

Lexical Strategies and Ideological Reframing: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Factory Farming Narratives

Muhammad Amir Razin Azizi*, Nor Fatin Abdul Jabar

Faculty of Education, Social Sciences & Humanities, University Poly-Tech Malaysia

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2025.91100238>

Received: 22 November 2025; Accepted: 28 November 2025; Published: 06 December 2025

ABSTRACT

Factory farming is a big topic of conversation about food around the world. It affects how people think about it, environmental policy, and moral issues. This study examines the linguistic and ideological strategies utilized in the Genetic Literacy Project essay, "Rethinking Pros and Cons of Livestock 'Factory Farms,'" to reframe industrial livestock production as rational, indispensable, and socially beneficial. The study employs Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate how lexicalisation, interdiscursivity, and evaluative framing validate industrial-scale agriculture, concurrently shifting accountability from corporate and regulatory bodies to consumers. Studies show that terms used in industry, such as "efficiency," "scale," and "lower emissions," as well as inclusive pronouns and trade-off framing, support factory farming as an important part of modern food systems. This research contributes to agricultural discourse studies by demonstrating how language serves as a mechanism for ideological reinforcement, influencing public acceptance of controversial production systems.

Keywords: factory farming, lexicalisation, discourse analysis, ideology, Fairclough, agriculture, consumer responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Factory farming, which means keeping animals in large, industrial settings so that they can be used to make a lot of meat, eggs, and dairy, has become a very controversial part of modern farming systems. Advocates often say that industrial livestock operations are necessary to make sure that everyone has enough food, that the economy stays stable, and that production is as efficient as possible (FAO, 2021). This is because the world's population is growing quickly and food needs are rising. The system is heavily criticised for its big effects on the environment, the ethical problems with taking care of animals, the health risks to the public from things like antimicrobial resistance, and the loss of jobs for smallholder farmers. These differing interpretations show that factory farming is more than just a way to make things; it is deeply connected to ideological conflicts, different value systems, and institutional stories that shape how people think and act about agricultural issues.

Language is a key part of this conflict. Discourse researchers assert that public perceptions of contentious issues are profoundly shaped by the lexical, rhetorical, and framing techniques employed in media, policy documents, and expert commentary (Fairclough, 2015; van Dijk, 2018). Language not only delineates social phenomena but also actively shapes their meanings, legitimises certain actors and institutions, and normalises specific types of power. In very political areas like industrial livestock production, the ability to define an issue by choosing certain words is a powerful way to express yourself. Terms like efficiency, optimisation, resource management, and innovation can hide the bad effects of factory farming on purpose. On the other hand, terms like cruelty, exploitation, and pollution focus on moral and environmental issues. So, lexicalisation, or choosing certain words and phrases to describe things, is a very important part of shaping public opinion.

The Genetic Literacy Project article "Rethinking Pros and Cons of Livestock 'Factory Farms'" is an example of how language can be used to make industrial livestock farming look better. The paper acknowledges potential negative consequences while simultaneously redefining factory farming as a rational, technologically advanced,

and operationally vital response to global food challenges. The author uses words that are related to industrial rationality, like size, efficiency, lower emissions, fewer resources, and optimisation, to show that factory farming is not only okay, but also good. This linguistic approach changes the way people talk about factory farming: instead of arguing about the moral or environmental problems, the discourse makes people see it as a practical compromise or "trade-off" to meet social needs.

These linguistic strategies are not unique; they reflect prevailing socioeconomic frameworks in contemporary policy discourse. Neoliberalism supports efficiency, market rationality, and personal responsibility as core tenets (Clapp, 2021). In this context, industrial production processes are often portrayed as logical, scientific solutions to complex global challenges, while ethical, environmental, or traditional concerns are reinterpreted as emotional, counterproductive, or impractical. Also, linguistic strategies that stress the need for "consumer responsibility" or "informed choices" effectively move the blame from businesses and government agencies to people. This discursive shift preserves structural power imbalances, portraying the consumption of industrially produced beef as a matter of individual discipline rather than systemic regulation.

The ideological consequences of these linguistic trends align with other research suggesting that discussions surrounding modern agriculture frequently normalise technological progress while minimising structural critiques (Garnett et al., 2020; Carolan, 2020). By focussing on terms related to scientific rationality and progress, writers can subtly change how we think about complex problems like climate change, loss of biodiversity, or resistance to antibiotics, making them seem more manageable through technological improvement rather than needing major changes in society. This is especially true when talking about industrial farming, where corporate power, political lobbying, and economic interests control both how things are made and how they are communicated to the public. The language used in mass media, expert analysis, and policy papers is a big place where people with different ideas can work things out.

