
Human–Animal Relationships

Fall 2006

Vet 106

Session 9 — November 15, 2006

Farm Animals

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A Hot Topic

- We turn to one of the most fundamental categories in “human-animal relationships”...
 - ...but an obscured relationship in modern times.
 - Many people are unaware of food animals’ nature and lives
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Student Responses

- “My first information of farm animals, as with most kids I would imagine, was through nursery rhymes, television, books, and animal crackers.” ...
 - ... *OUR urban and suburban* backgrounds
 - “With virtually no exposure to farm animals, the only knowledge I received on the subject up to age 10 was from television...
 - ...Unrealistic information was gathered through cartoons. Of course it was unrealistic, animals can't talk or get into adventures.”
 - “I do recall watching some special pieces on PBS (Sesame Street) on farm life. Cows were for milking, horses for riding and most other animals had no coverage at all.”
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More Student Responses

- “I had imagined farm animals to be quite happy and removed ... very distant from my reality.”
 - I am sure some of my first words were those of the sounds that the cow or pig makes.
 - “Already, veterinary school has provided me with information on both the farm animals, and the people that raise and live with them.”
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An Ancient Topic

- Using nonhuman animals for food is an ancient tradition
 - This tradition has an older branch ...
 - ... using “wildlife” engaged through hunting
 - The hunting “human-animal relationship” is complex in the extreme
 - Wild animals in hunting societies often thought of as sacred or bringers of blessings
 - ...and can be fearsome competitors
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An Ancient Topic

- The domesticated food animals side is simpler in some ways
 - Domesticated food animals category not unrelated to the companion animals category
 - Companion animals as a primary “human-animal relationship” ...
 - ... first opened up through symbiotic relationships with ancient dogs
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...first domestications...

- Dogs were the only Paleolithic domestication (Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, at 21)
 - Open as to timing ... perhaps 10-12,000 BCE (Serpell, UPenn) ...but
 - ... perhaps as early as 100,000 years ago according to Colin Groves of Australian National University
 - Humans-dogs connection “closely followed by domestic sheep and goats” (Serpell)
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First Domestications (Serpell)

- Around 7000 BCE cattle and pigs in Asia
 - Horses, asses, camels, water buffalo, and domestic fowl followed then ...
 - ...and, around 3,000 to 4,000 years ago, the domestic cat emerged from wild obscurity in ancient Egypt. [see also Clutton-Brock, J. 1981. *Domesticated Animals from Early Times*, London: Heinemann, British Museum of Natural History]."
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A Hot Topic in AVMA

