

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO ANIMAL RIGHTS

A Philosophy of Justice

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Dedicated to exploited beings everywhere,
and to those who work for their freedom.

Animal Rights

Animal rights is a philosophy and movement founded on compassion for animals and the right of all beings to live free from exploitation. Animals, like humans, are living beings who experience pain and pleasure. Whatever happens to an animal—whether she is confined or free, neglected or nurtured—means a world of difference *to her*, even if it matters to no one else. Recognizing this, animal rights proponents maintain that animals exist not for our use but *for themselves*, and that we do not have the right to intentionally hurt and kill animals simply because we are able.

Our modern conception of justice (in theory if not always in practice) gives all people the right to equal protection under the law, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. To achieve true justice in the world, we must have respect for other species. Animals have interests independent of human desires, and as such are entitled to some basic rights, including the right not to be eaten, worn, hunted, trapped, or experimented on by humans.

The founders of our country wrote the Declaration of Independence as a manifesto to announce our freedom and proclaim a radical affirmation of individual rights. The Declaration's authors wrote, "all men are created equal," and "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," and "that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." While Americans enjoy these rights, animals in our society are still considered property under the law: billions of animals are exploited by industry, living in utter misery, caged and abused for life, valued only as economic units. We must ask ourselves: Is it fair to so abuse beings who, like us, want to live, be free, and pursue their own version of happiness?

Many will still argue that what humans gain by using animals more than offsets any suffering they endure, and that our "right" to use animals for our benefit outweighs their right to exist free from exploitation. However, this assertion has *no logical bearing* on whether animals have rights. The question of whether animals have rights cannot be answered by arguing that humans benefit from animal exploitation, nor can this argument morally justify the suffering imposed on them. By deliberately injuring their bodies, violating their freedoms, and taking their lives, we unjustly withhold rights from animals, damaging ourselves and the environment in the process.

The animal rights viewpoint contrasts with society's current paradigm: that animals lack essential rights because they are different from humans, and are here solely to be used as we see fit, regardless of their interests or needs. Thus, our society imprisons and kills *tens of billions of animals every year* for food, clothing, entertainment, and research. Yet, humans don't need to eat, wear, or otherwise use animals in order to live, and what we gain by exploiting animals is frivolous compared to what animals sacrifice: they are robbed of their lives, their very existence, to satisfy human desires.

Society's mistreatment of animals is an overt representation of **speciesism**: the conscious or unconscious belief that humans are the most important species on the

planet, and therefore justified in exploiting animals in whatever ways we choose. Speciesism and other prejudices like racism and sexism all share the same foundation: placing the interests of one's own group above those of other groups and enforcing unequal power relations with violence. For example, white supremacists discriminate against other races, claiming non-white races are inferior. Batterers use violence to reinforce male dominance and female subservience, and behave as though a woman's needs are irrelevant when they conflict with a man's desires. Humanity's attitude toward animals is similar: we justify killing and exploitation by rationalizing that animals are inferior to us, and conclude that their most fundamental needs are unimportant compared to our most trivial desires. From making animals into coats to hunting them for sport, most humans act as though animals' lives don't matter.

Parallels also exist between speciesism and fascism, such as the principle that the powerful are the natural masters of the powerless, or that "might makes right." Modern social attitudes about animals often reflect the belief that humans are the "master species" of the planet in the same way the Nazis claimed to be the "master race" of humanity. This myth of human supremacy has developed over millennia, and is so deeply woven into the fabric of society that most people never seriously question or think about it. Perhaps the reason why so many believe the myth is because it was created *by* humans, *for* humans, based on the *human* definition of intelligence. However, even though animals can't do all that humans can, they use language, have emotions, and are far more complex than most people realize. Most important, animals experience pain, just like we do. Yet in practice most people disregard animals' suffering, perhaps because they want to continue using animals for food, clothing, etc. Consequently, fueled by accelerating consumerism and automated technology, more animals are abused now than ever before. The commodification and consumption of animals has led to levels of suffering that are literally incomprehensible: over *25 billion* land and sea animals are killed for food every year in the U.S. alone. Contrary to popular belief shaped by corporate advertising, cows, chickens and pigs do *not* spend their days blissfully meandering through green meadows before they skip happily off to slaughter. In reality, they are imprisoned on factory farms that resemble concentration camps more than anything else. We will briefly describe these conditions and the most common uses of animals in later sections of this Guide to illustrate the vast scale of abuse humans impose on animals.