In this context, it is essential to examine how linguistic choices in agricultural discourse uphold, challenge, or transform ideological positions. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, provides an extensive framework for clarifying these processes. Fairclough characterises discourse as a dialectical relationship encompassing (1) the text, (2) the processes of its creation and interpretation, and (3) the prevailing social structures and ideologies that both shape and are shaped by the text. This framework is especially pertinent to discussions on factory farming, as it allows researchers to analyse how particular lexical selections sustain industrial agrarian ideologies, while also investigating the institutional and political contexts that promote the extensive dissemination of such discourses.

Applying this methodology to the Genetic Literacy Project article enables an exhaustive examination of the linguistic legitimisation of industrial agriculture. The study employs textual analysis to identify the terminology, metaphors, pronouns, evaluative phrases, and modality patterns that depict factory farming as neutral, objective, or beneficial. The study employed discourse analysis to investigate the article's use of scientific genres, policy language, and neoliberal narratives to establish credibility and involve readers as co-participants in a shared responsibility for agricultural outcomes. The paper investigates how these linguistic practices foster expansive ideological commitments to technological progress, capitalist efficiency, and market-driven solutions influenced by consumerism.

The goal of this report is to answer two main research questions:

1. How does the text lexicalise and recontextualise the idea of industrial farming?
2. What ideological and sociological consequences emerge from these linguistic choices, particularly in relation to power, accountability, and the normalisation of industrial agriculture?

This study improves the current research on the link between discourse, ideology, and agriculture by looking into these issues. It shows how language that seems neutral or technical can hide moral problems, support neoliberal market ideas, and make big industrial systems seem legitimate. It emphasises the importance of scrutinising public communications concerning agriculture, particularly during a period marked by environmental instability, zoonotic disease risks, and consumer anxieties that challenge existing food production paradigms.

This introduction provides the conceptual and theoretical framework for a critical analysis of the impact of linguistic strategies on ideological interpretations of factory farming. The thorough CDA of the selected article demonstrates that language serves as an active force in legitimising industrial agriculture and influencing public perceptions of its acceptance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factory farming has become an important part of modern food systems. It has changed how animal-based food is made, distributed, and seen. Industrial livestock production is often praised as a technologically advanced and efficient way to feed a growing global population, but it is still very controversial. Economic forces, technological progress, and strong ideological frameworks that show industrial agriculture as both necessary and beneficial are driving the rapid growth. To understand how these systems gain public legitimacy, researchers are increasingly utilizing discourse-based methodologies that examine how language evolves, sustains, or challenges dominant agricultural ideologies. This literature review brings together previous studies on industrial livestock production, environmental and ethical critiques, discursive framing, lexicalization, and ideological communication. It puts this study in the context of bigger academic conversations about agricultural narratives and linguistic authority.

The industrialization of agriculture led to the rise of industrial livestock production. This made farming more efficient, more productive, and more cost-effective. Technological advancements, such as automated feeding and waste management systems, genetically enhanced high-yield breeds, climate-controlled environments, and precise monitoring devices, have collectively enabled the confinement of numerous animals in limited spaces while optimizing productivity. Buller and Blokhuis (2021) assert that these advancements were not impartial; instead, they were shaped by the intersection of political, economic, and scientific objectives that emphasized efficiency, standardization, and profitability. These goals are very similar to what capitalism wants: high-volume, low-cost production and a global supply chain that works well. Many governments sped up the growth of industrial agriculture by giving money to infrastructure, relaxing environmental rules, and making modernization of agriculture seem like a sign of national progress.

Despite its material productivity, extensive research highlights the environmental, ethical, and public health consequences associated with industrial livestock systems. Poore and Nemecek (2018) identified industrial agriculture as a major contributor to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane and nitrous oxide. Additional environmental impacts include nutrient runoff, pollution of waterways, degradation of soil, and the creation of hypoxic "dead zones." These stresses make climate change worse all over the world and threaten biodiversity. Research in public health shows that intensive livestock operations are a big cause of antimicrobial resistance because they use a lot of prophylactic antibiotics (Murray et al., 2022). This makes medical and veterinary treatments much more dangerous. Ethical scholarship acknowledges various welfare concerns, including confinement, limitation of natural behaviors, chronic stress, overpopulation, and routine painful procedures such as tail docking and debeaking. Fraser (2020) emphasizes that these circumstances may result in lasting physiological and psychological harm. This body of literature collectively illustrates that industrial agriculture is environmentally unsustainable and ethically contentious, presenting risks that extend beyond agricultural confines into public health, ecological integrity, and moral responsibility.

Language keeps factory farming legal, even though it is often challenged and shown to be wrong in real life. Researchers in discourse studies assert that language not only reflects social realities but also actively shapes them by delineating specific knowledge frameworks, legitimizing particular participants, and normalizing certain interpretations of complex subjects. Technocratic language shows how industrial farming is seen as scientific, data-driven, and reasonable. Carolan (2020) says that words like "controlled environments," "resource efficiency," "precision feeding," and "scalable solutions" make industrial farming sound neutral and technologically advanced. This language says that industrial systems are important for global food security, which means that other ways of making food won't work or aren't good enough. This framing hides systemic damage by putting industrial practices into a story about scientific progress.

