

Animal Welfare Movement Gaining Momentum

BY

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SHIPPENSBURG — "The animal welfare movement is a force to be reckoned with. It's going to have an impact on what you do and how you do it," Dr. Kenneth Kephart told pork producers at the Adams/Franklin/Cumberland Pork Producer's meeting. "Ten to twenty years from now there will be changes on farms because of animal welfare issues. The magnitude of those changes depends on how well we can educate consumers," he added.

Kephart, Pennsylvania State University Swine Specialist, spoke to about 40 farmers at the Memorial Lutheran Church February 8.

He differentiated between animal rights issues and animal welfare issues. Animal rights supporters oppose the use of animals for profit, for food and for biomedical research. Supporters of animal welfare issues oppose cages for laying hens, stalls for veal calves, farrowing crates, gestation stalls, tethers for sows, lack of bedding, and the lack of anesthesia during such procedures as clipping teeth, notching ear, and castration.

"Some pork producers themselves don't believe in using farrowing crates, either," Kephart said. "But they won't try to change what YOU do."

According to Kephart, many consumers think that high-

intensity, high-technology science is bad when it concerns the food industry. They have a picture in their minds of a storybook, Old MacDonald type of farm, and think farmers make a living that way.

Animal welfarists have made more inroads in farm procedures in European countries than they have in America. In Britain, for example, calves over two weeks of age must have solid food, and anesthesia must be used when castrating pigs and goats over two months of age, and bulls and rams over three months. In Sweden, no tethers may be used for sows, poultry farmers must phase out cages for hens within ten years, and all new technology is subject to testing before approval. "The Swedish public thought this law didn't go far enough," Kephart said. "These are the kinds of things that will come here."

Kephart also mentioned that a researcher at Cornell University recently forfeited a \$530,000 grant for research on drug abuse because of pressure from animal welfare supporters.

In September 1988, there were seventeen animal welfare bills pending. Among them were bills that would eliminate veal confinement, allow an individual to sue the United States Department of Agriculture for enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, and regulate all farm animal research and all shows involving farm animals.

Press coverage has been heavy,

Kephart said. On February 2, Animal Rights were featured on CBS's "48 Hours" program, and the December 26 cover story of Newsweek magazine concerned animals in bio-medical research.

In the recent election, Proposition 3 on the ballot in Massachusetts called for the humane treatment of farm animals, regulations concerning transportation, housing and processing of animals, fines of \$1,000 for violations, and allocations of up to ten cents per citizen to help producers change production practices to conform to the new guidelines.

"That's about \$500,000 a year," Kephart said of the allocations. "You're not going to change very many farrowing houses for that."

Proposition 3 was defeated by what Kephart called "a miracle." Farmers united under the name Save Our Family Farm and educated voters through displays at fairs, fliers, letters to Congressmen, interviews with the press, talks to civic groups, radio talks and debates.

"They explained to consumers what was REALLY going on," Kephart said. "They did a super job in getting the word out."

Kephart also profiled the typical CEASE (Coalition to End Animal Suffering and Exploitation) member. "He is devoted to the cause, well-educated — often

with a Master's degree — and will not compromise. His vision of the farm is unrealistic, and he has no background in how agricultural economics work."

CEASE members are calling for the creation of a five member advisory board, which would consist of four animal welfarists and the head of the Division of Animal Welfare. This board would make recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture, who would be responsible for the enforcement of regulations, and who could be sued in the event of violations.

Kephart detailed several things farmers and other interested persons could do to help alleviate some of the pressure from animal welfarists.

1. Learn to measure stress in a pig. "Unlike some animals, a pig adapts to stress and will still produce for you under stress. Don't just measure her performance; do blood testing," he advised.

2. More research should be done on facilities and animal behavior.

3. Explore potential alternatives.

4. Project the cost of policy changes.

5. Examine your own management.

6. Maintain a good relationship with non-farm citizens.

7. Maintain a good relationship with your legislators.

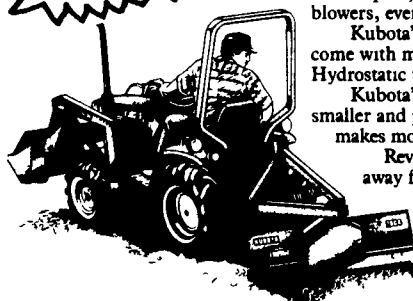
8. Be unified.

9. Build consumer confidence.



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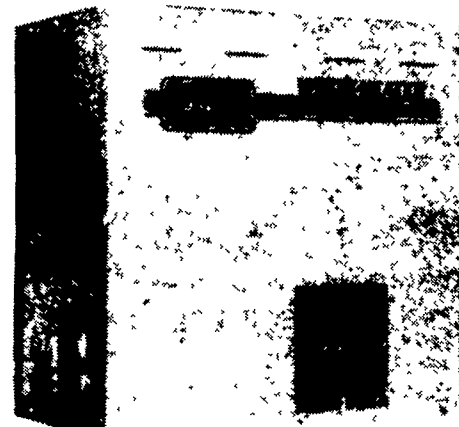
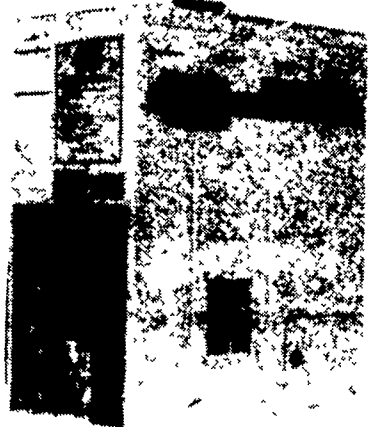
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