The idea of animals possessing rights may seem strange at first, but historically, many ideas that are now accepted as common sense were once rejected as absurd. The 19th century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer developed a theory that society reacts in predictable stages to the introduction of a new truth. In the first stage, it is ridiculed; in the second, it is violently opposed; and in the third and final stage, the truth is accepted as self-evident. At present, most people still mock, ignore, or attack the notion of animal rights. However, just as slavery was once commonly practiced but is now denounced as an abomination, so will animal exploitation someday be regarded.

As an alternative to the relentless domination and destruction of the natural world, animal rights calls humankind to embody a higher ethic—one that considers the

interests of animals. As such, it honors animals' right to life and rejects the authority by which humanity selfishly imposes its will on the animal kingdom.

Humans Are Animals

Throughout this guide, the term "animals" refers to non-human animals because that is the way the term is commonly understood. Yet, however we use the term, it is important to realize that humans *are* animals. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution revealed our common ancestry with animals, establishing that humans developed only relatively recently from our primate cousins. Modern scientific inquiry has further confirmed our biological similarities, especially to other mammals, and that the human species is just one among literally millions of species. Yet people still emphasize our differences, ignoring our commonalities while dismissing or underestimating animals' abilities. For instance, people still maintain that humans are the only species who use language, even while animals regularly communicate with each other and with humans. Researchers have even taught sign language to chimpanzees, who can use hundreds of signs to communicate with humans. Ethological studies demonstrate that animals nurture their young in ways similar to human mothers, and that animals play, learn and grieve for lost companions. Once we recognize that we share many things in common with animals, the arbitrary line we've drawn between "us" and "them" begins to fade.

The most important similarity we share with animals from an ethical standpoint is the ability to feel pain. Like humans, animals have a complex nervous system consisting of sensory organs and receptors that enable them to experience pain and pleasure. While it is not possible to prove conclusively what another being experiences, modern science offers no evidence or biological basis for doubting that animals feel pain. Obviously, when animals are struck, they react in the same ways that humans do—by screaming, flinching, bruising, and bleeding. In fact, many scientific studies are conducted under the very premise that animals feel pain. Some even rely on animals feeling pain in order to force them to perform specific tasks (for instance, through the use of electric shocks). In some cases, scientists actually study the animal pain response in order to increase understanding of the human pain response. Scientists also study emotional suffering in animals (for example, maternal deprivation studies of non-human primate babies) and apply their findings to theories of human psychology.

No reputable scientist now claims that animals are only inanimate objects or complex biological "machines" in the way that the philosopher Rene Descartes did centuries ago. While his scientific successors should have logically abandoned this fallacy in the face of accumulated knowledge of our shared biology, in practice many still persist in using animals as mere research tools, despite their suffering. All industries that rely on captive animals conveniently disregard animals' pain so that they can continue to profit from their exploitation. As we learn more about animals and our biological similarities, the distorted nature of our speciesist attitude becomes clearer and the justifications offered for harming animals become less convincing. With the realization that humans are also

animals comes the responsibility to respect animals as living beings with whom we share much in common.

There Ought To Be a Law

In the following sections, we discuss some of the ways animals are treated in our society. What you read may seem outrageous and unbelievable, but we have taken care to avoid any exaggeration. The activities we describe are not the exception, but the rule: these are *standard practices* within each of these industries and are legal in the U.S.

At some stages, you may think that there should be a law protecting animals from such institutionalized abuse. While there are some laws, animals themselves have no legal standing and are considered property in essentially the same way that a company owns its machinery of production. Sanctioned by the law, “owners” buy, sell, and raise animals for their economic value. Industries that rely on animals are motivated first and foremost by money, and disregard animal welfare (except as a public relations issue) because providing better care for animals would decrease their profits.

Despite most people’s belief that animals should be treated humanely, laws to improve conditions are seldom passed due largely to the influence of intense industry lobbying. As a result, the law serves to legitimize systematic cruelty rather than protect animals from it. For example, the Animal Welfare Act functions less like a piece of legislation to secure animals’ welfare than a way for industry to legally justify its abuse of animals. In addition, animals raised for human food, and rodents and birds used in research, are specifically *exempted* from the Act. While there is a Humane Slaughter Act that applies to cows and pigs (but exempts poultry, who are killed for food in the greatest numbers), it only stipulates that animals be rendered unconscious before being killed, and contains no regulations on how animals can be treated during the rest of their lives.