On the other hand, environmental, ethical, and public health advocates tell different stories that focus on the harm and systemic unfairness that come with industrial animal farming. These discourses employ terms such as

"contamination," "exploitation," "cruelty," "pollution," and "confinement" to depict factory farming as ecologically harmful and ethically unjustifiable. Fraser (2020) asserts that this dissenting discourse challenges the presumed inevitability of industrial livestock systems by emphasizing the moral and ecological repercussions that technocratic narratives tend to minimize. These opposing discourses exemplify a linguistic conflict in which competing groups utilize distinct vocabularies to shape public perception and influence policy direction.

A third important way of talking about things is based on neoliberal ideology, which shifts the blame for damage to crops from businesses and regulatory bodies to individual consumers. Words like "responsible consumption," "ethical purchasing," "informed choices," and "consumer demand" suggest that customers, not structural entities, have a say in whether industrial farming stays the same or changes. Clapp (2021) asserts that this framing aligns with neoliberal ideologies by highlighting individual accountability and market forces, while downplaying corporate influence, policy deficiencies, and systemic inequalities. When you frame environmental damage, labour exploitation, or animal suffering as issues of consumer ethics, you hide the institutional factors that keep industrial systems going. Neoliberal rhetoric functions as a formidable ideological tool, redirecting focus from structural transformation to individual behaviour.

Recent studies show that agricultural discourse is increasingly incorporating technical, environmental, and neoliberal elements into mixed narrative structures. One example is the "trade-off narrative," which acknowledges the negative effects of factory farming but frames them as necessary sacrifices to keep the world's population alive. Words like "balancing priorities," "necessary trade-offs," "pragmatic solutions," and "realistic compromises" make it seem like harm is bad but unavoidable, which makes industrial systems seem normal even though they are dangerous. Schmidt et al. (2021) assert that this framing alleviates criticism by situating environmental degradation or animal suffering within a broader utilitarian context that prioritizes economic progress and technological scalability. This mixed language is very powerful because it seems fair and reasonable while quietly supporting industrial growth.

In these discursive forms, lexicalization is essential. Fairclough (2015) posits that lexical selections condense complex realities into concise conceptual frameworks that reflect ideological viewpoints. Words that have to do with efficiency, optimization, and scientific rationality help tell a story that makes industrial farming seem modern and necessary. On the other hand, words that have to do with harm or unfairness go along with critical or reformist views. Van Dijk (2018) asserts that ostensibly neutral terminology can reflect power dynamics by shaping the prominence or obscurity of certain aspects of reality. Referring to emissions as "reduced" rather than "harmful" shifts attention from environmental damage to technical benefit. The difference between "factory farm" and "intensive livestock operation" has very different meanings when it comes to judging. Thus, lexicalization is not solely descriptive; it is infused with ideology, influencing readers' interpretations of agricultural systems.

Interdiscursivity, a key concept in Critical Discourse Analysis, denotes the integration of various discourse types—scientific, political, journalistic, and consumer-focused—to enhance legitimacy and persuasive effectiveness. Fairclough (2015) states that interdiscursivity allows texts to get authority from many institutional areas, which leads to stories that seem objective and widely accepted. In the domain of factory farming, scientific terminology often merges with policy discussions and calls for consumer responsibility, forming a complex rhetorical framework that depicts industrial agriculture as empirically substantiated, politically justified, and socially responsible. This interconnection makes it harder to argue against convincing claims because they seem to be based on expertise, government, and voluntary citizenship at the same time.

In agricultural research, Critical Discourse Analysis has become a prominent approach for examining how language reinforces or challenges power dynamics within food systems. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been employed to investigate sustainability dialogues, climate change communication, zoonotic disease narratives, and media representations of agriculture (Marsden, 2020). Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model—textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—clearly shows how language can support or weaken existing ideas. Factory farming is often presented as the predominant method of modern food production through language, reasoning, intertextuality, and modality, thereby obscuring alternative practices such as regenerative agriculture or agroecology.

Despite extensive research on the environmental, ethical, and health consequences of industrial agriculture, a significant gap persists in the literature regarding how public-facing texts—particularly those aimed at general audiences—employ lexical and discursive strategies to cultivate ideological endorsement of factory farming. Major scientific journals, industrial lobbying groups, and online media sites often share content that combines scientific credibility with economic logic and neoliberal models of responsibility. But these kinds of materials don't get the same level of scrutiny as policy papers or peer-reviewed scientific findings very often. This difference is important because these public stories have a big impact on how people see things every day and make industrial processes seem normal.

