

Bioethics Symposium II: Is Modern Animal Agriculture Ethically Defensible?

176 The food morality movement: The race to the moral high ground. K. Murphy*, *Food-Chain Communications LLC, Lees Summit, MO.*

Many critics of modern, intensive farming and food production have shifted their criticism to one based upon questions of religion, ethics and morality. We term this “the food morality movement” (FMM). The FMM often employs the language of science, food-safety, environmental impact and socio-economics to entice the general public into debate regarding ethical questions involving social justice, environmental justice, economic equality, animal rights, and others. Animal scientists and others who must respond to FMM-based criticism must adapt their response to incorporate several elements of a morality-focused defense, including reclaiming the farmer’s moral heritage, relearning communication strategies based on morality, avoiding internecine strife caused by misunderstanding of FMM motives, and shedding lingering guilt based on moral uncertainty. The modern food system needs an agricultural apology to answer the FMM in the race to the moral high ground.

Key Words: food morality movement, modern food system, animal science

177 Consumer perception of production process attributes for pork and lunchmeat products. M. G. S. McKendree*, N. J. O. Widmar, and C. C. Croney, *Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.*

Livestock producers are facing a changing marketplace. Consumers are increasingly focused on the practices used to produce their food and are especially interested in the treatment of livestock. An online survey of 798 US consumers was conducted in June 2012. One objective of this study was to determine consumer purchasing patterns of meat and dairy products, and perceptions of hog rearing and livestock product attributes. Fourteen percent of respondents reported reduced overall pork consumption due to animal welfare/handling concerns in the past 3 years. Of those included in the survey, concern for pig rearing practices was highest for intensive housing practices; fewest respondents were concerned about castration and ear notching. Although concern for livestock animals is often discussed, consumers’ actual shopping decisions focus on individual products. Lunchmeat purchasing and preferences for lunchmeat attributes were assessed. Inconsistencies were found between which lunchmeat attributes consumers associated with high quality and which attributes they actually considered during purchase. Over 73% of respondents agreed that “produced on farms with animal welfare and handling standards in place” and “produced by farmers certified in animal welfare techniques” were associated with higher quality lunchmeats. Of those purchasing lunchmeat, only 47% and 45% of respondents, respectively, reported considering these attributes during purchase. When asked about concern for animal welfare and food safety, the majority of products studied elicited concern from more respondents for food safety. Staple products (milk, eggs and ground beef) generated concern for the largest number of respondents. Numbers of respondents indicating concern varied across products, even when they were produced by the same animal species (i.e., steak versus roast beef lunchmeat). This work suggests that consumers’ values and beliefs influence their perceptions of important product attributes (such as food safety and animal welfare/handling) and potentially their purchasing behavior. However, high variation exists in concerns as a function of the product type and attribute.

Key Words: consumer demand, animal welfare, pork

178 An analysis of perceived obligations by consumers across animal species: Livestock, pet, or neither? M. G. S. McKendree*, C. C. Croney, and N. J. O. Widmar, *Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.*

Do perceived concerns about and obligations to animals vary based on their classification as a pet, livestock animal, or neither? An online survey (n = 798) was conducted with an objective of determining consumers’ classification of animal species, the relationship between classification and opposition to eating those species, and the relationship between pet ownership/crating and their perceived obligations to animals. The survey collected information on household demographics, pet ownership and perceptions of pets, and perceptions of traditional and non-traditional livestock animals. One interesting species classification was the horse, with 55% selecting pet, 27% livestock and 18% neither. Respondent opposition to eating animals varied by animal species; 81 respondents opposed eating a beef cow while 151 opposed eating a dairy cow. Respondents opposed to eating certain animal species were less opposed to others eating them. Tying classification with opposition to eating animals, those classifying a beef cow as non-livestock more often reported opposition to eating animals than those classifying a beef cow as livestock. Sixty-six percent of respondents reported having at least one household pet. At the 95% confidence level, respondents with cats and/or dogs more frequently reported concern about livestock animal welfare than those without cats and dogs. Of those with cats and/or dogs, 20% reported using cages/crates. However, no statistical differences were found between those who used crates/cages and those who did not regarding their level of concern for pig housing and management practices (including gestation crates, farrowing crates, group housing, and indoor confinement). Dog and/or cat owners more frequently reported having a source for animal welfare information (51% of dog and cat owners vs. 32% without a cat/dog). Understanding consumers’ views of different livestock species, their perceived obligations to animals and sources of relevant information is an important step in facilitating constructive discussions of agricultural animal care, welfare and ethics that incorporates layperson’s beliefs and values.

Key Words: animal welfare, pet, livestock

179 Industry stakeholder views on dairy cattle welfare. B. A. Ventura*, M. A. G. von Keyserlingk, and D. M. Weary, *Animal Welfare Program, Faculty of Land and Food Systems, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC Canada.*

Increasing stakeholder engagement is important as the dairy industry seeks to address societal concerns about the welfare of farm animals. The aim of the current study was to facilitate engagement among stakeholders and to describe their perspectives on key issues affecting the welfare of dairy cattle. Five heterogeneous focus groups were conducted during a dairy cattle industry meeting in Guelph, Canada in October 2012. Each group contained between 7 and 10 participants and consisted of a mix of dairy producers, veterinarians, researchers, students, and industry specialists. The 1 h facilitator-led discussion focused on participants’ perceptions of the key welfare issues and the role of different groups in addressing these concerns. Discussions were

audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the resulting transcripts coded and the themes identified. Lameness was uniformly recognized as the most important welfare issue facing dairy cattle; cow comfort, painful procedures (such as dehorning) and other production diseases (such as mastitis) were also commonly discussed. Participants had mixed views on the roles of different stakeholders in formulating solutions; many felt that producers and others working within the dairy industry should be

primarily responsible, but some believed that members of the general public also had an important role. Participants agreed that improved knowledge translation from researchers to producers and from dairy industry groups to the public was required to develop solutions to these concerns. These results illustrate the value of stakeholder engagement in developing solutions to dairy cattle welfare concerns.

Key Words: stakeholder attitudes, animal welfare, engagement