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## **Animal Rights, Government Regulations, and Rural Economies: An Examination of Factors Contributing to the Economic Future of Rural Communities**

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### *Abstract*

The purpose of this paper is to examine the increased role animal-rights organizations play in shaping attitudes and regulations that impact the long term viability of rural economies. The animal-rights movement is comprised of a highly diversified, often secretive, loosely linked network of groups. This creates a certain amount of difficulty in describing "first hand" the attitudes, values, and goals of these groups. A variety of animal production and other animal based industries were examined in terms of their contribution to rural, as well as state, economies. Secondary data analysis was performed on several sociological, animal rights, hunting and trapping, and agricultural texts, journals, and articles, which are cited throughout the text and in the bibliography. In addition telephone and personal interviews were used to gain additional information and insights. A discussion of new social movements and the appropriateness of including the animal-rights movement within this framework is developed. The research indicates conditions within the social structure conducive to violent and nonviolent conflict between animal-rights advocates and members of the community engaged in animal production as well as other animal related activities. In addition, the research suggests the animal-rights movement is having, and will continue to have, an impact on those segments of the economy related to animal production, and/or utilization.

## Introduction

The advocacy of animal rights has existed in some form for a considerable period in American society. According to Rollin, (1990:3456), "animal welfare concerns date back over 200 years but were primarily concerned with issues of cruelty." Certainly these groups would not have been defined as constituting a significant social movement. Indeed, until recent times, many if not most, Americans were unaware of the animal-rights movement or its associated agenda.

The concerns of modern animal-rights organizations move well beyond the issues of animal cruelty and welfare to challenge every facet of human/animal interaction. "This revolution entails a significant revision in traditional ways of conceiving our moral obligations to other creatures" (Rollin 1990:3458). Activities targeted by these groups include hunting, trapping, institutional research, zoo keeping, agriculture, and rodeo.

It is important to examine the future role of the animal-rights movement in shaping public opinion and government policy concerning the legitimate use and treatment of animals. These social changes could impact rural economies and lifestyles. "Although the animal-rights movement now involves only a small portion of society, it is strong and can be expected to become more influential in the future" (Larkin 1990:561).

Factors associated with the decline of rural economies in recent years included such things as, decreasing land values, increased costs of production, shrinking markets, unmanageable debt to asset ratios, and stagnant market prices for many farm products (Heffernan 1985; Buttel, et al. 1990). The animal-rights movement is presently directing efforts toward farm and animal policy which could have an overall negative impact on a variety of sectors within rural economies, potentially exacerbating the "farm crisis".

### **Animal Rights and Animal Welfare**

A critical issue that needs to be addressed is the extent to which people believe animals have rights, and how easily beliefs are influenced. If attitudes concerning animal's rights were placed along a continuum, we would find some individuals who believe animals have no rights at all, and others who think they have the same rights as humans. Most people's attitudes would be reflected somewhere between these two extremes.

There seems to be some confusion in the literature concerning the distinction between animal "rights" and animal "welfare". According to Adams (1991:10), "animal rights activists have worked to blur the lines between animal rights and animal welfare and the two terms are often used interchangeably by the public and the media." The National Pork Producers

Council defines animal welfare as "the advocacy of the humane treatment of all animals", and animal rights as "the advocacy of the philosophy that all animals have virtually the same rights (and feelings) as humans" (National Pork Producers Council 1991:2).

Many groups promoting animal welfare indicate that animals should be treated humanely, but that humane treatment does not preclude using animals for food, clothing, research, or entertainment. To believe that animals and man exist with the same rights is anthropomorphism, or the humanizing of animals. Anthropomorphism is viewed as a mechanism by which animal-rights advocates are attempting to change the symbolic meanings individuals attach to animals.

The animal-rights position concerning the appropriate use of animals by humans differs significantly from groups advocating animal welfare in conjunction with animal use. Animal-rights organizations also incorporate animal welfare into their philosophy, but only as one component of a system of rights that if granted would prohibit most common uses of animals.

According to Ingrid Newkirk, national director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "you cannot find a relevant attribute in human beings that does not exist in animals as well" (Hitt 1988:47). The statement appears to suggest that animals are in essence the same as

humans, and therefore enjoy the same rights. In contrast to Newkirk's position, "philosopher Carl Cohen contends that the possession of 'rights' implies a capacity for moral judgement, a uniquely human virtue" (Greenough 1991:10).