This study addresses this gap by examining a widely circulated statement from the Genetic Literacy Project, a platform known for promoting technology-driven solutions in agriculture. This study examines the operation of vocabulary selection, interdiscursivity, and ideological framing within the text, demonstrating how everyday language can legitimize industrial animal production, obscure systemic harms, and redirect responsibility onto consumers. Situating this research within the vast body of literature reveals that factory farming is not only a material and technological framework but also a discursive and ideological construct perpetuated through language. To promote clearer, more equal, and more sustainable ways of talking about food, we need to understand how language works in these situations.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative methodology grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a framework specifically developed to examine how language constructs, legitimizes, and propagates beliefs related to agricultural systems. CDA is well-known for being able to look at not only what texts say, but also how they affect social structures, institutional authority, and public awareness. Factory farming exists within interconnected domains of political economy, public health, environmental governance, and ethical discourse; consequently, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a holistic framework for elucidating the underlying assumptions and ideological roles of discourse. This research utilizes Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to methodically analyze linguistic patterns, discursive practices, and the overarching sociopolitical contexts that portray certain perspectives of industrial agriculture as natural or unavoidable.

Analytical Framework: Fairclough's Triadic Model

Fairclough's paradigm defines discourse as a dialectical interaction among three analytical layers: the textual dimension, the discursive practice dimension, and the social practice dimension. The research concentrates on vocabulary choice, grammatical structures, modality, coherence, metaphors, and evaluative language at the textual level. This level shows how literary qualities can change the meaning of a text, affect how readers feel, and highlight or downplay certain aspects of industrial farming. This research examines the production, dissemination, and interpretation of the text through the lens of discursive practice. This encompasses the examination of intertextual references, genre fusion, argumentative structure, and the strategies employed by the text to leverage established discourses—such as scientific, policy, economic, and ethical discourses—to enhance its credibility. The third dimension, social practice, puts the text in a bigger ideological context, such as neoliberal governance, capitalist rationalism, and technocratic decision-making. This third layer looks at how the article's language patterns support industrial livestock farming as a common and acceptable way to make food. These interconnected levels offer a comprehensive and theoretically grounded examination of how discourse both reflects and perpetuates power dynamics.

Data Selection

The research is based on a single, carefully selected essay called "Rethinking Pros and Cons of Livestock 'Factory Farms,'" which was published by the Genetic Literacy Project. CDA frequently employs single-text analysis when the chosen text is sufficiently rich, influential, and discursively representative, notwithstanding the reliance of certain qualitative traditions on multiple texts. There are many reasons why the chosen article meets these standards. First, it is widely known and easy to get, which makes it an important piece of evidence in public debates about industrial farming. Second, the text is very persuasive and tries to get readers to think about their views on industrial farming again. In Critical Discourse Analysis, persuasive texts are very important because they show how ideologies are either reproduced or challenged through language.

The essay shows how current discussions about factory farming mix together scientific, policy-focused, ethical, and consumer-responsibility ideas. It uses scientific proof to say that industrial agriculture is good for the environment, uses policy language to link industrial agriculture to regulatory goals, and uses moral stories to shift responsibility from businesses to individual customers. This combination of ideas makes the text a very useful place to think about how industrial livestock systems are framed as rational and necessary.

In the end, single-text analysis is methodologically sound in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) because the goal is to get to the bottom of things rather than to make broad generalizations. Fairclough and other scholars in Critical Discourse Analysis assert that individual texts can function as significant ideological nodes that promote the dissemination of broader societal meanings. This study achieves the requisite granularity to identify nuanced linguistic and rhetorical strategies by focusing on a singular text. The goal is to explain how certain discourses help to make industrial farming seem more legitimate ideologically, not to claim that all media portrayals are complete.

The Genetic Literacy Project website provided all of the material, which was then processed for systematic textual analysis. The process began with several careful readings to help the researcher get used to the text's structure, the way the argument was built, and the main themes. The initial readings uncovered emerging themes, such as the persistent focus on efficiency, the normalization of environmental degradation as "trade-offs," and the frequent use of inclusive pronouns to align readers with industrial objectives.

After that, the text was carefully looked at to find some word choices, metaphors, evaluative language, modality indicators, and rhetorical techniques. The focus was on words that made industrial processes seem normal ("scale," "efficiency," "lower emissions"), downplayed negative effects ("challenges," "drawbacks"), or shifted responsibility ("we must acknowledge," "our decisions are significant"). Intertextual references to scientific studies, economic analyses, and policy arguments were documented for their informational significance and their rhetorical function in establishing legitimacy. The characteristics were thematically coded and interpretively classified according to Fairclough's three-dimensional framework.

Methods of Analysis

The analytical process transpired in three phases corresponding to Fairclough's framework. The textual study focused on grammar, vocabulary, transitivity choices, modality, and cohesive elements. This phase showed how the text uses language to show that industrial farming is modern, efficient, and good for the environment. We paid special attention to how the text describes harms as either unavoidable or acceptable, and how the use of pronouns makes readers responsible for the effects of industry.

The examination of discursive practices focused on the article's genre blending and interdiscursivity. The study examined the strategic use of scientific discourse to validate contentious claims, the integration of policy language to suggest institutional conformity, and the portrayal of individual actions as crucial to agricultural transformation through neoliberal consumer-focused discourse. This analytical layer clarified the fusion of authoritative discourses, engendering a façade of neutrality and competence.

