

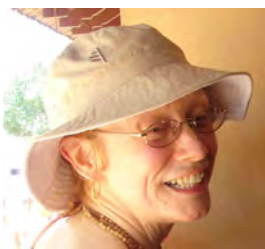
ISCOWP News



*Balabhadra
Training Oxen
with Ananda
and Prabhavati
in Belarus*

WWW.ISCOWP.ORG

Dear ISCOWP Members,



This is the time of year that Balabhadra, ISCOWP president and ISKCON Minister for Cow Protection and Agriculture, travels to share his knowledge of ox power and cow protection. As I write this, he is in Russia and has visited Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. He will also visit Serbia, Hungary, Germany and England to encourage and increase cow protection.

Life on the farm has slowed down as we make the final preparations for winter. Thanks to you, we now have doors on the geriatric barn and a new gutter system on the new roof for the large cow barn. It has been raining a lot lately and the new roof and gutters are a great improvement in keeping the cows dry.

We wish you peace and happiness during this holiday season and may you think of the cows in your time of giving. Thank you for your help in protecting the cows!

Yours, Chayadevi

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ISCOWP Profile

The official International Society for Cow Protection, Inc. (ISCOWP) was incorporated in the USA, March 1990, as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization. William and Irene Dove (Balabhadra das and Chayadevi dasi) are its managing directors. They are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Through their spiritual master's teachings, they have imbibed the practices and benefits, both spiritual and material, of lifetime cow protection.

Cow protection means enabling cows to live out their natural lives with love and affection. The tenets of cow protection are universal and nonsectarian, available to all regardless of race, creed, or nationality.

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Donations and Financial Reports

USA tax deductible number: 23-2604082.

To donate online:

www.iscwp.org/donations.html
www.causes.com/cowprotection

To donate by mail:

Make out check to ISCOWP and send to ISCOWP mailing address

A copy of each year's ISCOWP IRS Form 990-EZ is available at www.guidestar.org

E-newsletter Monthly

Send us an email with *subscribe* in the subject.

T-shirts

www.iscwp.org/tshirts.html

Adopt A Cow

www.iscwp.org/adopt-a-cow.html

Sponsor an Earthworm or Bookworm!

www.iscwp.org/sponsor.html

Editor's note

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Letters

Milk From Loved Cows

----- Original Message -----

From: Shyamarupa dasa

To: iscowp@earthlink.net

Sent: Monday, November 08, 2010

Subject: Re: Thank you

Thank you for your kind words. I was very happy to offer a small donation on the occasion of Govardhana Puja. I am good friends with Mother Hare Krsna devi dasi and her family, who live in Brunswick Maine. They have been singing your praises for some time now. And during our Govardhana Puja celebration in their home, her daughter, Maharani devi dasi, was glorifying your efforts with great enthusiasm. I was very inspired to hear how you were serving Lord Krsna by protecting His beloved devotees and wanted to offer some small service.

On a side note, the dairy used for our feast was donated by a local farmer who, although has never heard the term "cow protection", very much embodies the spirit of this consciousness. They are a family who treats their cow as beloved children, and so we were very happy to engage them in Lord Giridhari's service.

The milk was transported via mason jars and the paneer that was offered was truly maha-prasadam. There is prasadam that is offered to Krsna, there is prasadam that may even be accepted by Krsna, but this was prasadam that was definitely pleasing to the Lord.

It is difficult to describe in words, but there was a very sublime and ecstatic quality to this offering. I think because the bhoga was obtained, not through violence, or even a mercantile mentality, but with love and respect, that the Lord reciprocated in a very tangible way.

Thank you again for your dedication and humble service to Srila Prabhupada and the devotees. I hope to offer further support in the near future.

Yours in service
Syamarupa dasa
(Sam Richarson)

Tractor Asura or How Green is Your Tractor Play.

--- Original Message -----

From: Damodara Pandita das

To: iscowp@earthlink.net

Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 11:50

Subject: Mayapur Goshala

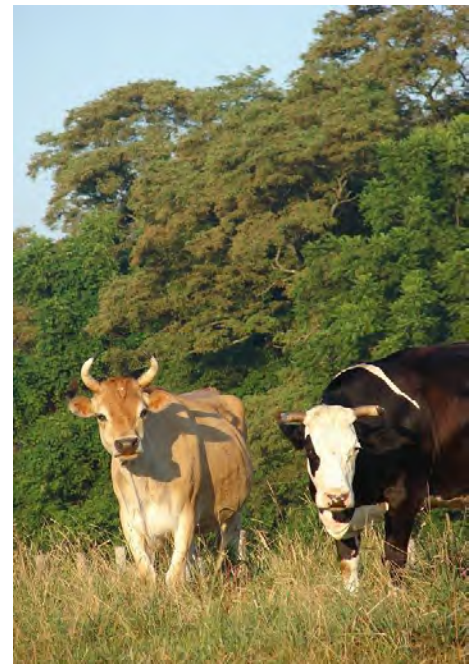
Balabhadra, you may remember that I picked you up at the airport when you came to visit New Govardhana, in Australia.

