

## Farm animal welfare in society: animal *and* human science

Karel de Greef, Bram Bos and Ferry Leenstra



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### Message

- Widening up the Farm Animal Welfare theme is useful
  - is an animal problem & a human problem
  - Animal science must not monopolise the theme
- Cases demonstrate:
  - clarity and explicit distinction between concerns is useful in the societal debate

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intro

### Different 'loads' to the Animal Welfare definition

What is animal welfare?

- *Broom*: ability to cope
- *Bracke*: QoL as the animal experiences it
- *Brambell*: absence of...; freedom to...
- *Blokhuis*: WQ + market
- *Bos et al.*: ...

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intro

### Philosophically:

- Why does Animal Welfare matter?
  - Who owns the problem decent society !
  - Who defines the problem (which aspects)
  - Who sets the norm
  - ~ Who play a role in the societal welfare process
- **Several actors**
  - policy/governments, farmers representatives, retail, consumers, media, animal scientists

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body

### Animal welfare: more than animal science

animals that are well off according to animal scientists are not by def. in an acceptable position for others

- Who determines when welfare is acceptable?  
different actors -> different attributes and different standards

→ complicated mixture  
we cannot separate components  
but we can distinguish!

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### What is animal welfare (in the societal debate)

- ★ an academic distinction
  1. Suffering / unease (experienced by the animal) (functional)
  2. Respect for the intrinsic value & naturalness (ethical)
  3. Pleasant appearance (aestetical)(Habermas '84: **truth, justness and truthfulness**)

used as base for priorities in future husbandry design

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- ★ an approach closer to animal science:
  1. 'Scientifically Sound Suffering'
  2. Human interpretations of 'being well'

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### Simple approach: make distinction

distinction between 'animal welfare problems' and 'discomfort'

- A. 'Discomfort' for the animals:
  - severity ; duration ; share of population
- B. the human perception of 'good'
  - a wide range of .....

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### Simple approach: make distinction

distinction between 'animal welfare problems' and 'discomfort'

- A. 'Discomfort': those forms of the physical and mental health of animals being affected, whose nature and existence can be established and substantiated scientifically
  - animal directed
- B. 'Good': the human perception of what animals are entitled to and what harms them.
  - a wide range of ethical and aesthetic views, intuitions and ideals which play a role in the public debate on animal welfare

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### the human perception

1. Ethical principles
2. Imputation without actual indications
3. Views on naturalness and its importance
4. Opinions on the relationship between animals and technology
5. Aesthetic opinions

YES,  
a messy set of motives  
and arguments!

But clearly separable from the strict animal orientation

and these elements do matter!

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examples

### Two very Dutch examples

- please realise:
  - NL is a bit specific on AW
    - polder/consensus society
    - market is orientation point
    - 'pig is the new victim of modern slavery practices'
    - animal welfare party in parliament

Two 2007/2008 cases

- governmental policy position paper on animal welfare
- a societal row over farm size increase: mega piggeries

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example 1

### The public policy nota case

National policy on animal welfare promised

" Science: please make an expert list of the main 'welfare problems for farm animals' "

- choice to make distinction:
  - discomfort AND human motives
- clarification in the debate
- clear choice in policy (priorities & arguments)
  - suffering: severity ; duration ; share of population

conclusion: useful!

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example 2

### The Mega-morphosis case

drastic size increase in pig units (>20000 each)  
→ public concern. *What is the national policy?*

- two-faced set of concerns
  - own interest
  - systems rejection : practices in intensive animal production
- Choice of National policy: accept the distinction
  - guard the QoL of the animals, accept reduction in public / social ideal

→ Clarity on the policy on animals involved & some public ease



extra

### Our role as Animal Scientists?

indeed:  
addition (acceptance) of 'human notions'  
requires  
quite some reflection  
on our role as animal scientists

we are not the voice of the animals  
and by no means the ultimate scientific objectifier



conclusion

### take home message

- widening up the Animal Welfare definition

rather aids  
than complicates  
the societal debate

- Animal (welfare) scientists have to find / choose / realise their position in that debate  
and add some reflectivity



<http://www.asg.wur.nl/uk/publications>

