

INVESTIGATION REPORT 2017: PARMESAN AND GRANA PADANO CHEESE PRODUCTION IN ITALY

WARNING

THIS REPORT CONTAINS IMAGES
AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ANIMAL
SUFFERING, WHICH SOME READERS
MAY FIND DISTRESSING.

INVESTIGATOR'S ACCOUNT

The truth behind two famous Italian products

Parmesan and Grana Padano cheeses are popular ingredients in many dishes - including pasta, spaghetti, soup and risotto. Each of these cheeses comes from a consortium of producers who work to the same rules and market their so-called 'premium' product worldwide.

A combined total of over 4.5 million tonnes of milk is needed for Parmesan and Grana Padano production each year. But what is life like for the estimated 650,000 cows that produce this milk?

Thanks to the generosity of Compassion in World Farming supporters, in late 2017 I was able to carry out an investigation into nine Grana Padano and Parmesan farms. What I discovered makes for shocking reading.



Case 1: TRAPPED IN FILTH

Again and again, on the farms I visited, I saw cows **trapped in filthy barns, forced to walk around in their own waste**. As they are never allowed out to pasture, these animals endure such squalid conditions for their entire lives.



Case 2: NEVER ALLOWED TO GRAZE OUTDOORS

The cows I saw, including the ones in this picture, are NEVER allowed out on to pasture. Cows need access to pasture with plenty of space and opportunity to graze. This is important for their physical and mental well-being. Zero-grazing means the animals have limited ability to perform natural behaviours, causing unnecessary suffering. It was so sad - and ironic - to see these cows, trapped indoors, eating hay brought in to them from a meadow.

Above:

Crammed into barns, and never allowed to graze outdoors - your donation could help end this cruelty.

Case 3: ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Many of the animals I saw were suffering from illness, lameness or injuries caused by the poor conditions they lived in. The cow on the left, like many others, was struggling to walk; and the cow below had an eye defect that may have been caused by conjunctivitis.



**COWS SHOULDN'T BE FORCED TO LIVE LIKE THIS.
PLEASE MAKE A DONATION TODAY TO
PROTECT THE WELFARE OF FARM ANIMALS.**

CASE 4



Case 4: EMACIATION

The cows that produce milk for Grana Padano have been bred for such high milk yields that they can struggle to maintain a healthy body weight. Many of them were emaciated, with overly-protruding ribs and spines. To me, this was a clear sign of what their life is about: being milk machines. The sight of numerous cows just like the one above was truly haunting.

Above left:
Some cows looked emaciated and struggled to walk - you can end their pain.

Above:
Cow or milk machine? The cow above had been strapped up during milking, probably to stop her kicking.

Case 5: FEARFUL AND SUFFERING

In some of the farms I visited, the stalls for cows to rest in appeared inadequate or badly designed. Rest is so vital for cows, especially when they've been bred for high milk yields. But, when there aren't enough stalls or they aren't big enough, subordinate cows can feel too intimidated to lie down near more dominant animals. The cow in this picture must have felt so exhausted to resort to curling up in the filth of the walkway.

I will never forget the cows I met during this investigation - their suffering and the way they looked at me. I will also never forget the promise I made to them - **to fight on until every dairy cow can feel the joy of living outside, grazing on grass, feeling the warmth of the sunshine on her back.**

CASE 5



Turn the page to find out how you can help..

**COWS SHOULDN'T BE FORCED TO LIVE LIKE THIS.
YOUR SUPPORT CAN EXPOSE, AND END,
THE SUFFERING OF ANIMALS.**

NOW IS THE TIME FOR THIS TO END!

The good news is that, since this investigation was released, the representatives of Grana Padano have reached out to Compassion to explore how they can improve the welfare of their cows. However, the makers of Parmesan have refused to take this step - and the fight is far from over.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

BUY HIGHER WELFARE

Unfortunately, almost all Parmesan and Grana Padano cheese comes from zero-grazed cows. Even the EU Organic certification does not ensure pasture access in this case.

If you eat cheese, for higher welfare, choose a certification or brand that guarantees cows have access to pasture. In the UK, the Soil Association, Organic Farmers and Growers and Waitrose Duchy Organic are good options.

Or, why not try a vegan alternative to grated hard cheese? These are widely available online, in specialist shops and many supermarkets.

SPREAD THE WORD

Pass on the news of this investigation to your friends and family by sharing ciwf.org.uk/parmesan or passing on this report. Extra copies are available on request. Together we can push for an end to this cruelty and suffering.

DONATE TODAY

Your donation today could:

- Keep up the pressure on Parmesan and Grana Padano to end zero-grazing and improve the lives of cows
- Beat the myth that 'made in Italy' always means 'high welfare'
- Help consumers to choose higher welfare products in shops and restaurants
- Persuade big food companies to put farm animal welfare at the heart of their policies
- Defend the truth, and expose factory farming - in Italy, and around the world

TO MAKE A DONATION NOW:

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VISIT

**CIWF.ORG.UK/
PARMESAN**

**WITH YOUR SUPPORT, THERE IS HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR
FARM ANIMALS. ON BEHALF OF ITALY'S COWS — GRAZIE!**