Factory Farming: Meat /s Murder

By far, the vast majority of animals killed by humans are used for food: every year, more than 10 billion land animals are killed for food in the U.S. alone. This number has grown steadily over the years, reflecting increases in both the human population and changing dietary habits: per capita, Americans eat more meat today than ever before. To meet ever-increasing demand, the agricultural industry has focused on developing mechanized production systems to raise and process animals in the cheapest and fastest way possible. The rise of industrialized agriculture has driven most family farms out of business and systematic animal abuse to new levels. The industry’s techniques of mechanization, intensive confinement, and genetic manipulation are what characterize modern *factory farming*, which produces about 98% of the meat consumed in the U.S.

Factory farming has been developed over the course of the last half-century to maximize production and profit by crowding the greatest number of animals together into the smallest possible space; animal welfare simply does not factor into this equation. Some factory farms are like warehouses with cages stacked several levels high, while others cram animals together by the thousands into a single large area. Without exception, factory farms are designed to limit animals' movement, both to conserve space and so animals don't expend calories and lose weight. Such severe overcrowding inevitably causes intense stress, and, compounded with poor sanitation and unnatural surroundings, disease and premature death are rampant. The only way to keep animals alive under such filthy and stressful conditions is by feeding them massive amounts of antibiotics. These animals are genetically bred for rapid growth so that they can be slaughtered at a very young age, living out only a fraction of their natural lifespans. Some of the conditions endured by animals on factory farms are described below.

Dairy Cows - Like all mammals, cows only produce milk after giving birth. Consequently, in order to keep them lactating year-round, dairy cows are artificially inseminated and forced to give birth *every year*, which is not their natural behavior and therefore physically devastating. A cow's gestation period is the same as that of a human mother, and each cow is expected to produce milk during seven of her pregnancy's nine months. With genetic manipulation and mechanized production, modern dairy cows produce 100 pounds of milk a day—*ten times* more than they would produce in nature. This subjects their bodies to constant stress, leaving them at great risk for numerous health problems. Because baby cows on factory farms essentially compete with humans for milk, they are taken from their mothers at birth in order to prevent them from drinking "our" milk. While female calves are raised to eventually replace their mothers as milk producers, most male calves born to dairy cows are raised for veal. To keep their flesh tender, they are fed an iron-deficient diet to make them anemic and chained by the neck inside crates measuring just two feet wide so that their muscles cannot develop.

Beef cattle - Cattle raised for beef are the only factory-farmed animals that spend part of their lives outdoors. After grazing for about six months on the range, they are rounded up and taken to a feedlot—where they are branded, castrated and dehorned without anesthetic—to be fattened quickly on a high-protein diet. They are killed in modern slaughterhouses at an average rate of 250 animals per hour. Line speeds are so fast that, according to worker testimonies, it is commonplace during the slaughter process for cows to have their hooves cut off, their stomachs slit open, and their skin stripped off while still conscious.

"Broiler" chickens - Chickens raised for their meat are crowded by the thousands into massive warehouses where each chicken has less than half a square foot of space. Like egg laying hens, broilers are also debeaked so that they won't kill one another under the intense stress of overcrowding. They are genetically modified to grow so fast that their hearts and lungs can't support the rest of their bodies, and their underdeveloped legs are often crushed under their own weight. All of the approximately

9 billion chickens raised for human food every year are exempt from the Humane Slaughter Act, so the industry can legally kill these birds while they are fully conscious.

Egg-Laying Hens - Female chickens raised to lay eggs live their entire lives in wire cages stacked upon one another, packed so tightly together that each hen has only a space about the size of a sheet of paper, not enough room for them to even lift their wings. Confined tightly their entire lives, the chickens often lose most of their feathers rubbing against the metal cages. Debeaking—in which part of the chickens' sensitive beaks are seared off with a hot knife to prevent them from pecking their cagemates to death in the overcrowded cages—is a common practice on factory farms. Battery hens are genetically bred so that each produces approximately 300 eggs per year—about 10 times as much as they naturally would. When they become "unproductive" by these standards, they are either "force molted" (i.e., starved for two weeks) in order to shock them into another laying cycle or sent to slaughter.



