

EDUCATING STUDENTS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT ETHICAL ISSUES IN ANIMAL RESEARCH AND ANIMAL WELFARE.

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**Proceedings of the Fourth Plenary Session of the Society for
Veterinary Medical Ethics
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Introductory Comments

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I am pleased and honored to write this Introduction to the proceedings of our plenary session in Reno in July of 1997. This was the fourth plenary session SVME has held, but this marks the first time we are providing written summaries of talks.

These summaries are all relatively brief. They are not intended to present all the information or all the views expressed by the speakers. The summaries do not convey the enormous forcefulness and enthusiasm which all our speakers exhibited. Nor could any published proceedings do justice to the excitement, and sometimes passion, which the discussions following each talk generated. These brief papers do present a wide range of questions and varying responses and do show how different perspectives and interests can shed unique and essential light on complex issues.

The general topic of our session was entitled "Educating Students and the Public About Ethical Issues in Animal Research and Animal Welfare." We chose this topic because of the interest of many of SVME members in it, and because we wanted to see whether our members, who do come from many different backgrounds, could help address it.

The results did not disappoint.

Jerry Silverman started the day with a poignant and eloquent challenge to educators. They must, he argued, encourage students to see through cliches and assumptions and to think for themselves. And thinking for oneself often requires understanding why opposing viewpoints are taken, which often requires exposure to these viewpoints.

Ione Smith argued that some of the heat and language that accompanies current debates about animal rights and

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animal welfare is sometimes generated less from the substantive content of the issues as from the perceived need of combatants respond to each others' thrusts and parries. Rhetoric, she argued, thrives on opposing rhetoric and takes on a life of its own.

Susan Paris approached the subject from the perspective of the President of the leading public advocacy group in favor of animal research. She explained why one must know the methodology of one's opponents if one is to meet their challenges, and (as Aristotle did many years ago) demonstrated how methods of response and argument are essentially important.

Dick Simmonds discussed an area that has received insufficient attention in debates concerning animal research - the role animal research plays in benefiting animals. He concentrated on wildlife issues to show how the humane use of animals is an essential tool in protecting animals and animal species in which the public take great interest and indeed in protecting the environment.

Larry Carbone treated us to an elegant presentation on the history of dogs in public attitudes and government regulation. Using works of art and legislative history he demonstrated how dogs have played a unique role in the public's views of animal research, explored how and why recent USDA regulations relating to exercise requirements were

adopted, and raised the issue of where we should look for expertise regarding animals that have so long been a part of the public's ordinary experience.

Bob Speth completed the day's talks with a spirited attack on philosophical positions which, he argued, simplify and sometimes distort what scientists do as well as the results of their work. He discussed various ways of responding to anti-research arguments and suggested ways in which veterinarians, scientists, and others can play an active role in debates that will affect all of us.

All the talks generated a good deal of interesting and useful debate, as I am sure these brief summaries will. It is safe to say that not everyone agreed with everything that was said by everyone. That is good!

I want to thank all our speakers, who took the time to come to our session in Reno and to prepare their interesting and stimulating talks. I also want to thank our President-elect and Editor, Bob Speth, for his patient and tireless work in assembling these contributions.

SVME is well on its way toward becoming a major force in the discussion of ethical issues relating to veterinary medicine and animals. Our meeting in Reno showed that we can, and must, play such a role.

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**Opening Minds to Different Views on the Use of Animals in
Research and Teaching**

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The implication of the title of this presentation is that some people have closed minds towards the opinions of others when it comes to the subject of animal use in research and teaching. Even within the animal "protection" community there are heterogeneous opinions as to what the term "animal rights" actually means. This has resulted in some less than chivalrous verbal sparring. Likewise, within the broad community of animal users, there are those who fully reject the viewpoints of others.

Many factors lead to these narrow opinions. They include indoctrination, misinformation, lack of information, societal mores, self-interest, etc. My intent is to provide you with some examples of these factors, and then present a program I have used for many years which appears to help to open minds towards the opinions of others when discussing the ethics of using animals for biomedical research and education. My examples emanate from those people I know best: animal users. Nevertheless, similar examples can undoubtedly be found from the ranks of those opposed to animal use.

To begin with high school-aged students who participated in an essay contest sponsored by a pro-animal research

society. The society provided the students with intentionally biased information about animal use (indoctrination) and provided a cash reward for winning essays (self interest). There are, of course, animal rights groups who use similar tactics in grade schools to advance their position.

Some common phrases were found in these essays, e.g., "Ninety percent of animals used in research are rodents, and, if it is not wrong to control rats in our homes, why should it be wrong to use them in laboratories?" Notice that it is implied that rats are not as "worthy" of the same ethical respect as other animals. These comments arise from indoctrination, lack of information, and the standards of society. Another common student comment was, "Only animal experimentation can assure drug safety." In this example, there is some fact, but the full picture is obfuscated.

