Fifty years ago, working with an organization called CRUNCH (Concerned Residents Upholding Nutrition’s Contribution of Health), as a nursing student, I joined with others in ridding schools of their empty calorie snack machines and meat and dairy-based, low-fiber, nutrient-poor school lunches. I see no major changes today. As a Public Health Nurse-Nutritionist, I dealt with an abundance of babies and young children with milk intolerances and allergies. Most children eating meat and dairy-rich diets show arterial plaque buildup at a very young age. Childhood obesity rates are high. We’ve all seen the data. We’ve seen the children. We have not trained the medical profession on the #1 contributor to poor health – bad nutrition. We have elevated the pharmaceutical industry and surgery in attempt to restore the health we challenge three times/day all of our lives instead of addressing the real issues.

**Dairy**

According to NYS Dairy Statistics for 2019, the state’s 4,000 dairy farms that produce over 15 billion pounds of milk annually, making New York the nation's fourth largest dairy state, and yet:

One of the most common [food allergies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_allergy) in infants is to cow's milk.

It is estimated that about 68 percent of the world's population has lactose malabsorption.

Milk is a [liquid food](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liquid_food) produced by the [mammary glands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammary_gland) of [mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal). It is the primary source of [nutrition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition) for their offspring before they are able to [digest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digestion) solid food. The milk of each species is specifically designed to support the growth and development of its own species until weaning, after which time clean water is the fluid required.

Cows’ milk has a very different composition than human milk. Cows would not thrive on human milk, yet we contrive to force cow milk to serve human health.

Consumption of dairy products is promoted as essential for adequate human calcium for bone health, yet countries consuming the most milk –Norway, Sweden, and the USA show the highest rates of osteoporosis and hip fractures.

Cornell’s T. Colin Campbell, author of *The China Study*, having grown up on a dairy farm and later wishing to promote dairy for those lacking adequate protein found to his surprise that certain cancers could be turned on and off simply by adding or deleting casein (cow’s milk protein).

Dairy milk contains hormones like insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1), estrogens, and progestins. Some cows are given additional hormones to increase milk production.

At this very moment, Cornell’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is promoting the production of more milk per cow by making cows insulin-resistant (diabetic) with no thought to the impact on human health. The plan is to showcase this animal manipulation success to public school students.

**Animal Agriculture**

Populations consuming a whole-food, plant-based diet or Mediterranean diet show marked health benefits, including chronic disease reduction and have been shown to reverse many cases of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

Nutrient-dense, fiber-rich, plant-based diets are also cholesterol-free, low in saturated fat, and provide more than enough protein and calcium to meet human needs.

Animal agriculture is increasingly conducted on mega-farms or CAFOs with negative impacts on human health, animal health, and the environment.

Manure management is a major issue with CAFOs as is the false solution of anerobic digesters for RNG production, which can become a non-issue with support of local farms instead of CAFOs.

Reducing the cattle population supports methane mitigation, human health, and frees land for reforestation.

94% of Tompkins County’s farmland is used for growing animal feed, which means it is not producing vegetables, fruit, and grains for human consumption and resultant high-level wellness.

**In Conclusion**

It is way past time that we put animal agriculture and the medical/surgical/pharmaceutical industries out to the pasture. We don’t even have a member of the health community on the Climate Action Council. We make cows sick so that each of them provides more milk and we make fake meat, fooling the public that dairy and meat are essential for human health. This issue is the biggest omission of the entire Climate Action Plan. Fifty years of this misinformation is enough. I think the dairy and meat industries are more powerful than the fossil fuel industry and certainly more than the tobacco industry. Let’s include this major issue in the Climate Action Council Scoping Plan. Fortunately, what’s good for the climate is good for both human and animal health, with no false solutions required.