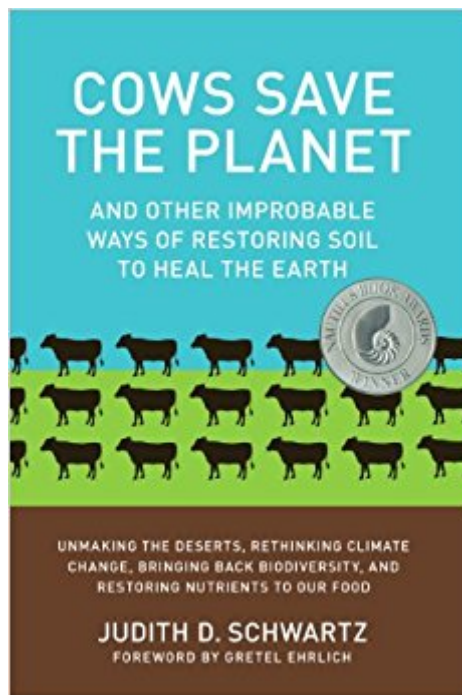




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# Cows Save The Planet: And Other Improbable Ways Of Restoring Soil To Heal The Earth



## Synopsis

In *Cows Save the Planet*, journalist Judith D. Schwartz looks at soil as a crucible for our many overlapping environmental, economic, and social crises. Schwartz reveals that for many of these problems—climate change, desertification, biodiversity loss, droughts, floods, wildfires, rural poverty, malnutrition, and obesity—there are positive, alternative scenarios to the degradation and devastation we face. In each case, our ability to turn these crises into opportunities depends on how we treat the soil. Drawing on the work of thinkers and doers, renegade scientists and institutional whistleblowers from around the world, Schwartz challenges much of the conventional thinking about global warming and other problems. For example, land can suffer from undergrazing as well as overgrazing, since certain landscapes, such as grasslands, require the disturbance from livestock to thrive. Regarding climate, when we focus on carbon dioxide, we neglect the central role of water in soil—“green water”—in temperature regulation. And much of the carbon dioxide that burdens the atmosphere is not the result of fuel emissions, but from agriculture; returning carbon to the soil not only reduces carbon dioxide levels but also enhances soil fertility. *Cows Save the Planet* is at once a primer on soil’s pivotal role in our ecology and economy, a call to action, and an antidote to the despair that environmental news so often leaves us with.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Most of us acknowledge that the earth beneath our feet is important for raising crops and nourishing lawns, yet few realize just how vital it is to our planet’s overall health. Inviting readers to roll

up their pant legs and wade with her into the dirt, veteran journalist Schwartz reveals a wealth of detail about soil's beneficial properties and presents a compelling case that proper soil management can end escalating worldwide desertification and slow, or even arrest, global warming. While these assertions may sound surprising, Schwartz collects abundant testimony from leading-edge soil scientists and activists, such as noted Zimbabwe biologist and rancher Allan Savory, whose sophisticated sheep- and cow-herding methods in several countries have completely restored arid grasslands in less than a decade. She also highlights evidence from little-known studies demonstrating that soil-restoration techniques can sequester about a billion tons of atmospheric carbon per year, potentially neutralizing damaging greenhouse gases. A well-written and persuasive manifesto for healing earth's environmental woes with one of its most underappreciated resources. --Carl Hays

Permaculture- Cows Save The Planet is a wonderfully comprehensive book, challenging some of the current popular theory relating to climate change and the mending of our damaged planet. Judith D. Schwartz has travelled to meet and interview an impressive mix of people, some well known names from around the world (Allan Savory, Christine Jones for example), and many who I have never heard of prior to reading her book. All, however, in some way, are undertaking a wealth of inspirational and essential work relating to healing the world's soil. At its core, Schwartz's work provides us with solutions and hope, for spiraling environmental and social destruction, through the rehabilitation of the earth beneath our feet. Each chapter of the book is a work in itself but there is also a natural flow and progression in the writing as Schwartz invites us to witness her journey, addressing climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification, droughts, floods and human health. The new thinking and new understanding you gain from reading and then rereading Schwartz's work gives us motivation and determination to want to make some very real positive changes in our communities and lands. I can recommend it to all. "Here's a secret climate-change activists and energy-efficiency and renewable-energy promoters neglect: Nature is designed to be self-healing, and her most profound 'tool' is photosynthesis. 'Free' sunlight is the best energy source to extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, while also producing organic matter and oxygen and a by-product is healthier soil, forests, wetlands, and ecosystems. When politicians, policy leaders, and activists get serious about cost-effective solutions to climate change, then a top priority will be ecological restoration to harvest and store carbon naturally, and Judith Schwartz's new book will provide a destination and map." --Will Raap, founder, Gardener's Supply and Intervale Center