These narrowly focused opinions are also found in post-baccalaureate education. For example, one kindly graduate student told me that he always tried to use the least evolved animals in his research, and that's why he used rabbits rather than dogs. This is truly a strange view of evolution and sentience, and a clear example of

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misinformation. In other instances, the use of animals seems to be justified through tradition, pressure, and indoctrination from mentors. Thus, it is not unusual to hear graduate students and even senior faculty use phrases such as, "These are the tools of my research." or, "Can you prove to me that rats feel pain?"

Veterinary students are not exempt from closed minded views about animals. I have often heard comments such as, "I don't care that they're animals, they're just rats." An academic veterinary clinician asked her students if it was ethical to let dogs recover from surgery performed by third year students, only to be killed a week later in terminal surgery. The large majority of her students responded that it was ethical because it was important for them to observe and learn how to care for a recovering animal. When she amended the question and asked why they could not learn the same from clinical cases, the common response was, "but at least we let them live a few more days." She said, "my students don't understand yet that what they do to animals can cause pain and suffering. Length of life is often more important than quality of life." And, she said, the majority of the few who believed that recovery surgery was unethical were not vegetarians. "They don't see the link between using animals in research or teaching and eating them."

For many years now I have tried to open my students minds to different points of view about animal use. The intent is not to change minds, but to create an atmosphere of understanding and respect

Only then can there be mutually beneficial discussion rather than confrontation. To accomplish this goal, I present a formal lecture on the use of animals for scientific and educational purposes, from ancient to modern times. I try to give an honest and balanced discussion of the opposing viewpoints, ensuing controversies. By using slides I show the benefits and pitfalls that can result from animal use in research. I remind them that the different points of view already have one common belief. That is, 'We would all be happy if there was no need to use animals in research or teaching.' Our major difference is agreeing on the speed with which it is realistically possible to achieve that goal and yet maintain the course of biomedical research. We then have an open discussion about animal use, not between myself and the class, but between widely recognizable persons holding different viewpoints. For example, Henry Spira and Adrian Morrison led a spirited class discussion. I emphasize to the reader that these are discussions, not debates. Debates, by their very nature, do not lead to a free and open discussion.

Does this program accomplish its goal? Subjectively, yes. Student feedback is always positive. But one positive experience, although important, is never enough. It is for us as educators to view our students as lifelong learners, and continue to push them to explore all sides of a controversy. It is important for them to understand the values that others hold and the reasons behind those values. This open mindedness, I hope, will lead to a better world for all animals, including our human brethren.

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Dialogue or Diatribe? Reason vs. Rhetoric

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The purpose of our session this year is to discuss ways to educate students and the public about the animal rights movement. I believe that one of the most important choices we make when educating others about animal rights is whether or not to demonize the opposition. Are we going to depend on dialogue, or diatribe? Are we going to arm ourselves with reason, or rhetoric? I strongly believe that one of our most important duties when educating students about ethics and animals is to give all viewpoints fair coverage; and this imperative means much more than including a dismissive or insulting sentence or two in your ethics lecture. But why should we give equal time to an ethical system which may threaten our very livelihoods? There are actually many reasons why we should do so.

First, in order to understand our own views we must also understand the opposition. "The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this." (John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859). Of course, at this point you're probably telling yourself-- "but I DO cover

the issues fairly! I HAVE studied all the viewpoints." And you may be thinking "everyone on MY side of the fence DOES tell the truth--it's the OTHER guys who distort reality." Well, let's take a look at just how fair and honest we really are when talking about animal rights.

For instance, according to some animal rights opponents, animal rightists want to give animals the same rights as humans (this is why we hear comments like "but it would be ridiculous for dogs to vote"). However, "equal consideration" does not necessarily mean "identical treatment", and "rights" does not necessarily mean "all rights". "The basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment, it requires equal consideration. Equal consideration for different beings may lead to different treatment and different rights." (Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 1975) Therefore, "to say that some animals have some moral or legal claims against us that are of compelling (though not necessarily conclusive) strength is not to say anything about what these claims are." (Jerrold Tannenbaum, *Veterinary Ethics*, 1995) The claim that animals rights tenets dictate identical treatment for animals is thus a straw man.

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Another related misrepresentation is the claim that animal rightists believe "a pig is a dog is a boy". Newkirk's comments have been variously quoted as: "a pig is a dog is a boy" (many unreferenced remarks), "When it comes to feelings, a pig is a dog is a boy." (Charles Oliver, "Liberation Zoology," Reason, June 1990) and "When it comes to having a central nervous system, and the ability to feel pain, hunger, and thirst, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." (Animal Rights Resource Site, <http://www.envirolink.org/arrs/>, 1997) While the first quote may sound ridiculous, most scientists today acknowledge that animals have "feelings" or emotions like pain, fear, etc.; and the third quote could almost have been made by an animal researcher. An insistence on repeating the first version of the quotes while ignoring the others therefore seems simply to be a case of intentionally misrepresenting the opposition--another straw man.

