

Think Twice Before Beef's for Dinner



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We all know eating fewer animal products is good for the environment. But when you do eat meat, do a favor for both the planet and your health and try to choose protein from humane, sustainable farms. Besides, it's proven that compassionately-treated animals produce tastier, more tender beef.

It's true that the majority of the animals raised for food live miserable lives of confinement in dark, overcrowded facilities known as factory farms.

The conditions at these places are horrifying.

Antibiotics are administered regularly to the animals in an attempt to ward off diseases bred by unnatural, unsanitary conditions. But, instead of doing their best to keep these animals healthy, farm managers are more concerned with keeping the animals just alive enough. It's more about *how sick can these animals be without dying* than it is about cultivating healthy livestock. And, to promote faster growth, the animals are fed hormones and even more antibiotics.

It's said that two percent of livestock farms now raise 40 percent of all animals in the U.S.--that's staggering. The giant quantities of manure produced by the crowded animals can lead to tainted water and severe air pollution.

Animals raised organically are not only free of antibiotics, added hormones and loads of other nasty stuff we don't want to put into our bodies, but they also get to graze outside in the fresh air. Many restaurants across the country are jumping onto the sustainable bandwagon and are increasingly offering meat from responsible farmers. At [The Dish's Dish](#)--my NYC and LA weekly home chef business--we always provide our clients with the highest quality meat possible.

[The Dish's Dish's Favorite Sustainable Farms:](#)

- [Niman Ranch](#)
- [Greyledge Farm](#)
- [Albaugh's Frosty Acres](#)
- [Autumn's Harvest Farm](#)
- [Chileno Valley Natural Beef](#)
- [Creekstone Farms](#)
- [DeyDey's Best Beef Ever](#)
- [Bird's Hollow Beef](#)

New York hot-spot [Monkey Bar](#) and the five-star [Mayflower Inn & Spa](#) in Washington, Conn. both only serve meat from the family-owned [Greyledge Farm](#) where animals are raised in open pastures and processed locally.

Mayflower's wildly popular Black Angus beef burger is made from Greyledge cattle that were fed nutritious grasses, clovers and natural minerals. As a result, the herd is content, healthy and high in vitamin E, omega-3s and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA)--which is found to help fight cancer and lower cholesterol. In addition, a diet of grazed grass requires much less fossil fuel than a standard feedlot diet of dried corn and soy. The Greyledge family also employs solar and wind power on their farm.

The fewer total "food miles" the meat travels, the better things are for the environment--that's why humane, on-farm or local slaughtering practices are so important.

New York City's [The Shake Shack](#) and [The Standard Grill](#) get their top-notch meat from [Creekstone Farms](#). Creekstone's processing plant was actually designed with animal welfare in mind by Dr. Temple Grandin.

Sustainable farm powerhouse Niman Ranch produces all natural meats for some of the top restaurants across the country by raising livestock traditionally and humanely. What started in the early 1970s on an eleven-acre ranch in a small coastal town just north of San Francisco has grown into a network of more than 650 independent family farmers across the country that share Niman Ranch's dedication to strict protocols.

Along with [The River Cafe](#) and Jean-Georges' [Mercer Kitchen](#) in NYC, Niman Ranch also has quiet the extensive clientele on the West Coast: [Rustic Canyon](#), a hip wine bar and seasonal kitchen in Santa Monica, offers up the sustainable protein, as does [Forage](#), the new hipster joint in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Silver Lake.

Even many of the gourmet food trucks are saying no to factory farms. [Patty Wagon](#) is roaming the streets of L.A., serving up sassy organic sliders made from Idaho-bred, grass-fed beef.

Do you think it's important for restaurant owners to take responsibility and only serve beef that comes from sustainable, humane farms? What are some of your favorite restaurants that serve sustainable meat?

For more great info about the benefits of grass-fed food, visit [EatWild.com](#).