

# Bioethics Symposium: Should Animal Welfare be Law or Market Driven?

**606 Bioethics symposium introduction: Should animal welfare be law or market driven?** C. C. Croney\*, *The Ohio State University, Columbus.*

In recent years, concern about the welfare of food producing animals has provided the impetus for greater regulation of US animal production practices and policies. Annual polls conducted within the United States indicate strong and consistent public support for such regulation. Intensive confinement of animals, relief of animal pain, humane handling of animals and timely and appropriate euthanasia remain high on the list of concerns articulated by consumers, animal activists, scientists and other key stakeholders. Consequently, the rate of passage of state legislation of farm animal production has escalated. Concurrently, most food retailers have adopted some form of animal welfare assurance scheme and audit program to meet consumer expectations relative to animal welfare. Despite these efforts, frequent undercover exposés depicting treatment of farm animals that is socially unacceptable or questionable, and occasionally, clearly abusive suggest some need for greater regulation. However, hastily regulating farm animal welfare may have unforeseen consequences, including negative implications for animal producers, food prices, concerned citizens and the animals themselves, and these should also be considered. All of this suggests the need for thoughtful debate about whether protection of farm animal welfare in the US should be legislated, voluntarily regulated by the animal industries, or driven simply by market demands.

**Key Words:** ethics, regulation, animal production

**607 Should we legislate farm animal welfare?** J. C. Swanson\*, *Michigan State University, East Lansing.*

In the last 5 years successful state citizen initiatives and legislation has created a patchwork of farm animal welfare regulation across the United States. Consequently, some states have responded with defensive measures such as creating state livestock care boards or advisory councils charged with promulgating standards for the care of livestock and poultry within the state. Although recent citizen initiatives and state bills begin with similar themes, during the legislative process deals are struck and the enacted laws often differ. Implementation periods, minimum space requirements, and noncompliance penalties are negotiated areas that create subtle yet important differences. Similar issues could erupt between state livestock care boards. As more states opt to regulate, it will eventually force a discussion about the federal regulation of farm animal care. This presentation will explore whether farm animal welfare ought to be legislated.

**Key Words:** animal welfare, legislation, regulation

**608 Impact of slaughter bans on horse welfare.** D. L. Gies\*, *Animal Assistance Foundation, Denver, CO.*

This session will provide attendees with an historical perspective of horse slaughter in the United States and the effects of slaughterhouse closures on horse welfare from both a scientific and non-scientific perspective. It will provide up-to-date information on the status and detail of the competing horse slaughter legislation and will discuss the ongoing efforts of the horse community to measure horse welfare. Many animal and horse welfare organizations have raised concerns for years about the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Specifically, groups stated that the horse slaughter process was inhumane, that horses should not be processed for human consumption and that horses should not be

slaughtered in the U.S. for export. In 2007, the three equine slaughter plants operating in the U.S., located in Illinois and Texas, closed following state legislation that banned the slaughter of horses for human consumption. In their final year of operation, these plants processed 102,260 horses. Since 2007, questions have been raised about whether the closure of the slaughter plants has in fact improved horse welfare. In 2009, there were an estimated 170,000 unwanted horses. Approximately 100,000 of these horses were exported to Mexico or Canada for slaughter in plants not regulated by USDA inspectors.

Currently there is no federal legislation banning domestic horse slaughter for human consumption. However, USDA inspectors are prohibited from inspecting horse meat slaughtered in U.S. plants for human consumption, effectively barring horse slaughter plants from operating. As a result, a national debate regarding horse slaughter continues. The proposed Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act seeks to ban horse slaughter in the U.S. and the export of horses for slaughter. A competing bill, the proposed Humane and Optimal Restoration and Sustainability of Equines Act (HORSE), seeks to reopen slaughter plants within the U.S. by removing the regulatory roadblocks to USDA inspection of horse meat.

