

# The cow is not a climate killer

Dr Anita Idel, a veterinary surgeon, asks about the right system – taking into account cattle as the landscape gardeners for the planet as well as extremely energy-intensive high-performance animals on the other.

Cattle, sheep and other ruminants turn pasture into milk and meat. They have evolved in co-evolution with pasture land, which is not appropriate to cultivation.



Cows “burp” methane, which is 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide. However, the highest agricultural emissions are caused by the synthetic fertilisers used in the vast monocultural production of concentrated feed as part of intensive agriculture. Chemical fertilisers need a lot of energy in the making and later emit nitrous oxide – which is 295 times more damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide.

In contrast to this cows and other ruminants can actually reduce climate change. And the reason for this is - pasture covers about 40% of the global land mass. Through sustainable pasture management carbon is stored as humus in the soil and contributes to the fertility of the soil. Each ton of humus in the soil captures about 1.8 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

This book is about more than a defence of cattle:

The author describes the destructiveness of intensive agriculture with the loss of soil fertility and its contribution to climate change. She gives people the floor who are actively reviving the symbiotic potential of the soil-plant-animal complex by keeping ruminants on pasture and the knowledge of 21st century.

Dr Anita Idel is a veterinarian. From 2005 to 2008 she was lead author in the World Agricultural Assessment Report. She is co-founder of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kritische Tiermedizin (1983) [Working Group on the Critique of Veterinary Medicine] and the Gen-ethisches Netzwerk (1986) [Ethical Genetics Network] as well as the Gesellschaft für Ökologische Tierhaltung (1991) [Society for Ecological Husbandry]. Since 1986 she has been lecturer at the University of Kassel. As mediator she works in the areas of economics and animal welfare as well as agriculture and environmental protection.

## **Die Kuh ist kein Klima-Killer: Wie die Agrarindustrie die Erde verwüstet und was wir dagegen tun können**

Anita Idel, 2010.

Metropolis Verlag für Ökonomie, Marburg. In German. [tinyurl.com/2w2bfpo](http://tinyurl.com/2w2bfpo)

English version planned for 2011.