The last level, social practice analysis, connected the text to larger ideological frameworks. This dimension examined the ways in which narratives of efficiency, scalability, and technological innovation reflect capitalist agricultural priorities; how appeals to "consumer responsibility" reinforce neoliberal governance; and how the sidelining of ethical considerations corresponds with dominant technocratic viewpoints. This made it easier to understand how the article's language techniques fit in with and support the existing power structures in food production.

The analysis employed reflexive reading, iterative coding, and theoretical triangulation to maintain methodological rigor. Reflexivity ensured that interpretative decisions were transparent and grounded in textual evidence rather than researcher bias. Iterative analytical cycles improved coherence, and engaging with CDA scholarship improved theoretical consistency. The interpretive nature of CDA does not claim positivist objectivity; instead, it achieves rigor through methodological precision, explicit data foundation, and compliance with recognized theoretical frameworks.

This research approach clarifies how seemingly neutral public criticism operates as an ideological construct that validates factory farming. The study illustrates how language sustains the structural integrity of industrial agriculture and shapes public perceptions regarding its necessity, acceptability, and inevitability through textual analysis, discursive contextualization, and ideological interpretation.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the essay "Rethinking Pros and Cons of Livestock 'Factory Farms'" demonstrates how linguistic patterns, discursive structures, and ideological frameworks collectively reconstitute factory farming as a rational, effective, and indispensable system. Using Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, the results are divided into three main parts: textual findings, discursive practice findings, and ideological findings. Each section includes real quotes and gives a thorough analysis of how the literature shows factory farming as a viable and socially acceptable way to grow food.

Textual Analysis: Word Choices, Evaluations, and Modality

The textual analysis shows that the words used in the article have a big effect on how people feel about industrial agriculture. A common theme is the reliance on words that have to do with modernity, optimization, and scientific reasoning. The text uses words like "efficiency," "scale," "reduced emissions," "technological advancement," and "resource optimization" a lot. The author says that industrial farms "produce less pollution per unit of meat" and "use feed inputs more efficiently." These word choices make people think of factory farming not as an unethical or harmful way to grow food, but as a high-tech way to solve world hunger problems.

The text always talks about industrial processes in terms of performance-based nouns like "production advantages," "high-yield systems," and "controlled environments." These phrases are not neutral; they use industrial reasoning in the conversation, which makes readers think that factory farming is systematic, organized, and based on science. The emphasis on control and optimization diminishes the chaotic, harmful, or unpredictable aspects of intensive livestock systems, thereby constructing a narrative of industrial precision.

A significant linguistic feature is the intentional minimization of harmful elements. People use euphemisms like "drawbacks," "challenges," "shortcomings," or "concerns" to talk about problems with factory farming, such as keeping animals in cages, concentrating waste, and using too many antibiotics. The article says that "factory farms come with some animal welfare concerns," but it quickly follows up with the reassuring news that "new technologies continue to improve conditions." Linguistic softening turns ethical and environmental harm into things that can be dealt with, instead of seeing them as structural problems that need more study.

On the other hand, organic, free-range, and regenerative farming are not given much attention, and when they are, they are often portrayed as not good enough. The article says that "large-scale systems enable producers to satisfy global demand more consistently," which implies that smaller systems can't provide the same benefits to society. The absence of favorable terminology for alternatives indirectly reinforces the presumption that industrial agriculture represents the most viable approach for sustaining the global population.

Modality is fundamental in determining inevitability and necessity. Words like "must," "need," "have to," and "inevitable" show that industrial livestock production is an unavoidable part of society. The phrases "we must embrace intensive systems to nourish billions" and "factory farms are essential to the solution" make it sound like there is no other choice. These claims keep readers from thinking about completely different ways to farm because the language in the text makes it impossible for them to do so. This approach emphasizes a deterministic viewpoint, suggesting that modern civilization must rely on industrial agriculture due to demographic and economic limitations.

Using pronouns makes the article sound more interesting. The piece has a lot of pronouns that include everyone, like "we," "our," and "us." Phrases like "we must rethink our expectations for cheap meat" put readers in the role of a group of people who are trying to support industrial agribusiness. This rhetorical device subtly shifts responsibility from businesses to consumers by suggesting that the state of agriculture is the result of collective public choices rather than systematic market frameworks. The text mixes up the interests of agribusiness with those of the general public by using pronouns that are the same for both.

The text employs a consistent rhetorical framework known as the "trade-off narrative." Statements like "everything involves trade-offs" and "any system will have costs and benefits" show this story. The article makes ethically questionable actions like imprisonment or pollution seem like necessary parts of a logical way to make decisions by making sacrifice a universal value. This viewpoint prompts readers to view injuries not as violations necessitating rectification, but as components of a comprehensive cost-benefit assessment that society must adopt for its own advantage.