I spend half my time in Mayapur living at the goshala. We at present have established a committee to help with the standards of cow protection.

Please find attached a play I wrote based on an article from your ISCOWP magazine.



Amrita, Priya and Sri, who are all related, like to sit together in the sun.



Krishna and Gourangi.

Panditji: Good morning Gopal. How are you?

Gopal: I am fine. Actually very excited.

P: Why are you so excited?

G: I have just taken my bulls to market for selling.

P: Oh - you mean Jagit and Karna. Oh no, you remember Jagit was born on the same day as your daughter Jagitarini.

G: Oh yes, I know.

P: And Karna has such handsome horns.

G: Yes, yes.

P: Then why would you want to sell them?

G: Panditji, I am planning on buying one tractor.

P: Oh Gopal Babhu. Have you thought this through? Hmm. I mean do you know where a tractor comes from?

G: Oh yes, they come from Singh's Tractor Yard in the next village.

P: No, I mean where originally do they come from?

G: No.

P: Well first they have to mine all the raw ingredients. They have to mine iron, tin, copper, coal and limestone just to mention a few. And these mines, they rape Mother Earth. They create hellish working conditions for all the miners that have to work in them.

Then the mined ore goes off to smelter plants – huge industry with mass pollution and more hellish working conditions. Remember last year we went to the wedding of Amrtia Rao in Palak Bhavan?

G: Oh yes.

P: Remember the smell of that village due to the local smelter?

G: Yes, that was awful, Hmm.

P: Anyway, after the smelter then the processed metals need to go to an assembly plant where the tractor parts are made and assembled. More pollution and horrible working conditions. And of course the tractor needs tires. Well that involves the exploitation of many tropical countries where locals are paid little for bleeding massive forests of rubber trees for latex.

G: Haribol, so many problems from making a tractor!

P: And, of course, what does a tractor run on? Can you just feed it grass and oats like Jagti and Karna?

G: No, of course not. The tractor runs on diesel.

P: And petroleum is not renewable like grass. First one needs to explore and discover oil. More mining. Then you might have to fight wars to defend your oil supplies. You might

P: Oh yes, so many innocent people are killed in fighting for such resources. And then when the oil is shipped, often the tankers have accidents and the oil spillages cause massive environmental devastation. You may even have heard how mass use of oil is creating global warming?

G: Yes, very bad!

P: As Panitji Al Gore says, carbon based emissions are responsible for

P: Ok, now let us look at what sacrifice you will have to perform for the tractor:

- First you will have to sacrifice your faithful bullocks and who then knows their destination?

- Next, you will have to sack the bull teamsters Lugudi and Gopinath. What will they do?

- Then, of course, you have to make the tractor repayment loan.



Balabhadra gave Ali Krsna, and Madhava and Kesava preliminary training at NV.



Lakshmi training Balaram.

even have to send your children to war to defend your oil.

G: Oh yes, remember Shyam Charan from the other village went to fight in the Middle East.

the polar caps melting, flooding, tsunamis, climate change, population displacement, and contamination of water and food chains.

G: But, wait a minute. All progress must come at a price. Even Lord Brahma states in scriptures that human kind was created alongside with sacrifice, so some kind of sacrifice must be there for progress to happen.

P: Yes, you are speaking learned words, but first let us look closer, what was the sacrifice you were making for keeping the bulls?

G: Well, yes, I was feeding them, providing shelter, and paying wages to the teamsters that worked the bullocks. And also, such hard work for the muscles and under the bright sun. Now I would not have to do such things anymore.

- Because you have no cows supplying dung for fertilizer you will have to take a loan for commercial fertilizer.

- Due to the compacting of the soil from overuse of the tractor and chemical fertilizers, the lifeless soil will only produce weak plants that have little resistance to bugs and disease – so then you will need a loan for commercial chemical pesticides.

- Eventually due to low output you will probably be forced to take another loan for genetically modified hybrid commercial seeds that can only be used for one season.

G: Okay Pandit, okay. You make some points I can see but with a tractor I will now have so much more time for my lifestyle. Free time and less hard work.

P: But what will you do with such

time, remain idle perhaps?

G: Well, I could always pay a gym membership. Hmm, Nah.

P: Gopalji, you talk of lifestyle but remember a few things. You would have sent your friends Lagudi and Gopinath to find work elsewhere. They will be forced to move their families away as they find employment elsewhere. You used to take the family on outings with the bullock cart to the Mandir and the Vrindavan Swimming Ghat. Will you drive your family on a tractor? Also with the rising costs and loans you will be forced to increase productivity. That will mean much longer hours of work. Some farmers even have to take a second job to pay for the first.



No pesticides in ISCOWP's beans.

G: Oh dear Panditji, so what you are saying is that my life will not become more simple? May the Lord protect me from such a negative outcome. Can your blessings protect me Panditji and bring success?

P: The Vedas explain that a blessed life, one that follows religious injunctions including cow protection is the path to success and happiness. But now let us look at the path you are suggesting.

