



After having visited my devotee friend's Cow Protection farm near where I live in Wales, the great simplicity of this project is apparent. The farm scenario is grouped with a Vaisnava ashrama in idyllic rural Wales that is simply breathtakingly beautiful. The reminder from the Jaya Radha Madhava mantra springs to mind conjuring up that all-attractive transcendental mood of the village of Vrndavana, and so that mood is captured here in the grove like meadows and rivulets of this Cow Protection project. Here we find ramshackle buildings echoing back to times gone by, integrity in the buildings: built without concrete and metal, just carpentry joins and pinned together with wooden "nails", all locally sourced materials, and that all attractive friendly nature of devotees engaged in devotional service to Lord Krsna.



That all embracing sweetness of the rural picture that is painted in Srimad Bhagavatam of Vrindavana, where Lord Krsna kept hundreds of thousands of Cows, indeed in Goloka Vrindavana is it possible to count Lord Krsna's Cows. Here in the heart of Wales that feeling and mood are sought after. The Cows and Bulls are housed simply, they are kept in a relevant place beside the devotees, the Goshalla is full of character and their environment is like the groves in Vrindavana with sweet water rivers freshly running by in the valleys between the meadows, accessible for the Cows. The picture is painted and the appreciation is beheld, and we just add Krsna Consciousness to this adorable haven of tranquility and we are on our way back to Godhead by chanting Hare Krishna. Saved by the Cows who just stroll along without a

care in the world.

The Cows' protection plan is master-minded in the most simplistic of ways. Cow Protection is sublime. Their needs are simple, a Goshalla that is clean and tidy with fresh bedding on top of a wood chipping foundation. Wood chippings and saw dust are both hygienic because they both absorb fluids and naturally have antiseptic properties. Many commercial farms use wood shavings and sawdust for bedding. It can be replaced up to three times a day for good animal husbandry techniques and a preventative technique against mastitis. Many sawmills will give you the waste product but even paying for it is economical, especially the harder wood shavings, which are really good for absorbency and hygienic qualities. As my devotee friend is looking after these Cows independently, he is able to maintain the Cows based on a symbiotic relationship with his neighbours, where bartering is the way they trade.

When it comes down to the investment that is made in Cow Protection, then there are some considerations to make. Cows, land, feed and housing are the basic needs. The investment is not that big that it is not affordable for westerners. But when it comes to ISKCON type Cow Protection, then it is altogether a different ballgame. Let me illustrate the considerable opposing scenarios that we have here in the UK.

At Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla a brand new construction has taken place recently. There was an initial investment/donation of £2. 8 MILLION made. With a herd of Cows and Bulls running at 44 (from their webpage) in total that means an expenditure of £63, 636 for each animal. That's just for the Goshalla. On any commercial operating farm where there is an intensive production of milk on the basis of say 300 cows in full milking, the cost of £63,636 per cow (£19,090, 800) just for housing would be a totally prohibitive amount to even set this enterprise up. all farmers would just laugh in your face at this. With the margins of profit based on the highest turnover of milk production in a commercial herd coming out at pennies per litre, the idea of spending £2. 8 Million for 44Cows, on just a glorified cow shed is unthinkable and a

non-starter for Cow Protection to base an economic solution on.



Not just withstanding the fact that there are 44 head of Cows at Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla, which means they are facing a full capacity scenario already, at least 50% are male which don't milk anyway, and it is a hard task to quantify their contribution to their £63, 636 price tag. There are naturally retired milking Cows and young heifers not yet reaching their full potential for milk, then there is the added hazard of poor animal husbandry, overweight animals, arthritic animals, and poor hygiene on concrete floors and inapplicable feed rationing. The whole package means there is no way on this planet that the Cow Protection project can afford a families wage to pay for the labour costs, what to speak of paying off the £63,636 investment in each Cow just for the Goshalla. The idea and concept of self-dependency becomes an illusory goal because the interest on the loan alone would not ever be paid off, what to speak of the initial capital investment of £2. 8 Million, and the creditors would be repossessing the whole project. In fact, the whole project would be a non-starter in the real world because the insurer for underpinning the loan would never have agreed to spending £2. 8 Million in this way.

This illustration of how Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla management have squandered such a considerable amount of money on just a Goshalla shows how the corporate application of managing and appointing millions of ££££'s has actually by-passed the community of devotees' symbiotic relationship in Cow Protection. With this amount of money available, £2.8 Million, it would have been an easy task to have bought over 250 acres of prime arable and grassland farm complete with all the relevant buildings, and housing for devotees to boot. Then it would have set-up a symbiotic relationship economy based on Cow Protection and rural cottage industries for a devotee's community, for now and future expansion.

