

WELFARE OR RIGHTS?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Animal welfare is the humane treatment of animals. Most people – including farmers and ranchers – believe in the principles of animal welfare: humans have a right to use animals, but they also have a responsibility to treat them humanely.

Animal rights supporters believe that animals have the same rights as humans, and that humans shouldn't use animals in any way, whether for research purposes or as food, clothing, entertainment, medicine – or sometimes, even as pets.¹

Animal rights activists believe very strongly that animals should not be harmed or exploited by humans in any way. They sometimes go to great lengths to impose their views on other people and use a variety of means to advance their cause. Animal farms and research facilities may be targeted in their efforts to eliminate animal research and animal agriculture. Some animal rights activists promote violence and use misinformation in attempts to gain support.



ANIMAL WELFARE: THE FIVE FREEDOMS

The “Five Freedoms” are recognized worldwide to describe the welfare needs of animals cared for by humans. An animal’s welfare needs can be met by providing:



1 FREEDOM FROM HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND THIRST

2 FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS

3 FREEDOM FROM PHYSICAL AND THERMAL DISCOMFORT

4 FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY AND DISEASE

5 FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR

Improved animal care practices are helping farmers to be more productive – chickens lay more eggs, dairy cows produce more milk, beef cattle are ready for market in fewer days, and so on, partly as a result of improved animal care.

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ANIMAL PROTECTION

Canadian provinces and territories have legislation in place to protect the welfare of animals, including farm animals. *The Animal Protection Act* in Saskatchewan, for example, defines animals as being in distress if they are not provided with adequate food, water, care, shelter, or are injured, sick, in pain, suffering, abused or neglected. Animal Protection Officers (APOs) ensure cases of animal cruelty and neglect are investigated, and that the well-being of all animals is protected.

The Criminal Code of Canada prohibits anyone from willfully causing animals to suffer from neglect, pain or injury. *The Health of Animals Act*³ and *The Meat Inspection Act*⁴ are federal laws that also help protect animals' health.



FARMERS FOLLOW CODES OF PRACTICE

Codes of practice are nationally developed standards for animal care that are followed by all people who look after and handle farm animals.⁵ There is a code of practice for each species of livestock (dairy cows, beef cattle, pigs, chickens, etc.).

Many experts in animal care, from farmers and veterinarians to provincial animal protection authorities and animal welfare specialists, are involved in development of the codes.⁶ They also ask for input from the public to take into account societal values.

Treating animals humanely is the right thing to do.

Temple Grandin is an expert on farm animal behaviour, handling and welfare. Through groundbreaking research and the lens of her own autism, Temple Grandin has strongly influenced farm animal handling facility design and welfare practices around the world.

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