An important misrepresentation is the claim that animal rightists are terrorists, or that a belief in animal rights necessarily means that one supports violence. We have this rebuttal from a founding father of animal rights philosophy: "Civil disobedience is a fragile weapon. When used in the wrong setting or by violent people pretending to be nonviolent, its sharp moral edge is dulled and can be broken....The moral and political pressure for change must increase, not decrease--but not at the cost of violence." (Tom Regan, *The Struggle for Animal Rights*, 1989) In fact, lumping violent and non-violent animal rightists together for the sake of dramatic diatribe is just as accurate as labeling all abortion opponents or Muslims

as terrorists because of the existence of extremists within their ranks.

Of course, animal rightists are also guilty of misrepresenting their opposition. For instance, rightists often claim that animal researchers are sadists who "vivisect" animals for the sake of fame and money. In reality, however, researchers are as likely to be compassionate as rightists.

One final example of inaccurate rhetoric has been promulgated by both animal rights and anti-animal rights camps. Members of both groups have made the claim that rights and welfare are antithetical. However, many animal rightists are dedicated to improving animal welfare; and many folks who would consider themselves "welfarists" believe that animals do have some rights. For example, in 1989 a survey published in *Parents Magazine* indicated that 80% of the poll's respondents believe animals have rights--although 85% also believe it is acceptable to eat animal products! Another survey conducted by Rebecca Templin-Richards in 1991 polled over 1000 animal rights activists; 80% of these activists declared themselves to be interested in both animal rights and animal welfare.

We've seen several examples of rhetoric being tossed about by both sides in this debate. But why should anyone care about open and honest discussion of the issues? I've already discussed the problem of fully understanding one's own ethical positions. But must we also give our students the opportunity to fully examine ethical

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issues? The answer must be an emphatic "yes!". We have a moral obligation to provide an open and complete education to our students. After all, we cannot expect veterinarians, researchers, or the public to make ethically informed choices if we fail to inform them. And there are also important practical reasons for using rational dialogue in our educational efforts. For instance, when speaking with people who have opposing opinions on any given subject it becomes obvious that speaking softly fosters mutual respect and communication much more effectively than screaming. For instance, if I told my opponents they were whacko idiots, I'd lose them immediately; however, if I politely tell them that I disagree and show them the reasons why, I may be able to educate them. Ranting and raving quickly create an impression of weak and poorly supported claims; in the presence of such a diatribe, onlookers will find an opposing calm and rational viewpoint even more appealing. Being polite to your opponent is therefore not only good for fostering a productive exchange: it's also very good PR.

An additional consideration is the set of opinions which our audience may bring with them to the classroom. Today those in attendance may very well represent both animal "rights" and animal "welfare" views. If we attempt to demonize either position we therefore take a strong risk of driving some of our listeners away from us and firmly into our opponents' camp. For instance, let's take a look at Scenario 1: Suzy comes to hear you speak. Suzy believes it's all right to use animals for some important purposes like

animal research, but she also believes that eating meat is not important enough to justify killing food animals. During your speech, you declare that animal rights vegheads have had their brains addled by lack of animal protein. Is Suzy likely to become more, or less, sympathetic to your overall message? Or, alternatively, Suzy attends another speech given by another speaker. During this second talk, the speaker denounces supporters of animal research as heartless self-centered speciesists. Will Suzy now be more, or less, likely to listen to the other concerns expressed by speaker number two? In reality, the best way for either speaker to attract Suzy is for the speakers to treat their opponents with respect. Many folks these days are like Suzy to some degree; let's not stab ourselves in the back with careless and inflammatory rhetoric.

We do ourselves, our students, and our animals a serious disservice when we fail to cover all viewpoints fully and fairly. Is it really impossible to be fair, open, and honest, while also being an effective advocate for your beliefs? I believe otherwise. If we can't defend our position while representing all sides fairly, then our position doesn't deserve to be defended. Whether we're teaching veterinary students or new animal rights volunteers, let's not teach them how to be narrow-minded, poorly educated slaves to rhetoric. Let's teach our students to think for themselves and be willing to carefully examine ALL sides of ethical issues; let's foster constructive dialogue and abandon destructive diatribe.

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**Animal Rights Impact on the Public's Perception of Animal
Research**

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Americans for Medical Progress (AMP) was formed to ensure that biomedical researchers retain the right to work with laboratory animals. Today I shall discuss the radical elements of the organized animal rights movement that threaten this effort, and address two questions of contemporary concern: Why is the public's perception of animal research important? and: What has been the animal rights movement's impact on research?

