

# ***“HAPPY PIGS ARE DIRTY” - CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES ON ANIMAL WELFARE***

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## ***AIM***

- This presentation is about the relation between animal production, animal science and society at large
- It will be argued that science based approaches to farm animal welfare must be understood in the context of ethical questions
- And that allowing for a broader dialogue on these questions will be good for both science, animals and democracy



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## ***PLAN***

- Development of animal production - the price of success has been paid by the animals
- Animal welfare from a lay perspective
- To understand the ethical views of the public science must understand its own ethical assumptions



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## ***DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION - THE PRICE OF SUCCESS HAS BEEN PAID BY THE ANIMALS***



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## ***DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION – A SUCCESS STORY (1)***

- Over the last 50 years animal production in the Western world has become increasingly efficient
- In many ways this market-driven development can be viewed as a success story



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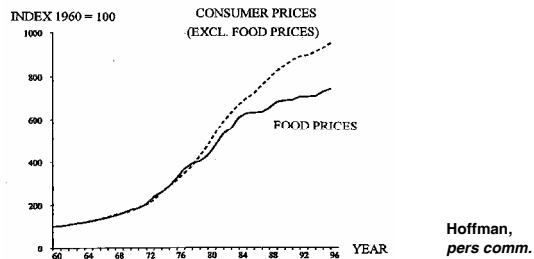
## ***DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION – A SUCCESS STORY (2)***

- Income spend on food: 1970 – 30 % 2000 – 10 % (DK unskilled worker)
- A Dutch worker could in the 1950es buy seven eggs for what he was paid per hour – in 2000 he could buy 400 eggs
- Farmers and farmworkers have maintained an income matching what is common in society



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### DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION – A SUCCESS STORY (3)



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### WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS? (1)

- Also some advantages for animals
  - Improved housing
  - Improved nutrition
  - Some diseases eradicated or reduced



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### WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS (2)

- But some disadvantages for animals
  - Typically less space
  - Barren environments
  - Bred for more efficient production ⇒ production-related diseases



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### SCIENCE MOVES INTO ANIMAL WELFARE

- Animal science has reacted to the growing public awareness of animal welfare problems in agriculture
- By investing in studies regarding animal welfare for production animals politicians could
  - be seen as doing something
  - and respond to the requirement of farming lobby not to interfere without strong arguments
- Often scientific studies regarding the welfare of production animals is presented as a neutral arbiter
- However, this is a highly distorted view



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### ANIMAL WELFARE FROM A LAY PERSPECTIVE



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### INTERVIEWS WITH LAY PEOPLE ABOUT PIG PRODUCTION

- 7 focus group interviews each involving 6-7 lay persons
- Carried out in November 2001 in different parts of Denmark
- Participants were invited to discuss
  - food and food preferences in general
  - pork
  - pig production
  - actors active in relation to the pig/pork-sector



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### **PIGS OUGHT TO BE DIRTY**

*"It is crucial that pigs are dirty. The pigs on these pictures are too clean! You can tell that they are bred in the pig-industry! All the pigs are clean, I don't like that! Here, here is one with a curly tail! A beautifully curled tail, but a little too clean - it ought to be dirty!"*



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### **THEN YOU HAVE TO CUT OFF THE TAIL**

*"A: ... we do so many strange things. Fiddling with nature and the like. If a pig is born with a tail, why not let it keep the tail?"*

*B: But the pigs, they are born to be slaughtered, are they not?"*

*A: They don't know that!*

*C: But if we don't cut their tails – if we don't duck the tails, then they eat each other's tails, and then they get infections, and then there will be a lot of trouble.*

*Interviewer: Then they will look like this (showing a picture of a tail bite)*

*A: Yes ... then you have to cut it off – that is obvious!"*



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### **THAT'S THE WAY NATURE IS**

*"A: [I watched a program on TV the other day] when the sow had brought forth she had one of these things over her – with a hole for each teat so the piglets could come and ... honestly that is disgusting. (...) A sow that is not allowed to use her instincts there, that is a shame. It's a shame, really. (...)*

*Interviewer: And then we have to accept that some are overlaid?"*

*A: Yes. That's the way nature is. I know that from my cat. When my cat has kittens, one or two is overlaid. We just can't do anything about that!"*



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### **TO UNDERSTAND THE ETHICAL VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC SCIENCE MUST UNDERSTAND ITS OWN ETHICAL ASSUMPTIONS**



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### **HOW TO INTERPRET THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EXPERT AND LAY PERSPECTIVE?**

- Three possible models:
  - The deficit model
  - The psychological reality model
  - The value based model



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### **DEFICIT MODEL**

- When lay people make judgements about animal welfare they do so by means of an anthropomorphic approach
- If they had had more knowledge about the relevant facts they would have made different judgments
- Therefore scientists should inform the public about the relevant facts
- And the members of the public will change their judgments accordingly



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### ***"PSYCHOLOGICAL REALITY" MODEL***

- The lay perspective is distorted
- However, there is no point in trying to change the view
- It just has to be taken for granted that that is how people think
- Therefore, experts have to combine their rational approach with recognition of "the political reality"



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### ***VALUE BASED MODEL***

- The lay perspective is to some extent distorted
- However, it also reflects that lay people have values that differ from those values inherent to the expert perspective
- Therefore, there is room for dialogue
- A good starting point is that the expert reflects on the values at stake – including his own



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### ***WHAT IS A GOOD LIFE? –THREE VIEWS***

- ***Perfectionism***
  - What matters is to realise species specific potentials
- ***Preference-satisfactionism***
  - What matters is to get what one wants
- ***Hedonism***
  - What matters is to have pleasant mental states and avoid unpleasant ones



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### ***WHAT IS A GOOD ANIMAL LIFE?***



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### ***ASSESSMENT OF ANIMAL WELFARE – CRITICAL ETHICAL ISSUES***

- ***Conception of animal welfare:*** What counts, ideally speaking?
- ***Purpose:*** Why is it necessary to limit the freedom of the animals or give them a less than perfect deal?
- ***Fairness:*** Where is the focus, on the average, on the animals worst off, or ...?
- ***Baseline:*** If there is a cut-off between acceptable and non-acceptable, what is the baseline?



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### ***CONCLUSIONS***

- There is a need to focus on animal welfare in the development of animal production
- However, there are different views on what is good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable
- The value based model gives the best explanation of the conflicting perspectives
- To be able to engage in a dialogue the experts need to reflect on their own tacit value assumptions
- When you look for them you will find many such assumptions



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