Many animal-rights activists are in favor of encoding the rights of animals into law in the form of an animal "bill of rights" (Rollin 1990; Hitt 1988). Rollin (1990:3459) notes "it follows inexorably that animals too should have their fundamental interests encoded in and protected by rights that enjoy both a legal and moral status." Legal encoding of animals' rights will have a profound impact on a variety of activities including, animal based industry, hunting, fishing, and trapping, all of which are key components of rural economies.

### **New Social Movements and Animal Rights**

The driving force behind most social movements is dissatisfaction, social concern, anger, or outrage with political or social issues and a desire to generate social change. "Social movements empower people to make changes that they could never make as isolated individuals" (Berberoglu 1991:280).

Theorists have indicated "new" social movements are those movements "primarily oriented to civil society and culture, as opposed to the

state, and/or the economic sub-system, their aims broadly being to bring about change through the transformation of values, personal identities, and symbols" (Scott 1990:22). The assumption being made by some theorists is that the new social movements focus less on political mobilization and formal organizational structures, and more on changes in individual values and lifestyles through loosely organized networks and grass roots organizations.

The animal-rights movement appears to contain elements of both old and new social movements. One of the goals of this movement is to change values and lifestyles, and its general organizational structure is somewhat loose, but it is also a politically active movement. This suggests that at least some new social movements are not so dramatically different than their older counterparts, and in reality may better be viewed as a reflection of the modern social milieu from which they have emerged.

### **Organizational Structure and Activities of Selected Animal-Rights Groups**

Social movements can be difficult to assess in terms of their organizational structure. In the case of the animal-rights movement, the organization is comprised of many sub-groups. Any general statements concerning common structure, classification, goals or activities, must be

made with caution. Statements that may be accurate concerning some sub-groups may be false with respect to others.

Elements within a particular social movement engaging in morally questionable or illegal activities may desire that their activities remain anonymous. This includes denials of affiliation between members of a social movement and deviant sub-groups which apparently act in concert with the goals and objectives of the larger organization.

Organizations within the animal-rights movement have grown dramatically in the past 10 years. According to the Animal Industry Foundation (1989), there are about 7,000 animal protection groups in the U.S. today, about 400 of these groups consider themselves "hard-core" regarding animal rights and control a combined budget of 50 to 75 million dollars a year ("Animal Welfare versus Animal Rights" 1991). Many of these groups are recently formed. One notable example of a "new" animal-rights organization would be a group calling itself, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). PETA was founded in 1980 by Ingrid Newkirk the group's national director. At present, PETA has approximately 65 staff members, over 250,000 individual dues paying members, and an annual budget of around 10 million dollars (National Pork Producers Council 1991).

This group publishes a bimonthly newsletter as well as the PETA, *Guide to Compassionate Living*. In addition, PETA sponsors and participates in conferences, lobbies for animal rights at the local, state, and federal levels, and actively organizes chapters in colleges and high schools.

PETA representatives claim they do not support violent activism, yet they have been linked with groups that do. PETA co-founder Alex Pacheco says his group is against violence yet, "PETA often has videotapes and issues press releases shortly after break-ins attributed to the Animal Liberation Front, an underground activist group" (Anderson 1990:96).

Recent PETA activities directed toward the animal industry have drawn considerable national attention. On May 30th, 1991 PETA members threw a pie in the face of the 19-year-old Iowa Pork Queen at the World Pork Exposition. While this type of act may seem humorous to some, it is in human terms exploitative of the person who was assaulted. This act also shows that members of this group will engage in extremist behaviors toward innocent people in order to get publicity.

On August 9, 1991 PETA purchased a full page advertisement in *The Des Moines Register* newspaper. The advertisement compared the recent mass killing of humans committed by Jeffrey Dahmer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with the slaughter of animals for human consumption.

Kathy Guillermo, a PETA spokesperson was quoted in Howlett (1991:3A) as saying "we saw in our minds a very clear comparison. The point is, abuse is abuse regardless of the species." The tone of the Howlett's article indicated many people did not agree with PETA's tactics concerning this particular issue. If PETA's goal was to draw public attention they were successful.

Other prominent animal-rights groups include, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). This group is difficult to place within the framework of the more radical elements of the animal-rights movement because of the Humane Society's positive public image. Generally when people hear about the Humane Society it is in reference to pet adoptions, animal shelters, or public service announcements concerning responsible pet ownership.

