (That's why I give it 4 stars) Still, this is a book everyone should read.

Tina says

Not my kind of book. That said this sparked a very lively and in-depth discussion at my book club.

In truth, I didn't find this book very well written and I could not figure out if it was fiction or non-fiction... Even if this was fiction based on actual events I do believe that the treatment of farm animals in factory farms is not what it should be. For that reason, I will be making better choices that I'm more comfortable with at the grocery store.

Lucille says

this is the most compelling of books for anyone interested in animal welfare and/or human health and/or environmental sustainability. "when we argue that saving a few cents on a egg is more important to us than the welfare of the hen that laid the egg, what we are saying is that our minor, trivial interests deserve greater consideration than the major welfare interests of a fellow living being."

Fredrick Danysh says

While the writing is professional, the book itself is full of PETA stereotypes based on on brief stints on poorly run commercial farms, many not in the USA. The agricultural industry could if ran the way the author describes. This is a highly biased piece based on a large number of Liberal, animals' rights sources that appear to look for bad examples instead of examining the issues fairly. This was a free review copy obtained through Goodreads.com.

Chloe says

Shortly after moving to Canada from the US a few years ago, I read *Eating Animals* by the incomparable Jonathan Safran Foer. Much like him, I had been struggling through an internal debate for years: to meat, or not to meat?

I've always loved animals, but I haven't always particularly loved meat. The thing is, though, it's just so *easy* to be a carnivore. When you eat meat not only are your menu choices vastly expanded, but eating meat also often appeals to modern human laziness. Too tired to cook? Just drive through McDonald's. Don't want to make your own special meal when eating at home with family? Just eat whatever mom's putting on the table.

Anyway, back to Foer (and, eventually, *Project Animal Farm*). I read his book and was enlightened. The enlightenment didn't leave much of a lasting mark, though, and I think I know why. Somehow I thought that, being in Canada, the contents of his book just simply did not apply to me. Because, hey, isn't everything just *nicer* in Canada? At the time of reading his book I couldn't find any similar books on the Canadian meat/dairy culture (not that I tried too hard). But now I have, and of course I was wrong.

Through *Project Animal Farm: An Accidental Journey into the Secret World of Farming and the Truth About Our Food*, I have learned that the Canadian meat industry is far from nice. In some cases, Canadian farmers are actually permitted to use practices outlawed in parts of the US. And it isn't just animals for slaughter that face the worst of it; egg-laying hens and dairy cows are still forced to live in abominable conditions. And, actually, it isn't just those animals either - it's everyone involved in modern factory and industrial farming as well as the planet as a whole. The statistics of the amount of toxic waste created by this system is depressing and almost unfathomable.

I don't want to use this review as a synopsis of book, so the last thing I'll say is that beyond convincing me that I cannot continue to support Canada's wayward meat industry, it has also shown me that many other countries have a long way to go. Sonia traveled to Asia, the Middle East, and all across North America to investigate. Her book shows the massive faults with the global meat industry, but also offers some hope.

Note: 4 stars out of 5 because I didn't 100% dig on her writing style.

Rachel says

From chapter 1, I was captivated by *Project Animal Farm*. Sonia's courage and drive to travel around the world alone, visiting farms, is remarkable. She captured these experiences in vivid, detailed writing; each place she visited came alive in my mind. Every page I read affected me in some way. I couldn't stop talking about it. As I was reading it, I even bought two more copies as gifts for friends.

I love how Sonia's book is a narrative. It is not simply a dry, factual report of her findings, but an emotional, honest, introspective, engaging account; it reads like fiction.

This book made such an impact on me that I no longer have any desire to eat meat...and I think twice about where I buy milk/eggs from.

I highly recommend Sonia's book. It will be life-changing!

Laurenjf says

I loved this book! Faruqi provides an informative, engaging, and highly readable account of the farming industry. Her unique writing style made me feel as if I were with her during every step of her journey.