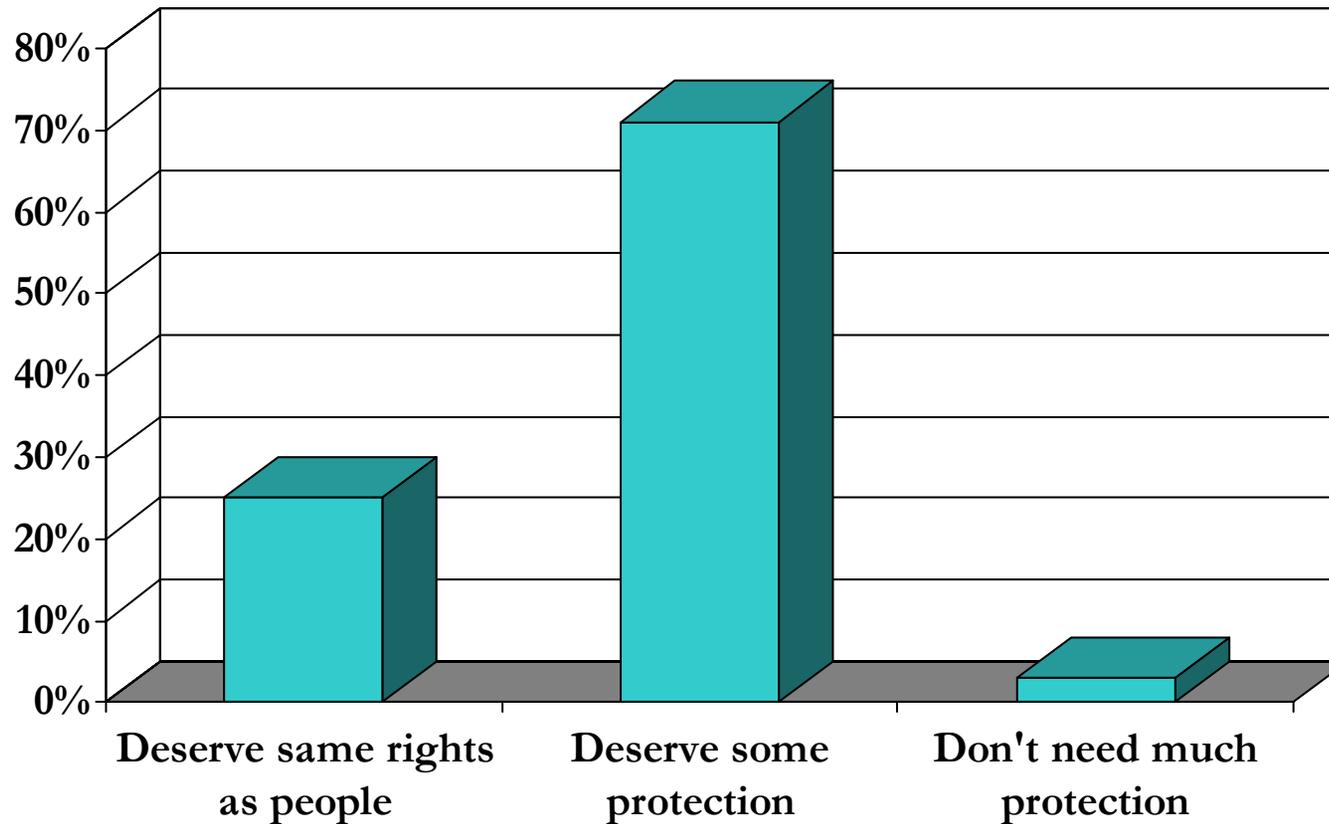
- Cover of current JAVMA
- Regular features in JAVMA described in reading



