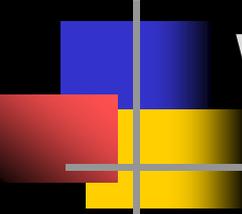


Factors Impacting Public Perceptions of Animal Welfare & Animal Rights

Candace C. Croney
Purdue University

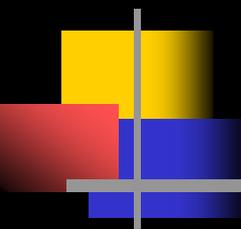
Purdue University
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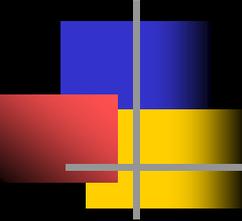


What is currently occurring

- Polarized, politicized animal welfare discussions
- Corporate agriculture portrayed as cruel, abusive, unsafe, & unsustainable
 - **Conventional = bad; alternative = good paradigm**
- “Education” efforts/agvocracy often off-putting
 - Little evidence of use of ag sites, social media
 - Food Inc. as the go to resource on animal ag
- Industry fractioning on key issues
 - E.g., swine industry housing

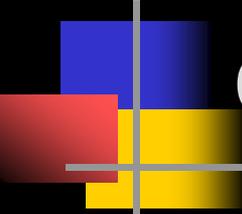


CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS



Perceptions about farm animals

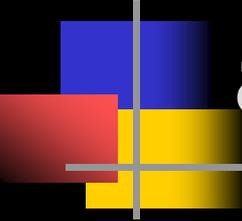
- 64% support “passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals” (2008 Gallup poll)
- 91%: in order to qualify as “ethical food,” animals should be treated humanely (Context Marketing, Mar 2010, “Ethical Food” report)
- 73% of women and 65% of men “have more confidence in food sold in grocery stores that actively support ethical and sustainable farming practices”
- 50%: animal care is important “when deciding which food to buy, brand preference and which grocery stores to shop” (AMI, 2004, “Laying Out the Facts”)
- Perceived connection between animal welfare and food safety (Harper & Makatouni, 2002)



Consumer perceptions about farm animals

- 64%: farmers and food companies put their own profits ahead of treating farm animals humanely
- 40%: ethical and moral considerations should be primarily used to determine how to treat farm animals
- 81%: animals and humans have the same ability to feel pain
- 75% : would vote for a law that would require farmers to treat animals more humanely
- 76%: disagree that low prices are more important than welfare

Results of a nationwide telephone survey by Jayson L. Lusk, F. Bailey Norwood & Robert W. Prickett, Aug 17, 2007 at Oklahoma State University, Department of Agric. Economics



Areas of disconnect between animal agriculture and consumers

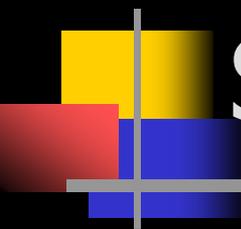
- Definition of “farming”
- Definition of animal welfare/acceptable treatment
- Who is trusted on animal welfare

Defining welfare: major disconnects between producers & consumers

- Farmers view welfare as meeting animals' basic needs (food, water, shelter; i.e., animal care)
- Consumers define animal welfare in terms of natural lives & quick, painless (humane) deaths
 - Animals should be reared, fed, housed, and allowed to behave as naturally as possible (Harper & Henson, 2001)
 - The question is not *do farmers* provide care, but *do they care about what the animals are experiencing?* (Croney and Anthony, 2010)
- *Values mismatch*



