

Tekst 7

Are we right to treat animals the way we do?

From a lecture given by the Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College in the City of London

HOW did the West get the idea that it is perfectly all right to kill animals?

According to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, dominion over animals was granted to the first human couple, Adam and Eve, but that dominion did not extend to killing animals, so food was 22. An important influence came from the pagan side. The pagan Greek philosophers had an evenly matched debate on whether it was all right to kill animals. The most influential of the anti-animal views was that of the ancient Stoics, who started around 300BC. They had a striking and in many ways a very humane view. All rational beings are bound together by bonds of attachment and owe each other justice. 23 all humans are rational, justice is owed to slaves and foreigners. They criticised Aristotle's view of slavery and said there is no such thing as a natural slave.

The 24 the Stoic view was that, in their opinion, no animals were rational, so none belonged to the community to which justice was owed and nothing you did to an animal could be an injustice.

In recent times, a book of 1975 had an exceptional impact, Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*, which in no way condones the violence of the English branch of the Animal Liberation Movement. This is a case of a modern philosophy book having a tremendous impact on our views on 25 and on practices in scientific and medical research. It would be hard for any reader not to be moved by the empirical chapters describing the treatment of animals in scientific research and in factory-farming.

Another leading book, *The Case for Animal Rights*, published by Tom Regan in 1984, offers a different basis. Mammals, and probably many other animals, have rights as individuals not to be harmed, because of their inherent value, and their value is due to their rich mental life.

I applaud the conclusion of these books that we must pay far more attention than we do to the welfare of animals. But I can now

state my chief doubt about the moral basis put forward for the conclusion. It is that the theories take only one main consideration into account, preference-satisfaction or inherent value, just as the ancient Stoics took into account only one factor, rationality. But life is more complex. 26, there is an indefinitely large number of considerations that may need to be taken into account, and there is no limit to how far we may need to expand our imaginations in order to recognise them.

I think that the present order of discussion is the right one. The concrete case of animals makes clearer than an abstract discussion could why multiple considerations are needed.

What consequences would multiple considerations have for recent dilemmas about animals? The country has recently had to consider foxhunting, foot-and-mouth disease, and medical research. A violent version of the animal-support movement harmed the one institution that has 27, in my view, when they recently attacked members of a medical research unit. Of course, medical researchers need to be under constraint not to be cruel, or needlessly wasteful of life, but medical research is a far more serious purpose than cuisine or styles of clothing.

We have just killed over a million healthy farm animals for commercial reasons, in case they became infected with foot-and-mouth disease, having rejected the route of vaccination. 28, it does not look as if any consideration at all was given to animals, and they should surely count for something. All of us who eat animals and animal products are 29 how farm animals are treated, so first we should consider more carefully how we as a country treat farm animals on a massive scale, before we direct a small group of people on how they should treat foxes. When we have put our own house in order, that will be the time to attend to cruelty to foxes.

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Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.

1p 22 ■

- A essential
- B varied
- C vegetarian

1p 23 ■

- A Even if
- B Since
- C Whereas

1p 24 ■

- A added advantage of
- B downside of
- C inconsistency of

1p 25 ■

- A government subsidies
- B the meat industry
- C the power of the Animal Liberation Movement
- D the price of meat

1p 26 ■

- A Fortunately
- B Indeed
- C Ironically
- D Moreover

1p 27 ■

- A considerable justification
- B no obvious purpose
- C serious drawbacks
- D the interest of animals at heart

1p 28 ■

- A Admittedly
- B Even so
- C In this case

1p 29 ■

- A indifferent about
- B indignant at
- C kept in the dark as to
- D responsible for