

Animal Welfare, Animal Rights: What's the Difference?

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Animal welfare

“Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry and humane treatment.”ⁱ

“Protecting an animal's welfare involves providing for its physical and mental needs. Ensuring animal welfare is a human responsibility that includes consideration for all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and, when necessary, humane euthanasia.”ⁱⁱ

Five Freedomsⁱⁱⁱ

The concept of Five Freedoms originated with the *Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems*, the Brambell Report, December 1965 (HMSO London, ISBN 0 10 850286 4). This stated that farm animals should have freedom “to stand up, lie down, turn around, groom themselves and stretch their limbs,” a list that is still sometimes referred to as Brambell’s Five Freedoms.

The welfare of an animal includes its physical and mental state and we consider that good animal welfare implies both fitness and a sense of well-being. Any animal kept by man, must at least, be protected from unnecessary suffering. We believe that an animal's welfare, whether on farm, in transit, at market or at a place of slaughter should be considered in terms of 'five freedoms'. These freedoms define ideal states rather than standards for acceptable welfare. They form a logical and comprehensive framework for analysis of welfare within any system together with the steps and compromises necessary to safeguard and improve welfare within the proper constraints of an effective livestock industry.

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain full health and vigour.
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 Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

5. Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The Five Freedoms is frequently referenced by animal welfare professionals across the world, especially in relation to farm animal care.

Animal rights

“Animal rights is the philosophy of allowing non-human animals to have the most basic rights that all sentient beings desire: the freedom to live a natural life free from human exploitation, unnecessary pain and suffering, and premature death. This is what the animal rights movement is about; it is not about working for equality between human and non-human animals.”^{iv}

“Animal rights means that animals deserve certain kinds of consideration – consideration of what is in their best interests, regardless of whether they are “cute,” useful to humans, or an endangered species and regardless of whether any human cares about them at all. It means recognizing that animals are not ours to use – for food, clothing, entertainment or experimentation.”^v

Strategies for minimizing challenges caused by animal rights groups.

Do the right thing. Always.

- Have and use an animal care code of conduct that outlines your farm's or company's expectations for animal welfare. Every person in contact with livestock should sign off on this document.
- Hire the right people, for the right reasons. Skills and strength are important in certain jobs, but go beyond that. Consider a person's temperament, and do not allow individuals with challenges (such as anger management issues) to work in close contact with animals.
- Train and retrain. Ensure every person understands the law, regulations, code of practice and expected procedures and policies. If an individual has trouble initiating a task (such as euthanasia) retrain that individual or reassign him or her.
- Establish a reporting system within your business that establishes how employees can raise animal welfare concerns. Ensure all concerns raised receive appropriate recognition and follow-through.
- When something goes wrong, document it. Outline what happened, and what you will commit to doing to ensure it does not happen again.

Animal rights protesters' focus on livestock transport

Over the past few years, animal rights activists have been holding protests outside of processing facilities. Most activists attending these events are committed to quietly observing trucks entering slaughter facilities. Recently, a growing number of activists, particularly in Ontario, Canada, have attempted to block trucks from entering. Activists have also been known to attempt to feed and

water animals, climb onto trailers to take images or make contact with livestock. Occasionally, activists argue with transport drivers.

What you can do:

- Establish communication and expectations with the plant.
- Assume you are being filmed, and act accordingly. Activists frequently post videos of their encounters to social media pages.
- If activists are blocking your truck, or if they are too close to safely move forward, stay inside your truck and contact plant security or police for assistance.
- Do not engage in conversation with activists, beyond asking them to move out of the way.
- Avoid use of truck horns. This causes distress for the animals, and inhibits your ability to communicate with plant security and police.
- Once protestors move away, verify it is safe to proceed and move the truck ahead.
- If protestors approach the truck again, stop the truck, warn them again, and call the police.
- Do not engage in physical or intimidating contact with any protestor.
- If you feel you or your property are threatened, contact the police.

Social media:

- For farmers and transporters who are active on social media, it is best not to engage in arguments with animal rights activists.
- End the conversation with individuals who antagonize. Block them if you need to.
- Ensure your security settings (photos, physical location, personal information) are not available to public view.

References

ⁱ OIE (World Organization for Animal Health). Chapter 7.1. Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare. Terrestrial Animal Health Code 2010. Available at http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_1.7.1.htm.

ⁱⁱ American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Animal Welfare: What is it? Available at <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/AnimalWelfare/Pages/what-is-animal-welfare.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ Farm Animal Welfare Council. Available at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121007104210/http://www.fawc.org.uk/freedoms.htm>

^{iv} The Vegetarian Resource Group. <http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/animalrights.htm>

^v People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). What do you mean by animal rights? Available at <http://www.peta.org/about-peta/faq/what-do-you-mean-by-animal-rights/>