When I refer to the animal rights movement, I'm referring to the elements of it that embrace the philosophy that animals are morally equivalent to human beings and those who oppose almost every use of animals in society, from pet ownership, to seeing eye dogs and most dangerously, to medical research. I call these people animal rights elitists because they seem to have the luxury of sitting back and deciding that:

--the blind person does not deserve a seeing eye dog,

--that the poor family shouldn't feed its children chicken as a source of protein, or

--that toddlers should not drink cows' milk to obtain necessary calcium.

They've even decided that women with breast cancer should be denied the benefits of research on rats, mice and fruit flies. You'll recall that when militant animal rightists broke into UC Davis they liberated tens of thousands of fruit flies in the midst of a research project. These animal rights elitists do not care that working with animals is a vital component to medical progress. They have one goal in mind: to abolish animal research, regardless of the suffering and death their actions will bring.

They are not concerned with how well we may or may not treat the animals in our quests for cures and treatments. This is not a debate about animal welfare. Last month at an animal rights conference co-sponsored by PeTA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), the HSUS (Humane Society of the United States) and other animal rights organizations, PETA's founder

told the 500 attendees, "I wish we would all get up and go into the labs and take the animals out or burn them down." The conference leaders incited attendees to several acts of violence throughout the weekend, resulting in a full scale riot and

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dozens of arrests -- including one for vandalism with intent to murder. Personal intimidation and harassment is a signature of the movement today. I fail to see the connection between terrorizing people and loving animals.

The animal rights elitists, who head up our nation's multi-million dollar animal rights industry, believe we have no right to the knowledge gained through animal research. Obviously, theirs is not a majority position at this point in time. But they plan to make it such and have launched several campaigns that are bringing them closer to their goal.

For instance, let's look at their anti-cosmetic testing campaign. First of all, "cosmetic testing" has no definition in industry or government. It's a term they made up to connect animal use with vanity and greed. It's really called product safety testing. Through brilliantly gut-wrenching newspaper advertisements, they created a public furor of concern and discussion. Discussions in which industry and the research community did not participate to a large extent. The cosmetics companies quickly capitulated, signed meaningless statements of assurance to PETA and began labeling products "cruelty free" -- again, a term with no definition. Today, most people believe we can develop safe innovative products without using animals and that only lazy, sick companies do so.

Because of the public's perception, not the realities of product safety testing, the entire research community got a major

black eye and the animal rights movement got tremendous credit and credibility for bringing it to our attention and fixing the problem they created. But let's look at it another way. Was the public upset because we have safe and effective products? No. No rational person would object to necessary tests to prevent members of their family or friends from being hurt. No rational person would object to knowing that every product he or she brings home has been safety tested for the benefit of their family. Animal rights strategists know that the truth about the value of product safety testing has powerful public appeal. That's why you never hear them talk about safety and efficacy. They talk instead about voiceless, helpless animals whom they depict as victims of societal vanity and greed.

Today, they're running a new and equally successful campaign. It's called "pet theft." While the USDA, after a two-year investigation, could not document one case of bonafide pet theft, we are facing two bills in congress right now to abolish random source suppliers in the name of pet protection.

Worse yet, the media fell in love with this campaign and helped spread the word. Now the public is convinced biomedical researchers are cruising their neighborhoods for their friendly, docile pets as cheap sources for cruel torturous experiments. Believe me, I hear from the public quite a bit.

It's a major black eye, again.

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These are just two examples of what creative marketing through direct mail etc., with millions of dollars to back it up, can accomplish. The result is that the perceptions of the public and our opinion leaders on these issues bear little resemblance to the facts. If we continue to allow animal extremists and elitists to control and color the debate, using sermons on the evils of humanity versus the innocence of animals, they will win. It's that simple.

So, why is the public's perception of research so important? There are many reasons:

x A positive public perception of animal research is important because animal research is a legislated and governmentally-regulated activity, frequently conducted with taxpayers' money.

x It is beholden to the public's support for its continuance, and animal rights elitists know this.

x People, namely the voting public, can legislate animal research out of existence, if they choose.

x If the organized, wealthy and vocal opponents of animal research succeed in convincing people that the process is excessively cruel and mostly unnecessary -- future cures and treatments come under direct threat of being waylaid by prohibitive laws and excessively restrictive regulations.

In the past 20 yrs, the biomedical research community has come to realize the importance of keeping federal legislators

and regulators informed about the facts. That's why the organization NABR (National Association for Biomedical Research) was formed 18 yrs ago.