•First the bulls are sold. When the bulls have no value there is a good chance they will end up in a slaughterhouse. In Mumbai alone 40,000 calves a year are killed just from local

dairies. Did you know that slaughterhouses are the most dangerous and demoralizing of all jobs according to recent American study?

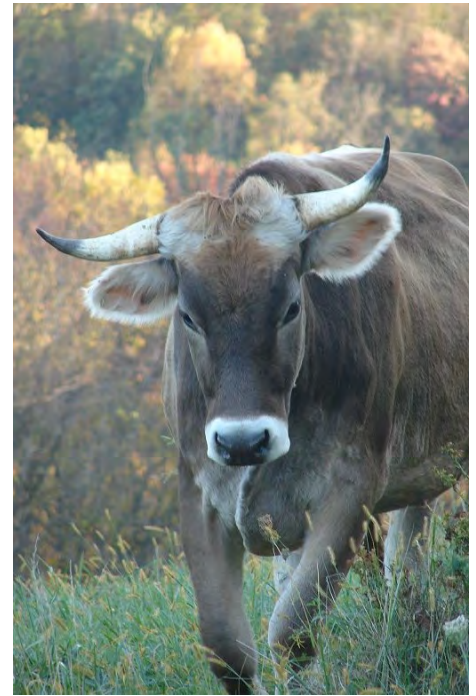
•They also contribute to the mass consumption of meat. Doctors agree that meat eating not only contributes to many diseases including cancer, but many say it makes people more aggressive and unhappy.

G: Go on Panditji.

P: Also remember that your action forced the poor teamsters out of work. They used to work happily with the bulls, but they'll probably end up in hellish factory jobs. And don't forget the destruction you contributed to by purchasing a tractor; all the problems associated with huge mining, industry and petroleum use. So there are heavy karmic reactions for killing the bulls, raping and polluting Mother Earth. This along with the anxiety caused by an increasing debt load has forced many farmers into ruination. Over the last 10 years 25000 farmers a year in India have committed suicide due the pressures of such commercial farming procedures. Many of them with the very same pesticides that were promised to solve their problems.

G: Go on Panditji.

P: Years ago I met Swamiji Prabhupada. He told me that people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and the bulls happy. But it is a fact by the



Kesava this fall at the ISCOWP farm.

law of nature. Do you really believe your wellbeing can be sustained without considering the wellbeing of the planet, the cows, and other people?

G: Oh Pandit, Oh Panditji . Hmm. Let me think...(pauses).. (walks off)

P: Okay, goodbye Gopal. But Gopal why do you now walk back that way. Your home is this way.

G: I am going back to get my bulls. (They embrace, all cheer)



Cows at Govardhana Trust, Raigad India are happy.



Trainer Ananda devi with new team at New Vraja Mandala Farm, Belarus.

ISCOWP Travels

Balabhadra, president of ISCOWP and ISKCON Minister for Cow Protection and Agriculture, is now touring Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, Hungary, Germany and England. We have heard briefly from him about Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. In these locations ox training and ox power are a reality and Balabhadra has been asked to contribute his knowledge and experience for the advancement of these activities, farm development and self-sufficiency.

He will be traveling until December 14. Consequently, this report will be only a partial representation of his trip. The rest of the report will be given in the April 2011 *ISCOWP News*.

Balabhadra's internet access has been minimal. What follows are brief messages I received reporting his activities via email. Also please check out our Facebook page where there are photo albums of Balabhadra's activities in each country visited.

Belarus

Training oxen everyday. Had two teams in the yoke yesterday. I've been to Minsk, where I gave 3 classes, Vitebsk and the farm. I'm back in Minsk now for the weekend and then back to the farm on Monday. It snows most of the mornings but by afternoon it is gone. Almost blizzard conditions and then a slight warm up. Everything is going fine and my health is good. Many devotees are watching me and concerned about my health and everyday ask how I am.



Right photo: Cows are worshipped on the holy day of Govardhana Puja. Vishaka is garlanded and receives fresh hay.

Bottom photo: Balabhadra explaining his training of Shiva in the Ukraine with Krsna das watching and listening to Bhaktin Nina as she translates.



There were about 50 devotees who came from many places in Belarus for Govardhana Puja celebration at the farm October, 30th. It was sweet and everyone was in total ecstasy with Giriraja sitting on top of Govardhana Hill. Great kirtan and the feast was really nice. Giriraja had abhiseka offered by the devotees and he and the devotees were very happy. We also did Gopuja and I have a lot of photos. I will send to you as soon as I can get internet access.

Lithuania

The teamster here is Petras. The grey ox is Kaena which is another name for Krsna. The black and white ox is Balai another name for Balarama. Very sweet team. They know Up, Whoa, Haw and are now working on Gee and doing very well. Sweet disposition. Kaena is six months and Balai is seven months old. Petras has done a good job. When asked to stand they will stand and will keep standing very nicely.