The rural idyllic village would then have commenced for all devotees and attracted much more devotee interest, because the all-attractive inclusive nature of community would be predominant. The opportunity to develop this kind of project is far reaching because all the components that are missing from Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla would be there. Community management includes communal dependency and with this type of inclusive interest devotees would be able to successfully build a community together governing themselves and the project. In time the economic branding of devotee products based on Cow Protection would easily sustain, expand and give unlimited opportunities to many, many generations of devotees.

Governing ISKCON in a corporate fashion by exclusive decisions based on Cow Protection as a tourist conception and animal sanctuary/zoo has proven that it does not matter how much money you throw at a project, if it is not properly managed in the way it is intended to work, it will fail. As long as Cow Protection is paraded, executed and marketed in the corporate, isolationist and exclusive conception as a sanctuary/zoo and touristic gimmicky fashion complete with Hinduistic tendencies, it just becomes a no-through road with nowhere to go and no community symbiosis. The relationship with the Cows is just based on impersonalistic principles and the love and dependency is non-existent, because the enterprise is based on the wrong principles of monetary income and Hindu religious activities. Just imagine how different this same project would have been if there were no Hindus nearby with money to give. The whole approach would be different and the whole dependency would change.

Because Bhaktivedanta Manor management have let the Hindu influence of donational money influence the Cow Protection project, we find a totally watered down principle of Cow Protection. In fact, all we find is a herd of Cows that are not slaughtered, that don't support a community, and who are not even connected to a community of devotees as the centre of their lives. There is not even any community infrastructure that is Community-Cow Protection related. The whole plan of the Goshalla has been compromised right from the planning and design stages so that inherently it can't be community related, no matter what happens from now on. Even the addition of a "farm shop" and some vestiges of cottage industry to make "spoons" is just a smokescreen and after thought to try to cover-up the total lack of vision, and the one-sided concept that initially planned the Goshalla. The Goshalla is self-evidentially non-community centric.

Cow Protection only works in a community orientated integrated dynamic, based on a relationship of symbiosis. Then Cow Protection stands a much better chance of setting the example that illustrates the alternative to animal slaughter. Not one farmer in his right mind would entertain the idea of spending £63,636 per capita, on just housing. It's flabbergastingly gobsmackingly insane.

Our Cow Protection projects have got to be run by devotees who know what they are doing and are transparent. They have to understand the long term interests of what integrated Cow Protection means. There has to be a plan where a natural development of devotee input is maintained to ensure that economic measures work. Cows give milk, and this can be processed into many products to add value and then packaged and marketed and retailed so there is a cash flow for inward investment and profitability to create service, jobs, and dependency on our Cows for all our devotees. The same process has to be applied to the Bulls as well, knowing that their employment is to produce grains, not to be gimmicky tourist attractions hauling around people on carts as rides!!

If the community is not involved with Cow Protection, then a watered down project ensues, and at Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla we find no community infrastructure related to Cow Protection at all, so the project is doomed to failure before it even begins because of the isolationist mentality. There has been no conceptual introduction and marrying up of devotee community to Cow Protection, therefore the project only works on donations of money from outside people. It does not solve the economic problems of life that Cow Protection is for and is not self-sustainable whatsoever. The main investments in Cow Protection are cows and land, not the goshallas. It's absolutely ludicrous to spend £2. 8 Million on a Goshalla.

As devotees within the ISKCON parameters we have to understand what Cow Protection is by nature, how it works and our relationship with the Cows. Just because there is a gold-plated Goshalla at Bhaktivedanta Manor does not mean that is Cow Protection, just because the Cows

are not killed. There are many sanctuaries and zoos worldwide where animals are not killed, but survive on the paying public for support. They pay money at an entrance to support zoos and similar to Bhaktivedanta Goshalla, there are animal rides and cart rides, and donations are solicited for many animal sanctuaries like donkeys and horses. But so what? this shows nothing but a monetary support system, a capitalistic entrepreneurial principle, not sustainability, not self-sufficiency, not eco-friendliness, and absolutely no communal symbiosis, the alternative lifestyle of Vaisnavas in this material world. Our alternative lifestyle is based on Cow Protection and land worked by the Bulls for grains, this is the basis for our economic future.