Results on Discursive Practice: Interdiscursivity and Genre Convergence

The results show that the piece is persuasive because it uses scientific discourse, policy reasoning, journalistic analysis, and neoliberal consumer rhetoric. This mixed discursive framework makes people think more about objectivity, authority, and balance.

Interdiscursivity, which is the mixing of different types of discourse, is one of the best ways to make something seem more legitimate. The article frequently cites scientific discourse, claiming that "feed conversion ratios are markedly enhanced in controlled environments" and "intensive systems diminish greenhouse gas emissions per calorie." The essay puts factory farming in a place of evidence-based logic by using scientific-sounding statistics but not giving full citations. This deliberate amalgamation of research with industrial communication informs readers that the conclusions are grounded in empirical evidence.

The presence of policy discourse enhances scientific discourse, giving the article a more authoritative tone. The statements "regulatory frameworks guarantee responsible management" and "policy reforms persist in enhancing industry standards" make people think of the power of governance systems. These statements support the idea that industrial farming is done under responsible supervision, even though the text doesn't say much about problems with enforcement or regulation.

Journalistic and expository styles are mixed together, which makes the tone easy to understand and conversational. The article starts with the sentence, "Factory farms have both pros and cons, and it is important to view them in context." This is similar to how an unbiased news analysis would start. However, most of the rest of the article supports industrial systems. This method makes it seem like the writer is being fair, but it really leads readers to a conclusion that has already been decided.

A notable finding relates to the article's chosen intertextuality. The work contains scientific and expert citations that support its argument, but it doesn't include any data that goes against or makes the pro-industrial view more complicated. The article references studies that show lower emissions in feedlot systems, but it doesn't talk about data that shows how concentrated manure can harm the environment and how antibiotic resistance can cause health problems. This uneven integration of knowledge gives us a narrow view of industrial livestock systems, which are shown as all-encompassing.

The piece also shows anticipatory refutation, which is a rhetorical technique that briefly acknowledges possible complaints before quickly putting them to rest. The essay starts by saying that "animal welfare is a concern" and then changes the subject to "technological advancements in housing systems" as a way to solve the problem. By recognizing objections only to lessen their importance, the text makes its argument more convincing while still making it look like it is fair.

The article's discursive framework prevents other interpretations by telling a story that makes factory farming seem controversial, judging it from an allegedly neutral point of view, and finally justifying it as necessary. This framework follows the problem-solution format that is common in persuasive advocacy writing.

Ideological Discoveries: Neoliberal Accountability, Capitalist Rationality, and Technocratic Progress

The final part of the analysis puts the piece in a larger ideological context. The findings suggest that the essay subtly reinforces neoliberal, capitalist, and technocratic principles that shape contemporary agricultural governance.

A key ideological element is the reliance on neoliberal individualism, which reframes systemic issues as matters of consumer choice. Statements such as "our demand drives production systems" and "we shape the market through our purchases" suggest that individuals, rather than corporations or policymakers, are accountable for agricultural conditions. This change in context makes government and business decisions less important and gives consumers more power, which is in line with neoliberal market citizenship ideas.

The text uses capitalist ideas about scale, efficiency, and productivity, which are the same goals as industrial agriculture. The constant focus on "scale," "optimization," and "cost-effectiveness" is in line with capitalist ideas that put making money and growing the economy ahead of environmental or moral issues. The essay normalizes capitalist production patterns by showing that industrial livestock systems make economic sense. This pushes alternatives like regenerative agriculture or small-scale farming to the side.

Technocratic ideology primarily manifests as technological optimism. The text consistently asserts that environmental and welfare challenges can be mitigated through innovation. It says that "better feed technologies can lower methane emissions" and "better housing systems will help with welfare issues." These claims show that technological progress is inherently good and can solve systemic problems, so they avoid talking about structural reform or other ways to make things.

In the end, the essay makes harm seem normal. The language frames bad outcomes as "necessary trade-offs," which is in line with utilitarian ideas that justify sacrifice for the sake of progress and efficiency. This ideological viewpoint considers industrial agriculture as the exclusive feasible approach, consequently constraining the conceptual framework for imagining alternative food systems.

RESULTS SUMMARY

The findings indicate that the article's linguistic, discursive, and ideological strategies operate in concert to validate factory farming. The article depicts factory farming as efficient, inevitable, and ethically permissible through positive lexical framing, necessity modality, interdiscursive blending, selective intertextuality, and alignment with neoliberal and technocratic ideology. These methods hide the negative effects on ethics and the environment and put the blame on consumers, which keeps the power structures in the global food system the same.

DISCUSSION

This study shows how the article being studied makes a strategically planned and ideologically consistent picture of factory farming. The article superficially purports to offer an unbiased evaluation of industrial cattle production; however, its linguistic and discursive choices ultimately function to legitimize, normalize, and rationalize the system. This section combines the textual, discursive, and ideological findings to show how they all work together to shape how people see things and make industrial cattle production seem scientifically sound, economically sound, and socially necessary.