Egg laying hens in battery cages

Pigs - Breeder sows are kept almost constantly pregnant, and spend most of their lives in metal stalls called gestation crates that are only two feet wide, too narrow for them to even turn around. Some are chained by the neck to the front of the stall, limiting their mobility even further: the less they move, the fewer calories they need, reducing feed costs. The sows lie in rows on wire mesh grates or concrete slats, allowing their waste to fall into huge pits under the floor: never in their lives do they have hay to rest on or mud to roll in. Piglets are taken away from their mothers to be fattened for slaughter at two to three weeks of age. They endure overcrowded, unsanitary confinement for their entire lives, never leaving the building in which they are born until they are taken to slaughter at six months of age.



Breeding sows confined in gestation crates

Transport to Slaughter - All animals—whether raised for their flesh or to produce milk or eggs—are eventually turned into meat. Slaughterhouses are often located hundreds or even thousands of miles from the factory farms where animals are raised, so animals are packed as tightly as possible into trains or trucks because it is “economical.” They often make the long journey in extreme weather conditions, many dying along the way from heat exhaustion or sub-zero temperatures. Others who become too sick or injured to walk to slaughter are tossed on a “dead pile” and left to die slowly with other dead and dying animals. Slaughterhouses operate as mechanized assembly lines for the mass murder of frightened animals where they are herded together, shackled upside-down, get their throats slit, and have their bodies dismembered as conveyor belts move them from one station to the next.

All of the abuses described above are imposed on animals to satisfy people's preference for the taste of animal flesh, which is just one way that human desires are deemed more important than animals' right to exist. The enslavement of animals goes beyond what we eat to encompass many other activities, as discussed below.

Other Uses of Animals

In addition to turning animals into food, humans use animals for amusement, fashion, and as scientific tools. The animal rights philosophy disputes all of these uses, even if they could result in some benefit to humans. While as a society we have decided that it is wrong to violate the rights of people—no matter their cognitive capacity—in order to benefit others, we have placed animals in a separate category, maintaining that they are ours to use without concern for their suffering. This attitude is defended by all who benefit from animal exploitation, from circus trainers to researchers seeking cures for human disease, with specious arguments that share a common theme: humans are

always more important than animals, period. However, the benefits humans accrue by enslaving animals are negligible at best, and the reasons for their enslavement are by and large trivial. Some of the more common uses of animals are detailed below.

Fur - Humans raise a number of species in cages—including fox, mink, chinchilla, raccoon, and lynx—in order to skin them for their fur. To prevent the fur from damage, furriers kill the animals by lethal gas, anal electrocution, or breaking their necks. Metal traps are used to catch fur-bearing animals in the wild, the steel-jawed leg-hold trap being the most common. Animals can languish for days in these traps before the hunter returns to club them to death, and many are in such agony that they chew their own limbs off attempting to escape.

Sport hunting - Hunters invade animal habitats armed with high-caliber weapons and stealth technology in order to shoot animals for sport. Meanwhile, commonly hunted animals like geese, ducks, squirrels and deer who pose no threat to hunters are completely defenseless: escape is their only hope of survival. While much hunting takes place on wildlife refuges, national forests, state parks and other public lands, there are also over 1,000 canned hunting facilities in the U.S. For a price, canned hunts allow people to shoot “trophy” animals (like antelope, bison, bears, rhinos and zebras) that are confined in fenced enclosures from which there is no chance of escape.

Fishing - Like mammals, fish feel pain as part of a biological survival mechanism: pain alerts fish to danger so that they can avoid it. Fish immediately begin to suffocate when pulled from the water into our atmosphere, and the sudden pressure change can rupture their swim bladder. Even "catch and release" sport fishing hurts fish because the repeated struggle against being caught weakens their bodies, making them more susceptible to predators and disease. Commercial fisheries locate schools of fish using satellite-tracking equipment, and cover miles of ocean with gigantic nets that trap everything in their path, killing millions of animals that are not even valued by the industry, such as sea turtles, dolphins, and sea lions. Americans eat an estimated 15 to 20 billion aquatic animals a year. Meeting this huge demand has led to chronic overfishing, which has depleted fish stocks and made intensive aquaculture (breeding fish on “farms”) increasingly common. Raised in overcrowded caged enclosures, farmed fish live in water infested with bacteria that forms from a surplus of excrement. When the fish are ready for market, they are dumped into large mesh cages where they suffocate to death.