Ukraine

We arrived at the farm in Ukraine about 3 hours from Odessa. Odessa is straight south of Minsk, Belarus by a 24 hour train ride. The temperatures are cool and it will be easy to work with the oxen. We had been received by the devotees and a team of oxen



Bhakta Oleg training Vijay in Ukraine.

and then went into the house to wake up Giriraja and get settled in after the long train ride.



Team Balai and Kaena in Lithuania.

Yesterday we started working with the little oxen here in Ukraine. There are 5 small ones and we will work with all of them. Two bigger ones. The animals here have been taken care of nicely so it is easy to work with them. Starting today we will work with the animals twice a day. We are taking lots of photos.

The weather here has been exceptional. Typical Kartik weather. Not hot and not cold. The Sea is 30 km from here so there is a constant wind on many days. In the mornings there is a heavy fog which burns off between 9 AM and 10 AM.

The whole village sends its cows out to a common pasturing ground. Each family that sends cows out has to help pasture the cows some time during the month. So far this month Bhakta Oleg's family has had to provide cowherds for two days, from 7 AM until 4:30 or 5 PM. It's dark here at 5 PM. There are about 126 cows that go out to pasture. From 7 AM until about 8 AM, cows just keep coming till the grazing herd is complete.

Barn Update

Due to the *Help Us Get Ready for Winter* campaign you have helped get the barn gutters up and the barn doors built before winter. This along with the new barn roof, whose construction you funded, has made a great improvement in the barn area. It should be a drier, warmer winter for the cows this year compared to last year. We have you, our members, to thank for your continued support. This winter we will see how the barns survive the weather and if they need any further improvements.



Mike and son Joshua put up the barn gutters in time for winter weather.



This is one of the 3 doors built to enclose the geriatric barn for the winter weather.

ISCOWP Outreach at the Farm

From spring to early fall ISCOWP receives guests to experience cow protection, gardening, harvesting and preserving foods according to the season. The ISCOWP sign at the head of our road says "by appointment only." Since we don't have staff dedicated completely to giving tours, by appointment allows us to schedule our service load around hosting guests.

In the last few years the amount of guests has increased. It is a wonderful experience for us to bring guests to the pasture to visit with the cows in their natural setting. This is not always possible due to the weather, but at this time of year it usually is possible. The majority of our guests live in the city or suburbs where there is not the wide open spaces of ISCOWP's 168 acres. In this setting guests usually experience the peacefulness of nature and the natural life of the protected cow.

Of course, the cows are the main attraction. Our herd is a mix of different breeds. We have Jerseys, Brown Swiss, Holsteins, Brahmans, Black Angus and a variety of breed combinations. Most of the cows are welcoming to guests with some who truly enjoy greeting visitors. Sri is an example of an ox that thrives on interacting with guests. He often will lay down with his head turned up looking



Jimmy Devine feeds Krishna a special treat.



Swetha Menon hugs Priya.



Balabhadra, Preethy Menon, Terry Devine and Swetha Menon give Radhe Shyam lots of attention. She had her own pasture as she is our oldest cow and had difficulty keeping up with the herd.

at the guests as if inviting pets and rubs. Guests can then sit down and pet him. It is as if he knows that he may be a bit imposing standing up and more approachable laying down.

Another attraction is the garden. The garden and cows together gives a holistic understanding of life close to the land. The cow manure fertilizes the garden which produces a variety of fruits and vegetables for the human residents some of which the cows also enjoy.

In the spring the garden is just beginning with the summer exhibiting full production. We try different types of vegetables and fruits each year but our consistent standbys are tomatoes (this year we grew Italian Longhorns which were the most productive tomatoes we have ever had), Bitter Melon, chard, potatoes, spinach, apples, blackberries, tomatillos, beans, beets and sweet peas.

Guests can help us plant, weed, harvest, can, dry or just observe a canning session. The help is always welcome and it is an opportunity for you our guests to learn how to do this food growing and preparation at home.

At this point in time we do not have any formal guest facilities. It is just a matter of funds before we can offer this requested facility to your guest hosting.

All About You

Being born in a Hindu family, from childhood we learned that cows are sacred. We would worship them, see them beautifully decorated at festivals, and always referred to them as go-mata (mother cow). This was a superficial understanding and I knew that there was more I needed to know: Why the cow?

Through the devotees of ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada's teachings, this understanding became deeper. The cow is our mother. She nourishes us with her milk. From her milk we get ghee, yogurt, and cheese; all very important parts of our diet. The oxen is like our father. Provided we train our oxen in planting vegetation, they nourish us with grains and vegetables. The stool can be used to grow organic vegetables without the use of chemicals. Her urine can be used for multiple medicinal purposes. Most importantly, the cow is very dear to Krishna!

A few years ago, stumbling upon a website that revealed the horrific life most cows suffer in the US, I wondered what I could do to help. Putting these gentle animals in terrible anxiety and distress has led to the devastation we see around the world: the destruction of natural disasters, the ongoing wars, and the degradation of society. I searched for the answer. Being raised in the west in a

suburb of Cincinnati, I couldn't imagine having my own farm. I knew nothing about raising farm animals nor did I have the skills.

