

DIRECT ACTION **DxE** EVERYWHERE

On-site Carson City contact: Matt Johnson, matt@directactioneverywhere.com, 319.464.5985

Secondary contact: Cassie King, cassie@directactioneverywhere.com, 760.707.8084

3 Topless Women Arrested After Disrupting Bernie Sanders on Stage for Support of Dairy Industry

Animal rights group decries Sanders support of “cruel and unnecessary” dairy industry

([DAIRY INVESTIGATION PHOTOS AND VIDEO](#))

([PROTEST PHOTOS AND VIDEO](#))

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FEBRUARY 16, CARSON CITY, NV - A group of women activists with the animal rights network [Direct Action Everywhere \(DxE\)](#) disrupted Senator Bernie Sanders as he spoke at a campaign event Sunday, pouring milk cartons with fake blood on themselves and displaying a banner reading “LET DAIRY DIE.” Three women, who were topless with “Let Dairy Die” written on their chests, poured bloody “milk” over their heads to protest the dairy industry’s abuse of female bodies.

The three women were arrested for indecent exposure and later released on \$2500 bond each.

“If Bernie truly cares about justice, he will stop propping up the dairy industry, which relies on the abuse of female cows,” said protester Priya Sawhney.

With the [dairy industry in steady decline](#), DxE is calling on Sanders to end his decades-long legislative history of protecting the dairy industry, citing animal welfare concerns and the preponderance of plant-based alternatives.

In conjunction with the protest, DxE is releasing the results of its investigation of Vermont Ben & Jerry’s dairy farms. Activists found **piles of dead mothers and babies and baby calves isolated in small hutches, exposed to snowfall and below zero wind chills, without food and water**. Activists cite a [veterinary opinion](#) indicating that this reality falls well short of the animal welfare standards set forth by [Ben & Jerry’s](#) and the [Sanders campaign](#).

Ben & Jerry’s co-founder Ben Cohen is also co-chair of Sanders’ presidential campaign. Ben & Jerry’s is also currently facing two consumer fraud lawsuits filed in [2018](#) and [2019](#), challenging the company’s animal welfare and sustainability claims. (Responding to the lawsuits, the company [removed it’s famous “happy cows” marketing](#) last month.)

While Sanders has shifted to criticizing factory farming giants during the 2020 campaign, the dairy industry remains notably absent from his condemnation. On the contrary, Sanders has a pro-dairy history, including [personally writing an amendment](#) into a 2009 ag appropriations bill to give dairy \$350 million in corporate welfare. Sanders also supported the 2018 Farm Bill, which approved over [\\$100 billion](#) in subsidies while [rejecting activist requests to prevent handouts to millionaires and billionaires](#).

“I love Bernie, but we must hold abusive industries accountable, not shield and subsidize them. Animal farming is an industry which [gives welfare payments to millionaires](#),” Sawhney said. “People are fed up. Like the Sanders campaign itself, animal rights is a burgeoning mass movement.”

Activists say Sanders is just one prominent example of the corrupting political influence of a dairy industry which not only undermines animal welfare, but has been cited as a [major contributor to climate change](#):

- Mega-cooperative Dairy Farmers of America, which ostensibly exists to support dairy farmers, has instead paid out tens of millions in class action lawsuit settlements *to its own member farmers* in [2012](#) and [2018](#). St. Albans Cooperative Creamery in Sanders’ home state of Vermont was recently forced to merge with the DFA.
- Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin, a [top recipient](#) of DFA campaign contributions, sponsored the Dairy Pride Act, which seeks to ban words like “milk” and “butter” in labelling dairy alternatives like soy milk. (Elizabeth Warren was a surprising 2018 sponsor of the Dairy Pride Act.)
- DxE activists have also exposed horrific dairy cruelty at a Wisconsin farm owned by state Assemblymember Gary Tauchen, who has co-authored a [state-level parallel](#) to the Dairy Pride Act.
- Like Sanders, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has [exempted dairy from his Big Ag antitrust critiques](#) since becoming CEO and President of U.S. Dairy Export Council, where he earns upwards of a million dollars a year.

Investigators with [Direct Action Everywhere \(DxE\)](#) enter farms, slaughterhouses, and other agricultural facilities to document abuses and rescue sick and injured animals. DxE's investigatory work has been featured in [The New York Times](#), [ABC Nightline](#), and a [viral Glenn Greenwald exposé](#), and DxE activists led the 2018 effort to [ban fur products in San Francisco](#). Visit Direct Action Everywhere on [Facebook](#) and at [directactioneverywhere.com](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) [@DxEverywhere](#).

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