




 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
 animal welfare program

Understanding Animal Welfare





NFACC's National Farm Animal Care & Welfare Conference, September 20 & 21, 2007
 La Conférence nationale du CNSAE sur le bien-être et la protection des animaux d'élevage, 20 et 21 septembre 2007

Dilemma


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Dilemma

"Some serious welfare problems for sows persist even in the best stall-housing system."

Scientific Veterinary Committee, 1997




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Dilemma

"Both individual and group housing can meet the welfare requirements of pigs."

Barnett et al. 2001




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Dilemma


"... public perceptions may result in difficulties with the concept of confinement housing ... [but] ... the issue of public perception should not be confused with welfare."

Barnett et al. 2001



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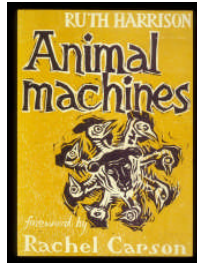
- What is animal welfare?
- Cultural roots
- Scientific approaches
- Conceptual framework
- Conclusions



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What is animal welfare?

Have we the right to rob [animals] of all pleasure in life simply to make more money more quickly out of their carcasses?



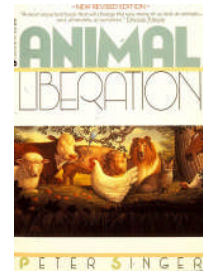
Ruth Harrison, 1964



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What is animal welfare?

... there can be no moral justification for regarding the pain (or pleasure) that animals feel as less important than the same amount of pain (or pleasure) felt by humans



Peter Singer, 1990



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What is animal welfare?

Pleasure
Pain
Suffering
Happiness

} **Affective states**



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What is animal welfare?

In principle we disapprove of a degree of confinement of an animal which necessarily frustrates most of the major activities which make up its natural behaviour...

F.W.R. Brambell et al., 1965



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What is animal welfare?

Let [farm animals] see the sun just once, get away from the murderous roar of the fans. Let them get to breathe fresh air for once, instead of manure gas.

Astrid Lindgren, 1985



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What is animal welfare?

... a much increased concept of welfare. Not only will welfare mean control of pain and suffering, it will also entail nurturing and fulfilment of the animals' natures...

Bernard Rollin, 1993



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What is animal welfare?

- Natural behaviour
- Natural environment
- The nature of the animals

Reasonably "natural" lives



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What is animal welfare?

My experience has been that ... by-and-large the standard of welfare among animals kept in the so called "intensive" systems is higher. On balance I feel that the animal is better cared for; it is certainly much freer from disease and attack by its mates; it receives much better attention from the attendants, is sure of shelter and bedding and a reasonable amount of good food and water.

G.B. Taylor, 1972



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What is animal welfare?

Good health is the birthright of every animal that we rear, whether intensively or otherwise.

David Sainsbury, 1986



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What is animal welfare?

- Freedom from disease and injury
- Food, water, necessities

Basic health and functioning



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What is animal welfare?



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Cultural roots

Pro-industrial claims

- natural progression
- healthy, happy workers
- productivity as proof

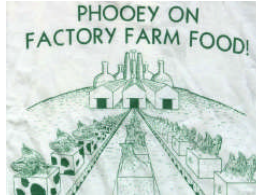


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Cultural roots

Anti-industrial claims

- cramped, unhealthy
- no contact with nature
- injuries and deformities
- loss of human nature



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Cultural roots

Romantic/Agrarian view

- simple, basic life
- nature as an ideal
- values emotion
- autonomy of individual
- Golden Age in the past

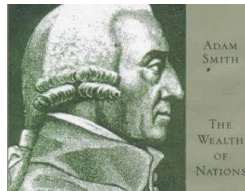


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Cultural roots

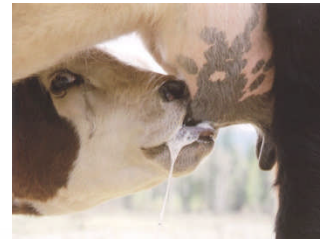
Rational/Industrial view

- life improved by science/technology
- nature as imperfect
- values rationality
- productivity of enterprise
- Golden Age in the future



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Scientific assessment of welfare: *Natural living*

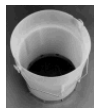


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Scientific assessment of welfare: *Natural living*



- Nurses calf 6-10 times a day
- Provides about 10 kg of milk

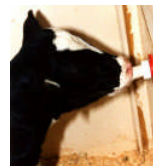


- Feed 2 times a day
- Provide about 4 kg of milk



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Scientific assessment of welfare: *Natural living*



Artificial feeding systems can allow key behaviors:

- Calves feed about 5 - 10 times/d
- Calves drink about 10 kg of milk/d



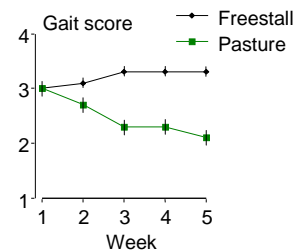
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Scientific assessment of welfare: Health



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Scientific assessment of welfare: Health

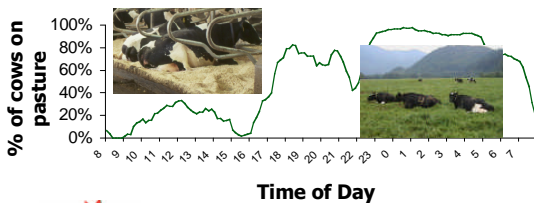


Mendo et al., 2007



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Scientific assessment of welfare: Affective states



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Conceptual framework

FACTS

- descriptive statements
- true or false
- “Cows are bigger than chickens.”

PREFERENCE VALUES

- evaluative statements
- better or worse
- “Cows are better than chickens.”

MORAL VALUES

- normative statements
- right or wrong
- “We should eat chickens, not cows.”



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Conceptual framework

“EVALUATIVE CONCEPTS”

- food safety
- agricultural sustainability
- human health
- animal welfare

These concepts include preference values (what is better/worse), but science can guide practices and policy. Use by professionals needs to correspond to the meanings understood by society



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Dilemma



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Dilemma

"widely accepted criteria of poor welfare such as health, immunology, injuries, growth rate..."

"Both individual and group housing can meet the welfare requirements of pigs"



Barnett et al. 2001

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Dilemma

"Suffering is one of the most important aspects of poor welfare..."

"... exploration of a complex environment, rooting in a soft substratum and manipulation of materials such as straw"

"Some serious welfare problems for sows persist even in the best stall-housing system."



Scientific Veterinary Committee, 1997

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Understanding Animal Welfare

People (*and* scientists) have different conceptions of what is important: affective states, basic health, and natural living. These concerns have deep cultural roots; the pursuit of one concern should not be at the expense of others.



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Understanding Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is an "evaluative concept" which is both science-based and values-based. When professionals deal with these concepts they need to draw on both science and values.



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