



# **Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food**

*Gene Baur*

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## **Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food** Gene Baur

Leading animal rights activist Gene Baur examines the real cost of the meat on our plates -- for both humans and animals alike -- in this provocative and thorough examination of the modern farm industry. Many people picture cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens as friendly creatures who live happily within the confines of a peaceful family farm, arriving as food for humans only at the end of their sun-drenched lives. That's what Gene Baur had been told -- but when he first visited a stockyard he realized that this rosy depiction couldn't be more inaccurate. Amid the stench, noise, and filth, his attention was drawn in particular to one sheep who had been cast aside for dead. But as Baur walked by, the sheep raised her head and looked right at him. She was still alive, and the one thing Baur knew for sure that day was that he had to get her to safety. Hilda, as she was later named, was nursed back to health and soon became the first resident of Farm Sanctuary -- an organization dedicated to the rescue, care, and protection of farm animals. The truth is that farm production does not depend on the family farmer with a small herd of animals but instead resembles a large, assembly-line factory. Animals raised for human consumption are confined for the entirety of their lives and often live without companionship, fresh air, or even adequate food and water. Viewed as production units rather than living beings with feelings, ten billion farm animals are exploited specifically for food in the United States every year. In Farm Sanctuary, Baur provides a thoughtprovoking investigation of the ethical questions involved in the production of beef, poultry, pork, milk, and eggs -- and what each of us can do to stop the mistreatment of farm animals and promote compassion. He details the triumphs and the disappointments of more than twenty years on the front lines of the animal protection movement. And he introduces sanctuary. us to some

## **Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food Details**

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# From Reader Review Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food for online ebook

## Shel says

Of all the causes one could devote their life to in this world — farm animals? It's easy to forget how much we love them. Gene Baur offers a reminder.

Baur, co-founder of Farm Sanctuary, <http://www.farmsanctuary.org>, a farm animal protection organization with sanctuaries in New York and California, talks about his activism on behalf of farmed animals.

The book contains disturbing descriptions of suffering and facts about how animals are treated. It also examines the consequences for human health and the environment. It does not, however, tip over into titillating descriptions of violence. Rather, the focus is on the animals (the small percentage among the billions slaughtered) that make their way to farm sanctuary.

The humane farms serve as sanctuaries for the animals, but also for the activists. Watching individual, named animals at ease and healthy on the farm, people can take comfort in the lives they can save while confronting the institutionalized cruelty inflicted on billions of others.

It can be easy to forget how enjoyable and healing it is to see animals living in peace. In part, that's because, viewed as commodities, most animals are now hidden from view in warehouses. Factory farming has become standard practice (actually a number of increasingly "efficient" and increasingly cruel practices) enforced by agribusiness.

With the suffering of farmed animals come health and environmental disasters and failures in social justice for the contract farmers and farm workers.

So, yes, of all the causes one could devote their life to in this world Gene Baur chose farm animals. Thank you, Mr. Baur.

He makes a compelling case for why people should consider the treatment of cows, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and pigs. When we're aware, we care.

**Pairs well with non-fiction:** *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong; *Forks Over Knives* by Gene Stone; *The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell; and *The Life You Can Save* and *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer

**Pairs well with fiction:** *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair; *Animals* by Don Le Pan; *The Ethical Assassin* by David Liss; *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro; *The Unit* by Ninni Holmqvist; and *Vegan Revolution... With Zombies!* by David Agranoff

## Quotes:

"...it's not much of a stretch to say that our health care crisis is closely tied to the health crisis in the animal agriculture industry."

"...there are now more prisoners than farmers in the United States. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference."

(attributed to Brian Halwell of the Worldwatch Institute <http://www.worldwatch.org>)

"Accepting institutionalized animal cruelty as a cost of doing business requires a flexible conscience, and I guess we shouldn't be surprised when the same attitude starts slipping into the way we treat each other."

"It's time to face industrial agribusiness, whose blindness to the suffering of animals is almost equal by their indifference to the well-being of the public. Our health, the appropriation of scarce planetary resources, food security, and how we treat other animals cannot be left to corporations and the government alone."

"...farm animals are sentient beings, capable of awareness, feeling, and suffering, and we humans have an ethical obligation to refrain from behaviors that inflict suffering on them."

"Eating plants instead of animals goes a long way toward promoting kindness and sustainability, not to mention good health."

"It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves...The surface of the earth is soft and impressionable by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity!" — Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

"Every person and every living creature," Leo Tolstoy wrote, "has a sacred right to the gladness of springtime."

