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Most likely, the last time you were admiring animals, you were not thinking about how they could potentially ruin our environment. Several hundred acres of undeveloped land has been left to a large community along the coast. The community has many proposals for this land, but which will they choose? I feel that using this land for grazing animals is a bad idea for the following reasons: clearing land for the animals causes the release of greenhouse gases, animal waste contains harmful pathogens, and diseases carried by animals can become waterborne, polluting the water.

Some people think that the benefits outweigh the negatives. “Homestead Helpers: Sheep, Cattle, Pigs and Poultry” states, “Tougher vegetation control involving woody shrubs and brambles requires tougher livestock. Goats fit the bill here. They can control all sorts of noxious and woody plants, including poison ivy, poison oak and kudzu” (Klick 71). This shows how the animals could make land upkeep easier, and potentially lessen the workload. The article also says, “Using sheep to keep lawns trim is quiet, requires no fossil fuels, adds fertilizer to your lawn, and has wonderful side benefits--meat and wool--that no mechanical mower can provide” (Klick 68). This proves that the livestock are not only an easy way, but a beneficial and effective way to keep land clean-cut and dapper. “The Multiple Benefits of Grass-Fed Meat” states, “Sustainable grassland ecosystems must include plants, microbes and grazing animals. Big animals with rumens drive the entire process, meaning these systems cannot be healthy without them” (Manning 32). Not only do the animals provide many benefits for the ecosystem; the ecosystem cannot thrive without them.

Some people believe that the detriments outweigh the benefits. “Cows, Pigs and Sheep: Environment’s Greatest Threats?” states, “The livestock sector accounts for 18% of global

greenhouse gas emissions; more than transportation 13.5%” (Brahic). This means that the animals and the deforestation are a major driver in global warming, and the loss of biodiversity, which will eventually lead to the destruction of our environment. The article also acknowledges that “30% of land, once home to wildlife, is now occupied by livestock” (Brahic). This means that the animals are not only harming the environment, they are also harming the wild animals that once occupied the land. “Negative Effects of Agriculture on Our Environment” says, “The runoff from animal farms compromises the quality of surface water by seeping into water systems either directly from livestock excrement or precipitation runoff” (Rodriguez 29). This demonstrates that the animals can easily pollute the water and air in many ways, which is a big negative of livestock grazing. This article also states, “The toxic effects of phosphorous become noticeable when agricultural runoff is deposited into lakes, streams, and other water sources because an excessive amount of phosphorous leads to eutrophication” (Rodriguez 31). Eutrophication causes a dense growth of plant life and death of animal life from lack of oxygen, which is terrible for the environment. Catherine Brahic says, “20% of pastures and rangelands are degraded by livestock.” Just because the animals keep the land trim, does not mean they are keeping it healthy. She also states, “The pastures account for 70% of deforested areas in the amazon, and one-third of global cropland.” These animals are taking over the land and ruining it. According to Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ryan Sultan, and Amy Hilliker, “...accumulation of nitrates and salts in drinking water and waterborne pathogens are cause for alarm for human health” (30). The livestock are not only polluting the lakes and streams, they are polluting human drinking water, which is a colossal risk for the health of the people. The authors also state, “Depending on the quality of waste management, the chances of excrement seeping into groundwater or making

its way into our water systems are good or bad. Some farms may not put enough effort or money into waste management, greatly increasing the chances of parasites from feces contaminating water, and in turn, causing disease or infection in humans” (30). The water is vital to us humans, and with the livestock contaminating it, we will have no source of it.

Although the livestock may be able to keep the land trim, they have led to deforestation, release of greenhouse gases, and loss of wildlife home and biodiversity. They are also a major factor in air and water pollution. The animals are polluting water sources that are vital to our livelihood. They are causing major disruptions that are irreversible and will eventually lead to an environmental obstacle left for us humans. Next time you gaze at livestock, think about the negative effects they are applying on the environment.

## Works Cited

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