ForeWord Reviews- "Could it really be this easy? Improve soil fertility, preserve biodiversity,

reduce obesity, and halt climate change by having more cows graze more land to help 'fix' more carbon into the soil? Well, solving the world's problems may not be quite that easy, but journalist Judith Schwartz raises these and many equally intriguing questions in *Cows Save the Planet: And Other Improbable Ways of Restoring Soil to Heal the Earth*. Her book focuses on sustaining and improving the quality of soil, as well as the economic, environmental, and societal benefits we could realize by making that change. Around the globe, topsoil is lost at an alarming rate: up to 40 times faster than we're generating it (in China and India, particularly). The consequences include a rapid increase in deserts, droughts, floods, and wildfires, not to mention a loss in the fertility of soil and the nutritional quality of food. The losses occur rapidly, but the solutions can work almost as quickly. The soil can be rebuilt from the bottom up, and nature can heal itself with surprising efficiency. For instance, undergrazing can damage the soil as much as overgrazing. study the historical movements of herds of grazing animals over the grasslands and plains of much of the globe, and adjust livestock and land management principles accordingly, the author suggests. Allow for the organic material, natural microbes, and insect life that facilitate plant diversity and soil enrichment. The resulting impact will be far-reaching and transformational on the land, climate, and crops. Schwartz refers frequently to the holistic management principles outlined by agriculturist Allan Savory, views that some consider controversial. Schwartz does not attempt to bridge the gap between these holistic ideals and current practices in the industrial food complex but instead grounds her view in narratives of earnest farmers and ranchers from Australia to Vermont who put these soil management principles into practice. A journalist who has written on marriage, therapy, and other diverse topics, Schwartz tackles complex topics such as the chemistry of the carbon cycle and photosynthesis and counters the myths about cows and methane with an accessible, conversational voice. Her study is lucid, enlightening, and often surprising. It is also an enjoyable, compelling read that will appeal to a wide audience, offering hopeful and creative solutions to some of the most daunting questions of our day.

"Booklist- "The earth beneath our feet is something most of us acknowledge is important for raising crops and nourishing lawns, yet few of us realize just how vital it is to our planet's overall health. Inviting readers to roll up their pant legs and wade with her into the dirt, veteran journalist [Judith] Schwartz reveals a wealth of detail about soil's beneficial properties and presents a compelling case that proper soil management can end escalating worldwide desertification and slow, or even arrest, global warming. While these assertions may sound surprising, Schwartz collects abundant testimony from leading-edge soil scientists and activists, such as noted Zimbabwe biologist and rancher Allan Savory, whose sophisticated sheep- and cow-herding methods in several countries have completely restored arid

grasslands in less than a decade. She also highlights evidence from little-known studies demonstrating that soil restoration techniques can sequester about a billion tons of atmospheric carbon per year, potentially neutralizing damaging greenhouse gases. A well-written and persuasive manifesto for healing earth's environmental woes with one of its most underappreciated resources." "Judith Schwartz's book gives us not just hope but also a sense that we humans are not serial destroyers that we are and can actually turn the climate crisis around. This amazing book, wide-reaching in its research, offers nothing less than solutions for healing the planet. --Gretel Ehrlich, from the foreword "Judith Schwartz takes a fascinating look at the world right beneath our feet. *Cows Save the Planet* is a surprising, informative, and ultimately hopeful book. --Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* "In *Cows Save the Planet*, Judith Schwartz takes us on a fascinating, John McPhee-style journey into the world of soil rehabilitation. The eclectic group of farmers, ranchers, researchers, and environmentalists she visits have one thing in common: they all believe in the importance of organic matter in the soil for solving our most pressing environmental issues. Some of the innovative techniques they use to increase the vitality of their soil include no-tillage, using deep-rooted perennial grasses, cover crops, mulching, and, surprisingly, grazing large herds of animals according to a program called 'holistic management.' Imagine, a book about soil that's a real page turner! --Larry Korn, editor of *The One-Straw Revolution* and *Sowing Seeds in the Desert*, by Masanobu Fukuoka "Judith Schwartz reminds us that sustainable range management is as much about the microbes in the soil and their feedback loops with cattle as it is about the cattle themselves. When I finally go home on the range to be composted, I want to be part of the miraculous cycle of rangeland renewal that is managed in the way that Schwartz describes so well. --Gary Nabhan, author of *Desert Terroir*, Kellogg Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems, University of Arizona

This is an absolutely wonderful book that shows the benefits that grazing animals have had on the renewal of the earth. The author counteracts the myths about cows and methane production and goes on to show how proper grazing practices can restore soil and water, key to reducing impacts of climate change.

This book shows that cows, and their relatives, are the key to restoring degraded land by the use of Holistic Planned Grazing. Massive land areas, along with their attendant water cycles, have already been restored. When this happens, tremendous amounts of carbon are drawn out of the

atmosphere and sequestered in the soil, from where it was released due to poor land use practices. I am approaching friends with extreme Boy Scouts of America connections. Holistic Planned Grazing and other restoration techniques, which can be done without animals, are worthy and timely projects for scouts looking for Eagle Scout projects.

A must read for anyone interested in healing the planet, no matter what field you are in and a potential wake up call to the scientific community that people are changing their environment just by trying ideas.

Life changing. I have shared this with many friends and consider it part of a revolution that could contribute to "saving the planet". Everyone who cares about our future should take the time to read this and act on it.

Thought this book would be all about farm animals so was most surprised to learn such awesome things about our soils, water etc. Loved the book and would recommend to anyone who cares about our natural world

Well written and informative. Practical realities and progressive solutions...I hope everyone...anyone is listening and working to turn back the clock.

This is really important information. This country needs to stop growing so many annual crops (corn and wheat) which deplete the soil and require huge amounts of petroleum fertilizers and petroleum for harvest and planting. We must put more land back into grass. The USFS and BLM need to really monitor the grass on existing land so as to maintain natural grasses that cattle feed on. A friend of mine raises Wagyu cattle on public land which has been monitored responsibly for over 50 years and those cattle eat only grass. The meat grades choice and sometimes prime so it tastes good plus has very high Amino fatty acids. It can be done.

Excellent overview of the value of healthy soils and therefore healthy agriculture and healthy ecosystems through an optimistic message of what we can do about it through numerous personal examples. Loved the book.

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