However, the animal rights industry took the debate to another arena - that of public opinion, which, at first, the research community did not view as a viable threat to its continuance. Let's face it, institutions looking to cure cancer or treat cystic fibrosis didn't concern themselves with cosmetic testing either and didn't bother to defend it. On the flip side, the public was cared deeply about animals portrayed in the images presented by the animal rightists, and sent in donations by the millions. Millions now being used to halt important research. Scientists never dreamed that a philosophy driven by emotionalism and enunciated with terrorism would achieve such tremendous gains in light of the obvious benefits to human and animal health developed through such research. They were wrong.

The animal rights industry has successfully tapped into humanity's deep visceral feelings about protecting animals and has convinced many that all animal research is inherently cruel and probably unnecessary. Look at it from the public's perspective: why would animal lovers lie to us about life saving research -- certainly they're not against that!?!

Supporters of research must engage animal rightists in the arena of public opinion if we are to ultimately retain our ability to conduct animal research. The

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problem is that scientists and medical professionals are trained to study and heal, not to debate the complexities of their work in the arena of public opinion, and especially against people with no allegiance to the truth.

That is where AMP comes in. It is in the media almost every day and has two goals: First, to ensure that people understand how and why we do animal research, and second, to ensure that people understand the distinction between animal welfare and animal rights, so they can vote accordingly with their donation dollars. Americans for Medical Progress takes the position that most people do not understand the full agenda of the animal rights movement that they are so generously funding. And, that it is critically important that they find out!

Americans for Medical Progress views public thinking and support for the animal rights movement as a belief that it is supporting a "beefed up" version of animal welfare. Those of us closely monitor the movement see something different. The public needs to know that when they donate money supposedly directed at stopping "cosmetic testing and pet theft", that this money is really being used to stop vital

animal research. They need to know that the animal rights movement wants to stop all animal research. In opposing all animal research, the founder of PETA and a leader of the modern-day animal rights movement has said, "Animal research is immoral, even if it is essential."

When influencing public opinion, the rules are quite different from the procedures and protocol involved in setting regulatory standards for research. When bodies such as Congress and agencies such as the USDA set out to determine what is rational and proper involving the use of animals in

research, deliberate and reasoned review of all sides of the issues are the order of the day. Arguments are heard in detail and carefully weighed.

However, when this "debate" is thrust into the arena of public opinion, we are dealing in a world of 7-second sound bites and emotive language and visuals. Our messages must be unequivocal and succinct. Make no mistake about it. There is a war being waged today against the future of animal research. And the research community must engage in it. Public opinion is a crucial battlefield on which we must participate.

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ANIMAL RESEARCH BENEFITING ANIMALS

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Whenever there is a debate regarding the ethics of using non-human animals, particularly vertebrate animals, in "research," the discussion invariably centers around human medical research or consumer product safety testing. Usually overlooked in the ensuing discussions and debate is the ethical conundrum poised by the use of animal-based research intended solely for the benefit of animals, the most striking example being efforts to save endangered species. Although there are also many other examples of animal research intended to produce results intended solely for the benefit of other animals, e.g., the development of vaccinations for our pets, this commentary will be limited to the issues involved in endangered species research because it is believed that this area of concern provides the most clear-cut example of the conundrum which is being highlighted.

In order to obtain the knowledge needed to either define minimally necessary habitat ecosystems or to develop captive breeding programs, we must do "animal" research. In some cases, the research may be nearly non-intrusive, such as simple field observations of natural behavior of the target species (although, even here, the

simple intrusion of the observer, into the environment may adversely impact either members of the target species or other animals in the area, especially during breeding seasons). Other times, minimally intrusive procedures may be necessary such as capture and release of representative members of the species for the purpose of obtaining basic physiological and health data or applying a tracking device such as a radio collar. Still other necessary research might involve captive behavioral studies using the targeted species or development of housing and maintenance procedures for captive reproduction using a surrogate species. In many of these research efforts, there is at least the potential for animal harm, e.g., accidental injury during capture. In all cases, none of the animals being disturbed, manipulated, or used have given "informed consent."

Among the oldest examples of efforts to save endangered species are the Przewalski's Horse and Arabian Oryx. Although both of these species were saved from extinction by captive breeding programs, it is unlikely that there was any formal research in developing the captive breeding technology. More contemporary examples are the Whooping Crane and

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California Condor, both successfully reared in captivity and released back into the wild. In the case of these latter two examples, there was extensive research on captive breeding techniques accomplished prior to bringing individuals of the endangered species into captivity so as to maximize the potential for success while minimizing the danger of harming the rare animals. In these cases, Sandhill Cranes and Andean Condors served as the surrogates, respectively, for the two endangered species.

Today, there are tremendous pressures being exerted on a worldwide basis to obtain the knowledge necessary to save the growing numbers of species being threatened and endangered by the pressures poised by human population growth and habitat destruction.