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## **Sally Bennett says**

Having visited Farm Sanctuary and heard Gene Baur speak on more than one occasion, I had a good idea what to expect from this book. I knew I would learn so much more than I had already learned, and the book didn't disappoint. More than ever, I so admire those activists who took action years before I finally figured it out. They've had to face so many hurdles and challenges and setbacks that would have defeated many.

As one already on board with the mindset, I found it hard to read some of the horrible details of what they and the animals they were saving had to face. The absurdity of the human race jumped off of the pages at every turn. I found myself getting angry, near tears, wondering why and how people can succeed at such blatant cruelty. But the book left me with hope, reminding me that there are good people who are strong and will continue to be the voice for all animals, no matter what they have to overcome.

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## **Melina says**

I saw Gene Baur interviewed last year on Jon Stewart's Daily Show and felt compelled to read his book, Farm Sanctuary. I have to admit it took me several months to finish the book as I would take long pauses between chapters. He provides his hard to stomach real life experiences saving farm animals in dire situations and also goes into great detail describing current commercial farming industry practices. As a vegetarian, I found it hard to read some of the gruesome stories, but found the rescue stories uplifting and reassuring.

After reading the book, I reevaluated my own thoughts and feelings regarding consuming dairy and eggs. I've since decided to adhere to a more vegan diet and continue educating myself on being a more informed consumer of goods to ensure companies I support have ethical practices and are cruelty free.

I encourage people to give the book a read whether they're vegan or carnivores. The book encourages self-examination and a more humane way of living.

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### **Molly says**

I'm with Baur in spirit, but the writing was stilted, and the organization struck me as strange. There was no true narrative thread to follow throughout the book, and the book itself never seemed terribly human. Humane, yes. But there were no "characters" to connect to throughout the storytelling, no steady lens. I think I was more interested in the goings-on on the actual farm as opposed to the reasons for the farm--I didn't need the continual glimpses into slaughterhouses and onto feedlots or the statistics of how those things are bad--instead, I'd rather celebrate the positive that is a place like Farm Sanctuary.

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### **Jo says**

Amazing book by one of my favourite organizations:

<http://farmsanctuary.org/> <3

Devastating yet hopeful, heartbreaking yet heartwarming.. this is a wonderful book that I think everyone would benefit from reading. I think it's so important that we understand where our food comes from and educate ourselves with how it's made. After each chapter there's a profile featuring one of the many animals at the sanctuary that they've rescued. ♥ There's also a list of resources included at the back of the book: websites, books etc and even a few recipes! I hope to one day be able to visit the sanctuary! They're a wonderful organization.

"Overcoming cruelty is something we can do one person, one choice, one act of conscience at a time. Eating meat is a habit we choose, not an unwritten law to be blindly obeyed. In the face of factory farming's harsh and violent spirit, every one of us has the power to say no and in doing so show the world there is a kinder way.

When all the arguing is done, all the objections heard and excuses made, it comes down to this: if you're aware of something bad happening, are you going to try to make it better?"

<3 <3

I had the pleasure of hearing Gene Baur speak at the Toronto Food Festival in 2009 and it was a wonderful experience. He's definitely my hero, that's for sure. :)

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### **Chris Fenn says**

It must be understood that this book is aimed at the broader public, thus those familiar with veganism and

animal advocacy may find it somewhat basic. Nevertheless Baur succeeds in weaving together an excellent general interest book that combines autobiography, advocacy and history. This is one of those books that reaffirms my own commitments and is a fascinating look at an unlikely success story. Having visited Farm Sanctuary this summer I wanted to know more and was very satisfied by this book. A great book to recommend to anyone interested in animal rights and vegan living! Baur is a unique individual who is driven by empathy and drive.

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## **Tracy says**

Last Thanksgiving I adopted a turkey.

Ok, he didn't actually come to live with me; I "adopted" him financially with a gift to Farm Sanctuary.

Farm Sanctuary, a haven for rescued farmed animals, began 20 years ago when Gene Baur rescued a goat -- which he named Hilda -- from a pile of dead goats in a stockyard.

In "Farm Sanctuary" Baur takes readers through the past 20 years of his life and that of his sanctuary, which now has two locations -- Watkins Glen, NY, and Orland, CA. He recounts stories of rescues, his work to improve the lives of farmed animals through legislation, and issues regarding each species of farmed animal. Interspersed between these chapters are profiles of individual animals at Farm Sanctuary.

At times I needed a break from the horrors that farmed animals endure, so I read "Striking at the Roots" concurrently. But it's important that we don't turn away from this information. If you eat meat and/or eggs or drink milk from animals, you owe it to the animals to know the truth about their lives. And you owe it to yourself to know the facts about what you're putting into your bodies -- and into your children's bodies.