Rodeos - People generally believe that animals in rodeos are wild, and have to be “broken” by cowboys. The truth is that horses and bulls used in rodeos only “buck” because a leather strap is tightly cinched below their rib cage where it constricts vital organs and pinches the groin. Calves used in the roping events are mere babies at four to five months of age. Running at up to 30 miles per hour, they commonly suffer severe and sometimes fatal neck and back injuries, broken bones, and internal hemorrhages when they are lassoed around the neck and jerked to the ground. Rather than receiving painkillers and veterinary care, most animals injured in the rodeo or during practice are sent to the slaughterhouse.

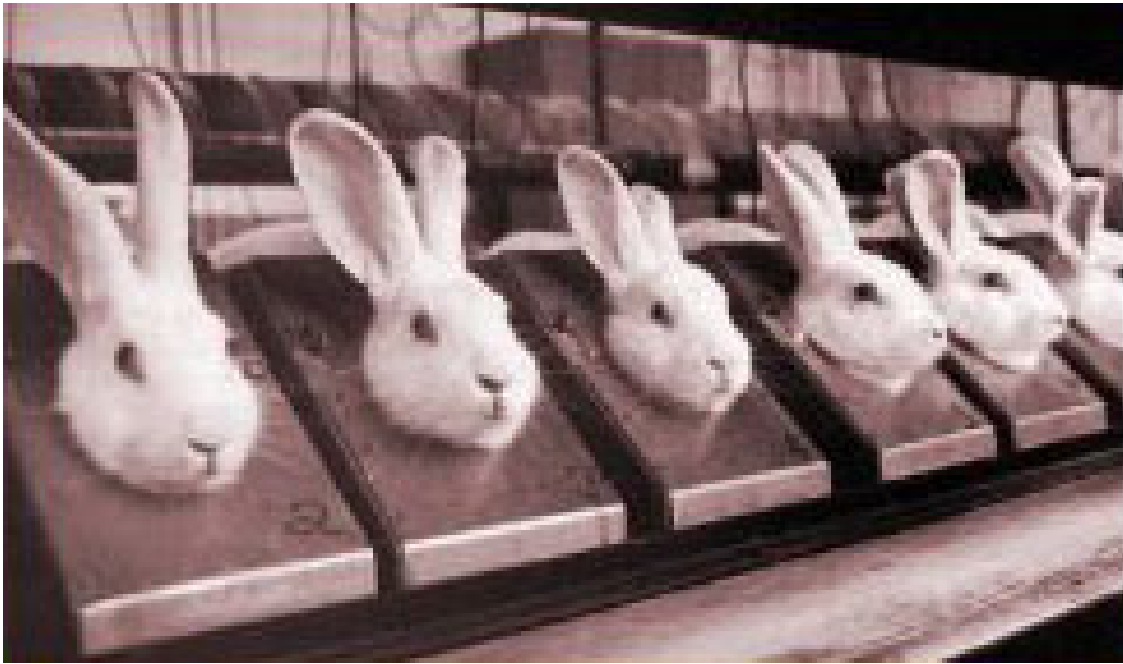
Circuses - Colorful pageantry disguises the fact that animals in circuses are unwilling captives forced to perform unnatural and often painful acts. From almost constant confinement in cages while traveling to being completely cut off from their families and natural habitats, animals in circuses live in misery. Circus trainers use beatings to train animals to perform their tricks, conditioning them with terror so that they will respond merely out of fear of pain during the show. While circuses try to hide their cruelty from the public by saying they only use positive reinforcement, the standard tools used by trainers—such as choke collars, muzzles, electric prods, and bullhooks—tell a different story. When animals in circuses grow old or sick and can no longer perform, they are sold to zoos, private menageries, game farms (to be hunted as trophies or for their "exotic" meat), or even research laboratories.



An elephant forced to perform

Animal Experimentation - Every year, millions of animals are used in consumer safety tests, even though more reliable non-animal methods are available, and in a wide variety of laboratory experiments. As research subjects, they are drowned, starved, burned, irradiated, dismembered, paralyzed, blinded, forced to ingest toxins, and deliberately infected with diseases in the name of science and medicine. While advocates of animal experimentation claim this research is necessary, the fact remains that the most important advancements in health have *not* resulted from research done on animals, but rather improvements in public sanitation, personal hygiene, and lifestyle. Similarly, we can save more lives by teaching people how to stay well through diet, exercise and stress reduction rather than by funding animal experiments that seek

cures for diseases that we already know are caused by unhealthy lifestyles and dangerous behaviors. Yet the hard fact remains that whole industries profit immensely from animal experimentation and have a stake in maintaining the status quo. Pharmaceutical companies make billions developing drugs to treat diseases that result from unhealthy lifestyle choices. The bottom line: it's not in their stockholders' interest to promote preventive care, nor can large corporations profit from it. In the academic world, researchers and the universities that employ them can make their reputations, and get lots of grant money, by using animal subjects. As a result, many primates, dogs, cats, rodents, and other animals suffer a lifetime of deprivation and loneliness in laboratory cages as well as excruciating pain and death while being experimented on.