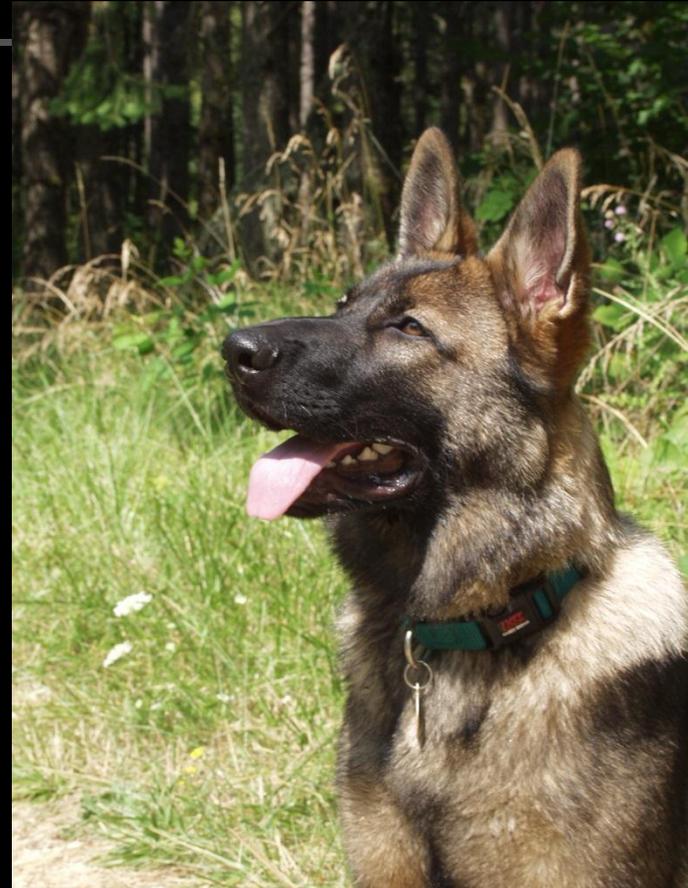
HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?



SOCIETAL CHANGES

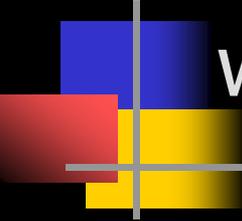
Societal changes

- Growing disconnect with production agriculture
- Contact with animals primarily through pets, zoos or mass media



Societal changes

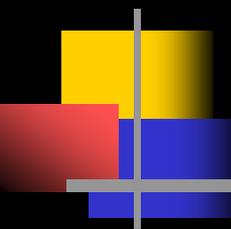
- Extension of moral consideration to categories of humans previously denied
 - Natural progression to extend to animals



Demographics relative to concerns about welfare

- Urban-rural factors
 - People from rural areas, farming experience view welfare more positively
- Gender, socio-economics, age, family status
 - Women, younger people, those with few children, lower incomes and both higher and lower education levels more concerned
 - Higher tendency of millennials toward environmental concern, activism & communication (the Twitter generation)

(Verhue and Verzeijden, 2003; Burrell and Vrieze, 2003; Frewer et al., 2005, Kendall et al., 2006; Farrar, 2007; Banks, 2008)



CHANGES IN BELIEFS ABOUT AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH ANIMALS

Changes in beliefs about animals

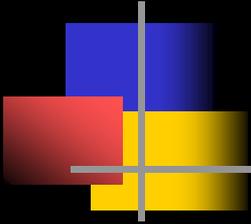
- Animal Exploitation
- Animal Rights
- Animal welfare (stewardship)

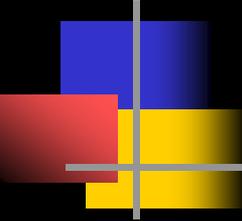
ANTHROPOMORPHISM & “THE DISNEY FACTOR”

(Jamison and Lunch, 1998)



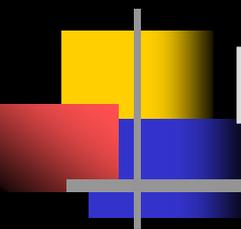
Evolution of the human-animal bond



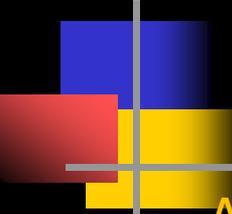


Welfare and the human-animal bond

- Relationships with pets ⇒ paradigm for other animals
 - ⇒ Growing concern over animal treatment (animal welfare)