Despite the cruelty that we learn about, "Farm Sanctuary" is ultimately inspiring. It shows how one person's work can save thousands of animals. And it shows how something as simple as a meal can also help animals.

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## **Shaya says**

I thought Farm Sanctuary was good not incredible. I liked the beginning that was more personal narrative and described the path to creating Farm Sanctuary. The part in the middle was less engaging. Maybe that's because I have read other books and get the basic point that our food system is really bad and cruel. I would have liked it if he had spent more time on kind solutions for the consumer to still eat animal products because I don't think the world will ever go entirely vegan, but creating dialogue that this is bad and we need to find more humane ways to eat meat and dairy products would have been helpful. That said, I did find it interesting that he is able to work on legislature for better conditions and film and talk about such cruelty. Reading this I definitely found in myself a division between "pet" animals and "food" animals. I had to work harder to feel compassion for suffering animals that fit in the food category than I would have if the same thing had been happening to dogs or cats. The part about ag classes at Cornell was very interesting, how people can be desensitized by being told "this is normal" by someone in charge even if they originally think a practice is cruel.

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## **Tim Smerken says**

Farm Sanctuary gives a very good description of many of the abuses that take place on factory farms, while also shining a positive light on the many animals that have been rescued and are now living out their lives at Farm Sanctuary. The book also features a large list of resources and organizations to follow for continued learning/guidance. I would highly recommend this book to anyone, as it is very important to know the truth behind the food we eat!

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## **Kristine says**

This book has changed my entire view on the meat that sits on the shelves of grocery stores. I do not eat meat but my family does and after reading this book I will be making some serious changes with the food that enters our house. There were moments where my jaw dropped to the floor at the cruelty some of these "farmers" inflicted on these defenseless animals and Gene Baur and his staff should be respected to the highest degree for the work they do. Farm Sanctuary is less than 4 hours from where I live and I have already started to make plans to visit next summer. In the meantime, I will remain aware of where my food is coming from, thanks to this book.

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## **Shannon says**

I loved this book!!

The Book was a wonderful read and full of information in regards to the welfare of animals that are viewed as commodities in Food Industry and how much the farming industry has changed over the last 50 years, I loved how the book also featured profiles of animals that were rescued by Gene (Author )and the Farm Sanctuary team. This Book is a wonderful read for anyone interested in how Animals are farmed in the 21st century, The treatment of animals in the production line(s)and how our food ends up on our plates.

This book is wonderfully written and i highly reccomend it :)

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## **Laura JC says**

A seminal work about the treatment of animals in the food industry and the evolution of a sanctuary for farmed animals. I so admire Gene Bauer for witnessing and documenting and then relating the situation in a straightforward way. I wish everyone would read this book.

I especially liked the last chapter. A few key passages:

"The best and easiest way to promote health, compassion, and sustainability is to adopt a vegan lifestyle and to buy locally produced, organic plant foods. Animal foods...waste vast resources and are inherently violent. ...If you continue eating meat and dairy products and you are concerned about animal welfare, then I hope you'll avoid factory-farmed meat, milk and eggs. To buy these products is to shore up a system of abuse that destroys animals and people, ecosystems, and healthy communities. Every time we spend a dollar on food we are effectively saying, 'I support this system.'"

About sanctuary: "There are always more animals than we can provide shelter for. ...So beyond providing a

home for the animals we can take in, the sanctuaries act as a reminder that for billions of other farmed animals there is no respite or place of mercy."

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### **Linda Riebel says**

Baur, co-founder of Farm Sanctuary, describes the cruelty of factory farming, where cows, chickens, and turkeys are confined, mistreated, and neglected in order to maximize profits. This thorough account also covers agribusiness practices, weak or poorly enforced laws, and exploitation of human workers. Profiles of individual rescued animals showcase the humane alternative Baur helped pioneer. The appendix of organizations and websites that support compassionate food and animal advocacy gives readers ways to take action and participate in the humane movement. I don't know if I'll be able to finish this book -- I've never been able to tolerate well any graphic descriptions of horrors and tortures of animals. But there's plenty of positive material in here too.

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### **Katey says**

The first portion of the book was making it shape up to be nothing special. As a vegan and someone who has read many different accounts and facts about the horrors of CAFO's and slaughterhouses and the factory farming system in general, nothing was new to me. It also seemed like he wasn't promoting veganism but improved farming methods as a way to end the suffering (the book was only leading up and hinting at it until the end, where he explicitly stated it, so that's good) But it was Gene Baur's personal accounts, the telling of how Farm Sanctuary came to be, that sets this book apart from others. The personal profiles and stories of some of the animals at Farm Sanctuary was a really good and important touch, and am glad the book came together at the end to promote veganism, and what an individual could do to end the suffering of billions of animals. The book was about getting you in the right frame of mind, more gently than a lot of things I've read, but pairing that method with Baur's personalization, and I think this book could be an effective tool. The writing itself isn't mind blowingly great but it serves its purpose: to tell a story and to present the truth.