Rabbits restrained for eye irritation tests

The animal rights movement has sought to expand people's view of other species and promote understanding of the commonalities we share with other animals. The movement has made some progress in recent decades, making it more difficult for industries to blatantly abuse animals without concern for their welfare. To counteract the animal rights movement, the industries that depend on animal enslavement now employ public relations experts to hide the facts about what they do to animals, convince the public that they treat animals humanely, and actively discredit animal rights by calling anyone who points out their lies an extremist. Perhaps animal rights activists are extremists: for justice and compassion, that is. The people who profit from animal slavery are *most certainly* extremists, despite the fact that their PR departments portray them as models of respectability and rationalism: they are extremists in favor of protecting and extending legalized animal enslavement so that they can continue profiting from it.

Making the Connection

Less than 150 years ago, human slavery was legal and widely practiced in the southern states of the U.S. Fewer than 90 years ago, women were not allowed to vote. Today, most people regard the gains won by the abolition and women's suffrage movements as great victories for freedom and democracy. Throughout history, numerous other liberation movements have also advocated for the rights of minority groups, and as a result won many freedoms.

The animal rights movement is working to end oppression of animals just as other liberation movements have stood against the oppression of humans. Many of the great humanitarian pioneers of history understood the connection between human and animal exploitation, and incorporated compassion for animals into their lives and work. For example, a number of groundbreaking feminists—such as Susan B. Anthony, Annie Besant, Gloria Steinem, and Alice Walker—recognized parallels between male domination of women and human exploitation of animals. The severe exploitation of female animals' reproductive capacity within industrial farming is counter to core feminist principles. As one illustration of this, motherhood and the bringing of new life into the world have been reduced to a manufacturing process. For example, on factory farms:

- Female animals are immobilized and exposed using a "rape rack," then forcibly impregnated by a male animal or artificial insemination.
- One hog industry journal advises, "The breeding sow should be thought of, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery whose function is to pump out baby pigs like a sausage machine."
- Newborn calves are taken away from their mothers after nursing for only one day so that the milk can be processed and sold for human consumption. Hens are devoted mothers, but never get to raise their young on factory farms. Female chicks of egg laying hens are raised in incubators to replace their mothers, while male chicks, being useless to the industry, are routinely suffocated or ground up alive for fertilizer.

Other human rights advocates have also recognized the importance of compassion for animals in the struggle for human liberation. Many of history's great humanitarians—such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Leo Tolstoy, and Gandhi—were also outspoken animal advocates. In more recent times, the great labor leader Cesar Chavez noted a direct connection between human and animal exploitation by agribusiness conglomerates. He not only fought tirelessly for the rights of farm workers, but was also a devoted animal advocate and vegan. Today, the modern slaughterhouse worker is probably the most exploited employee in the U.S., earning low pay, facing persistent anti-union efforts by the industry, and suffering the highest injury rate of any industry.

While the social reformers mentioned above included animals in their circle of compassion, many otherwise progressive people still don't understand the contradiction between the values they hold and the suffering caused by their diet. It's easy to

denounce oppression during a conversation over dinner, but if your meal includes parts of a dismembered animal, what do your convictions really amount to? It's simply hypocritical to say you're against oppression while directly subsidizing the torture and murder of helpless animals.

Animal Abuse and "Human Problems"

It has become clear that the more we exploit animals, the deeper we become enmeshed in our own problems, from physical disease to environmental destruction. For example, we kill millions of wild animals and wreak ecological havoc cutting down forests to raise billions of domesticated animals that we then slaughter for food. Eating these animals in turn causes disease in millions of humans, so much so that we now accept the most common diseases as "natural" and inevitable. We then experiment on still other animals seeking cures for the diseases caused by eating animals in the first place. This only goes to show that not only is our use of animals unnecessary; it is self-defeating. With this in mind, the following are just some of the "human problems" consequent to our mass enslavement of animals.

