

Animal rights : why should it concern me? / People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Contributors

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

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WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many things you can do to help the billions of animals used each year in food production, clothing, experiments and entertainment. You can start with your kitchen, bathroom and wardrobe.

- By avoiding meat, eggs and dairy products, you can save hundreds of animals. You can also help move the market away from animal experiments by purchasing cosmetics and household products that have not been tested on animals.
- Next, clear your cupboards of fur and leather garments. PETA uses donated fur coats in displays for our fur education campaign.
- Don't visit circuses, zoos or other forms of 'entertainment' that keep animals in chains and otherwise exploit them.
- Become a volunteer for animal rights! Letter-writing campaigns, fund-raising and demonstrations at local hamburger restaurants or fur shops are just a few of the things you can do, working solo or with friends, to help others learn how to help stop animal suffering. Contact us for more ideas.

MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

I've attached my contribution of:

£10 £15 £25 £50 Other £ _____

(Donate £10 or more and receive six free issues of *Animal Times*.)

I'm already a PETA member. This is an extra donation.

Send the completed form with your cheque to:

PETA PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS
P.O. Box 3169, London, NW6 2QF
071-372 0459

Thank you from all of us here at PETA.

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ANIMAL RIGHTS

WHY SHOULD IT CONCERN ME ?





"Aren't humans more important than animals?"

In fact, humans are animals, though we call the others "animals" in order to separate ourselves from them so that we will feel less uncomfortable exploiting them. Much as slave owners convinced themselves that black people did not have the same physical and emotional feelings as white

people, we have reduced other-than-human beings to virtual automatons, incapable of thinking or experiencing pain, love, joy, sadness or other emotions.

René Descartes, an 18th century philosopher, believed that the sounds dogs made when he cut into them were no different from or more important than the noises made by machines. He did not recognise dogs as sentient beings. Until very recently, it was common for physicians to perform major surgery without anaesthesia on newborn and premature infants, but pediatricians and others now question this practice. Similarly, many animal experimenters have abandoned this old-fashioned perspective to speak out against vivisection.



"Aren't animals here for people to use?"



Like us, the other animals are valuable in and of themselves, not merely as commodities to be hunted or killed for casseroles and coats or used as living toys and test tubes. Each animal is an individual whose life is as dear to him or her as ours is to us. We have no right to take the life of a fox for her coat, or a pig for his flesh, simply

because our taste calls for it. Just as we would balk at testing drugs on unwilling human subjects, we must protest at the use of rats, rabbits and chimpanzees for similar purposes. These animals are as capable of suffering physical pain and psychological anguish as a human being. Our exploitation of other species for our own profit is as reprehensible as the exploitation of people of another race or sex.

"What kinds of experiments are performed?"

Worldwide hundreds of millions of animals are subjected every year to experiments that blind, poison, mutilate, shock and burn them. Some tests last for hours at a time or continue over several days or years.



Chimpanzees are kept for their lifetimes in AIDS and hepatitis studies; other primates languish in restraining devices for months. Small mammals used in product safety tests are force-fed toxic substances or have them dripped into their eyes. Dogs and cats discarded by their human companions may end up in vivisection labs.



"What can researchers use besides animals?"

Many alternatives to animal experiments exist, including clinical and epidemiological studies, cell and tissue cultures, mathematical, computer and mechanical models and audiovisual guides. Human patients with cancer, AIDS and other illnesses are often refused opportunities to try experimental treatments that offer some chance of success, and healthy volunteers are eager to participate in behavioural studies. The animals, however, have no choice, and anything can be (and is) done to them.



"Do animal experiments save lives?"

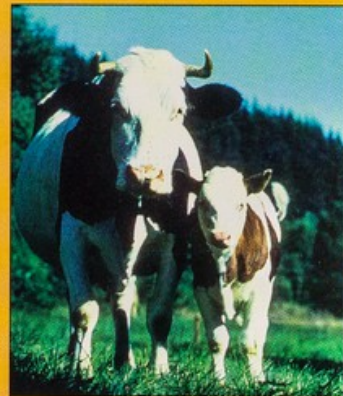
In countless cases animal experiments hurt, rather than help us. For example, potentially harmful chemicals are often kept on the market because animal test results are inconclusive. Substances that were tested on animals and determined "safe" have caused dangerous side effects when administered to human patients. While millions of animals die and billions are spent every year to confine them and make them sick, many people with crippling illnesses are unable to obtain adequate health care, drug and alcohol addiction treatment centres must turn away addicts for lack of funds and basic health care funding has been slashed to the bone.