What also sets this book apart is the telling of the fates of some of those rescued farm animals, sometimes even years later, and b/c of our genetic engineering, these poor animals have become unsuited for the most basic principle on this planet: living. Their bodies cannot support them, even if every other medical problem has been addressed.

In trying to be a better ~~vegan~~ person, this book has helped me, and I hope it will help others.

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### **Maureen says**

I think Gene Bauer does a good job striking common ground with activists and non-vegetarians alike--I think it would appeal to anyone who cares about the environment, health, and basic animal welfare. A good overview of the ills of factory farming -- mixed with a lot of redemptive stories, personal anecdotes that make it an intimate and readable book.



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## **Christine says**

A fantastic read! It's sad and devastating, yet hopeful. I decided to start a vegetarian (vegan when possible) lifestyle 4 months ago. I must admit I feel physically better, and I am emotionally happier (much Happier after reading this book) since doing so. I enjoyed reading the history of Farm Sanctuary, and all the animals that they have been able to rescue and give a second chance at living. A great book.

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## **Ira Therebel says**

A few weeks ago on a weekend trip to Watkins Glen I went to a restaurant that promoted vegetarian options on its window and found a leaflet inviting to visit Farm Sanctuary that was a short drive away. Of course I went. It ended up being a wonderful experience. I saw many well taken care of animals, got to interact with these friendly creatures and heard a lot of stories from the tour guide. When leaving I saw this book in the gift shop and just had to have it. And I am very glad I did.

This book tells us the story of Farm Sanctuary and the amazing work Gene Baur and people involved have done to make it the place it is. It also takes us through their activism showing the progress they made. I learned a lot about the founders and how things have changed since the days when Hilda was found and taken in as the first animal on the farm.

We also get to know more about current problems in factory farming, including the ones involving veal, dairy and egg production. We also find out more about the work of activists and the legal challenges that they face these days when fighting animal cruelty.

I loved this book. Gene Baur is a great role model for activists and somebody who has also done a lot in his lifetime. In person he is also very charismatic and interesting which I could tell from some interviews with him I watched. There is one part that really made me think. The one where he says that he has a vegan worldview but understands that it will not happen in his lifetime so it makes him patient and work on the little steps to make the progress. The thing is that I also have this view and the realistic understanding that I will not witness it, but unlike him it makes me frustrated and angry. And he is definitely more right in his way. Positivity is what helps our cause.

Of course it is hard to stay positive when one reads for example the foie gras problem. It is amazing that in our time it is still so hard to stop people from abusing animals in such a way. At the same time the book is also filled with incidents that give one hope.

Besides this, I also liked him adding short life stories of the animals living on the farm. Getting to know better, what they went through, the examples of their emotional lives and the life they have on the farm really adds to the book's message.

I am also very happy with the Appendix. It provides so many great sites for vegans traveling as well as many animal rights organizations.

The book is great for the ones who already have an interest in animal support but I hope people who don't

know everything he tells here or still aren't convinced will read it because he does a great job telling it.

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### **Bethany Ransom says**

I am visiting the southern California Farm Sanctuary in a couple of weeks so I decided to read this book to learn more about it. I already know the horrors of the factory farm industry so that part of the book wasn't new to me, but it was very well done. Reading about the cruelty brought tears to my eyes many times. I also had tears of happiness many times while reading the stories of the rescued animals. Farm Sanctuary is a wonderful organization. A very good book for anyone who likes animals.

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### **Josephine Morris says**

This book so eloquently describes the plight of the over 10 billion (yes you read that right, 10 billion) farm animals that endure suffering every year in the United States for human consumption. Baer has reminded me the importance of living not only a vegetarian lifestyle but truly a compassionate vegan lifestyle. I am continually surprised at how positive he is about the small steps of progress being made in such a horrifying industry.

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### **Gary says**

This is an incredibly compelling book. It makes you think seriously about how animals are treated, the risks to their lives, and the impact on our health. I learned a lot about factory farming. And I was surprised to learn a lot about the farm animals themselves - particularly their social habits and their intelligence. Now I need to visit a Farm Sanctuary location to see these animals first-hand. And, think hard about what I'm putting in my stomach.

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