

Animal Welfare and Industrial Animal Agriculture

Recommended:

Jonathan Safran Foer “The Truth about Eating Animals,” *FES*, pp. 16-21.

Introduction to *Industrial Animal Agriculture*, *FES*, pp. 322-337.

Humane Society of the USA, “The Welfare of Animals in the Meat, Egg, and Dairy Industries,” *FES*, pp. 347-352.

Questions:

1. What are the best arguments *against* the current standard treatment of animals in industrial animal agriculture? Are there any plausible arguments in favor of the current practices?

Utilitarian/Consequentialist? (Singer and Tännsjö)

“...I assume *total* hedonistic utilitarianism, which is the view that what matters is the *total* amount of happiness in the world. According to this view, we ought to maximize the *total* amount of happiness in the world.” (Tännsjö, *FES* 363)

“My conjecture is that both animals held in captivity and wildlife experience *on average* enough happiness to compensate for [the pain and suffering they experience].” (Tännsjö, *FES* 364)

Kantian? (Korsgaard)

“A human being who lives a life governed only by desires and instincts, not by values, would certainly be a lesser being. But that doesn’t mean that the other animals are lesser beings. They are simply beings of a different kind.” (Korsgaard *FES* 371)

“The claim of the other animals to the standing of ends in themselves has the same ultimate foundation as our own- the essentially self-affirming nature of life itself.” (Korsgaard *FES* 371)

Virtue Theory? (Hill?)

Other? (Re the environment, efficiency, etc?)

“The topic of cruelty to animals, while important from a practical viewpoint, because much of our present treatment of animals involves the infliction of suffering for no good reason, is not very interesting philosophically. What is philosophically interesting is whether we are justified in having different standards of necessity for human suffering and for animal suffering.” (Steinbock, 251)

“[Singer] thinks that the principle of equality requires that, no matter what the nature of the being, its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering of any other being. In other words sentience does not simply provide us with reasons for acting; it is the only relevant consideration for equal consideration of interests.” (Steinbock, 251)

2. What standards are appropriate for the treatment of non-human animals in the meat, egg, and dairy industries, e.g., are free-range egg farms permissible? Other “humane” farming practices that produce animal products? Why or why not?
3. What standards are appropriate for animal testing? Managing zoos? Participating in animal entertainment (circuses, rodeos, Sea World)? Owning pets? Why?

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Spring 2017

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