I recently read a class given by my Guru Maharaj, His Holiness Radhanath Swami. In a purport of Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 7, Chapter 3, Srila Prabhupada says, "In Vedic

world what would please him the most is to worship Govardhana Hill, the Brahmins and the cows.

Maharaj talks about one morning walk with Srila Prabhupada in which Prabhupada explains why and how cow protection is most important. He explains, "if the cows are happy, that means that society is spiritually and morally strong. If the cows are suffering, to that degree, it

takes care of its cows in every aspect with amazing love and devotion, just as if they were their own children. From birth to death, they are nurtured, loved, and raised in peaceful environment. The oxen are properly engaged in farming and the cows provide milk with love. At the natural end of their lives, they leave their bodies while hearing Krsna's holy name.

One way I knew I could help was by supporting such a farm. Having a full time job and not being a farmer myself, I have a duty to help sustain such farms. As ghrastas, we must all come together and give a little of our earnings, which will allow more farms like this to emerge. Right now there are very few farms such as this in the world where cows are being nurtured and protected and oxen are being engaged in ox-cart power. The more Krishna Consciousness spreads to every town and village, the more the awareness grows about the importance of cow protection, the happier and more peaceful the entire society will be.

Srila Prabhupada emphasized simple living, high thinking. Although we have not yet adopted this lifestyle, we must all work together to make a change. Radhanath Maharaj said, "In one letter Prabhupada writes, besides preaching, cow protection is the most important part of our mission."

Written by Radhikesh das



Radhikesh Sharma and family visit their adopted cow Shyama.

culture, the welfare of the cows and the welfare of the brahmanas are essential. Without a proper arrangement for developing brahminical culture and protecting cows, all the affairs of administration will go to hell." Maharaj explains that the root of all spiritual and material prosperity is simply dependent on pleasing Krishna. He gives the example of Govardhana Lila. Krishna tells the

is degraded, sinful." We make the cows happy by protecting them and making them feel valued. They are innocent and completely dependant on human beings. Prabhupada said, don't use tractors, use the oxen and the bulls. That will make them feel valued and useful.

Then by Krishna's mercy, we learned of ISCOWP. This is a farm that really



Balabhadra cooking tomatoes down to can in the adjacent "canner."

Lakshmi's Kitchen

We received a request from Gour Govinda das on September 29th in our web page inquiry form asking for instructions as to how to preserve tomatoes. "Haribol, can you tell me how to conserve tomatoes and also how to dry them please."

Tomatoes are very versatile. They can be used for a variety of cooking purposes and can be preserved nicely in three ways: canning, freezing and drying. In this article we will give a description of these processes but for complete details we recommend the classic book, *Stocking Up* by Rodale Press. You can also purchase the *Ball Blue Book* in Wall Mart.

Canning Tomatoes

After you have cut your tomatoes in quarters, place them in the cooking pot. While they are cooking clean your canning jars and then put them and the lids in very hot water. When you want to remove your lids a useful tool is a lid wand. To lift your jars from the hot water and to put them in



Harinama is picking tomatoes from mature plants in late summer. Everything begins with planting the tomato seed which is usually done indoors six to eight weeks before the last expected spring frost. Approximately two weeks after that date the seedlings can be planted in the garden. Since tomato plants grow profusely, we put cages around each plant to support it and guide the plant growth upwards.

the canner the tool to use is the jar lifter. These tools, jars, lids and bands can be bought in Wall Mart.

When you have brought the tomatoes to a boil and cooked the tomatoes to the desired consistency, fill your jars to 1/2 inch of the top. Remove the air from the jars by running a spatula or knife along the inside of the jar, pressing the contents as you do so. Wipe the jar's lips, place the lids on and screw the bands on. Place the closed jars upright in the canner. Water should be two inches above the lids of the jars. Put the lid on the canner and bring the water to boiling. Begin to count time as soon as the water starts to boil. We give 15 minutes. Remove the jars from the canner with your jar lifter and let them sit, preferably on racks and with air space between them. You will hear a popping sound that means the lids have sealed.



Once the tomatoes are picked they should be washed and then cut either in quarters for cooking to can or freeze or 1/4 inch slices for drying. Canned jars of tomato sauce are cooling on the counter. These glass jars can be used over and over again so they are worth the investment. Less expensive plastic containers can be bought for freezing and they too can be used again. Both can be bought at Wall Mart and sometimes garage sales.



Left: Nidra dasi and Terri from Denver and Rasa Priya from NV receiving their dried produce gifts from ISCOWP's garden in the ISCOWP root cellar. Balabhadra is holding some apple butter made from our apple trees. Behind them are over 450 canned tomatoes in various combinations and other canned produce such as beans, chard, berry jams, applesauce and apple butter. The buckets sitting on top of the shelves contain dried tomatoes, apples, Bitter Melon, and Basil and Peppermint herbs.

Drying Tomatoes

Drying tomatoes is fairly easy. Just cut them to 1/4 inch thick and place them on the drying trays. There is usually a manual that will come with your dryer and it will give you the temperature and length of time for drying. The length of time will vary according to the humidity in the air.

