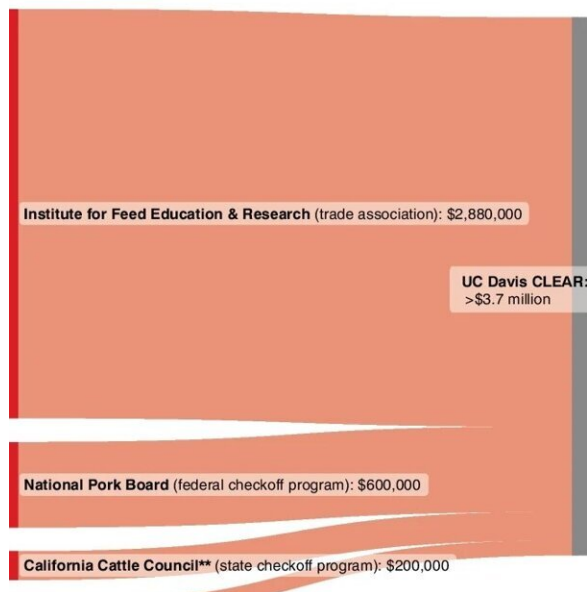


# Study uncovers the influence of the livestock industry on climate policy through university partnerships

February 29 2024, by Diana Udel

**UC Davis CLEAR Center**  
2018 - May 2023



**Colorado State University AgNext**  
2020 - May 2023



Known funding streams for the UC Davis CLEAR Center (from founding in 2018 to May 2023) and Colorado State University AgNext at CSU (from founding in 2020 to May 2023). Note that this figure also includes funding for research related to the center’s purpose and for which the center faculty director was a principal investigator or co-principal investigator during the same time period. These figures do not include funding sources announced in 2023 after the

date of article submission. Credit: *Climatic Change* (2024). DOI: 10.1007/s10584-024-03690-w

The livestock industry's impact on climate change has long been a subject of concern, as detailed in the 2006 United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization's 390-page report "Livestock's Long Shadow." The report provided the first global assessment of animal agriculture's contribution to anthropogenic warming, land degradation, air pollution, water shortage and loss of biodiversity. Further, the report stated grim environmental consequences if the industry continued as usual.

A recent [article](#) in the journal *Climatic Change* sheds light on the industry's tactics in shaping [public discourse](#) and policy surrounding its climate impacts.

The study, co-led by Jennifer Jacquet, a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science, and the Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy and Viveca Morris, a research scholar at Yale Law School, reveals how animal agriculture companies, akin to fossil fuel corporations, have downplayed their role in climate change and influenced policymaking in their favor.

Key findings indicate that industry-funded efforts have been bolstered by collaborations with [academic researchers](#). Notably, funding support from the beef industry helped to create what appeared to be a scientific dispute over the findings of "Livestock's Long Shadow" and served to shift blame away from cattle production for climate change impacts.

The researchers also identify the emergence of academic centers, established with industry support, as playing a pivotal role in promoting

industry-friendly narratives, obstructing emission regulations, and advocating for climate solutions that prioritize production over [environmental concerns](#).

"This research underscores how industry-funded initiatives within academic institutions have perpetuated misinformation and hindered meaningful action on [climate change](#) mitigation in the animal agriculture sector," said Jacquet.

"These are egregious examples of industry funders being heavily involved at universities—the industry groups shape the research agenda, hire PR firms to help name and promote the university centers, get involved with the professors' social media accounts, and in some cases are the professors' former employer."

"It's now well established that the animal agriculture industry is a major contributor to the climate crisis," said Morris.

"Yet, in the United States—one of the largest producers and consumers of meat and dairy products—livestock greenhouse gas emissions remain effectively unregulated. This begs the question: why? Like other industries, in a multitude of ways, the livestock industry has shaped public opinion and public policy to ensure that it can continue to operate and emit as usual. Industry-funded academics have played a key role in those efforts."

The study, which evaluated the origins, funding sources, and activities of academic centers and researchers, highlights the need for transparency in academic-industry partnerships. The findings also highlight the industry's strategic efforts to maintain its social license to operate by leveraging academic credibility to shape public opinion and policymaking.

**More information:** Viveca Morris et al, The animal agriculture industry, US universities, and the obstruction of climate understanding and policy, *Climatic Change* (2024). [DOI: 10.1007/s10584-024-03690-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-024-03690-w)

Provided by University of Miami

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