The ethical Principal of Universality would have us apply an ethical conclusion in similar ways in all relevantly similar circumstances. This being the case, should we as a society decide that it is unethical to use non-human animals, at least vertebrate animals, in research intended to benefit the human species, we must then apply that position to the use of non-human animals in research efforts intended to help us save endangered species

(and, for that matter, all other animal targeted research such as vaccine development). It is probable that the contemporary ethical and philosophical positions being put forth by authors such as Tom Regan (*The Case for Animal Rights*), Gary Francione (*Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement*), and David DeGrazia (*Taking Animals Seriously: Mental Life and Moral Status*) would result in a prohibition of the use of at least vertebrate animals in any research activity, period. If this impression is correct, and if such positions were to be generally accepted by our society at large, one of the consequences likely would be the near elimination of endangered species research, a consequence likely unintended, but nonetheless one of the consequences.

Contrary to good publication principles, I do not have a conclusion in regards to this matter. The intent of this note is to try and insert this aspect, i.e., animal research for animal benefit, into the ethical debate regarding our use of animals as research subjects. Much more considered debate and discussion of this subject is going to be necessary if we, as a society, are going to continue restricting, perhaps abolishing, the use of non-human animals as research subjects.

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The Public Life of Dogs: Dogs in the Animal Welfare Act

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The theme of today's meeting is Public Education and Understanding of the Use of Animals in Research and Education. It's important to consider where education ends and political education, or propaganda, begins. We educate the public about what we do in laboratories with a political motive -- we want their support, both financial and political. We do this because we know how powerful public opinion is in this controversial area.

Public opinion of vivisection is readily apparent when we look at how dogs have been treated in the laws and in the public arena. Everyone has an opinion about dogs. For instance, the common story is that the Animal Welfare Act was first passed in 1966 after the massive response to an expose in *Life* magazine on the way dogs were sometimes obtained for laboratories (Silva, "Concentration camps for dogs," *Life*, 2/4/66, 60(5): 22-29).

Dogs are not the only players of course, and the major revisions to the Animal Welfare Act in 1985 may be due more to two primate incidents: the "Silver Spring

Monkeys Raid" and the stolen videotapes from the head trauma research lab at the University of Pennsylvania. In contrasting the dogs' role in the 1960s with the monkeys' role in the 1980s, we see a shifting ethic about animals and nature. We sense a social contract with dogs, our long-time familiars, that calls for a nurturing, 'be kind to animals' ethic. Monkeys, by contrast, are our wild and untamed cousins, inhabiting a natural world that is foreign to most Westerners. Our response to them is hands-off, rather than nurturing, respect for their rights rather than paternalistic kindness.

Though "Guinea pig" is often used synonymously with "research animal," it is interesting to watch the animal species that artists and journalists have chosen to embody animal research. In Victorian era paintings of animal research, many done with an antivivisectionist thrust, one sees frequent depictions of dogs, particularly when the moral cost of vivisection is the message. By contrast, Claude Bernard is portrayed dissecting a rabbit, proud at finding the right model for his work on the sympathetic trunk (Schupbach, "A select

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iconography of animal experiment," in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, Nicholas A. Rupke, editor, 1987). In contemporary media, pictures of dogs and monkeys highlight the moral gravity of animal research; pictures of mice (and children) convey its power and urgency (And note: If anyone in SVME knows of a published analysis of this, I would love to hear about it).

Notice the choice of species in these two quotes below. Consider how the authors' meaning would change if the species were swapped between them:

"Most vivisection is nothing more than pricking mice with the point of a needle." (Samuel Wilks in 1882)

"Least of all is it proof that someone has the skill to cure people for he has the heart to torment dogs." (A. G. Kastner, 1719-1800)

Choice of species carries weight in public discourse on vivisection because we share so many of the same images and assumptions about the animals in our world. We also carry our species-specific assumptions and knowledge when we move from the either-or vivisection-antivivisection debate and shift to fine-tuning the regulations under which we perform our experiments.

Dogs have held a special place in the Animal Welfare Act since its inception 30 years ago. Not only did they secure its passage, but they were its main beneficiaries as well, as this initial piece of legislation was essentially an anti-pet-theft law.

When the law was amended in 1985, the call from the research community was that any new regulations should be based on science and data. I am very interested in how such data actually find their way into public policy, passing as they must through the hands of the scientists and regulators who must interpret them and give them meaning. Here too, I think, dogs have special significance, for we do not have simply our scientific knowledge of their behavior, but our public knowledge of them as members of our families and towns.

As an example, the 1985 amendment included a provision (introduced by Senator Bob Dole) that the USDA develop standards "for exercise of dogs as determined by an attending veterinarian." What sort of scientific data or common sense knowledge should be used to set such standards?