Health - Dietary research conclusively links overconsumption of animal products with the most common—and deadly—ailments, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S., and is the direct result of cholesterol buildup in the arteries. Animal foods are very high in cholesterol, while plant foods contain none at all. Plant-based diets are also high in many essential vitamins and minerals. The Framingham Heart Study, the longest running clinical study in medical history, supports the health-giving properties of a meatless diet. Its director, Dr. William Castelli, has said that "Vegetarians have the best diet. They have the lowest rates of coronary disease of any group in the country...they have a fraction of our heart attack rate, and they have only 40% of our cancer rate." E. coli, salmonella, and now Mad Cow disease are also serious meat-borne health threats.

Environment - Intensive animal agriculture is ecologically unsustainable and destructive, requiring immense amounts of water, oil and land (for grazing and to grow food for the billions of animals). Animals raised for food in the U.S. produce 130 times the excrement of the entire human population, making intensive animal agriculture one of the top industrial polluters in the world. Livestock also release massive amounts of methane into the atmosphere, hastening global warming. Rainforests are cut or burned down to provide grazing land for cattle. For every quarter-pound fast food hamburger made in this way, 55 square feet of rainforest is destroyed. With over 500 species going extinct *every day* due to human encroachment, meat eating is a luxury that the planet can ill afford.

Famine - Approximately 20 million human beings, 85% of them children, will starve to death this year in developing nations. In order to pay off debts to the World Bank and other international lending agencies, these countries often raise crops for export to industrialized countries that feed them to cattle. Feeding grains to animals and then

eating their meat is an incredible waste of resources: for example, a cow must eat 16 pounds of grain to produce just one pound of beef, and billions could live on the food currently eaten by livestock. Starvation could be eliminated if people were given some of the grain that is now fed to livestock.

Violence- Lack of empathy for animals has profoundly negative consequences for society, though they remain largely unrecognized. Over twenty-five hundred years ago, Pythagoras—the first philosopher and vegetarian in the history of Western Civilization—said, “For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love.” In modern times, criminological research has established that most serial killers “train” by torturing and killing animals before moving on to human victims, and that the same is true of other violent offenders. Violence against animals is so ingrained in our society’s way of life that few ever question the morality of eating meat, wearing leather, buying products tested on animals, etc. The ubiquitous availability and promotion of animal products numbs people to the fact that they are consuming the dead bodies of once-living beings, so few ever consider how the underlying violence of these activities might impact their lives or the world. Suppressing the knowledge of what we do to animals only removes it to a subconscious level, so that we don’t recognize how this unacknowledged bloodshed facilitates the violence we humans do to one another. The psychological damage that we do to ourselves and our children by routinely massacring animals should make us ponder whether it is possible for us to be truly free ourselves while enslaving other beings.

These examples show how our world is interconnected, and that we cannot exploit one part of it without bringing grave harm to ourselves. Truly, we reap what we sow.

Be the Change You Want to See

Gandhi, whose practice of non-violence changed the course of history, once said, "You have to be the change you want to see in the world." This reflects his teaching that living in accord with what you know to be right simultaneously transforms your own life and makes the world a better place.

As children, we are *taught* that it is natural to eat animals, and conditioned to repress the instinctual disgust we feel when confronted with images of slaughter. While most people think meat tastes good, they avoid looking too deeply into the preparations that make dismembered animal corpses palatable. Packaging for animal products is often adorned with cute cartoon animals, specifically designed to feed into this tendency towards denial. Our parents took us to the circus, the zoo, and the marine park; in school we dissected frogs; and in many ways throughout our lives the “natural order” of human over animal is reinforced.

At some point as adults, we must decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. It is therefore essential that we ask ourselves *why* we think it is all right to kill, eat and

otherwise mistreat animals. Why do *you* believe that animals exist to become our food, clothes, and entertainment? Was it because your family, school, religion, government, or culture told you it was so? The taste for animal flesh is often determined by where you were raised: for example, while in our culture it is acceptable to eat cows and chickens, people eat cats and dogs in other countries. But what is the real difference? Cows, chickens, cats and dogs all suffer, and, given the chance, will develop relationships with people who care for them. On the other hand, vegetarianism is common in some countries, such as India. In addition, two-thirds of the human population is lactose intolerant, and many cultures do not consume dairy products at all. In the context of differing cultural practices, it is important to see for yourself whether your preconceptions about diet and animals stand up under objective examination.