And the illustration and example of construction at Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla is the perfect way of not building ecologically, sustainably and communally. The manufacture of concrete produces the equal amount of carbon footprint. In other words, for every tonne of cement produced there is exactly the same amount of carbon produced. That statistic means that cement and concrete produce more emissions than all the planes in the world put together, that's how unsustainable and toxic concrete is. So don't worry about flying to India, worry about cement manufacture and concrete blocks, its way more polluting.

Then they have also used heavy tubular steel for a number of uses. Another heavy pollutant and industrialised material. This hardly creates the Vrindavana mood and just reminds us of the same commercialised farms where cows are reared for slaughter. The ambience is rather like a men's public convenience. Their next problem was the import of wood from abroad at a huge carbon footprint. And if that is not enough, the use of diesel fed tractors instead of the resident bulls to make "hay" is another pollutant, so where is the sustainability, where is the eco-friendliness, where is the all-attractive mood and character atmosphere that is punctuated by protecting cows? Why has the western model of warehouse construction been copied when there are so many fabulous alternative ways of construction that enhance the atmosphere for the cows to live that actually do create that delightful place to milk cows. Why put the cows in huge metal tubular crates just for milking them? It's all over the top and so unattractive. What happened to the aesthetic designers?

At Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla the mood is neither inclusive for Cow Protection nor one of the sweet mood of Vrindavana. The cows are rarely included in kirtana with the devotees and the Goshalla is found miles across a field so the relevancy is minimised. There are also other farms in ISKCON occupying the same disjointed and disconnected Cow Protection projects.

We have to understand that the cows are part of our community and love us as we love them, they are integrated with us not dis-integrated. Just treat them on the same level as Deity worship and you can't go wrong. Chant Hare Krsna with your cows and love them to bits, and Lord Krsna will be pleased. Treat the cows as family members, which means including them where you live too. Otherwise it's just like putting your old mother in some nursing home in another town, miles away from you. They are there for you, so please be there for them. It's better to have a relationship with cows than mobile phones and electric gadgets. We don't need that much electricity either, just energy produced from cow manure and trees. That's our motto: "simple living high thinking", and that's for ALL the members of ISKCON, including the sannyasis and gurus. That's our lifestyle.

And just as an example of total conditioning to electricity in ISKCON and the western world, there is a picture I want to paint for you. Just picture a remote rural ISKCON property, there is no electricity. The devotees are organising an Initiation ceremony and they have all gathered outside in the sunshine. There's maybe thirty devotees in total, a small group. The fire yagna is set, the sitting places arranged, and a more elaborate sitting place for the Sannyasi is set. The devotees are now assembling, ready for the ceremony. They are all talking amongst themselves and it's all pretty relaxed, but a bit excited. And stuck right in the middle of the big seat is a microphone complete with amplification and an electric generator powered by petrol. Can you imagine this scenario? In rural countryside, with a small bunch of devotees, with the birds singing and other country sounds, and there is a generator to supply electricity for an amplifier for ONE microphone. There's wires and a stand and the hum and smell of the generator and no-one blinks an eyelid. It's just normality. Is this not total insanity? And this actually happened!!!

Our lifestyle is based on the rural location where the influence is mode of goodness, so that our life is situated peacefully, simply, and honestly. The whole idea of Cow Protection is to integrate our lives and dependency on them in this mode of goodness. Our business, our housing, our energy requirements, and our food are all produced from the interaction of Cow Protection and land. Our needs become simple because we self-govern our communities through istagosthis and our relationships become trustworthy because we depend on each other communally. The whole package of our lifestyle is based on a rural idyllic situation. Influenced primarily by the mode of goodness, our bodily and mental health becomes less agitated by passionate and ignorant desires, so falldowns are a thing of the past and corruption becomes extinct.

The only reason for living in towns and cities is to preach, and only preach. Books are the basis of our preaching, and towns and cities are where the majority of people reside, so we go to these places to distribute Books, but not to accept the association. If we accept the association of passion and ignorance, then offences to chanting the Holy Name may creep in and our spiritual lives are slowly diluted. In the mode of goodness in our rural domiciles where we practice our lifestyles through Cow Protection and living off the land we are protected by the community of devotees, the cows, the way of life itself and our chanting becomes less offensive, the clearing stages. All these important points illustrate the relevance of Cow Protection in rural places-- that is to protect the devotees as well!!!!!-- from Maya.

But the problem with Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla is that the principles of community, the mode of goodness, and our rural lifestyle are not integrated with the devotees. The Goshalla operates as an independent, individual and inaccessible entity because of its economic basis and because the Cow Protection project is based on outside help and touristic dynamics. Cow Protection is self-perpetuating because it generates wealth, employment, life skills and solves the economic problems of life, and surrounds the devotees in the mode of goodness lifestyle. But what is happening in official ISKCON Cow Protection projects is practically the opposite of what Cow Protection is for and how Cow Protection integrates with community and lends itself particularly to symbiotic relationships.

