Animal Ethics and Public Expectations

The North American Outlook

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The Animal Ethics Issue Hopper

How do we understand the ethics of animal welfare given these assumptions?

Ethical treatment of livestock
1. We will be raising livestock on a large scale...
2. We must keep consumer costs reasonably low.
Animal Ethics

Cognitive Measures: Pain, Suffering, Experiential Frustration or Satisfaction

Species Typical Behaviors: Nesting, Wing Flapping, Dust Bathing, Perching

Standard Veterinary Health Measures: Mortality, Morbidity, Growth and Development

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Animal Ethics

Cognitive Measures: Pain, Suffering, Experiential Frustration or Satisfaction

Species Typical Behaviors: Nesting, Wing Flapping, Dust Bathing, Perching

The Philosophical Problem: How to understand animal natures?

Option 1: Species typical behaviors are important to the extent that they effect cognitive or veterinary well-being

Option 2: Species typical behaviors are constitutive of well-being.

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The Case for Option 1

When frustration or curtailment of natural behavior affects health or thwarts a felt need, it is clear that a welfare interest of the animal so affected has been compromised.

But a given animal may or may not actually experience a felt need (or health affect), especially when breeding has altered and instinctual drive.

In such cases no interest would be served (and other interests may be harmed) by emphasizing animal natures.
The Case for Option 2

Behaviors typical of a species represent capabilities that are functional for individuals of that species, at least under historical, evolutionary conditions.

To deprive a particular individual (or a breed) of a capability that is functional for typical individuals of that species is to harm that individual.

Livestock producers should aspire to raise animals capable of expressing all behaviors typical of an animal’s nature. To do less is to compromise welfare.

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Strategies for relieving stress or adverse impact on livestock that use genetics to
a) reduce sensory capacity;
  b) eliminate or moderate behavioral drives;
  c) alter species-typical behavior.
There's a strain of chickens that are blind, and this was not produced through biotechnology. It was actually an accident that got developed into a particular strain of chickens. Now blind chickens, it turns out, don't mind being crowded together so much as normal chickens do. And so one suggestion is that, `Well, we ought to shift over to all blind chickens as a solution to our animal welfare problems that are associated with crowding in the poultry industry.' Is this permissible on animal welfare grounds? Here, we have what I think is a real philosophical conundrum. If you think that it's the welfare of the individual animal that really matters here, how the animals are doing, then it would be more humane to have these blind chickens. On the other hand, almost everybody that you ask thinks this is an absolutely horrendous thing to do.

Blind Chicken Strategies....

• in order to:
• Eliminate harmful behaviors or
• curtail stress

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...but what do blind chicken strategies do for animal natures?

- reduce sensory capacity;
- eliminate behavioral drives;
- alter species-typical behavior.
An individual animal that has no need to perform a species-typical behavior (like seeing) would not be frustrated by living in an environment where the behavior need not be performed. Needs are important to the extent that an individual actually experiences these needs.

- Reduce sensory capacity;
- Eliminate behavioral drives;
- Alter species-typical behavior.

If eyes do not help an animal cope with its environment, simply having sight does not contribute to welfare.
Possible Ethical Problems with Blind Chickens: Welfare Specification

• Reduce sensory capacity;
• Eliminate behavioral drives;
• Alter species-typical behavior.

Option 2
Possession of species-typical genetic drives and behavioral abilities is a fundamental component of animal natures.

Animals that lack such drives and abilities are "worse off" than con-specifies that have them.
• Implication: The conundrum. What seems right is something no one accepts as right.

Option 1
Need for movement and expressing genetic drives are important to the extent that an individual actually experiences these needs.

Option 2
Possession of species-typical genetic drives and behavioral abilities is a fundamental component of animal natures.

• Implication: One seems willing to endorse a situation where animals suffer over one where they do not (or suffer less).
Animal Ethics

Cognitive Measures: Pain, Suffering, Experiential Frustration or Satisfaction

Option 1: Species typical behaviors are important to the extent that they effect cognitive or veterinary well-being

Species Typical Behaviors: Nesting, Wing Flapping, Dust Bathing, Perching

The Practical Problem: The philosophical problem makes a difference to how you approach industry standards

Option 2: Species typical behaviors are constitutive of well-being.

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Current strategies in Animal Welfare Standards

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Consumer Preferences for Farm Animal Welfare: Results from a Telephone Survey of U.S. Households

Forthcoming in Animal Welfare

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Naturalists
Basic Wefarists
Price Seekers

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Value allowing animals to exhibit normal behaviors and exercise outdoors far more than individuals in the other two classes. These consumers view animals more akin to their wild counterparts, in that little management is needed to ensure animal well-being other than allowing animals to act naturally.

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Forthcoming in *Animal Welfare*

Authors:

Members of this class will quickly sacrifice farm animal amenities such as comfortable bedding and access to outdoors in return for lower food prices.

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Forthcoming in Animal Welfare

According to Basic Welfarists, as long as animals are fed, watered, and kept alive, little else is of importance.

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Forthcoming in Animal Welfare

According to Basic Welfarists, as long as animals are fed, watered, and kept alive, little else is of importance.

Compared to Naturalists, Basic Welfarists have a much shorter list of animals’ needs, but like the Naturalists, will pay higher prices to ensure these needs are met.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Naturalists</th>
<th>Price Seekers</th>
<th>Basic Welfarists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Ample Food &amp; Water</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>31.39%</td>
<td>42.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed to Exhibit Normal Behaviors</td>
<td>19.27%</td>
<td>7.54%</td>
<td>1.65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowed Outdoor Exercise</td>
<td>9.79%</td>
<td>4.96%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed to Socialize with Other Animals</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in a Way to Keep Food Prices Low</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
<td>22.23%</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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U.S. Distribution of Membership in Each of the Three Classes

- Naturalists: 46%
- Price Seekers: 14%
- Basic Welfarists: 40%

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Why Using Genetics to Address Problems in Animal Welfare May Not be a Good Idea

54% of total

A 46% plurality who see natural behaviors as an important component of welfare
Animal Ethics: The Public Mind

- **Basic Welfarists:** Experience of pain, satisfaction, frustration & contentment.
- **Naturalists:** The kind of life that animals would lead in nature is the moral norm.
- **Price Seekers:** Only minimal levels of physical well-being matter.

Research by Pritchard, Norwood and Lusk, Oklahoma State U.

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