Carbon Audits: The Facts

Mandatory carbon audits mean stock cuts and higher costs for farmers. They are rigged, and they must be stopped now.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Carbon audits WILL end with stock cuts

The official plan for Northern Ireland's climate targets relies on cutting cattle and sheep.

40% **fewer cattle and sheep**
by 2050 for net zero[1]

> ***"Our pathway rests on a reduction in livestock numbers."***
> Climate Change Committee, 2023[2]

DAERA wants a carbon footprint for every farm business.[3]
The footprint comes first.
The cuts follow.

WHO PAYS?

Carbon audits pass the bill to farmers

Other people's emissions land on the farm's footprint. And every fix is paid for by the farmer.

Imported soya

FARMER PAYS

Deforestation in Brazil, put on the farmer's footprint[4]

Fertiliser tax

FARMER PAYS

UK carbon border tax on imported fertiliser from January 2027[5]

Bovaer

FARMER PAYS

Methane feed additive (3-NOP), built into the CCC's plan[1]

Carbon audits don't just measure. They send farmers the bill.

WHY IT'S RIGGED

Carbon audits are rigged against farmers

1. **It's not science.**

   A steady herd's methane is counted as if it piles up forever.

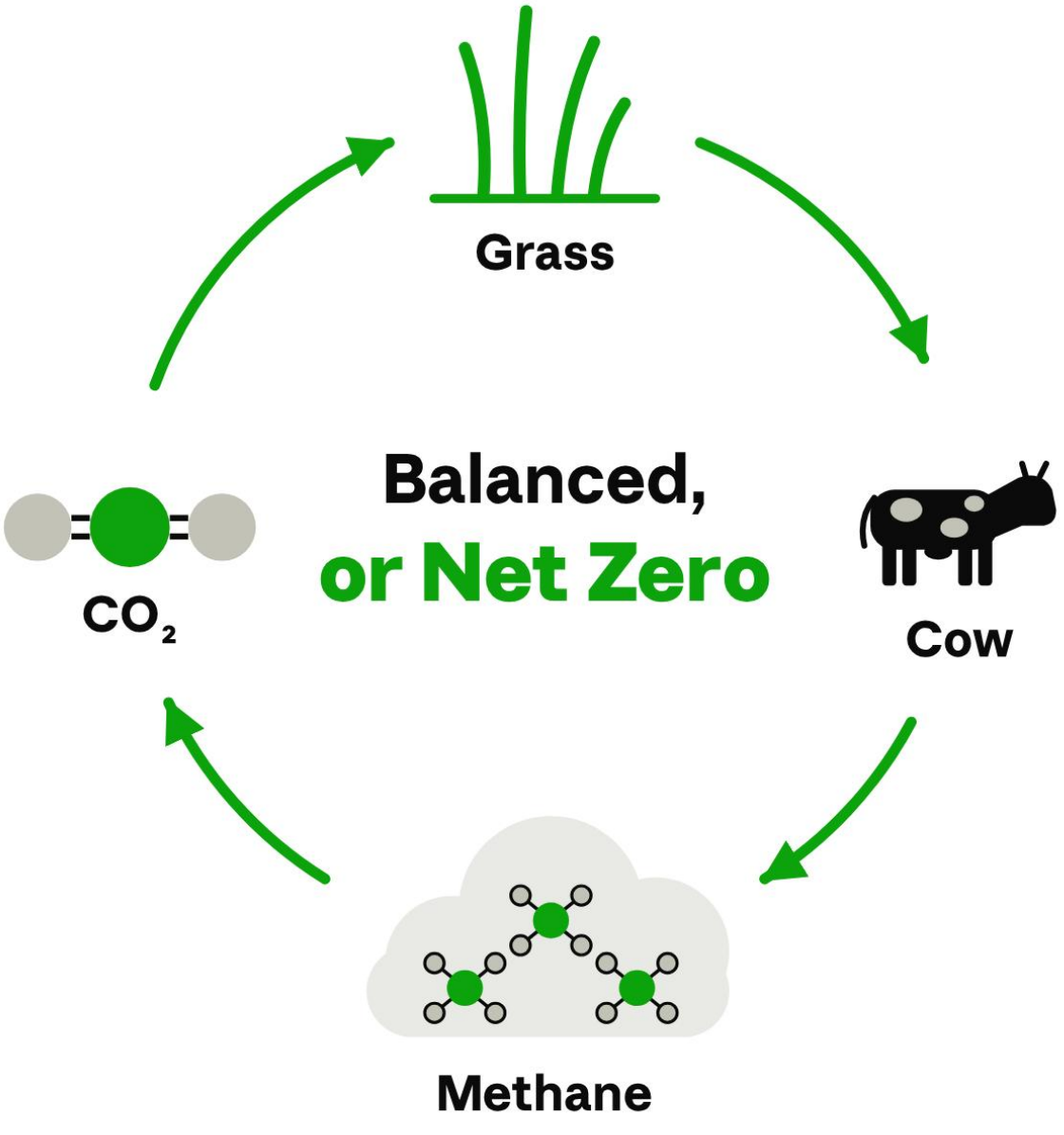
2. **It's not fair.**

   Farmers count every scope. Airlines and oil firms don't have to.

1 · IT'S NOT SCIENCE

Methane from cows is net zero*

● The carbon atom (C), followed round the cycle



New methane only replaces what breaks down.[6,7]

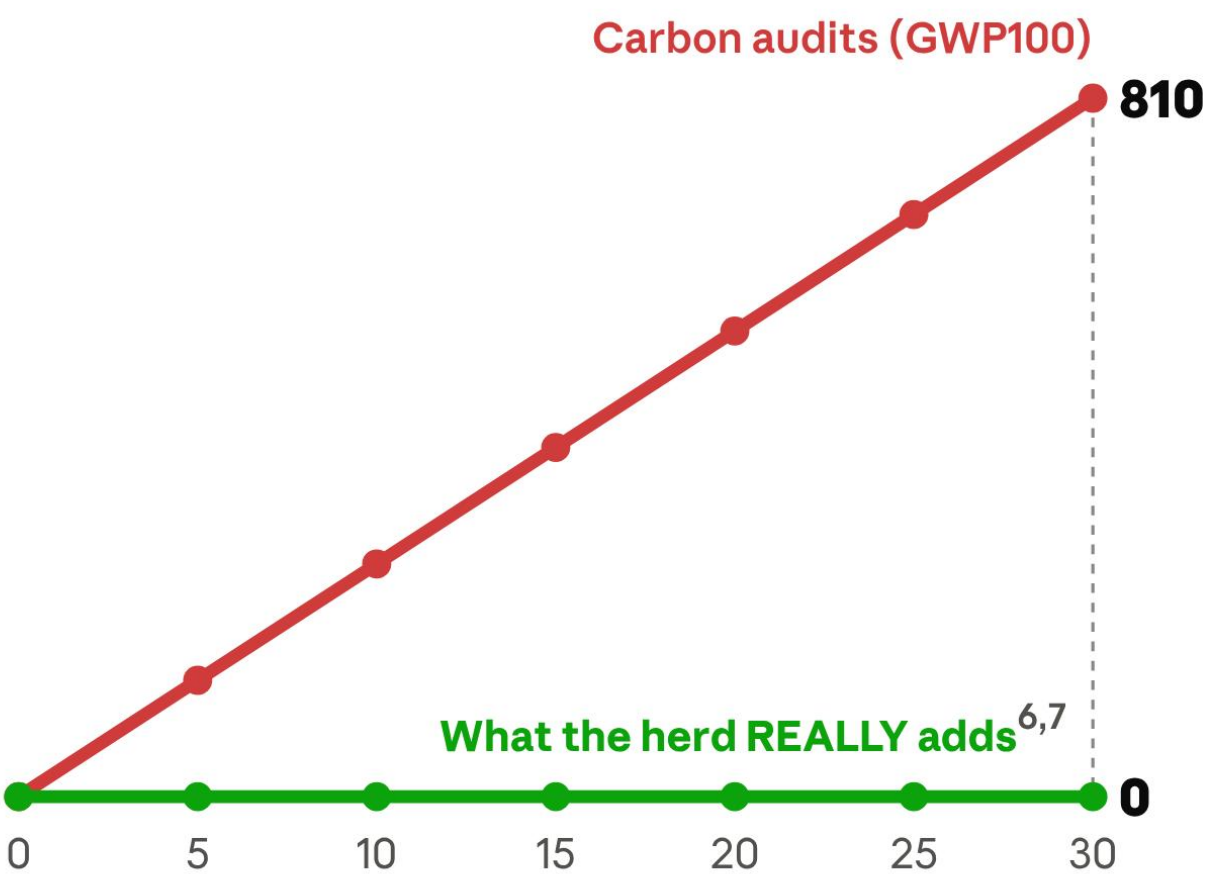
**Applies to the UK, which has a stable herd.*[8]

