

Animal Liberation

By Peter Singer

Please focus on Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6

Questions to answer ahead of class

By way of background, describe the essence of the utilitarian view (Utilitarianism is not a presupposition of Animal Liberation). Discuss the terms: Equality, Interests, and Rights related to humans and animals. Considering the below topics, (1) describe one in which you have first-hand knowledge and (2) indicate if what Singer wrote is accurate or not (in fact).

- a. Broilers
- b. Laying hens
- c. Pigs and sows
- d. Feedlot cattle
- e. Dairy cattle
- f. Veal calves

Question for discussion on class day

1. Is it necessary to afford farm animals rights in order to accept the principle of equality of interests and a need to not eat meat?
2. If we have a production system where most animals are happy and live a positive life, but a few are suffering (lameness, injury, genetic defects, etc.) should the whole system be condemned? Does the pleasure of the masses off-set the pain of a few?
3. Environmental enrichment (toys, play objects) are now "required" for lab animals and some farm animals. Do we have an obligation to provide pleasure to animals? To humans? Do our social welfare programs for humans provide for people's basic needs, or more than that?
4. If one has a certain moral or ethical view, is it required to put that ethical view into action in ways that may affect others, or should your ethical views just apply to your life? (this implies that others are entitled to live according to their own ethical standards; note, we legislate abortion rights to women even if many people strongly disagree)
5. The utilitarian view, in part, suggests that we ought to maximize pleasure and minimize pain in the world. This is a cost-benefit analysis of sorts. Our minimal pleasure associated with eating meat would not be off-set by animals suffering (experiencing a sort of pain) in order to accommodate our tastes. What if we could raise animals in a stress-free environment that gives them regular pleasure and then kill them painlessly? In this case:
 - a. Would it be OK to eat meat?
 - b. Would we want to have as many animals as possible experiencing a positive life so we can enhance the numbers of positive experiences in the world?