A Hot Topic in Society

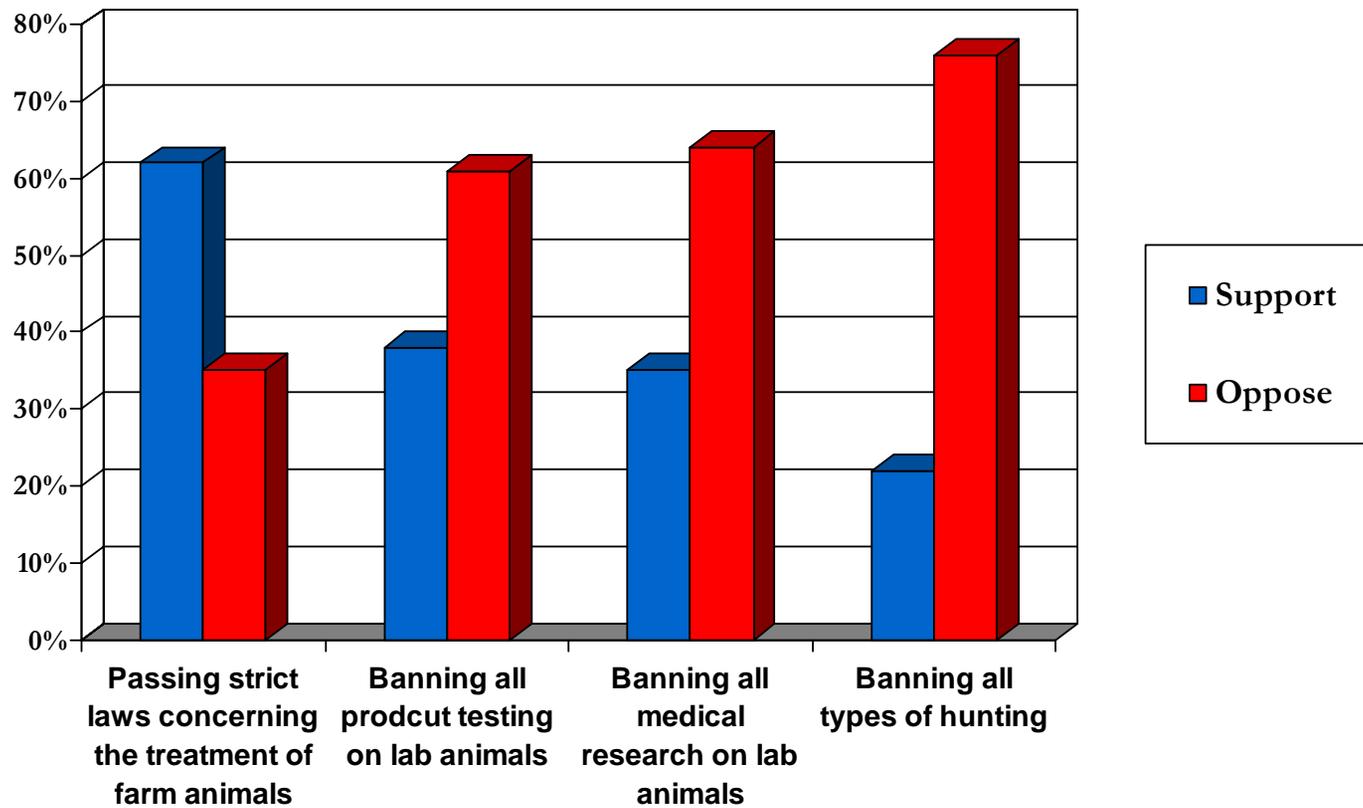
- Gallup 2003
 - 96% of Americans say animals deserve at least some protection from harm and exploitation
 - Only 3% say animals don't need protection "since they are just animals"
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Animal Protection Chart



Adapted from *Public Lukewarm on Animal Rights*. Gallup News Service, 5/21/03.

Support/Oppose Chart



Adapted from *Public Lukewarm on Animal Rights*. Gallup News Service, 5/21/03.

“Ferment”

- Basic issues raised by 2005 report of The Ohio State University survey of 1,800 Ohioans
- → → → →



The Ohio State University Poll— Societal Views

- 92% - important that farm animals are well cared for
 - 85% - quality of life for farm animals is important even when used for meat
 - 81% agreed that “the well-being of farm animals is just as important as the well-being of pets”
 - 75% agreed, “farm animals should be protected from feeling physical pain.”
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Industry's Response

New York Times - June 25, 2003
Animal Welfare's Unexpected Allies
By David Barboza

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- “McDonald’s, Burger King, KFC and Wendy’s have all underwritten research and recently hired what are called animal welfare specialists to help them devise new standards aimed at ensuring more humane treatment of the animals destined for their kitchens.
 - Industry trade groups are promoting the new rules and conducting audits of livestock producers to assure they are being followed, though some groups express concern about higher costs and other complications.”
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Trade Association Response – June 2004

- “WHEREAS, Many of our customers (including McDonald’s) are requesting a decrease in antibiotics in animal feed....
 - “RESOLVED, **The Iowa Pork Producers Association urges all producers to voluntarily discontinue the use of all growth-promotant antibiotics in swine finishing rations.**”
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Episcopalians Join In

- **2003 Resolution, D016: Stewardship: The Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment**
Resolved, ... responsible care of animals falls within the stewardship of creation;
 - *Resolved* ... the Episcopal Church encourage its members to ensure that husbandry methods for captive and domestic animals would **prohibit suffering in** such conditions as **puppy mills**, and **factory-farms**;
 - *Resolved*, That the Episcopal Church ... identify and **advocate for legislation protecting animals and effective enforcement** measures.
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Leadership Issues

- Natural for both veterinarians and non-veterinarians to look to the AVMA for help...
 - ... in understanding our human possibilities with the nonhumans who live amidst and near our communities
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2006 Resolutions