The Humane Society is intimately involved in areas other than those previously mentioned. The Humane Society actively promotes reforms in practices related to farm animals. Included are demands for reforms in livestock care, transportation, housing, and treatment. HSUS pamphlets offered to the public include titles like, *Breakfast of Cruelty* and *Livestock Cruelties: State Legislative Action Packet*. The inference drawn is that farmers treat animals cruelly and therefore their activities should be regulated even more closely by the government.

The Humane Society also publishes anti-hunting and anti-trapping information. An HSUS advertisement in the October, 1991, *Animals' Agenda* magazine offers readers, *The Shame of Fur Campaign Packet* for a price of five dollars (Bartlett and Greanville 1991). This packet is described as an activist kit designed to help spread the word about animals used in the fur trade. An examination of the materials reveals that the campaign encourages subscribers to use humiliation tactics to discourage individuals from wearing clothing made from fur.

The Humane Society of the United States has approximately 850,000 dues paying members. This organization also publishes a periodical titled, *Children and Animals*, a magazine for teachers of pre-K to sixth grade students. According to John A. Hoyt, HSUS president, "We (HSUS) work through education, legislative, investigative, and legal means to eliminate cruelty and promote animal rights" (National Pork Producers Council 1991:13).

The Humane Society is highly organized and has a broad-based structure in place throughout the United States. The literature published by this group acknowledges their desire to change attitudes and laws concerning animals. Moreover, the Humane Society has sufficient membership, funding, and influence, to allow them at least to some degree, to accomplish this goal.

The Humane Society of the United States and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals are two of the most well known animal rights groups but they are not necessarily the groups presenting the strongest case against farm animal production. The Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM), is an organization specifically devoted to farm animal rights and regulations. This group has an estimated 10,000 dues paying members.

FARM, like other animal-rights organizations, publishes literature and is involved in social activism. This group sponsors national campaigns such as the "Great American Meatout" (March 20) and "World Farm Animals Day" (October 2). The Great American Meatout is an educational campaign designed to alert Americans to the health risks of eating meat and to encourage them to kick the "meat habit." World Farm Animals Day memorializes animals slaughtered for human consumption through exhibits, marches, memorial services, and vigils. In 1990, ten countries and 50 cities took part in these activities. "FARM is strictly a vegetarian group, with a direct focus on ending livestock and poultry production" (National Pork Producers Council 1991:17).

The Animal Liberation Front (ALF), is the final group that will be examined in detail. ALF is generally recognized as being among the most radical animal-rights organizations. ALF and another group, Bands of Mercy, have moved beyond peaceful social protest into the area of violent

militant activism. Their activities promote a philosophy of animal "liberation."

The organizational structure of these groups is difficult to assess due to their desire for secrecy. Alperson notes, "an array of militant, masked animal liberation groups periodically resort to extreme and illegal actions" (Alperson 1988:29). Actions include raids on laboratories, releasing test animals, arson, and bombings. Many of these activities have been carried out on college and university campuses. The Justice Department of the United States has listed many of ALF's activities as "terrorist" incidents. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has put ALF on its list of domestic terrorist organizations. The literature indicates by 1990 over 6,000 direct violent actions had been carried out by animal liberationist's groups (National Pork Producers Council 1991:6).

Acts of violence against people for the sake of animals has generated fear and concern among the agricultural and research communities. Evidence of this concern can be found in *The Pork Producers Handbook on Animal Welfare/Animal Rights* publication (National Pork Producers Council 1991). This document contains a section titled, "Security and Animal Rights Activism". The information in this section is directed primarily toward livestock producers.

Producers are advised to engage in "threat assessment" in order to determine the degree to which they may be a vulnerable target for animal-rights activities. Producers are also advised to, maintain a low profile, secure buildings and vehicles, avoid revealing personal information to strangers, and to avoid setting predictable patterns in their travels and daily schedules. The information also includes a detailed "Bomb Threat Report Form" for commercial as well as individual producers (National Pork Producers Council 1991).

One might question if this type of information is really necessary. However, a more interesting point for the social scientist may be found in the fact that animal industry representatives *believe* it is necessary. In other words, the activities of some animal-rights groups have generated enough fear to produce this kind of reaction. In addition, the animal-rights groups directly responsible for violent actions largely remain hidden and are reported to receive support and protection from groups like PETA (Kuntz 1990; Anderson 1990; Holden 1987). According to Anderson (1990:96), "the animal-rights movement is a national movement with considerable circumstantial evidence of conspiratorial behavior." This suggests that animal-rights movement comprises a network of mutually supportive sub-groups striving for common goals, including, the elimination of meat in the human diet.

