

10 Ways Volunteering at a Farm Animal Rescue Is Therapeutic

From [Patricia Campana, MVLCE, MainStreetVegan.net](#)

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Photo credit: Patricia Campana

Several years ago, pre-vegan but vegetarian, I toured a farm animal sanctuary here in San Diego County. During the tour I heard stories of these rescued animals and one story touched me the most—Gracie Lou, a rescued dairy cow. Gracie Lou was less than one year old and destined to be slaughtered because she could not produce milk. [Farm Animal Refuge](#) saved her. I heard her story, learned about the horror of the dairy industry, and from that day forward I became vegan and never looked back. Gracie Lou is my vegan story.

I wanted to be a volunteer at this sanctuary, but it was a 90-minute drive each way. It tugged at my heart, and I decided to say, “Yes!” A life-changing decision. I signed up for a shift on Sunday mornings and this became my personal therapy. I am a psychotherapist, and during my work week I hear and respond to human pain. Going to the sanctuary is my therapy. The long drive out of the city alone is therapeutic.



Photo credit: Patricia Campana

Here are ten other ways volunteering at a farm animal sanctuary is therapeutic:

1. Rescued Farm Animals Get You Out of Yourself

You let go of everything you're dealing with in your life and just focus on the animals and their needs. This can be very therapeutic if you have a demanding job, one that may not involve animal advocacy.

2. Rescued Farm Animals Need You

They give a sense of purpose. You are their provider and their lives are in your hands. Which animals do you best connect with? Gravitate toward them, help them, and they will help you.



Photo credit: Patricia Campana

3. Rescued Farm Animals Provide Mental Distraction

We all need distractions and ways of coping with everyday life. Tune out and observe the animals—they go about their day without a worry about the world’s problems. Just sit and watch them.

4. Rescued Farm Animals Provide Mental Comfort

Again, it’s about coping skills. How do you cope with the difficulties of life? Animals provide comfort.



Photo credit: Patricia Campana

5. Rescued Farm Animals Are Good Listeners

They cannot speak my language and they may not understand my words, but they do understand my love. I continue to talk to them and that brings me joy. Speak kindly—they will listen and not judge, loving us back in return.

6. Shoveling Poop Is a Therapeutic and Humbling Experience

Seriously, I can't stress this enough...if you're at a desk job or work from home—get out on a farm!



Photo credit: Patricia Campana

7. Working With Rescued Farm Animals Develops Responsibility and Routine

These animals depend on us. When we show up for our shift to feed them, they know we are there for them, to nurture them.

8. Rescued Farm Animals Are a Great Source of Entertainment

They have personalities. They are funny. There is nothing better than watching how fun they are.



Photo credit: Patricia Campana

9. Feeding Time Is So Amazing

What's better than feeding someone who is looking forward to their meal? It's so special to hear them calling out in their own unique voices and see them watch us preparing their food!

10. They Love

Animals show gratitude for the love you show them. This is priceless and you will drive home from your shift with a full heart, ready to face your week and know you made a difference in their lives. Consider visiting your local sanctuaries and volunteering.



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