

Animal Welfare: An Important Aspect of Animal Management

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Introduction

Animal welfare covers the responsibilities that humans have when it comes to the treatment of animals in captivity. There are many different situations where animals are held in captivity by people. From farms raising animals for food and zoos to laboratories that run animal testing and circuses, the range of different situations where animals are captive is vast and shocking.

Animal welfare refers to the responsibility that humans have when it comes to the treatment of these animals. That can include how they are housed, how they're handled, the management of their lives and living situations, their medical status and treatment, and their well-being in general. All of these issues are important for the overall well-being of these captive animals.

5 freedoms of animal welfare:

The 5 freedoms of animal welfare were first published in the United Kingdom in response to a 1965 government report on livestock husbandry.

- Freedom From Hunger & Thirst
- Freedom From Discomfort
- Freedom From Pain, Injury, Disease
- Freedom To Express Normal Behaviour
- Freedom From Fear Or Distress

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst:** The idea behind this is that animals in captivity have the right to food and water to maintain full health and vigour. This is a basic right that all living creatures should be granted.



2. **Freedom from Discomfort:** By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. **Freedom from pain, injury or disease:** By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. **Freedom to express normal behavior:** By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.



5. **Freedom from fear or distress:** By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Why Animal Welfare Exists?

Animal welfare exists because we live in an imperfect world for non-human animals. For as long as humanity has existed, humans have used animals as tools. From horses for transportation to dogs as companions and everything in between and while the human use of animals many years ago was mainly used for survival, that time has come and gone. The use of animals for food, protection, transport, and beyond are no longer needed for survival. However, there are huge markets for animal products and endless money invested in making people think they still need animal products in today's day and age.

Marketing in the food industry tells people that they need animal protein, something that simply is not true. Marketing in the automobile and fashion industries tell people they need leather, something else that is simply not true and while we are seeing the downfall of circuses and animal-themed parks, they still exist and attract large numbers of support and visitors. With all of that said, billions of animals are still held in captivity and slaughtered every year for human use. That means the consumption as food, clothing, and testing for products used by people. Animal welfare exists because it needs to exist. Major change isn't going to happen overnight. And while veganism and cruelty-free products are both becoming more popular, the percentage of people following these lifestyles is still a very small minority.

Animal welfare advocates work to improve the lives of animals in captivity. And while many would love to see a world where animals aren't used as products and tools, they know that isn't the reality right now. Like with any movement or cause, there will always be a wide spectrum of beliefs and interpretations by the people fighting for the cause.



The role of animal welfare in dealing with animal abuse, cruelty and neglect:

In addition to the many programs and policies developed to improve standards of care and wellbeing for animals, animal welfare proponents also work to end animal abuse. Animal abuse comes in many forms, but for purposes of simplification, can be separated into two major categories: abuse that occurs as a result of negligence (failure to act properly) or harm that results from deliberate acts. The lines are sometimes blurred between what is intentional and what is not, and cases are decided on the basis of case-specific facts.

Every state now has felony laws against animal cruelty, but they vary tremendously from state to state in the acts they designate as felonies, and in the punishment they impose



for those crimes. In the case of neglect, abuse can be the result of ignorance, such as when a pet owner didn't recognize that a pet needed veterinary treatment; or when it is the result of behavior that a person should have known would cause harm to animals but allowed to continue.

Abuse can also be the result of overt cruelty to animals. Deliberate acts of cruelty include torture, beating or maiming animals as well as activities such as dog fighting, which result in severe pain, injury and death to the animals involved. Deliberate acts of abuse warrant the most severe penalties, not only because of their shocking nature and the immediate harm they inflict, but also because there are well known connections between abuse to animals and violence against people.

Conclusion:

It's a tragic reality that the intersection of human and animal lives so often results in pain and suffering for animals. Strengthening welfare standards not only improves the lives of animals; it can also educate the public about the harsh conditions animals face in places like factory farms and laboratories. The conversation around animal welfare is constantly evolving, and it features many different viewpoints even from advocates with the same ultimate goals. Still, this ongoing dialogue and the actions it inspires continue to pull our society toward better conditions for animals. One day, progress in our movement ideally will result in all animals' liberation from the worst of human treatment.