**Key Words:** horse, slaughter, welfare

**609 Should animal welfare be law or market based?** B. Rollin\*, *Colorado State University, Fort Collins.*

Between 1976 and 1985, a group of people at Colorado State University engaged the task of writing federal animal welfare legislation for research animals. Between us we had over 50 years of experience in animal research. We were particularly concerned about the lack of knowledge of analgesia and pain control in research. Not only was there virtually no use of pain management in invasive research protocols, there was not even literature on the subject. Yet the knowledge existed in the research community that the failure to control pain and distress skewed key variables being studied. In other words, pain control should have been a matter of rational self-interest, assuring that one's results in experimentation were as accurate as they could be. Even self-interest could not override widespread ideological agnosticism about animal pain and consciousness rife in the scientific community, nor could it override ignoring ethical questions occasion by animal research. When we did successfully legislate pain control for research animals in 1985, both knowledge and use of analgesia in research proliferated. From a total absence of papers on pain control in animals in 1982, there now exists an estimated 10,000 such papers. In other words, legislation was essential to incorporating into animal research what should have been ethically presuppositional to its activities. If self-interest did not lead researchers to control pain, it is clear that market options would have done so. Fulfilling one's ethical obligation attendant upon using animals for human benefit should not be a matter of choice of the sort that market options provide. The animal agricultural industry knows full well that the public often chooses the cheaper product even when expressing a commitment to animal welfare or environment friendly products. This does not prove the weakness of these commitments, it rather shows what ancient Stoic philosophers call *akrasia*, or weakness of the will. That is why repeated polls have demonstrated that fully 75% wish to see farm animal welfare encoded in legislation. Honoring basic moral obligations should not be left to market choices, but should be presuppositional to such choices.

**Key Words:** pain, research animal law, market

**610 Should euthanasia and pain management be mandatory? Veterinary viewpoint.** G. C. Golab\*, *American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, IL.*

The AVMA believes animal pain and suffering are clinically important conditions adversely affecting quality of life, and encourages veterinarians to make every attempt to prevent and alleviate pain in animals. Because animals vary considerably in their response to stimuli, preventive and therapeutic strategies for managing pain must be tailored to individuals. Pain management protocols must be flexible and allow professional judgment in their application.

Considerations in managing pain include species, type/breed, age, procedure performed, extent of tissue trauma, behaviors, degree of pain, health status, and availability of techniques and pharmaceuticals. Pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches should be considered. Pharmacologic approaches include appropriate selection and use of sedatives/tranquilizers, anesthetics, and analgesics. Consideration should be given to multimodal approaches, as these may improve analgesia, allow reductions in dose of drugs, and minimize adverse effects. Nonpharmacologic approaches include nutritional support, good husbandry practices, and positive owner interactions. It may not be possible (or desirable) to completely avoid or eliminate pain in animals. In such cases, veterinarians should pursue strategies that improve an animal's ability to cope with pain, allow the animal to engage in as many normal activities as possible (e.g., eating, sleeping, ambulating, socializing with conspecifics and/or people), and avoid suffering. When suffering cannot be avoided, and resolution of the condition leading to suffering is unlikely, euthanasia should be considered. Delaying euthanasia, when euthanasia is the appropriate choice, is unacceptable in terms of risks to animal well being and human ethical responsibilities. Euthanasia is the act of inducing humane death. Veterinarians have a responsibility to ensure that if an animal's life is taken, it is done with the greatest degree of respect and with an emphasis on making its death as pain-

and distress-free as possible. Euthanasia techniques should result in rapid loss of consciousness, followed by cardiac or respiratory arrest and the ultimate loss of brain function.

**Key Words:** pain management, euthanasia

**611 Consumer preferences for market and regulatory responses to farm animal welfare concerns.** F. B. Norwood\* and J. L. Lusk, *Oklahoma State University, Stillwater.*

Consumers can pursue changes in how farm animals are raised by purchasing products differentiated by the level of animal welfare provided, or by seeking regulations forcing farmers to adopt certain production practices. The desirability of market or regulatory responses depends on the extent to which animal welfare is considered a private or public good. The greater extent to which people care about the animals producing other peoples' food, the more animal welfare resembles a public instead of a private good. Consumer experiments were conducted to measure the private and public good component of livestock welfare. Over 300 individuals from 3 cities were educated about the farm animal welfare issue, and were presented with 4 different systems for producing pork and eggs. These individuals then submitted bids in a real auction to measure the extent to which they will pay premiums for animal-friendly pork and eggs. The auctions were specifically designed to measure welfare concerns for the animals producing their personal food and the animals producing other peoples' food. The results suggest that approximately one-third of Americans do not value welfare improvements, many consumers possess a relatively high value on the private good component of animal welfare, but that the public good component for the average American is small. The results suggest markets may address animal welfare concerns better than regulations.

**Key Words:** consumer experiments, consumer preferences, farm animal welfare