Animals Cannot Defend Themselves

One significant difference between the animal rights movement and other liberation movements throughout history is that, unlike oppressed humans, animals are incapable of organizing an effective resistance or speaking out against their exploitation. They express their frustration individually by exhibiting neurotic symptoms such as repetitively biting the bars of their cages, and sometimes by escaping or even rebelling, as when elephants in circuses turn on their trainers, killing them and even spectators. However, animals can't lobby Congress, or air commercials on television, even while their corporate captors can and do.

Animals' inability to advocate for their own liberation makes it even more critical that people take up their cause, and the vast scale of atrocities committed against animals make this an urgent matter. During the height of the civil rights struggle, Martin Luther King, Jr. decried white moderates who said that blacks should "wait for a more convenient season" to win their freedom. He found this attitude frustrating because it was *not whites* that had to endure the pains of racism, but *blacks* that were daily victimized and even murdered by a racist establishment. Similarly, we live in comfort and ease compared to the animals, who are suffering and dying *right now*, and can't afford for us to hesitate in taking action: their very lives depend on it.

Animal abuse is everywhere in our society, yet remains below the social radar so that most people remain relatively uninformed about the realities and accept the fantasies created by corporate marketing campaigns. For example, the "happy cows" that produce the milk for cheese are *not* happy—they are in fact hooked up to milking machines that make their udders bleed, and are genetically and chemically manipulated to produce about ten times more milk than they would naturally. People are complicit in animals' exploitation when they buy the lie that animals are treated humanely. Corporations that profit from animal enslavement will continue to perpetuate the myth that animals are well cared for and enjoy their captivity for as long as they are able. Meanwhile, animals themselves really don't have a choice: their suffering will continue unless and until compassionate people do something about it.

Choosing veganism is the best way to start making a real difference in the lives of animals. By not eating meat, dairy and eggs, you can also improve your health, preserve the environment, and alleviate world hunger—what's good for us is also good for all life on the planet. More than just a dietary choice, veganism is a lifestyle that embodies compassion for all living beings and a practical way to reduce suffering and make the world a better place for everyone, day by day. Many vegans experience a sense of empowerment from living in alignment with their conscience and deepest values. As such, veganism is the enactment of animal rights in everyday life. However, even if you are not ready to stop using all animal products, you can still benefit animals and yourself by gradually decreasing your support for exploitive industries and purchasing humane alternatives, such as soy milk instead of cow's milk or shoes made of synthetic materials instead of leather. *Any* steps you take in this direction will help animals.

We wouldn't need an animal rights movement if society didn't routinely abuse and murder animals to satisfy human desires; but the fact of their enslavement remains. We therefore urge you to learn more and tell others about the animals' plight. Please use the resources in this Guide and contact us if you have any questions or want additional information. On behalf of all exploited animals, we thank you for your concern and look with hope towards a brighter future for the planet and all of its inhabitants.



Child with rescued calf (Farm Sanctuary)

Resources

Books

- *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, by Carol Adams
- *Slaughterhouse*, by Gail Eisnitz
- *Specious Science: How Genetics and Evolution Reveal Why Medical Research on Animals Harms Humans*, by C. Ray Greek and Jean Swingle Greek
- *How It All Vegan!: Irresistible Recipes for an Animal-Free Diet*, by Sarah Kramer and Tanya Barnard
- *Empty Cages: Facing the Challenge of Animal Rights*, by Tom Regan
- *The Food Revolution*, by John Robbins
- *Animal Liberation*, by Peter Singer

Videos

- *Peaceable Kingdom* (Tribe of Heart)
- *The Witness* (Tribe of Heart)
- *Meet Your Meat* (www.goveg.com/factoryFarming.asp)
- Undercover TV (www.undercovertv.org)

Advocacy Organizations

- Compassion Over Killing (www.cok.net)
- Farm Sanctuary (www.farmsanctuary.org)
- The Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org)
- In Defense of Animals (www.idausa.org)
- People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals (www.peta.org)
- Vegan Outreach (www.veganoutreach.com)

San Francisco Bay Area Resources

- Animal Place (www.animalplace.org)
- Bay Area Animal Rights Network (www.sfbaarn.org)
- Bay Area Vegetarians (www.bayareaveg.org)
- East Bay Animal Advocates (www.eastbayanimaladvocates.org)
- The Empathy Project (www.empathyproject.org)
- San Francisco Vegetarian Society (www.sfvs.org)