- The petition process for getting resolutions before the AVMA
 - Resolution No. 4 featured this language:
 - **Resolved, that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) hereby declares animal welfare to be a higher priority than economic considerations.**
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2006 Resolutions

- The Executive Board, the House Advisory Committee, and “reference committee” all recommended disapproval.
 - HOD voted, however, to refer Resolution 4 to the Animal Welfare Committee.
 - Florida delegate, Dr. Larry Dee, recommended the referral, noting that the resolution does not define “animal welfare” or “economic considerations.”
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Replacement Resolution

- Same general issue was addressed by a resolution crafted on the spot by “allied organizations”
 - Resolution No. 8 passed unanimously—calls for “responsible use of animals for human purposes.”
 - ... doesn’t define “responsible” or indicate which current practices are deemed responsible.
-

The Foie Gras Resolution

- Another resolution called for AVMA to “oppose the practice of mechanical force feeding of ducks and geese to produce foie gras because of the adverse effects on the birds' health and welfare.”
 - In the US, various communities & State of California have passed resolution regarding this practice
 - Internationally, practice has been banned in more than a dozen countries because of humane concerns.
 - Claim that nationwide survey of 1000 veterinarians reveals that majority opposes this practice
 - Resolution was voted down at AVMA
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Our Cultural Heritage

- Husbandry ethic, Rollin's account
 - Obscuring of this tradition by physical separation from farm animals—the removal of abattoirs/slaughterhouses from public scrutiny
 - Technological advances and indoor production
 - Result is that today's consumer is, in several senses, far removed from the farmed animal...
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More Student Comments

- Being raised in a major urban center and being provided with “a fictitious and imaginary view on these foreign animals.”
 - The information I received as a child is **only** relevant today in the way that a cow does "say moo."
 - As far as I knew, a farm could have one horse, one pig, one cow, one sheep, and one dog. It didn't occur to me that they were gregarious animals and would be miserable if there were only one of them. (Also, the farm would quickly go under if there were only one of each of them.) The information that I received about farm animals previous to 10 years of age has no relevance to today's farm animals (except that I can identify them).
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Some Students Had Very Relevant Experiences at a Young Age

- My interaction with “farm animals” and my placing them in this category occurred most likely from visiting local farms (I grew up in rural Pennsylvania...plenty all around!) ...
 - ...and my mother used to often take us to weekend farm trips, farm activities (hayrides, pumpkin picking etc).
 - **Clearly the area one grows up in has a lot to do with one’s views of farm animals and their purpose/uses.**
 - Fascinating entry that reveals much →
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Quality of Experiences at a Young Age

- “I grew up in a very suburban area of southern Massachusetts. Yards were shared, and fences very rarely separated one house from the next.
 - Needless to say, the fact that we owned a pig as a pet was far from normal in my area.
 - My first introduction to “farm animals” was therefore more like anyone’s introduction to “domestic pets.”
 - Our pig was put on a harness and leash and walked around the block alongside our black lab. Although my father did raise other farm animals (sheep, specifically) at a location separate to my house, I was raised not realizing any large differences from a pig to a goat to a cat.”
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More Responses

- Thinking back my learning of farm animals divided them into two categories...
 - ... those that we very casually ate at McDonalds ... and ...
 - Those we visited on farms and fed in petting zoos.
 - One oath, one medicine, one world ...
-

Our Cultural Heritage

- Most of us ...
 - geographically and politically removed from farm production
 - Many of us are thus often “knowledge-removed”
 - Result is that farmed animals are, for many people, in important ways “off the radar screen”
 - But what about today’s veterinarian?
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Veterinary Heritage

- Veterinary education tradition of exposure ...
 - ...utilitarian tradition at heart of veterinary medicine in the Euro-American cultural trajectory
 - But also a tradition of caring ...
 - Manifested mostly regarding companion animals ...
 - But many breeders and small producers are *very* close to their animals
 - What about food animals?
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Food Animals at Veterinary Centers

- Often “off the radar screen” at CFA
 - And in veterinary education this was sometimes true in peculiar ways ...
 - ...it was commonly asserted a decade ago in veterinary education circles, including some at Tufts, that “if an animal hits its target weight within the target time, there can by definition be no welfare problems”
 - Other, “ferment” views show up these days in JAVMA articles and letters
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...not an easy subject...