The packaging of your dried tomatoes is crucial if you are planning on keeping them for awhile. Six months is the usual life expectancy. We use a Foodsaver plastic bag sealer and then we put the bags in five gallon buckets with air tight lids. The dried produce is in very good condition even after six months.

Freezing Tomatoes

We are new at the freezing process having just bought a freezer this year. It is claimed that the nutritional value of frozen foods exceeds those of canned and dried. The trick is to freeze the produce as quickly as possible after preparing it. However, you should never put anything hot into the freezer.

Whole tomatoes do not freeze well. It is recommended that you make tomato sauces. But the problem here

is that you must cook the sauce a long time to achieve the desired consistency and therefore it is quite hot and will take much time to cool. If you fill your sink with ice and submerge your pot of tomato sauce in the ice it will cool much more quickly.

You should label and date all your containers so you can use the oldest ones first as 6 months is the life expectancy. Plastic containers for freezing are inexpensive.



Top: Lakshmi picking Bitter Melon which grows well here and also dries nicely. Bottom: Balabhadra and Maitreya cutting tomatoes for the dryer. The tomatoes must be cut no more than 1/4 inch thick.



Ahimsa Mrdangas

The mrdanga is a type of drum widely used in the spiritual music of bhajans and kirtans. Leather is used in creating the unique sound of the mrdanga. Unfortunately most mrdangas are made from the skin of slaughtered cows. Please support these youth of ISKCON who are producing mrdangas made from Ahimsa leather.

“Ahimsa Shri-Khol

We are dedicated to giving devotees all over the world high-quality mrdangas that do not support cow killing. Skin is collected solely from cows that have left their bodies due to natural death. Careful measures are taken to ensure that no leather comes from slaughtered cows. This skin is then processed naturally – without chemicals or salt.

The leather is given to our craftsman, who chooses the best parts of the skin and makes mrdangas with high-quality sound production. Clay bodies are used for the mrdangas, being the medium that gives the best resonance. The mrdangas are dyed with natural, earthy colors, and no plastic is used in their manufacture. Finally the mrdangas are fitted with cotton straps and (optionally) with brass rings, and wrapped with cloth.

We also offer traditional straw stands for the mrdangas to rest on. Although it is commonplace in our temples, actually it's better for mrdangas not to rest vertically on the floor, partly as it adversely affects the sound, but also because it's not respectful to the mrdanga as a representative of Lord Balarama.

As no chemicals or salt are used to treat and preserve the leather, the skin is not affected to a very large extent by changes of temperature and humidity. Due to only taking the best parts of the skin for the drums, the quality of the sound, as well as the

endurance of the straps and heads, is increased. This means less frequent, if any, replacement of heads.

Both large and small-sized mrdangas are available, made in the same way, with the same quality. (N.B. small sized mrdangas have a higher pitch than large ones, and cannot be so finely tuned.) Mrdangas can be made and tuned for bhajan, for kirtan, or for a mixture of both.



Handmade ahimsa mrdangas.

The cost of large-sized mrdangas is Rs.2500, and for small-sized is Rs.2000. As far as getting a mrdanga, the easiest and cheapest way is if they are picked up directly from us in ISKCON Mayapur, although we can also send them in large batches (by ship) or individually (by air). For more information and to order a mrdanga, you can contact us by email – ahimsa_mrdangas@hotmail.com, or by phone (Laksmipati Dasa) – (+91) (0)8016741901

Mahaprabhu's Shri-Khol

Bablu dasa, the world-famous mrdanga teacher, has given guidelines for making a special type of mrdanga called Mahaprabhu's Shri-Khol. It has special features such as specific sizes for the length of the drum and widths of the heads, and it is tuned according to the tone of a pair of karatala made from bell-metal. Bablu dasa says that 'This kind of Shri-Khol is rare. The loud, clear sound of the right side and the soft, deep and majestic sound of the left side combine to create a very sweet sound. Thus when this kind of Shri-Khol is played at kirtans, it attracts the mind of the Lord and His devotees.'

We offer such types of mrdangas to devotees on order.

A Cow Protection Initiative

The Ahimsa Shri-Khol project was started by a group of ex-gurukulis, as an attempt to raise awareness of the need for cow protection.

In India thousands of cows are slaughtered daily, not for meat, as many would expect, but for their hides. After being driven from state to state on foot, sometimes for days on end, the ones who arrive at the slaughterhouses are sick and emaciated to say the least, before they are mercilessly killed.

Many of the hides thus taken from cows are purchased by mrdanga craftsmen, who favor them because they are easier to acquire and they are also cheaper. If hundreds of mrdangas are bought by ISKCON devotees every year, then hundreds of cows have been sent to slaughterhouses to get that skin.

We are offering an opportunity for devotees to avoid unnecessarily (and unconsciously) supporting the slaughter of cows."

Q & A: Want Milk?



In Mayapur, India the calf is near the mother as she is milked.