The unfair calculation

Carbon audits count every tonne of methane as 27 tonnes of CO_2,[9] every year, as if it never goes away.

Carbon audits book 810 tonnes. The herd adds none.

Example: A herd that releases 1 tonne of methane a year and stays the same size, over 30 years.



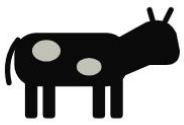
Years from today, herd size held steady

The methane breaks down. The audit's tally never does.

2 · IT'S NOT FAIR

Farmers count all three scopes.[10] Airlines and oil firms don't have to.

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
Own emissions	Electricity bought	Supply chain[11]



Dairy farm

DAERA's plan

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
COUNTED	COUNTED	COUNTED

No footprint? Lose 10% of your payment, rising to 15% from 2030.[3]



Airline

CORSIA and UK ETS[12,13]

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
CO_2 34%	not counted	Not counted	Not counted

Counts only CO_2 from fuel: 34% of its warming. Contrails and NOx (66%) are not counted.[14]



Oil company

UK listed company rules[15,16]

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
COUNTED	COUNTED	OPTIONAL comply or explain

Burning the oil it sells is 81% of its emissions:[17] all of it scope 3, optional to report.

Same planet. Different rules. A rigged game.

This moment matters

Accept a rigged calculation now, and we will never get it changed.

Farm carbon audits are unscientific, unfair, unjust and unacceptable.

A vote to make such audits compulsory is a vote to:

- open the door to 40% fewer cattle and sheep
- destroy family farms built over generations
- hollow out rural towns and jobs
- make food dearer for every family
- make farmers pay for other people's emissions

Save our family farms.
Save our rural economy.

Say NO to mandatory carbon audits

Say YES to a future for family farms

Appendix: the 2050 estimates

About 40% fewer cattle and sheep by 2050.[1]

The CCC's data for its 2025 report gives Northern Ireland's cattle and sheep numbers year by year: 2.77 million in 2040 and 2.43 million in 2050, a further 12% fall after 2040. Applying that further fall to the CCC's stated 31% cut by 2040[18] gives 39.3% fewer by 2050 (0.69 × 0.88 = 0.61), which we round to 40%. On a plain head count from the CCC's 2025 starting point, the 2050 cut is 36%. 2050 is the year of Northern Ireland's legal net zero target.[19]

53% of farming's emissions cut comes from fewer livestock by 2050.[1]

The CCC's full dataset splits farming's emissions cuts by measure. Two of them cut livestock numbers: “average reduction in meat and dairy consumption” and “reduces livestock numbers”. Together they deliver 48% of farming's cut in 2040, matching the CCC's report,[18] and 53% in 2050 (1.51 of 2.87 $MtCO_2e$).

These are our calculations from the CCC's published data, not figures the CCC states.

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