

California Cattle Feeders

ADVANCING OUR STATE'S FOOD SECURITY, WASTE REDUCTION, & CLIMATE GOALS



California's cattle feedlots are critical to the state's food system, supporting a safe, affordable beef supply while advancing California's policy priorities on **organic waste diversion, methane reduction, and environmental stewardship**.

Operating year-round under some of the most stringent environmental regulations, these feedlots contribute to food security, climate goals, and rural economic stability.

Feedlots are essential to maintaining price stability & food access for consumers

Most beef cattle in California spend the majority of their lives grazing rangelands. In their final 4 to 6 months, many transition to feedlots where they receive carefully balanced diets, formulated by animal nutrition experts. The phase of production at the feedlot:

- Improves feed efficiency & reduces time to market
- Lowers resource use per pound of beef produced
- Supports a consistent & affordable protein supply

Feedlots directly support California's SB 1383 goals by diverting organic waste from landfills & reducing methane emissions

By re-purposing food processing waste and byproducts like some of the feeds pictured on the right, feedlots prevent organic materials from entering landfills, where they would otherwise generate methane. This system of beneficial reuse:

- Diverts significant volumes of organic waste from landfills
- Reduces methane emissions associated with waste decomposition
- Extends the value of California-grown agricultural products

Feedlots provide a **market-based solution** that converts inedible food streams into high-quality protein, directly **supporting the state's 75% organic waste diversion target**.

Feedlots operate under strict oversight & uphold environmental stewardship

Feedlots operate under regulations governing:

- Water quality and runoff
- Air quality, including dust emissions
- Manure management and nutrient handling

Continuously monitored, feedlots must meet strict standards to protect communities and natural resources. Water use and dust are actively managed. Manure is repurposed as compost or fertilizer, recycling valuable nutrients, especially in organic farming where synthetic fertilizers are not allowed. **These practices support California's goals for climate resilience, soil health, and sustainable agriculture.**

Fun feed facts:

Over 90% of cattle feed is not edible for humans.¹

About 40% of cattle diets consist of byproducts.²

Feeding byproducts to cattle can cut emissions by about 60% compared to landfilling them.²