### **Animal Production, Animal Rights, and Rural Economies**

Animal production in the United States is a central component of many rural economies. The nature of this contribution varies by state and county. In addition, animal production impacts the economy in a variety of ways, some of which are indirect and difficult to assess.

It is even more difficult to provide clear examples of how the animal-rights movement is impacting rural economies. Part of the reason is related to the fact that the animal-rights movement is a fairly recent social phenomenon and there will be a lag period before the impact can be comprehended. Given this fact, research in this area must be considered exploratory.

The animal-rights movement consistently depicts modern American farms as "factory farms". The inference is, the days of the family farm are gone and these "idyllic" entities are being replaced by cold, impersonal animal factories. Mason notes, "Farms like the one of my childhood are rapidly being replaced by factory farms. On factory farms there are no pastures, no streams, no seasons, not even night or day" (Mason and Singer 1990:12). The author also indicates that a majority of hogs are raised in total confinement systems in which the hogs never see daylight until they are loaded on trucks to be transported for slaughter. The veracity of such statements has been the subject of considerable debate.

It is true that the numbers of family farms have declined dramatically since the early part of this century. However, according to the Animal Industry Foundation, "Of the 2.2 million farms in the U.S. in 1989, 87% are owned by an individual or a married couple responsible for operating the farm". In addition, if partnerships between relatives are considered, 97% of U.S. farms are family owned and operated (Animal Industry Foundation 1989:9).

Farming in the United States is a business and therefore producers must be profitable in order to survive. According to the Wisconsin Agri-Business Foundation, "Because the profit margin per animal is usually small, the farmer needs to raise many birds or animals in order to realize a profit" (Wisconsin Agri-Business Foundation 1989:6). Modern farming technologies have allowed producers to adapt to demands for increased production and cost containment. "In 1900 one U.S. farmer fed just 7 people. In 1987 one U.S. farmer fed 78 people" (Wisconsin Agri-Business Foundation 1989:4).

Agricultural production has a complex impact on the economic activity in a particular state or community. Actual dollar sales are only a small part of the overall picture. In the case of South Dakota, Beutler notes, "The impact of the \$13.2 billion agriculture industry on South Dakota's economy is dramatic (three times larger than any other industry in

the state). Changes in agriculture profoundly affect the economic vitality of nearly all non-agricultural industries in the state" (Beutler 1991:4).

Beutler's research identifies three impacts of agriculture on the economy: **Direct Effects** - Actual dollar sales, costs, and wages paid in a particular agricultural industry. **Indirect Effects** - Added economic activity generated by input suppliers and output users. **Induced Effects** - Added economic activity generated as employees and business owners, (many of whom are farmers), spend money in their communities. Lambert (1992) refers to this as multiplier effects.

The largest agricultural industry in South Dakota is the beef industry. The economic impact of the beef industry is approximately \$6 billion or 45% of the total economic impact of agriculture. The entire livestock industry has an \$8.7 billion impact on the state's economy or 65% of the total for agriculture. In addition to beef production, dairy contributes \$1.4 billion to the economy and swine production \$939 million (Beutler 1991). Clearly, states like South Dakota are highly dependent upon animal production for their economic well being. While the economies of many states in the Midwest, Plains, Southwest, and Rocky Mountain regions are largely impacted by animal production, others in New England, Mid Atlantic, and Far West states are not. Some states with highly diversified economies and large urban centers do produce, process, and sell large

numbers of livestock. However the relative contribution these activities have on the overall state economy is less significant than in many rural states where the economy revolves around agriculture (see Table 1). In an interview with C. Lambert (1992) of the National Cattlemen's Association, he stated that "the percentage of personal income that comes from the sale of cattle and calves ranges from nearly 18% in Nebraska to less than .01% in Alaska. Total economic activity associated with the beef industry was on the order of \$365 billion in 1989, or 7% of the U.S. Gross National Product."

As Table 1 indicates California actually has larger cattle cash receipts than South Dakota but the relative contribution to the economy is dramatically different. The commitment by the public to support and maintain animal production industries must at least at some level be related to economics.

Again, the information in Table 1 is only a partial picture of the contribution animal production makes to these state's economies because the figures focus exclusively on cattle. For example, people in Iowa derive 4.52% of their personal income from cattle sales. However, in Iowa, hog production is a larger industry than cattle. We can assume that hog and cattle production together have a huge impact on Iowa's economic viability. Iowa has been referred to as a state where farm income, and the state

TABLE 1. CONTRIBUTION OF CASH RECEIPTS FROM SALES OF CATTLE AND CALVES TO TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME BY STATE, 1989.

