

## Animal welfare and animal integrity



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## Animal Welfare

- During the past 30-40 years there has been a growing recognition within the modern Western culture of animals as ethical subjects.
- The most visible result of this is the different kinds of legislation passed to protect animals from (unnecessary) suffering due to human actions
- Today the welfare of animals is considered a legitimate ethical concern to raise in connection with human use of animals
- There are two main interpretations of the concept of welfare in the ethical debate
  - The narrow perspective
  - The broad perspective

## Eurogroup for Animal Welfare

- In short, Eurogroup for Animal Welfare is opposed to cloning technologies for the following reasons:
  - Due to the inefficiency of the technology, a considerable number of animals are used in order to produce the cloned animals.
  - A large proportion of animals produced by this technology have died shortly after birth as a result of physiological problems and other abnormalities.
  - Many cloned livestock animals are overgrown at the time of birth, which can make birth difficult or necessitate caesarean section delivery.
  - The long-term effects of nuclear transfer cloning on animal welfare are unknown. However, there is now evidence that cloned mice have a significantly reduced life-span in comparison with non-cloned controls and that all animal clones are more likely to suffer from a range of abnormalities, including tumours, liver disease, pneumonia and disorders of the immune system.
    - Mail from Eurogroup for Animal Welfare 07.09.2005

## The narrow perspective

- The basic ethical difference is between joy/happiness and pain/suffering
- Thus it is prima facie ethically wrong to act in way that produces experiences of negative mental states
- All beings capable of experiencing mental states are ethical subjects
- Negative mental states in an animal can be justified by an at least equal raise in positive mental states in other beings
- The experience itself is unimportant. Only the effect on beings capable of experiencing mental states counts

## Blind hens



## The broad perspective

- Not only the mental states of the individual, but also the experiences that induce them are ethically important
- Whether an animal suffers or not, it should be allowed to fulfill its species specific behaviour
- Birds should fly and dogs should sniff strangers in the groin, whether they know the difference or not
- There is an underlying ideal of naturalness
- There is debate whether changes in behaviour could legitimately be induced by humans
- There is an underlying ideal of naturalness – but a debate on the interpretation of naturalness

## Blind hens



## What is animal integrity?

- Integrity = Wholesomeness, fullness
- The idea of animal integrity plays an increasing role in the debate about biotechnological manipulation of animals
- Together with the concept of naturalness it can be understood as terms capturing the ethical concerns hidden under the label "Other moral concerns"
- There are two main interpretations of the concept of integrity in the ethical debate
  - The "scientific" perspective
  - The "philosophical" perspective

## The scientific perspective

- Integrity understood as physical naturalness
  - Genetic integrity
    - Evolution vs. human interference (especially GM)
  - Behavioral integrity
    - The right to procreate naturally and to be a result of natural procreation
- Encompasses not only the individual, but also the species
- Expresses a respect for natural processes

## The great chain of being



## The philosophical perspective

- The concept of integrity understood as expressing the independence of the animal
- The animal is whole/full in itself. An alien that remind us we are not alone
- It is not defined by human use and can not be reduced to a familiar cultural artefact
- The term “Bioreactor” is a symptom of the problem
- The culturalization of the animal violates its integrity
- Integrity expresses an ethical experience of untouchableness

## A pig

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- LOCUS BF078463 437 bp mRNA linear EST 18-OCT-2000
  - [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=nucleotide&dopt=GenBank&list\\_uids=11072293](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=nucleotide&dopt=GenBank&list_uids=11072293)

## A pig



## A pig



## Welfare and integrity

- Ethical concerns about welfare does not exclude concerns about integrity
- Sometimes they come into conflict – should welfare or integrity be protected?
  - Blind hens
  - GM/cloning for disease resistance
- Can be seen as opposite points of departure
  - Welfare: Do what you want, but no pain
  - Integrity: Do nothing, unless justified

## Old wine on new bottles

- Are the ethical concerns about farm animal cloning qualitatively different from other ethical concerns about human use of farm animals?
- Only a few seem genuinely new – the rest is old wine on new bottles
- So why discuss cloning especially, when we – or most of us – have accepted it already?
- There are many historical explanations, but most importantly, cloning might just be:

## The straw that broke the camel's back

- Intensive farming of crocodiles is a new venture, but it represents an old wrong, now done to one more creature. By contrast, whoever first trained caged wild animals to perform acts at which audiences would laugh invented a novel kind of wrong, an addition to the already established list. Even in this case, of course, there were precedents, and if our criteria for novelty are sufficiently strict then, indeed, "there is no new thing under the sun". But then continuity with the past – similarities with what has gone before – is not the crucial consideration. The straw that broke the camel's back was just like the previous one in the bale, yet from the camel's point of view it was a very special straw. Sometimes, indeed, we only appreciate something as distinctive and novel by seeing it as the culminating stage – one that reaches a limit – of a continuous process. So the fact that genetic engineering of animals may be continuous with previous practices, such as dog-breeding or force-feeding, does not mean that it is innocent of committing a new wrong

■ Cooper, David E. (1998): Intervention, humility and animal integrity, in Holland, Allan & Johnson, Andrew (eds): *Animal Biotechnology and Ethics*. Chapman&Hall, London, s. 145-155.

The ethical concerns about farm animal cloning might not be dismissed by pointing to their familiarity, but on the contrary become an occasion to re-evaluate already existing practices