This question has been around at least since 1963. The *Guide for Laboratory Animal Facilities and Care*, notes: "One of the most widely debated questions in the field of animal care concerns the need for 'exercise' in the housing of laboratory animals, most specifically in the housing of dogs. The concept of 'exercise' frequently is confused with that of cage size by animal welfare groups... Scientists know that the size of the cage does not necessarily influence the amount of 'exercise' an animal receives, or its well-being." Though citing no relevant data on dogs and exercise, the writers of the *Guide* were clear that this was a question for scientists' professional judgement, not for the lay public. For while others are confused, scientists *know*.

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When dog exercise became the law, other voices weighed in. Consider this letter sent to the USDA in the late 1980s: "Dogs need at least one hour of exercise and companionship daily ... Scientific studies are not needed to understand [this] ... this is obvious to all." Animals in general, but dogs most particularly, are public property. *Everyone* knows what dogs need, this letter writer argued, and scientists and veterinarians have no corner on special knowledge that is relevant here.

But Scientists and Veterinarians did have several studies at hand by 1987, and they used them to argue against what could have been incredibly costly renovation and staffing requirements. Perhaps the most interesting was by Hughes *et al.* ("The effects of cage size and pair housing on exercise of beagle dogs," *Laboratory Animal Science*, 1989. 39(4): 302-305), interesting for its counter-intuitive finding that dogs in the smallest cages studied were more active and "traveled" a greater distance (presumably, in circles). Other studies showed dogs choosing to settle down and rest after a few minutes in a large exercise pen, that dogs were most active only in the presence of people, and that there were no demonstrable physical or physiological differences with dogs in different cage sizes, unless confined in very small and restrictive cages (smaller than those required under current Animal Welfare Act standards).

This growing body of literature countered the animal protectionists' reliance on common sense public knowledge of what dogs need. The USDA's response to these competing knowledge claims was to back off from rigid specific exercise standards and specify far more flexible, "performance-based" standards, though without specification of the desired performance outcome.

In competing to define what dogs need, I think the animal protectionists missed the boat, for that is not the question they are necessarily interested in, nor necessarily what Dole's amendment called for. Consider some other relevant concerns:

- What do dogs want?
- What can dogs learn to settle for?
- What can dogs learn to expect and hope for?

In summary, I believe dogs' special role as the most domestic of all animals has led to their frequent use as laboratory subjects and to the vociferous movement to limit such use. Scientists' calls to base regulations on scientific studies of animal behavior and physiology will always compete -- at least in the case of dogs -- with the common knowledge of our canine familiars that virtually everyone -- scientists, non-scientists, regulators and the concerned public -- can claim.

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Educating Students and the Public about "Animal Rights"

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Why is it important to educate students and the public about the dangers posed by the animal rights movement?

In recent years groups that collectively represent an ideology known as the animal rights philosophy have gained an increasingly visible presence in society. More and more, the public has come to view the animal rights advocates as representing the voice of animal interests. Playing upon human sentimentality and concern for the well-being of our fellow animals, the animal rights movement has portrayed animal usage by humans as immoral, cruel, and inhumane, using powerful rhetoric, graphic examples of animal abuse, masterful manipulation of the mass media, and deceptive characterizations of animal usage. While many believe that the animal rights movement has helped animals by calling attention to their plight, it has done this at considerable cost to the animals they claim to be protecting.

Implementation of the animal rights philosophy harms both animals and humans to an extent that far outweighs the benefits it

provides to animals, e.g., by opposing all animal research, the animal rights movement endangers research that benefits both humans and animals; by inciting extremists to liberate domestic animals, they cause the deaths of most of the liberated animals that are placed into environments into which they have little hope for survival; by opposing the killing of animals by humans, however humanely carried out, they doom hoards of animals to lives of suffering, terminated by slow and often painful natural deaths. By opposing all animal enterprises or human activities that impact animals they threaten even the most primitive level of survival by humans, e.g., animal rights dogma would prohibit even the use of pesticides to protect farmers' crops. Even the noted animal rights philosopher Tom Regan has acknowledged the impossibility of human survival under the philosophical principles he espouses.

As members of a profession that seeks to provide for the health and well-being of animals, as well as to serve a society that depends upon animals for its well-being, it is

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our responsibility to educate the public of the realities that govern the interactions between humans and animals. We are obliged to share the knowledge and understanding of animals that we have gained through our work with animals to refute the falsehoods promulgated by animal rights activists whose philosophical principles would jeopardize the well-being of animals and humans alike.

How should we educate the public about the animal rights movement?