State	Personal Income (in \$ mil.)	Cattle Cash Receipts (in \$ mil.)	Cattle as % of Personal Income
Iowa	44,856	2,027.0	4.52
Kansas	41,916	3,752.5	8.95
Nebraska	25,772	4,633.8	17.98
North Dakota	9,047	443.1	4.90
South Dakota	10,022	1,455.6	14.52
Texas	263,588	5,049.8	1.92
California	576,489	1,504.8	.26

Source: American Cattlemen's Association, 1991.

treasury, rise and fall with the hog market ("At Stake--Iowa's Future, Animal Agriculture 1991).

A recent editorial in the *Des Moines Register* ("At Stake--Iowa's Future, Animal Agriculture" 1991) responded to the advertisement run by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals comparing the Dahmer murders to livestock processing, framed the concerns of many farm people. "Animal agriculture is under siege from an assortment of causes that range from the caring to the kooky, and livestock farmers are defensive about it. Understandably. Their livelihood and way of life are threatened" ("At Stake--Iowa's Future, Animal Agriculture" 1991:2).

The article asks questions this research is attempting to address. What would a reduction in meat consumption do to farms, businesses, and rural communities in states with economies dependent upon animal production? How many more family farms can America lose before farming as a way of life is also lost? Concrete answers are lacking. What is clear is the animal-rights movement is targeting agricultural production. Changes in animal production and rural lifestyles as a result of the animal-rights movement's activities are at this point inevitable.

### **Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing and Rural Economies**

Outdoor recreational activities associated with the harvesting of fish or game contribute significantly to the economies in many rural communities. Farmers, the animal industry, and sportsmen (men and women), have several things in common even though they themselves may not always realize it. First, their lifestyle is commonly linked to the rural environment. In the case of farmers, hunters, and trappers, their numbers are declining and their activities are being more highly regulated by the government. Finally, each of these activities is under fire from the animal-rights movement.

As American society has become more urbanized, many individuals have lost contact and identity with both agricultural production and wildlife

management and utilization. Generally, urban dwellers have little contact with animals other than pets. "The consuming public today is generally unaware of farmers' relationship to their animals and how meat, milk, and eggs are produced on modern farms" (Animal Industry Foundation 1989). Similar misunderstandings abound concerning wildlife, wildlife management and wildlife based economic activities. Animals such as deer have a tendency to overpopulate, starve, and create road hazards. Hunting has been shown to be the only effective method in controlling deer populations.

Of all outdoor activities, trapping has received the most criticism from animal-rights groups. The necessity for trapping can be examined from a number of different perspectives. Furbearers are wild animals which have traditionally been harvested for the clothing industry. In addition, many furbearing animals are predators, and have been known to kill pets, livestock, and domestic fowl. Historically, these animals have been trapped, hunted, and poisoned to reduce predation. Predation is still a problem in many rural areas of the United States (See Table 2).

Table 2 refers only to sheep. Many other domestic farm animals are subject to predators including hogs, chickens, cattle, turkeys, and any other farm raised creature that might provide a meal.

Remember farmers and ranchers lost almost 22 million dollars in sheep alone to predators in 1990. According to the group, Fur Takers of

**TABLE 2. LOSSES OF SHEEP AND LAMBS FROM PREDATORS, NUMBER OF HEAD AND TOTAL VALUE, UNITED STATES, 1990**

Predator	Number of Head	% of Total Predators	Total \$ Value
Coyotes	311,900	63.7	13,555,500
Dogs	66,400	13.6	3,424,875
Mountain Lions	16,800	3.4	814,875
Eagles	17,700	3.6	622,500
Bobcats	13,600	2.8	493,750
Foxes	12,800	2.6	451,550
Bears	8,000	1.6	454,475
All Other Animals	43,300	8.7	1,878,175
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>489,500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21,695,700</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1990.

America (1985), "trappers perform a valuable free service to taxpayers by controlling animal populations. Without trapping, the state would have to do this at taxpayer expense." This group further notes that in *one* state the conservation department responded to 2,587 animal damage complaints at a cost of \$63,856 to taxpayers. In this same state trappers harvested 553,000 animals at no cost to the taxpayer.

This does not necessarily justify trapping. It does however point out the fact in some areas animal control is necessary and that the alternatives for control are limited. In addition, the need to control wild animal damage is not limited to predation. Beaver and muskrats commonly damage crops

and weaken earthen dams and levees through tunneling activities. Ultimately, the need for animal control will remain, even though society may become increasingly uncomfortable with the ways in which it is done.