We often hear the question; "I want milk but I do not want to support the dairy industry and I can't find a no-kill dairy source. What can I do?" Here is an article sent to us by Pancharatna das (Stephen Raisz). He wrote the article as one answer to this question. The article is entitled "Industrial Milk Offsets – A Way to Achieve Sustainable Cow Protection," Draft Ver. 1.3.

There is no getting around it. For dairy farmers to be competitive in today's market, practically every cow that enters their farm will leave for the slaughterhouse. Only by selling their newborn male calves and older cows (generally around 12 years old - with an average of 8 years left to their lives) to meat producers can they afford to sell milk at current market prices of about \$1-2 per gallon wholesale.

In a protected cow farm the cost per gallon of milk would be at least six times the cost of industrial milk (more later on how this is calculated). When

we buy industrial milk we should always remember that the price we are paying has been subsidized by the blood of the cows that have produced that milk and their offspring.

What is a devotee of Krishna to do? Of course, the best option would be to only purchase milk and milk products from protected cows. Unfortunately, this is rarely available today even if we are willing to pay the real cost.

Another sensible solution is to simply become vegan and forego milk products altogether, except for what we need to offer to Sri Krishna and that daily cup of hot milk Srila Prabhupada recommends. Again, for a variety of reasons, many devotees find this option unsatisfactory.

There is a third option -- industrial milk offsets.

These are just like the carbon offsets purchased by environmentally conscious consumers to offset the

excess carbon produced by their regular consumption (driving a car, using electricity, etc.). The goal is to neutralize the negative effects of using carbon producing energy by supporting positive carbon reducing activities like planting trees, building windmills, etc.

In the same way, devotees of Krishna can offset the disastrous effects of cow slaughter connected to the milk they purchase by contributing towards cow protection the amount they should have paid for those products had they been produced by protected cows.

For example, a typical vegetarian family will consume nearly 3 gallons per week of milk in the form of both milk and milk products (yogurt, cheese, butter) with a weekly cost of about \$20. If all those products were purchased from a protected cow farm, the cost would be nearly \$70 (we'll get to our calculations soon). So, to offset the negative effect of the meat industry's subsidies, the difference of \$50 (in cash or kind) is contributed to a cow protection development program.

The industrial milk offsets system accomplishes two important goals. First industrial milk offsets can enable the development of a viable protected cow products market, by investing in protected cow farms which can replace the commercial products. Secondly, it prepares cow loving consumers to pay the real price of their treasured milk products as they become available from protected cow farms - without paying any more than they are already.

Now for the calculations.

Basically, to keep a guaranteed supply of milk a farm needs to breed one cow every year (well taken care of cows can give milk for several years, but the supply nearly always drops off after the first year). To keep this going the farm needs to maintain 20 animals altogether, breeding each cow no

more than two calving cycles (we don't want the herd to grow unmanageably). Statistically, 10 (50%) will be male, 4 (20%) will be milking cows in different years of lactation, 3 (15%) will be heifers, too young to breed and 3 (15%) will be retired cows. Altogether this family of cows is expected to give about 7 gallons of milk per day.

Currently, in the New Raman Reti Farm in Florida, where I live, it costs about \$1000 per year to take care of a cow. This includes hay, grains, minerals, veterinary care, worming, hoof trimming, pasture maintenance (fence repairs, water tanks, fertilization, mowing), tractor maintenance and diesel fuel. This does not include any carrying costs for the land required (about two acres per cow), capital costs for barns, etc., or any payment to the volunteers who look after them. A milking cow would require about \$500 a year more for special feed, etc. So, altogether the cost of maintaining 20 cows and milking four of them, in NRR would be \$22,000 per year which works out to be about \$8.60 per gallon of milk.

In a private farm, where the farmers are supporting themselves through protecting the cows and growing agricultural products, we have to add the land and infrastructure costs and the personal income needs of the farmer while subtracting the value of the manure and income from agricultural products (vegetables, etc.). This is a difficult number to estimate but at a minimum, we should calculate the labor cost at \$30 per day for milking and looking after the herd. This adds an additional \$4.30 per gallon or just under \$13 per gallon total. This is assuming that the rest of the income requirements of the farm are met through agricultural products (products grown with ox power should also fetch a premium amongst the cow loving community).

Naturally, there are many variables that can affect all of these costs. For example, abundant rain would offset the need for purchasing hay as would the growing of fodder crops with ox power. Still, the mathematics is inescapable. If it costs nearly \$1 -2 per gallon (current wholesale prices) to produce industrial milk by using factory farming techniques and forgoing the care and protection of 90% of the cows involved than the real cost per gallon, if those same cows were protected, must be in the range of \$12-\$14 minimum.



Vishvambhara and Prabhavati work a team of oxen in Belarus to dig up potatoes.

Of course, it's a big step to go from paying an average of \$3 to \$12 per gallon or from \$80 per month to \$280 per month. Naturally, protected cow milk products are going to be more valuable and thus less consumed. That's why, at our New Raman Reti Save the Cow program we recommend starting off contributing whatever you can (and cutting back on industrial dairy products where practical). Contributing to cow protection can, of course, take many forms including a vacation and spending time donating labor at a devotee farm with cows, educating others about milk offsets, etc.