Reframing Factory Farming Through Efficiency and Technological Progress

The text always talks about efficiency, scalability, and new technology. Phrases like "reduced emissions," "resource optimization," and "regulated environments" are used to describe industrial operations. These phrases make factory farming sound like a modern, scientifically advanced way to feed the world's population. This language shift changes the way people think about factory farming from a controversial and debated system to one that seems logical and necessary. This framing aligns closely with dominant global narratives of progress that emphasize speed, productivity, and technological advancement.

The study places industrial cattle production within a context of optimization and scientific rationality, thereby bolstering neoliberal principles that prioritize technological solutions over ethical or structural reforms. This framework indirectly pushes aside other types of farming, like regenerative farming or community-based agroecology, by suggesting that they aren't big enough, efficient enough, or dependable enough to meet the world's food needs. The article's linguistic framing of modernity ultimately places factory farming within a broader ideological framework that links industrialization to advancement.

Normalising Harm Through the Trade-Off Narrative

It is important to use "trade-off" language on purpose when trying to change the way people think about factory farming. Environmental degradation, animal welfare issues, and public health problems are only briefly mentioned before being framed as unavoidable costs. Statements like "every system has costs and benefits" or "these trade-offs are necessary to keep billions alive" make people think that systemic problems are reasonable, fair, and ultimately justifiable. This rhetorical strategy lessens moral criticism by putting harms in a utilitarian context that focuses on production and economic stability.

The claim that industrial agriculture is the only viable option not only simplifies complex ecological issues but also inhibits meaningful dialogue about systemic transformation. By emphasizing inevitability and necessity, the article reframes significant ethical and environmental issues as manageable consequences of a system that society must accept. The trade-off story is a powerful piece of propaganda that shifts people's focus away from structural analysis and toward practical compromise.

Redistributing Accountability Through Pronoun Use and Consumer Responsibility

The article uses pronouns like "we" and "our" to get readers on board with the goals of the industry. The claim that "we need to rethink our expectations for cheap meat" or "our choices affect production systems" creates a shared responsibility that shifts responsibilities from businesses and lawmakers to consumers. This rhetorical strategy bolsters neoliberal governance frameworks by reframing systemic problems as personal decisions.

This leads to a fragmented and depoliticized understanding of agricultural systems. The reader is subtly encouraged to view industrial farming as a result of personal consumption decisions, rather than recognizing it as a product of powerful corporate, legislative, and economic influences. This new way of looking at things hides the real facts about agricultural consolidation, policy advocacy, regulatory failures, and structural inequalities, which makes calls for institutional reform less effective. The linguistic construction of collective responsibility functions as a rhetorical device that absolves structural agents while assigning the consequences of a system they did not create to individuals.

Creating an Appearance of Objectivity Through Interdiscursivity

The article's persuasive power comes mostly from how it mixes scientific, economic, and policy-related words and phrases. By using references to emissions data, market principles, and regulatory frameworks, the language gives the impression of balance and skill. Scientific discourse substantiates industrial claims, economic discourse rationalizes production efficiency, and policy discourse invokes institutional legitimacy. When these different ways of talking come together, they create an assessment that seems fair and based on evidence.

This apparent neutrality is deceptive. The selective use of scientific facts and the exclusion of conflicting evidence create a distorted information landscape in which industrial agriculture appears to be the only logical and scientifically supported method. This discursive layering strengthens the ideological legitimacy of factory farming by linking it to authoritative knowledge domains, while concurrently downplaying or obscuring critical environmental and ethical concerns.

Minimisation of Ethical and Ecological Harms

The text consistently downplays the dangers to animals and the environment. These concerns are recognized only superficially and articulated with euphemism or mitigative language. By recasting substantial ethical issues as "drawbacks" or "shortcomings," the piece dissociates moral urgency from the discourse. This rhetorical minimization closely coincides with the text's overarching ideological objective: to prioritize technology and economic reasoning while relegating ethical considerations to the periphery.

This minimization is not a mere oversight but a calculated tactic that bolsters industrial rationale. Ethical critiques jeopardize the intellectual stability of industrial cattle production; thus, their marginalization is crucial for preserving the facade of legitimacy. By acknowledging damages solely in limited, superficial terms, the essay perpetuates the notion that industrial agriculture is both ethically justifiable and environmentally sustainable.

Pragmatic Consequences for Media

Media organizations are essential in influencing public comprehension of agricultural systems. This study illustrates that ostensibly objective articles can utilize nuanced discursive methods that normalize industrial practices. Media professionals must recognize the impact of lexical selections, selective evidence, and framing techniques on public perception. Ethical reporting necessitates the straightforward presentation of environmental and ethical impacts while eschewing euphemism language that obscures systemic issues. Journalists and editors must rigorously evaluate sources, incorporate diverse viewpoints, and guarantee equitable exposure of alternate farming approaches.

