



7 3 C O W S

Documentary Overview

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Log Line

A beef farmer battles with his conscience every time he takes his cows to slaughter. He knows he must make a change.

Short Synopsis

Jay Wilde has been a beef farmer his entire life, but as a vegetarian he begins to struggle with his conscience every time he takes his cows to be slaughtered. Gradually, the process of meat farming becomes unbearable. Feeling completely trapped within the industry, Jay realises that he must find a way to make a change. He decides to set about doing what no farmer in the UK has ever done before, by transforming his meat farm into an organic plant based farm. Taking a step into the unknown, Jay must decide what to do with the existing cattle on the farm who are ready to be slaughtered and which could bring the vital profits he needs to transform his farm. This is the story of the first beef farmer in England to save every one of his cows from slaughter.



Long Synopsis

Jay Wilde has lived on Bradley Nook Farm his entire life. Having had the farm handed down to him by his father, he knows he must maintain its legacy. As Jay spends more time beef farming, he realises that he can't bear to eat the animals he calls his friends, and so becomes a vegetarian. Being a vegetarian beef farmer begins to weigh on Jay's conscience every time he takes his cows to be slaughtered. Gradually, the process of meat farming becomes unbearable. Jay's wife Katja can see that beef farming is slowly destroying her husband. Their relationship becomes strained. Knowing that they need to make ends meet, they feel completely trapped within the industry. Jay realises he must find a way to make a change.

Having heard about plant based farming, Jay becomes inspired and decides to set about doing what no farmer in the UK has ever done before by turning his meat farm into an organic plant based farm. The road ahead is a long one, and without a plan of action Jay contacts Tom Kuehnel from the Vegan Society who helps him to come up with a plan to re-work his entire farm. During the process Jay faces a predicament. He still has cows on the farm who are ready to be slaughtered, which could bring him the vital profits he needs to transform his farm. Instead, Jay decides he will rescue all 73 cows.

After a painstaking search, Jay receives a call letting him know that a sanctuary has been found who are willing to take on all his animals. Overjoyed, Jay feels the burden of meat farming lifted from him. Jay and Katja can finally enjoy the relief that comes with doing something purely because it's the right thing to do. After news breaks of Jay and Katja's sacrifice, support begins to pour in from people around the world, making the tough journey ahead seem more achievable.

This is the story of the first beef farmer in the UK to save every one of his cows from slaughter.



Importance of the film

Jay Wilde of Bradley Nook farm will likely be remembered in generations to come as the first meat farmer in the UK to transform his farm from beef to plant based farming. Jay's courage to take a step into the unknown is not only of personal importance but also cultural, as Jay hopes to lay out the blueprint for farmers across the nation. In this climate of change, 73 Cows will capture audiences from all backgrounds who appreciate the merits and courage which it's subject displays.

Documentary Style

The documentary is 15 minute exploration of Jay Wilde's incredible story. It focuses on Jay's feelings, the conflict he faced within himself and the difficulties he came up against having made his decision to save his cattle. 73 Cows aims to provide personal context to the issue of ethical farming. As a character piece, Jay's voice guides the viewer through the film whilst piece to camera interviews with those close to the story provide broad context to Jay's farming transition and also the importance of it. Whilst interviews with both his wife Katja and the Vegan Society provide additional context to the piece, they are still very much focussed on understanding Jay's character motives.

73 Cows aims to be a film with a strong sense of place. The subject, Jay, has lived on Bradley Nook Farm his entire life and so the look and feel of the location has heavily informed his character and, in return, he has impacted greatly on the farm. For this reason, Jay's farm serves as a visual extension of himself. It's condition, it's unkempt nature, and ultimately it's hopefulness. The film aims to serve as an empathetic reflection of Jay Wilde's story, seeking to understand his motives and challenge the audience in a way in which isn't patronising or abrasive. The overall message of the film is an uplifting one, that an individual can overcome their personal daemons, no matter how challenging the road ahead may seem.



Visual Style

The visual language of 73 Cows seeks to balance style with a grounding in reality. The film aims to create a look which feels cinematic and considered with a real fluidity to its motion, rather than inviting a more gritty fashion of shooting. Each individual shot aims to feel considered whilst still allowing the camera to explore scenes and follow action as it naturally occurs. Slow motion footage is used in order to give the pacing of the film a sense of thoughtfulness. The use of slow motion also seeks to allow the audience to look closely into everyday nature of the things being captured. In order to accurately portray Jay's farming lifestyle, Jay was captured with as little direction as possible in order to truly capture reality as it presented itself.