- Recall how vibrant the subject of food animals got when Kumar lectured
 - That phenomenon says much ...
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“Farmed Animals”

- Recall the request for a definition of “factory farming” in Oct 25 session when Kumar was answering questions ...
 - **Not a technical term** ...
 - Clearly does not cover all farms ...
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No Definition at ...

- Encyclopedia of Farm Animal Behavior



Issues Involved Reveal Some Tensions

- Inheritance of bucolic images and tradition of husbandry ... etymology
 - Today these bucolic realities do exist ... but, in a relative sense, they are rare
 - Something quite different prevails today ... →
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From Reading in “Farmed Animals and the Law Session” in Second-year Course

- From Matthew Scully’s *Dominion*
 - State court litigation heard in Warren County, New Jersey, in the fall of 2000
 - Poultry company, ISE America, convicted of cruelly discarding live chickens in trash cans.
 - Conviction appealed and overturned, partly on grounds that the producer had only six employees overseeing 1.2 million laying hens →
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New Jersey Criminal Case

- With each worker tending two hundred thousand creatures “it remained unproven they were aware of those particular birds dying in a trash can.”
 - “The company’s initial defense, offered to Judge Joseph Steinhardt by an attorney named Kevin M. Hahn, asserted outright that this is exactly what the birds were anyway—trash:”
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The Law Box

- **Mr. Hahn:** We contend, Your Honor, that clearly my client meets the requirements [of the law].
 - Clearly it's a commercial farm.
 - And clearly the handling of chickens, and how chickens are discarded, falls into agricultural management practices of my client.
 - And ... **we've litigated this issue before in this country with respect to my client and how it handles its manure**
-

New Jersey Criminal Case

- **The Court:** Isn't there a big distinction between manure and live animals?
 - **Mr. Hahn: No, Your Honor.** Because the Right to Farm Act protects us in the operation of our farm and all of the agricultural management practices employed by our firm.
 - **Translation**—the law doesn't protect the chickens' interests, but it does protect other interests ... which ones?
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Relevant History

- In 1980 only one percent of all cattle feedlots handled 32,000 head.
 - By 1991 nearly a third of all cattle feedlots in the United States contained at least 32,000 head.
 - The number of hog producers in the United States declined from 670,000 in 1980 to 256,000 in 1992.
 - Consider the relevance of this to the profession ...
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Relevant History

- As number of hog producers was dramatically declining from 1980 to 1992, **total number of hogs increased during that period**
 - Nearly 80 percent of hogs are raised in operations housing 1,000 animals or more.
 - Number of dairies milking 500 head or more almost doubled between 1974 and 1987, from 661 to 1,268. [Larry Frarey et al., *Livestock and the Environment: Watershed Solutions*, Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research, July 1994 at 13.]
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Some General Definitions of “Factory Farming”

- “large-scale, industrialized agriculture”
www.nrdc.org/reference/glossary/f.asp
 - From European Environment Information and Observation Network website:
 - The technique of capital intensive animal-raising in an artificial environment, used for chicken, egg, turkey, beef, veal and pork production. Animals are restrained in a controlled indoor environment and their food is brought to them. The buildings take on the appearance of industrial units.
-

Another Definition

- Factory farming is an informal reference to any intensive commercial form of agriculture that employs extreme growing techniques to produce the greatest output in the least space, usually with heavy use of agrichemicals and veterinary drugs. It originated with and most often refers to large-scale, industrialized, intensive rearing of livestock, poultry and fish...

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory_farming

What Is “Foie Gras”?