Policy Implications

Policymakers often depend on expert analysis and publicly accessible materials when formulating agriculture policy. This study underscores the necessity of critical literacy in analyzing industry-sponsored narratives. Policymakers must acknowledge how scientific and economic narratives can be skillfully employed to rationalize actions that may not conform to long-term sustainability or public welfare. Effective policy formulation necessitates recognizing systemic power disparities, enhancing regulatory supervision, and countering myths that depict environmental or ethical damages as unavoidable or permissible.

Implications for Public Education

The results highlight the necessity of incorporating critical media literacy into public education. Consumers must be able to discern how language delineates responsibility and influences perceptions of food systems. Educational programs in schools, universities, and community settings can assist individuals in distinguishing between structural reasons and individual behaviors. By cultivating critical understanding of discursive strategies, public education can enable citizens to engage more effectively in dialogues regarding agricultural reform and food sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates that the examined article employs a complex array of linguistic, discursive, and ideological methods that collectively serve to legitimize factory farming while sidelining alternative practices and ethical considerations. The paper underscores neoliberal and technocratic perspectives by prioritizing efficiency, technical advancement, and scalable solutions, so portraying industrial livestock production as essential and scientifically substantiated. Simultaneously, detriments are normalized via the narrative of trade-offs, accountability is shifted onto customers through pronoun alignment, and authoritative discourses are interwoven to fabricate an illusion of impartiality and legitimacy.

These findings underscore the necessity for ongoing critical discourse analysis in the examination of food systems. Language is not solely descriptive; it shapes public comprehension, influences political decisions, and establishes institutional authority. As communities face the interrelated difficulties of climate change, public health threats, biodiversity decline, and animal welfare issues, it is essential to examine the communicative frameworks that support industrial agriculture.

By acknowledging the influence of discourse, stakeholders—such as policymakers, educators, communicators, and researchers—can strive for narratives that are more transparent, ethical, and sustainable, accurately representing the intricacies of modern agricultural systems. Ultimately, comprehending how language influences public imagination is essential for conceptualizing and executing agricultural futures that emphasize ecological integrity, ethical responsibility, and social justice.

REFERENCES

1. Buller, H., & Blokhuis, H. (2021). Living conditions for farm animals: New scientific approaches to welfare improvements. *Animal Welfare*, 30(3), 301–313.
2. Carolan, M. (2020). *No one eats alone: Food as a social enterprise*. Island Press.
3. Clapp, J. (2021). *Food*. Polity Press.

4. Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
5. Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
6. Food and Agriculture Organization. (2021). *The state of food and agriculture 2021: Making agri-food systems more resilient to shocks and stresses*. FAO. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org>
7. Fraser, D. (2020). Animal welfare and the intensification of animal production. *The Veterinary Journal*, 257, 105451.
8. Garnett, T., Godde, C., Muller, A., Röös, E., Smith, P., de Boer, I. J. M., & van Zanten, H. (2020). Grazed and confused? Ruminating on cattle, grazing systems, methane, nitrous oxide, the soil carbon sequestration question—and what it all means for greenhouse gas emissions. *Global Food Security*, 25, 100356.
9. Gerten, D., Heck, V., Jägermeyr, J., Bodirsky, B. L., Fetzer, I., Jalava, M., Kummu, M., Lucht, W., Rockström, J., Schaphoff, S., & Schellnhuber, H. J. (2020). Feeding ten billion people is possible within four terrestrial planetary boundaries. *Nature Sustainability*, 3, 200–208.
10. Macnaghten, P. (2020). The co-production of techno-scientific futures: Implications for responsible innovation. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 45(1), 50–77.
11. Marsden, T. (2020). *The future of the agrarian question: Sustainability, agriculture, and the rise of agroecology*. Routledge.
12. Murray, C. J. L., Ikuta, K. S., Sharara, F., Swetschinski, L., Aguilar, G. R., Gray, A., Han, C., Bisignano, C., Rao, P., Wool, E., Johnson, S. C., Browne, A. J., Brewer, T. F., & Lemons, D. S. (2022). Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance in 2019: A systematic analysis. *The Lancet*, 399(10325), 629–655.
13. Poore, J., & Nemecek, T. (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. *Science*, 360(6392), 987–992.
14. Schmidt, A. L., Zollo, F., Scala, A., Betsch, C., & Quattrociocchi, W. (2021). Polarization of environmental communication on social media. *Environmental Research Letters*, 16(5), 054003.
15. Springmann, M., Clark, M., Rayner, M., Scarborough, P., & Webb, P. (2018). The global and regional costs of healthy and sustainable dietary patterns: A modelling study. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 2(10), e451–e461.
16. van Dijk, T. A. (2018). *Sociocognitive discourse studies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Genetic Literacy Project. (n.d.). Rethinking pros and cons of livestock 'factory farms'. Genetic Literacy Project. Retrieved from <https://geneticliteracyproject.org>