What ISKCON has been offering to the devotees by their Cow Protection projects is the opposite. Instead of changing the hand of lifestyles from western capitalistic culture, they have tried to fit the glove to match the hand of corporatism. In other words, instead of changing our lifestyles to fit Cow Protection they have tried to fit Cow Protection to fit our western dominated lifestyles. To make Cow Protection work in its symbiotic relationship and to solve the economic problems we have to integrate our lifestyles to fit Cow Protection, not the other way round. That's what "simple living" means. That's why Cow Protection has never worked in ISKCON, because they are too busy trying to fit the glove of Cow Protection to a hand of corporate culture and the self-sufficient ethos is always by-passed and misconstrued. In other words, we humans have to elevate our lifestyles to the mode of goodness to be equal to our protected Cows, to gain the benefit and association of them.

Cow Protection only functions in its natural form with the dynamic of community. When we picture the ideal scenario in our minds eye we see the cows in their Goshalla milking, the Bulls are working the land producing grains and the devotees are processing the milk into all the dairy products. The grains are being harvested and stored and then processed into foods for human consumption. Then on the other side of Cow Protection there is the whole energy producing effect from cow manure from the animals and the hauling of wood from the forests for heating and cooking. Naturally the Cow Protection project and community would be located near to rivers and/or springs and wells for sufficient fresh water and irrigation, because in only a few days without water the whole project is finished. A fresh water source is absolutely fundamentally vital. And as we are witnessing in the Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla region of the UK, there is now a hose-pipe ban because there are drought conditions, in the Spring, so now the cows, the devotees all depend on the water companies just for water. In Wales we have water coming out of our ears! What happens if the weather trends cause droughts there every year? What about the agriculture there? Is the Southeast of the UK a good location for Cow Protection and farming and being self -sufficient?

For lighting we can use cow manure-produced gas (methane) to light or we can grow flax for oil lighting, even the fibre of the flax plant can be used as a wick, it's a perfect arrangement. Or make our own beeswax candles. Then we have a complete holistic lifestyle going on (much of the detail is missing) but here we have the fundamental foundation of a self-dependent lifestyle. This is predominated by the mode of goodness at every step from economic development, business opportunity, employment, food production including medicines, etc., eco-friendly

energy requirements, clothes, housing and construction, and other elements that are not able to be produced in every country of the world, that we can barter for or exchange monetary goods, or simply do without.

When we analyse the ISKCON Cow Protection projects there are many, many elements missing still after many years, because of lack of vision, lack of leadership, missed opportunities, ill-advised decision making, misguided devotees and just plain old disqualification. And the continuing idea that we in ISKCON have real Cow Protection projects is misconstrued, misunderstood and misconceived by the devotees who view the projects as they are. At best we have Cow Protection zoos and sanctuaries as defined around the world by many of the same projects where animals find sanctuary from being slaughtered and abused, and although this is of some benefit for mankind, it is not the fully manifest mandate of Cow Protection that we are all seeking to fully take shelter of, so that we can place our full faith and security for the future of our children and our childrens children.

The symptom of these sanctuaries and zoos are the subtle perpetuation of corporatism, monetary systems of lifestyle, inequality, and materialistic based conceptions because there is a business mentality behind them for maintaining them, i.e., paying public, money making gimmicks and touristic ideas. The isolationist mentality is magnified and the exploitation is emphasised, and eventually the conclusion will be to just slaughter all the animals because they cost so much money and effort. And from the history of some devotee's accounts of Cow Protection in ISKCON, this is exactly what has happened to some cows. They were slaughtered, or abused and left to die! And some were just accidentally killed by outrageously inept managers who should never have been left in charge of cows in the first place, typically bad ISKCON management.

It is important for us as Vaisnavas to understand the significance of real Cow Protection and our integrated symbiotic relationship with them. In fact, this is the real definition of what Cow

## Hare Krishna Centre - Leicester, UK - Cow Protection

Written by Dusyanta dasa

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Protection is. Our relationship with the cows is one of love. And our partnership with them is dependency. If we don't show this relationship with the cows, then who else on this planet is going to? It's up to us to get this right, so get involved with Krsna's Cows, just like He showed us in Vrndavana on a daily basis. Make them part of your life and they will be part of your life, you can depend on that!!!!

All glories to Krsna's cows

your servant of the servant,  
Dusyanta dasa