Trends of Industrialization

- As an idea, industrialized farming had its origins in England in the late 18th century
- Has rapidly spread through Western societies since the mid-1950s
- Increase around the world is chronicled in Daniel Nierenberg's Happier Meals : Rethinking the Global Meat Industry Worldwatch Institute, 2005
- Summary—application of industrial methods to food production have produced technologically advanced but highly unnatural conditions of confinement
- Amounts of money involved are staggering

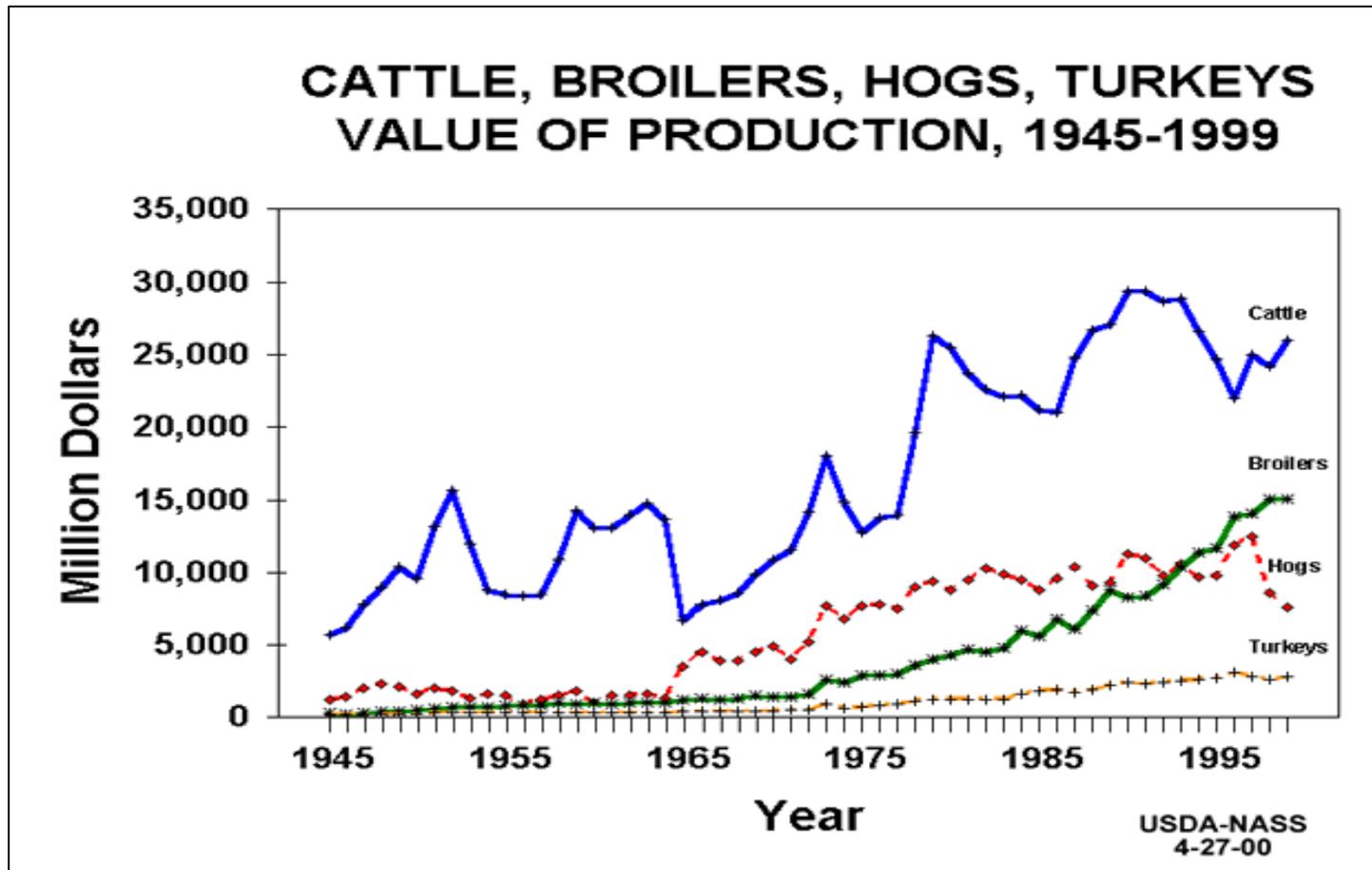
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Value of US Agriculture