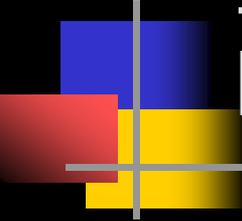


NEW SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION &
EASY ACCESS TO IT



New information on animal behavior

- **Animal intelligence** (pigs, chickens, sheep): Cerbulis, 1994; Mendl et al., 1997; Croney et al., 1999; 2005; Kendrick, 2001
- **Motivation** to perform specific behaviors or work for access to stimuli (e.g., social access, substrates)
 - Nest building (hens, pigs)
- **Positive emotional states** (Matsusaka, 2004; Panksepp and Burgdoff, 2003 Panksepp, 2005)
- **Pain** (Millman, 2009; 2010)

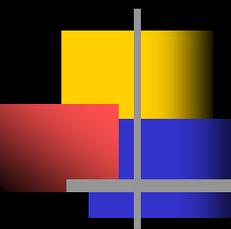


Implications of new information on animal behavior

- As animals' needs & behavioral complexity become better understood, perceived obligations change
 - Cognitive dissonance created by different standards for treatment of food animals vs. others

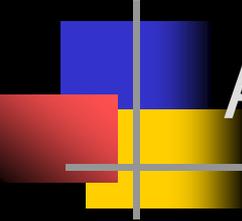
How can you love some animals and be indifferent to the suffering of others?

Center of heart vs. center of plate dichotomy
(Jamison, 2009)



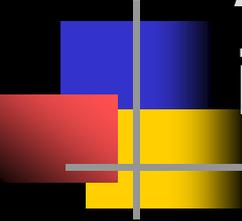
FAILURE TO ADDRESS THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF ANIMAL CARE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “DO
RIGHT” BY ANIMALS?



Activist messaging on housing issues

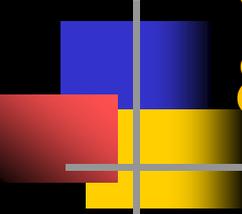
- Shouldn't they just be allowed to turn around?
- Reasonable, modest reform needed
- Identifies core values and appeals to them



Agriculture's response on housing issues

- Key points

- Food safety, nutrition, affordability, food access
- Our methods work
- Change isn't necessary
- *Ethical concerns around animals, yet ag's messages are still focused on food*



Caught on camera: animal abuse scandals & documentaries

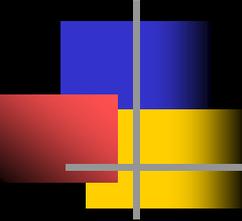
- Pilgrim's Pride—KFC supplier, 2004
- Westland/Hallmark, 2008
- "Death on a Factory Farm," 2009
 - Sow hanging
- Maceration of male chicks, 2009
- Conklin dairy scandal, 2010
- Texas heifer ranch abuse case, 2011
- Wyoming premium farms, 2012

- *Can the agricultural industry "experts" be trusted?*
- Rollin (2005): if society believes industry is not self-regulating, society will take steps to do so

Are these practices socially acceptable today?

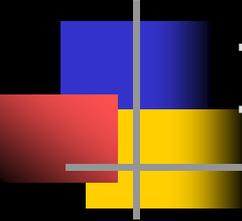
- Sow gestation stalls
- Conventional battery cages (laying hens)
- Veal calf stalls
- Tail docking (dairy cows)

Does “standard practice” automatically make it “right”?



“Perfect storm” culminates in major challenges for US agriculture

- Feeling of insufficient protection for farm animals
- Increased trust in animal protection groups; decreased trust in industry self-regulation
- Concerns about loss of husbandry & individual care
- Rise of the ethical food movement, impetus to regulate, & premature policies



Implications

- Inability to cooperatively resolve issues pushing us closer to increased integration, federal legislation & off-shoring
- Need to demonstrate & emphasize animal welfare as a key component of ethical, sustainable agriculture
 - Must take care of people, animals & environment