

Animal rights

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Dr. Fox said he feels it is inhumane to deprive an animal of its natural needs just as it is inhumane to inflict unnecessary pain. Therefore, many accepted drug testing methods also come under question by the group.

Fox said he feels all farm and laboratory animals should be given five basic rights: 1. the freedom to be able to get up easily; 2. to lie down; 3. to turn around; 4. to stretch and 5. to groom.

He has been quoted as saying social animals should have some kind of social interaction.

"What rights does a veal calf have? Veal calves have eyes and legs, therefore they should have light to see by and sufficient freedom to move."

What does all this mean to the producers?

It could mean a drastic change in production practices costing a great deal of time and money. It could also mean more labor.

According to Dr. Robert W. Berg, an animal science professor with the University of Minnesota, "Animal welfare could become a challenging issue in the 1980s. Poultry producers must be aware of active groups which believe producers are ignoring animal welfare."

"Producers should make every effort to improve the living conditions of their flocks, and improvements should be made as much for the well-being of their flocks as for any other reason," he said in the February issue of *Gobbles*, a magazine for poultrymen.

"Producers should correct unquestionable conditions without outside force. It should not be necessary for an outside group to come in and set standards," he continued.

Schwindaman claims there will be increasing pressure on Congress to recognize animal rights, and said he feels Congress probably will give in to the welfarists.

He added, "All this controversy doesn't mean there will be legislation, but the potential is definitely there."

And the pressure on Congress may have already begun in the form of a 20 minute special on ABC's 20-20 news program, dealing entirely with the humanist's side for animal rights, according to the poultry speaker.

"The behavioral aspect of animal welfare is coming on very strongly. Society is not going to let us think only of biological aspects any more," Schwindaman said.

He points out that what may seem normal to an onlooker may actually be stress for the animal.

While we may perceive a placid animal, the animal could in actuality be putting off hormones indicative of stress in attempt to adapt to its environment.

So, according to animal rights enthusiasts, there is a vast difference between physiology and behavior that must be studied.

Schwindaman said the movement probably will be advertised on the emotional level. "The image being portrayed is that you're (producers) only interested in economics, not welfare."

And if you think, after all this, that the issue is going to involve only farmers and humanists, guess again.

Veterinarians find they also must take stands.

According to Dr. Ray Thompson, executive director of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association, animal rights is indeed an issue with which they must deal.

In fact, in the August issue of the PVMA's newsletter, a member, Dr. S.W. Ostrich was quoted as saying, "We are about to be faced with what very well may be the greatest upheaval in animal science of this century."

"We as veterinarians - both individually and collectively - may have to stand up to be counted; for I see in the future two great forces 1. American agriculture and medical research which we have been traditionally a part



Dr. Schwindaman speaks to poultry servicemen about the growing issue of animal rights and the impact it will have on the poultry industry.

of since founding of American veterinary medicine, coming into political and cultural conflict with, 2. the American humane movement, to which we are morally bound. Therefore, we who have been given the privilege of caring for the medical needs of animals may soon be asked: 'Which side are we on?'

"This is a dilemma to be sure. Certainly no one, especially veterinarians, would wantingly turn their backs on the needless suffering of subjective thinking animals - but on the other hand, are any of us ready to subject American agriculture and American medical research to rules that would cause such a tremendous economic upheaval in those industries as to have irrevocable repercussions, i.e., are any of us ready to become vegetarians?"

"I would suggest that a committee be formed and funded to study, contact, and guide both Agriculture and the Humane Movement. Let us, the organized veterinary profession become leaders and initiators and not sit on the sidelines and accept that which may be forced upon us," he wrote.

Dr. Ostrich's recommendation was considered by the Board of Trustees of the PVMA in May and was approved unanimously.

The PVMA requested that the American Veterinary Medical Association establish such a committee. The PVMA reports that it has appointed an ad hoc committee from its Executive Board to study and make recommendations concerning the appointment of a standing committee and the charge to be made to that committee.

The ironic part of all this controversy is that the animal rights movement seems to be coming at a time when our technology has finally allowed a more plentiful, affordable and speedy supply of food in the market. Technology has increased animal productiveness and decreased labor and production costs significantly.

So the argument remains that the supporters of this questionable act could be doing no more than hurting themselves in their attempts to give the animals their own rights.

What's also ironic is that socially it could be very embarrassing for someone who is not a farmer or producer to not support this movement. Thus the program will virtually engulf everyone who is not actually involved in animal agriculture.

One need only look at the history of animal rights to see that considerable legislative concern has been voiced in the past few years.

In 1873 the government passed the first 28 Hour law; in 1891 the Safe Transport and Humane Treatment; and in 1906 the new 28 Hour law, which was USDA enforced on animals moved by water and rail. And then a jump to 1958 with five acts in the past 20 years. 1958 - Humane Slaughter Act; 1966 - Laboratory Animal Welfare Act, includes animals moved by any mode of transport; 1969 - Endangered Species Act; 1970 - Horse Protection Act; Animal Welfare Act of 1970.

Precedent has been set in law to recognize that animals have rights. But a producer's argument might be that people give human feelings and freedoms to subhuman animals. After all, how far are we going to extend these rights? And who has the clout to speak for the animals?



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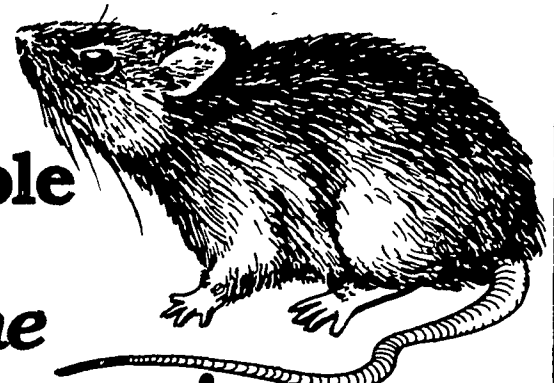
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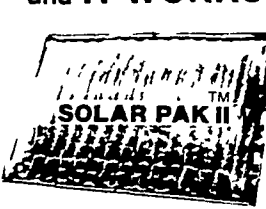
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