Just imagine if all the members of ISKCON were to adopt a policy of industrial milk offsets. Within a short time, there would be sufficient funding to invest in startup protected cow farms with an already primed and developed market for both their dairy and agricultural products at their real costs.

Just as if everybody went carbon neutral by purchasing carbon offsets it could save our environment, purchasing industrial milk offsets is the most sustainable and progressive way at this time to expand cow protection.

*From: Hare Krsna dasi
Date: 13-Nov-10 17:47
To: Cow (Protection and related issues)
Subject: RE: ahimsa milk -- with \$200 per barrel petroleum by 2020*

Pancharatna -- Bless you for beginning to *articulate* this problem and the solution!

There are just a couple things I want to add:

1. Breeding cows to provide the neighboring devotee community (Philadelphia, NYC) with milk is exactly what Gita-nagari did in the

1970's-1980's. And how it got stuck with more cows than it could easily support -- when future waves of temple presidents decided that milk from protected cows was too expensive for their temples. Please, never forget this fact.

2. I took particular note of the breakdown of expenses for maintaining the cows:

A. I would strongly suggest that **before** a farm breeds cows for the devotee community, you find out what your market is. A person might be willing to purchase 1 gallon of \$9 milk for a special occasion, but might not be prepared to spend \$500 per year for the next 10 years for milk.

B. All the costs here are based on current prices for input commodities. However, experts in the petroleum industry are warning us to expect \$200 per barrel (it was \$19 per barrel in 1998) petroleum by the year 2020 (\$7 per gallon) -- 9 short years from now. A cow or bull born today should live until 2025 at least, so you must keep in mind how this major economic shift will impact your business plan.

C. I note that the costs above factor in the price of diesel fuel for operating the tractor in the field, but it does not factor in the price of the fuel required to deliver the milk. Even if the devotees will themselves come and pick up the milk, when prices increase, just a few years from now, price of transporting milk may be a deterrent in some devotees

maintaining their commitment to purchase milk. So, in working out your business model, please keep in mind that participants who live at a distance of more than 20 miles from your farm may not be able to maintain their participation after a certain point. At \$7 per gallon, a number of devotees will give up owning a car.

D. I see that no mention is made of using ox power to produce grains and hay (and even grind the grains) required to maintain the cows. I hate say it, but I admire your realism.

Probably no one will learn to work oxen, and it is not realistic to include that factor in your business model.

E. I see that there is no pay calculated for "volunteers who look after" the cows. I have to say that at the scale you are talking about -- 20 cows -- that sounds troubling to me. In terms of our experience in ISKCON-wide, one of the greatest areas of vulnerability, and one of the greatest causes of suffering for cows comes from having unstable, uncommitted, disputative, or insufficiently trained personnel to look after them.

If you have just a few cows, a program can limp along, one way or another. But lots of cows requires committed farm families (not brahmacaris) who can expect to make a reasonable living by taking care of the cows and working the oxen. And, they need strong support and appreciation from the devotee community, when it turns out that they can't fully participate in the morning program because of needed duties in the barn and the field.

Will that type of stable staff be available, and strong emotional and spiritual support be there from the community - when you go to scale? This is not a theoretical question. It is a question that is **crucial** to the long-term welfare of the cows. Everyone should consider it carefully before taking this big step.

Please keep in mind that in all the most successful programs that we see around the world, there is one clearly recognizable devotee -- who has the emotional, spiritual and financial (even if never sufficient!) support of the devotee community -- who has invested years of commitment to the cows to make sure the program is running as smoothly as is possible, and who is **dedicated to the comfort of the cows.** These leading cow protectors include Syamasundara,

Balabhadra, and Kurma Rupa. These are not fair weather volunteers. They are devotees with long-term commitment. No cow program can be successful unless it is headed by a devotee who has a long-term commitment, and is supported by the community. Don't think that you will get out of this on the cheap with labor. Krsna's cowherds must be properly honored for their labor. You will get what you pay for. Please keep that in mind.

And, I am not kidding about \$200 per barrel petroleum. Here is just one link to a very clearly presented talk by Jeff Rubin a Canadian petroleum expert. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgBpt9_FSV0.

Jeff Rubin comments on how world oil prices are set to be trading around the \$200 US dollar mark in the future. Rubin, the former Chief Economist of CIBC World Markets warns that higher oil prices are a result in a lack of affordable, extractable global world oil, which has now passed the easy peak oil extraction year of 2005. These comments and more can be found in the video on Jeff Rubin speech regarding oil prices at The Business of Climate Change conference in January 2010.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND: I know that most of you don't follow the hundreds of video links that you are bombarded with every day. I sure don't.

But I am asking you as a personal favor, just this once.

Please watch this very short video clip. Imagine that you are watching it with Srila Prabhupada.

Then try to think what he would advise us to do next.

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