

A MAN AND HIS COW

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Once upon a time there was a cow standing quietly in a lush green field nursing its calf.

A young man happened upon the pair and quietly watched as the cow fed her newborn calf. The man, remembering his own childhood, wondered if he could partake of the cow's milk to satisfy his hunger.

After many days, the man befriended the cow and she allowed him to drink her rich, warm milk. The calf did not worry because there was enough milk for both. They spent the days lying together under the shade of the trees and huddled together at night for warmth.

Eventually, the landowner passed by and saw the relationship between the man and his cow. The **landowner** said to the young man, "**unless I can have some milk, you'll have to move on.**" The man and the calf did not worry because there was enough milk for all. They shared the milk. The calf matured and began to eat grass alongside its mother.

Other people heard about the cow with the rich warm milk, and one by one they each proposed a reason why they should have some milk. A **carpenter** offered to build a barn and a stool for the young man to sit on... **for some milk**. A **doctor** offered to keep the cow healthy... **for some milk**. A **tinsmith** offered to make cans... **for some milk**.

A **dung hauler** offered to keep the pasture clean... **for some milk**. The **mayor** offered to protect everyone and make sure that everyone got their fair share... **for some milk**.

The mayor had brought the number of mouths to seven, and the cow could feed no more.

Other **townspeople** wanted milk but there was no surplus. Everyone, **except the young man**, held a meeting to decide what to do about the milk shortage. It made no difference what the young man wanted to do, the rest could outvote him. They decided to get more cows and begin to barter with the other townspeople. Only the young man knew how to get milk from the cows.

The townspeople accused the young man of profiteering. They taxed his profits until there were none. They made him milk the now-grown calf and mortgage both cows to buy more

cows. They told him to hire and train more milkers. Bulls were imported and more calves were born.

Businesses began to multiply and for every new cow and milker, seven more jobs were created. The dung hauler sold dried dung to the farmer who used it to fertilize plants for cow food. The carpenter built barns for the landlord and houses for all.

The landlord rented property. The tinsmith made pots and pans. The doctor provided health care services. The farmer grew food for the cows and the people.

Countless specialized service businesses blossomed overnight... like the family that made a soothing balm to comfort the wrinkled hands of the milkers.

The economy thrived until the **dung haulers went on strike**. They wanted more milk for their efforts. It was a dirty job and someone had to do it.

The farmer could not produce food without fertilizer. The cows grew hungry and milk production fell. The cow dung piled up and the cows got sick from germs. Milk production fell. The doctor offered to cure the cows if he received **more milk** for his vaccine research. The mayor interceded and offered to solve all the problems if he got **more milk** for his efforts. The mayor and the doctor got **more milk** so the town grew. The dung haulers got a raise.

Cows were bred with larger udders. They were fed special food and injected with hormones to make them produce more milk. Eventually the people tied the heads of the cows to the feeding trough so they wouldn't need to waste energy walking around the pasture. There still wasn't enough milk to feed all the townspeople so an **inventor** designed a milking machine... **for some milk**.

Then came the war. Milk was needed to feed the **soldiers** who would no longer be involved in milk production. Each cow was asked to feed eight mouths but they could only feed seven. Everyone sacrificed a portion of their milk to feed the soldiers.

There were so many cows, the air, ground, and water became polluted. A **scientist** agreed to solve the pollution problem... **for some milk**. The people were asked to give up portion of their milk to feed the scientist and so the situation grew... more cows... more milkers... more **engineers** and **scientists**... more **educators**... more carpenters... and more regulations. The dairyman was not consulted because he could be outvoted.

The whole system had grown to the point where the only way it could survive was if it continued to expand and if there continued to be wars.

And then it happened... **the war ended**. A neighboring town, which had not been in the war, had only six people per cow and few milk production regulations. They had invested the profits in better milk production. They began to sell milk at lower prices. **The dung haulers were the first to buy the foreign milk**. They claimed they weren't making enough money to afford domestic milk and that the foreign milk tasted better. Other townspeople did the same. Soon, the mayor had to pay the dairy a subsidy to continue production. The mayor made the townspeople sacrifice some milk to pay this subsidy.

The soldiers came home and there were no jobs.

Tradesman banded together and refused to work if their standard of living was not improved. Those who were not part of a special interest group became poorer, hungry and some lost their jobs.

A town meeting was called and everyone demanded time to voice their problems and offer solutions to the problem. They were so dissatisfied with their quality of life that they elected a new mayor. It was not because he knew how to solve the problem but because anything would be better than what they had now.

Each tradesman tried to convince the others that his problem was the worst and that his solution to the problem was the best. And yet, none had ever built a business from nothing but a cow and tender loving care. They had only become experts on how to live off men with a cow and a dream.

The new mayor gave every special interest group what they wanted based on the number of votes he could get. The dairymen were not consulted because they had so few votes. The dairymen did not get involved because they were too busy saving the cows.

The mayor taxed the dairy because of the insistence of the other trades people. The dairymen argued that they could not stay in business without profits. While they were arguing, the cows went without food and health care. Severely neglected, they died.

The teachers opened a center to train dairymen how to repair their milking machines but there was no market for milk. The teachers trained new milkers but, there were no cows to milk.

Because of unemployment, the value of houses fell, and the mayor had less tax money to provide services to the people.

Some businesses continued to flourish... **for a while**. The butcher slaughtered the cows, sold them for food, and bought milk from the neighboring town. Specialty services survived because people still had needs. The mayor used his remaining budget to count the number of people leaving town. The carpenters built wagons for people to move their meager belongings. Eventually all the money was gone, drained by milk purchases from the neighboring town.

Hat in hand, the townspeople migrated to the neighboring town looking for a job and an opportunity to start over. The neighboring town had no surplus jobs. They had to feed the **immigrants**. They created economic development programs. The rest of the townspeople were asked to sacrifice part of their milk.

The economy was just beginning to grow when the dung haulers went on strike...

Some time later, in an arid field without grass or trees, a small group of hungry people was picking over the bleached bones of animal carcasses.

The last dairyman quietly stole away with one cow and one bull he had kept alive with a small portion of his milk. He would travel until he found a fresh green pasture with a few shade trees. That would be enough for the three of them.

No one else noticed.

Once upon a time they had a cow... but not any more.

THE MORAL

Companies that manufacture and export products are the best cash cows of the community economy. They produce the core jobs the service industries need to survive.

Defense subcontractors can be converted into manufacturers and exporters. They have few votes and need the support of the rest of the tradesmen.

Every core manufacturing job creates six jobs for other tradesmen. If you are a job creator, thank you. If you prosper, because of a job creator, be careful. A cow can only feed seven mouths.

WHATEVER YOU DO, SAVE THE COW!
