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## Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture (Plume)

*By Jeremy Rifkin*



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Americans have a love affair with beef. The average American consumes the meat of seven 1,100-pound steers in a lifetime. But how many hamburger-lovers realize that a single boneless beefsteak requires up to 1,200 gallons of precious water to produce, that livestock now consume nearly one third of the world's grain, or that cattle play a central role in species extinction?



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### **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Rifkin drives home the moral paradoxes of meat eating, issuing an important call to nutritional sanity and environmental ethics.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Rifkin (*Biosphere Politics*, p. 460, etc.), who seems to turn out environmental calls to arms on an assembly line, now turns his guns on beef--in this survey of the cattle culture's destructive role in the modern world and in history. Citing the works of others, Rifkin points to paleolithic bull and cow cults, to the clash several millennia ago between peaceful matrilineal agriculturalists and nomadic cattle herders who arose around the Ukraine and spread throughout the Old World, and to the North American West--where native populations and the buffalo they lived off were displaced and slaughtered to make room for the cattle industry, much of it financed by British interests, and where US taxpayers continue to subsidize beef ranchers and packers. None of this is original; and readers of vegetarian and animal- rights literature will already be familiar with the points addressed in Rifkin's subsequent indictment of our multinational- driven cattle culture with its devastating effect on the economies of developing countries; on the lives of starving Third World populations; and on the health of affluent populations who ``gorge" on beef, tropical forests, the water supply, soil, and the global atmosphere. *Animal Factories* (1980) by Jim Mason and Peter Singer, as well as *Food First* (1977) and other works by Frances Moore Lapp, and Joseph Collins, are among the widely read works that are more forcefully and solidly argued. Nor are Rifkin's modish touches of punning deconstruction truly eye-opening. Rifkin's vision of a future ``beyond beef" is only that, absent strategies or specifics. Still, by putting all this readably together, he might well win a new and different audience. --  
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