Other arguments made in favor of trapping include, control of animal overpopulation, protection of public health, and economic benefits to trappers and workers in the fur industry. Criticisms against trapping focus largely on the issue of cruelty. Many people feel that the pain inflicted on trapped animals does not justify any benefits that might be gained.

In an interview with J. Henke of the National Trappers Association (1992), he noted that the fur industry generates approximately \$900 million in the United States. Most trappers are "part timers" in that trapping is not their sole source of income. A smaller number of people do engage in trapping as their major occupation. In addition, some individuals own and operate fur ranches raising mostly mink and foxes. These people tend to rely on fur production as their major source of income.

Hunting in the U.S. is a big business. Approximately 16 million people buy hunting licenses each year. The amount spent on state hunting license fees for 1990 was \$778 million. About 31 million people buy fishing licenses. In an interview with T.A. Wolter of the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America (1992), he noted that "each year sportsmen (hunters and

fishermen), contribute \$38 billion to the nation's economy through the purchase of guns, ammunition, food, lodging, bait, tackle, fuel, etc." Much of this money is spent in rural areas where these activities are located. Most of the money available for wildlife conservation comes from licenses, taxes, fees, and donations paid by sportsmen. Eliminating these funds would have a direct impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Hunting, trapping, and the raising of fur bearing animals are controversial activities. Many animal-rights groups advocate a total ban. Their efforts are primarily focused on changing peoples' attitudes toward animals, and humans who use animals. These groups also promote change through legislative action. "The anti-organizations have concentrated on wildlife. In one year, 68 anti-trapping and anti-hunting bills were introduced in 30 state legislatures" (Wildlife Legislative Fund of America 1991).

Unfortunately, the debate over trapping and hunting often digresses into name-calling by both those who support these activities and individuals who are against them. Both groups seem to understand the politics of labeling. It may be that the future rules regarding wildlife management, and animal production in general, will be at least partially dependent upon which group is most successful at applying negative labels.

## Conclusion

The animal-rights movement is becoming a powerful, well funded, and highly organized movement. Through the process of labeling, some animal-rights groups are attempting to define farmers, hunters, trappers, fishermen and people who wear fur, and even people who eat meat, as cruel and uncaring in their attitudes toward animals.

Farm animal production and outdoor recreational activities are important components of rural economies and lifestyles. In states, like Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska, they are the base of an entire state's economic viability. Changes in laws and regulations, as well as changes in eating habits, will have a negative impact on ag-dependent communities. In addition, there is an entire culture in the United States built around farming and outdoor activities. As urbanization increasingly becomes the norm, the understanding of rural life and rural people will continue to diminish.

The debate concerning animal rights really centers around definitions. Proponents on both sides of the issue would like to become the definers. The issue is not so much whether animals do or do not have rights since this can not be proven , rather the issue is whether or not people will come to *redefine* animals as having rights.

The meanings we attach to any object influence our behavior toward it. Most people seem to be more concerned about animal welfare rather

than animal rights as they are strictly defined. In other words, for many people the fact that you eat meat or enjoy outdoor sports does not automatically classify a person as condoning cruelty or mistreatment of animals.

It is at best difficult to predict the future impact this emergent social movement will have on attitudes, values, and behaviors. This is especially true in that we don't know what the strength or commitment of the inevitable "backlash" movements against the animal-rights position will be.

The willingness of some radical animal-rights groups to use violence has to be a social concern. Moreover, the complicity between violent and non-violent animal-rights groups suggests these kinds of activities will continue. There seems to be some form of irony created when humans treat one another in a cruel and inhumane fashion in order to protest humans treating animals in a cruel and inhumane fashion. In addition, the idea of hog farmers keeping their "Bomb Threat Report Forms" by the phone, just in case of an emergency suggests there may be need for greater social dialogue pertaining to this issue.

States already have a number of laws prohibiting cruelty and other forms of animal abuse, though they may or may not be adequate. In addition, laws concerning the use and manipulation of wildlife are generally strict. With the emotional arguments that are being made it will be difficult

for many people to look beyond the "cause" and consider the impact of animal oriented legislation. At least one consequence will be a loss of jobs and income in rural areas that are already experiencing financial difficulty. The articulation of this issue needs to be moved out of the fringes so that sensible suggestions and concerns about animal welfare can be addressed in the absence of threats or denigration.

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