

5 Reasons to have a cow on the Homestead

1. Milk and Dairy Products

The first and (*I think*) most obvious reason to own a cow is for milk. Fresh, clean raw milk has so many health benefits. The milk alone is such a wonderful product but we can't forget all of the things that can be made with milk like: cheese, kefir, yogurt, butter, buttermilk, sour cream, ice cream..... I could go on and on but I know we are all just getting hungry.

Not only does this wonderful milk nourish my family (*it tastes pretty amazing too!*). It also offers nourishment to the other animals on our homestead.

We can use extra milk (not that there is any extra milk very often) to feed our chickens and/or pigs. We also use the leftover whey to feed our other animals. We sometimes soak their feed overnight with it.

AND who doesn't love homemade ice cream? **That is enough in itself to own a cow!**

2. Beef

Since I've already gone and made you hungry I'll just make it worse (*you can thank me later*). When you own a cow, you will need to have said cow bred, to continue getting a sufficient amount of milk. The resulting calf can be a great source of home raised, grass-fed beef if it is a bull calf.

Typically, a family milk cow will be bred each year. This would provide your family with the ability to raise all of your own beef.

Just think of all of the ground beef, steaks, briskets, steaks, ribs, steaks, loin, and did I mention **STEAKS?** That is some good eats ya'll!

3. Pasture Management

If you have a decent amount of land to work with, you can use your cow (*or cows, whatever the case may be*) to manage your pasture. Between keeping the pasture growth level managed, the cow's manure will fertilize and nourish the ground resulting in beautiful, lush grazing for your cow year after year.

Being able to move your cow around to different sections of your pasture with rotational grazing is a great benefit to both the cow and the land as well.

4. Compost

Similar to the pasture management, the manure can be placed into a compost pile to break down. This is an amazing additive to your garden soil. You will have some rich dirt with this mixed in and your veggies will love it. This is one of the richest ways to improve your soil.

You can also use whey to fertilize your plants. **Bonus, bonus, bonus!**

5. Income

Owning a cow also enables you to generate income for your homestead. There are a couple of ways you can do this. One would be selling the beef you get from calves or selling older steers on hoof for meat. If you have more than one cow, selling one steer for beef would definitely help off-set the expense of owning a milk cow. If you have heifer calves, you can sell them as family milk cows. You will be able to get a decent price for your heifer and the satisfaction of helping another family enjoy the benefits of owning a milk cow.