

## What would you do?

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Now, having spent the last year immersing myself in the immense concerns and atrocities found within the animal agriculture business, I found myself excited to finally share my newfound wealth of knowledge. I was quick to explain that his statement was incorrect as male calves born into the dairy industry are either only kept alive briefly to be slaughtered for veal, or slaughtered immediately for cost-saving purposes. As per [The Humane League](#), "Male calves are often considered entirely disposable by the dairy industry, though some farms are equipped to exploit them for other purposes. Regardless, no male calf will live beyond the age of a couple of years before being killed—and in some cases, this bloody end can come within the first few hours of life." Some surveys estimate over half a million male calves are slaughtered every year in the U.S. when they are only one week old.

My mother, who had raised and milked cows as a child, seemed to believe that dairy cows were impregnated "the usual way" to which I had to explain in the least horrific way possible, how female cows are continually impregnated manually in order to keep milk production constant. After four to five years, the heifers are then sent to slaughter as their milk production has been exhausted. (A cow's natural life span is around 20 years, but letting milk cows live that long is not "economically viable.")

Although it made for some uncomfortable dinner discussion, I hope I managed to open some eyes and minds. I am still trying to find that balance between saying nothing and saying too much.

What are your thoughts on this subject? How do you have these discussions with family and friends? Have you found a way that works best? Please email [jaynee@nwveg.org](mailto:jaynee@nwveg.org) with any experience you would like to share. Let us know if you do not want your content to appear in a future newsletter. We will not be printing any names.

*On a side note:*

*I recently found myself asking questions and researching the purpose of metal nose rings for calves, only to discover this [horrific device](#). It is a metal nose ring for newborn calves to wean them from their mothers as quickly as possible. This device prevents the baby and its mother from doing the two most natural, instinctual things: nurse and nurture. When the calf goes in to nurse from its mother, the spikes surprise and hurt the mother, causing her to kick her calf away, which prevents her from nurturing her baby.*