

COWLEARNING - The complex world of dairy and beef supply – an Alternate Reality Game

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Urban young adults inevitably engage with food supply through daily shopping, yet often lack awareness of its complexities due to the spatial and cognitive separation between consumption and production. Reaching this target group requires innovative approaches that not only provide information, but also encourage critical thinking and reflective consumer behaviour. The interactive WhatsApp mystery game 'Cow Chat Crime' provides a playful way to explore the complexities and challenges of a sustainable dairy and beef supply. The game, an alternate reality game, highlights the interrelationships of the animal food supply and how individual consumption choices impact it and have far-reaching consequences for the environment, animals and people. The aim is to inspire young adults to take responsibility for a sustainable future. The game is the result of the research project COWLEARNING

<https://cowlearning.boku.ac.at/> (funded by FWF CM 400B), in which scientists from BOKU University, the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna and professional game developers and stakeholders worked together. By combining real-life elements with digital media, the boundaries between reality and fiction are blurred and the player becomes part of a gripping story. The interactive thriller presents players with choices and ensures a realistic gaming experience. Multimedia content keeps players engaged with intriguing challenges, videos, and secrets. The focus is on sustainability: the game shows how humans, animals and nature are connected (the game is based on the One Health/One Welfare approach). It can also be played flexibly - in one go or in stages. The player decides when and where to immerse himself/herself in the story. About the game: <https://waur.l.me/vw70tba0f>