Director's Statement

"When I stumbled across Jay and Katja's story in the national news, I instantly knew I had to make a documentary about it. I felt that whatever anybody's personal opinions are about Jay's decision to save his cows, that the courage it must have taken both Jay and his wife could surely be admired. Any act of true courage like that, I felt, makes for a great story. Given the film's controversial subject matter, I knew the film would divide opinion.

I went to meet with both Jay and Katja at their farm to get to know them, their story and also to meet the cows. Sat at Jay and Katja's kitchen table, we ended up talking for hours. What struck me was just how many layers there were to this story. I hadn't anticipated the level to which the couple have had to make sacrifices, simply to do what they felt was the right thing to do. I became incredibly excited to tell their story.

Over the next few months my small crew and I went back and forth to Bradley Nook Farm, capturing everything from Jay doing odd jobs around the farm to him sat reading the local newspaper. Both Jay and Katja were incredibly giving with their time in order to help us make the best film we could. The entire crew gradually bonded with not only Jay and Katja but also with the farm itself.

By the time we'd shot our last images, I really felt I understood the story, the location and what the film should and shouldn't become. 73 Cows is the film project above all others that I've cared for the most, enjoyed the most and have felt a true sense of direction with.

My hope for the film is that this resonates with viewers in the same way the story has resonated with myself."

Alex Lockwood



Key Crew



Alex Lockwood **Director / Producer**

Alex is a film maker from a little town called Bromsgrove in Worcestershire. Enjoying the act of storytelling from a young age and having been inspired by the gritty British works of Ken Loach and Shane Meadows, Alex decided to set about a career in film. A graduate of Film Production from the University of Gloucestershire, Alex has spent the last 7 years working on low-no budget narratives and documentaries whilst making a living working within the corporate film sphere. Alex's ambition is to spend his career making films from an ethical standpoint which shed light on difficult issues. As his most ambitious independent film yet, Alex has hopes that 73 Cows will serve as an introduction to himself as filmmaker.



Oliver Walton **Cinematographer**

Oliver is from a small rural town called Bromsgrove and this is where his love of film making began. With a keen eye for cinematic storytelling, Oliver is inspired by the likes of pioneering cinematographers of our industry such as Robert Richardson, Emmanuel Lubezki, Rodger Deakins, Gordon Willis and Tom Stern. Oliver won a prestigious Learning on Screen award for his film about Sexual Health, which was promoted national throughout schools. Oliver met Alex whilst studying at the University of Gloucestershire working on their final year film. Working together they knew what they could achieve together. Oliver has also set up his own production company, Fix 8 Films, specializing in film and corporate production.



John Roddy **Sound Recordist and Designer**

John has worked on many projects shooting mainly corporate films and has also worked on many theatre shows and tours, including tours of Spain and China, such as Merry War, Tempestory, A Clockwork Orange, Shout, Cinderella, Rent and Freeman. John has worked with Strictly Arts Theatre Company on their latest film entitled 'Consequences,' for which he recorded all of the location sound for the shoot, and was also the Re-recording Mixer.



Facts about 73 Cows

73 Cows was made on a shoestring budget and was funded completely out of pocket. Everyone involved with the film worked purely for the passion of film making and knowing that the story was one worth being told.

As the cows were released onto the fields for spring, none of the workers who helped transport the cows to the fields agreed to be filmed due to the stigma still attached with taking animals to sanctuaries.

Jay has received a mixed reaction from his local community having set his cows free. With other farmers around the area struggling to understand his decision, many have nicknamed his farm 'the funny farm'. Jay though, has no regrets and feels strongly that, in time, his decision will prove to have been the right one.

During filming, the crew met one of Jay's cows Tiger Tim. When Tiger Tim was born it was said that he would struggle to grow and that the treatment to save him would be too expensive. Jay was advised to put Tiger Tim to sleep. Jay instead treated the cow and nursed her to health. She's now the biggest and healthiest cow you could imagine. At 6 years old, she is the largest of all of Jay's cows.

The final scene of the film took weeks longer than anticipated to film as poor weather conditions meant that Jay's cows had to be kept indoors until the grass was suitably dry. When we finally managed to film the cows being released for summer, it was the first time that Jay and Katja had been reunited with their cows since releasing them a year previously.

Having sent the majority of his herd to live at Hillside Animal Sanctuary, Jay has kept 12 of the cows on his own farm where they live as rescue animals along with his 9 cats and 2 dogs.

During filming, Jay's rescue cows were generally very intrigued by the camera gear. It turns out, cows are very hard subjects to film, and enjoy nothing more than ruining takes by attempting to lick and nudge camera lenses.