While it is tempting to resort to counteroffensive actions against the publicity stunts and gross distortions of reality perpetrated by animal rights activists, we must adhere to the highest ethical principles in presenting our case. If we violate the trust that the public places in us, or compromise the integrity that characterizes the Veterinary profession, we jeopardize our ability to present our arguments as those of the voice of reason. The guidelines we must impose upon ourselves for educating the public on the issue of animal rights should include:

- educating ourselves regarding the use of animals by humans and the arguments being used by animal rights activists who are philosophically opposed to all uses of animals by humans. There are a number of organizations that represent a variety of animal user groups that can provide factual information in support of the rational use of animals, e.g., The American Veterinary Medical Association,

The Foundation for Biomedical Research, Americans for Medical Progress, The Farm Bureau and the Fur Commission USA, to name just a few.

- learning good communications skills, e.g., addressing your audience at a level at which they can understand your arguments; keeping presentations simple and straightforward; recognizing the need to convey your message in a seven second sound bite, having the relevant facts at hand, providing written, visual and oral examples to back up your arguments, directing your arguments to your audience rather than at your adversaries.
- making yourself available to give presentations to audiences that have an interest in animal well-being issues
- willingness to provide written and verbal commentary based on factual information to public forums such as newspapers, television and radio, and to legislators
- not allowing anger to compromise the objectivity and integrity of your presentation

What are some of the arguments that can legitimately be used to challenge the animal rights philosophy?

As noted above, I believe that the animal rights movement has perpetrated a deliberate and highly effective misinformation campaign to sway public opinion against all uses of animals by humans. To challenge their arguments we need to present equally powerful arguments whose strength derives from their honesty.

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and their appeal to rational logic. Some of the arguments I use in challenging the animal rights philosophy include:

- pointing out the differences between the animal rights position and the animal welfare viewpoint: It is my position that guardianship of animals by humans promotes their welfare, while the animal rights position jeopardizes animal welfare by impeding the ability of humans to care for animals. I emphasize common interests of humans and animals that can be met by domesticating animals, e.g., domesticated animals are protected from predators, disease and hunger by their owners in return for the benefits those animals provide to their owners and society in general. The lives of domesticated animals are far better than those of animals that are left to fend for themselves in the wild. The cruelties of nature stand in stark contrast with the care provided to animals in an agricultural or research setting.
- noting the unfeasibility of human survival with the goals of the animal rights philosophy: It is not possible within the framework of the ecology of the Earth for humans to declare independence from their need to compete with, and use animals to our benefit. Well-intentioned efforts of animal rights activists who are ethical vegetarians and who do not wear garments made of animal products address only the tip of the iceberg of ways in which they exploit animals. Life saving medical therapies developed through animal research and safety tested on animals are routinely

employed by animal rightists. Farming of food crops that sustain ethical vegetarians, as well as fiber crops which animal rights activists use for clothing cause the deaths of countless animals, either through pesticide use or habitat loss. Hydroelectric dams and coal burning generators that supply the electrical power for animal rights activists cause the deaths of even more animals. The photographic film used in the cameras of animal rights activists requires animal collagen for its production. The list of ways in which we depend on animal products goes on and on and no one in the animal rights movement can legitimately deny having exploited animals for their selfish purposes.

- refuting the argument that speciesism is bad: The reality is that all species that survive are speciesist. Not to be speciesist is to become extinct, or in the case of human beings, to commit suicide. Most will agree that suicide is not an rational solution to the problem of our dependence upon animals for our sustenance. Related to the argument that speciesism is bad is the need to refute the analogy comparing speciesism to racism and sexism. I consider it grossly demeaning to minorities and human females that animal rightists take the position that since we convey rights to these individuals that we must therefore also convey the same rights to animals.
- presenting ethical arguments in favor of the rational use of animals. It is important to note that animals as well as

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humans benefit from animal research. When debating the cost of animal research to society and the animals used in research, it is important to point out the value of the information obtained through such efforts. Once a discovery is made, we then have that knowledge to carry forth into the future, when it will provide lasting benefits, e.g., we do not have to reinvent cures for polio, smallpox and a variety of other diseases for which cures have been developed through animal research. And the cures for many of these diseases can be used to help animals as well as humans. It is important to note that many treatments and therapies we now have for diseases are either nonexistent, of limited value, or are only palliative, so that we need to continue to do animal research to find better and more effective treatments for diseases.

These are but a few of the arguments that can be used to reveal what I perceive to be the fallacies and questionable logic that characterize the animal rights philosophy.

In conclusion, it is time for those involved in the Veterinary profession to reclaim their rightful role as the preeminent organization speaking on behalf of the interests of animal well-being. It is time for us to regain center stage and dispel the myths, half-truths and outright dishonesty being propagated by extremist elements of the animal rights movement. By asserting rational viewpoints and promoting a knowledgeable appreciation of the human animal relationship, we can contribute substantially to both human and animal well-being.

Editors' Notes

This publication represents the first time that the Proceedings of the Plenary Session of the Annual Meeting of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics has appeared in print. We especially thank the presenters at this meeting for providing the manuscripts included in this volume.

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