"What's wrong with eating meat?"

The neatly wrapped packages in the meat case at the grocery store contain the body parts of animals who were raised in cramped quarters, unable to ever stretch a wing or take a few steps. They suffer from injuries and disease caused by overcrowding. By the time these animals reach the shops, more



cows, pigs and chickens are being installed, like machines, on factory farms. They will continue through the macabre cycle that produces and kills 850 million animals a year in the UK. Although comparable in intelligence to dogs and other animals we keep as companions, these animals are never given the chance to play, to enjoy the sunshine or develop a loving, natural relationship with others of their own kind. They never hear a warm word or feel a sensitive hand. With their needs and instincts thwarted and their lives cut short, animals raised for food are denied their right to live happily, for no better reason than our ugly habit (a taste for flesh) or desire for profit.



"What about nutrition?"

All meat, eggs and dairy products contain high concentrations of saturated fat and cholesterol, which have been irrefutably linked to heart disease, cancer and stroke, the three leading killers. Because animals raised on factory farms live in such unhealthy conditions, their feed, which often contains such cheap filler as cement dust, shredded newspaper and recycled animal wastes is heavily laced with antibiotics, pesticides and hormones, the residues of which collect in the meat and are passed on to consumers. A vegetarian diet provides all the fibre and nutrition a person needs, without the ill effects of meat.

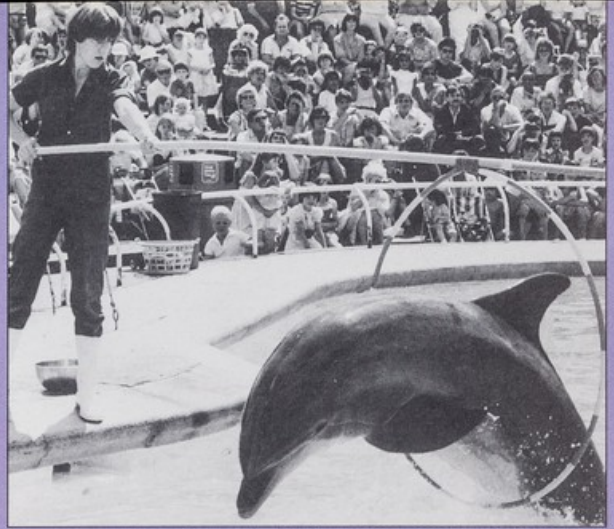
"Is animal rights good for the environment?"



Shockingly, the most devastating damage done to our planet stems from the production of meat and dairy products. Animal agriculture is very energy intensive. For example, animal farming is the UK's largest water user – 35 billion gallons each year. It takes 2,500 gallons of water to produce a pound of meat, but only 25 gallons to produce a pound of wheat, and a single chicken processing plant may consume 100 million gallons

of water daily. An animal-free diet saves trees, too – an acre a year for each vegetarian. Animal grazing causes soil erosion and desertification and drains the earth's water reserves from aquifers.

Other forms of animal exploitation also wreak havoc on the earth. Hunting, trapping and 'sport' fishing disturb wildlife habitats with the presence of cars, equipment and dogs and upset the balance of animal populations by



killing the largest, strongest and healthiest animals rather than those who are weak, old or sick, as nature would. Commercial fishing industries dump tons of plastic netting and rubbish into the oceans, polluting the waters and strangling and poisoning birds, fishes and marine mammals.

The capture of marine mammals for amusement parks and aquariums, of exotic birds for sale in pet shops, or of elephants and primates for zoos, circuses and research facilities tears animal families apart as well as their niches in nature. The animals who survive the harrowing journey to their final destination spend the rest of their lives in captivity, in conditions bearing little resemblance to the open spaces and infinite variety they are accustomed to.