- Biggest part of our economy - \$1.5T - 16% of GDP, 17% of civilian jobs, 8% of exports
 - Total value of agriculture is about \$200 billion in farm gate receipts (half from animals)
 - US is largest agricultural products exporter in world (\$50 billion)
 - 15% of market share
 - Cheap food policy in US
 - 11 cents of the disposable dollar spent on food in the US
 - Up to 50% in many countries
-

Livestock Value –

Cattle are the most valuable of commodities



U.S. Agricultural Trade - Exports balance with imports for the first time since the late 1950s



Source: USDA

Imported Food

- One-third of our fresh fruit
 - Over half our seafood
 - Approximately 5 million shipments of imported food enter through more than 300 ports of entry
 - Only 27,550 (1/2 %) were inspected in 2002
 - Note how ripe many will be for arguments that US should produce more of its food domestically
 - What role for the profession?
-

Coming Back to “Factory Farms”

- If this notion dominates discussion, it is a disservice to the smaller farms that continue to be an important part of production and our culture
 - Defining “factory farm” carefully ...
-

Federal Definition of CAFO

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines these large animal factories as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO).
 - To be termed such, the facility must: “**stable, confine, and feed or maintain animals for a total of 45 days or more in any 12 month period; and, not sustain crops, vegetation forage growth, or post-harvest residues in normal growing season over any portion of the facility.**” [Source: United States, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Guide Manual on NPDES Regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations 4 (1995).]
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Ethical Concerns About Industrialized Techniques

- Much more evident in the last decade
 - E.g., ethics and environmental journals
 - Jensen, Karsten Klint, and Jan Tind Sorenson, 1999. 'The Idea of "Ethical Accounting" for a Livestock Farm', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 11: 85-100, 1999
 - Behavioral problems caused by restricted conditions
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Ethical Concerns About Industrialized Techniques

- Production related diseases
 - Effect of waste on the environment
 - Consequences of routine use of pesticides, medicine, hormones, and other chemicals in production
 - Govt. regulations now appearing to respond to these problems, and social general concerns arising out of the obvious problems.
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Increasingly Impassioned Challenges

- Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* 2006, 68
 - CAFOs as “biological absurdity”
 - Wendell Berry – two problems created from dividing up integrated farms
 - Waste handling now needed, when once ...integrated farms used manure for fertilizing soil
 - Fertilizer now needs to be imported onto farm, and the source is oil (scarce, politically charged commodity)
-

Where does all of this put today's veterinary medicine?

- One response ... JAVMA offers wide range of views from the profession
 - Animal Welfare Forum
 - Letters and articles
-

Busy Continuum Between Two Poles

- Veterinary medicine's one side ... production animals—historically very important
 - But the other side ... the healing side
 - Mission Statement of the Center for Animals:
“Work conducted by the Center is based on the tenet that **animals matter in and of themselves....**”
 - Realities are always nearby ...
 - “Farmed animals” are on campus ... →
-

... how to understand?

- Chinese proverb
 - Tell me and I'll forget.
 - Show me and I may remember.
 - Involve me and I'll understand.
 - →
 - Each side of polarized debate makes the same argument...
 - ...get involved in order to talk about farming ...
-

Getting Offshore—McLibel

- Justice Bell in McLibel case re arguments made by industry...
 - ...state laws now grant to industry the power to determine what is cruel:
 - [The argument was presented that] any practice which accorded with the norm in modern farming or slaughter practices was thereby acceptable and not to be criticized as cruel. I cannot accept this approach....→
 - To do so would be to hand the decision as to what is cruel to the food industry completely, moved as it must be by economic as well as animal welfare considerations.”
-

Humane Slaughter Act and Its Implications

- Implications – law on the books
 - Implications – lack of enforcement issues
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Trying to See the Future

- What will veterinary medicine's stance on "farm animals" be in the future ...

