

GUEST EDITORIAL: The uphill battle against animal factories

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Editorial feature:

“Zero grazing” vs. the Five Freedoms

FEW ANIMAL ADVOCATES doubt these days that the use and misuse of more than 47 billion farmed animals worldwide is the most urgent and critical issue before us. Whether one favors ushering humanity toward vegetarianism or veganism, or only more nuanced efforts to reduce and mitigate animal suffering in husbandry and slaughter, animal agriculture involves many times more animals and more misery than all other human activities combined.

MERRITT CLIFTON | [\[print_link\]](#) NOTE: Captions and images are the responsibility of The Greenville Post, not the author.

Indeed, from a third to half of all the birds in the world are factory-farmed chickens. Farmed mammals far outnumber all companion animals and probably all wildlife larger than a dog. Even the highest estimates of the numbers of animals used in laboratories per year appear to be lower than the volume of animals slaughtered for human consumption on most days of the week.

Farm animal welfare has also become a priority for consumers, voters, governments, and even agribusiness itself. Probably the most significant achievement of animal advocacy, recently or ever, is that animal product marketers now feel compelled to use terms such as “cage free” and “free range” in their advertising and on product labels, and that most major U.S. supermarkets now stock vegetarian and vegan products, from block tofu to whole heat-and-serve meatless meals.

Competing animal welfare certifications appear in almost every supermarket refrigerator or egg case, along misleading labels offered by companies who are unwilling to change their methods, yet recognize the importance to the public of at least appearing to be humane.

Some agribusiness front groups continue to resist almost every effort to improve farm animal well-being, even in areas such as disease control, where

better welfare means bigger profits. Yet few agribusiness executives today, even those trying to obstruct or evade legislation to help farm animals, do not at least pay lip service to the ideal of better farm animal welfare.

Widespread concern about the care of farmed animals is of relatively recent origin. Despite a short-lived flurry after Ruth Harrison published *Animal Machines* in 1964, farmed animal welfare was almost absent from mainstream humane literature for most of the 20th century. Peter Singer to some extent directed attention to the treatment of farmed animals in *Animal Liberation*, the 1976 book credited with sparking the animal rights movement, but the first animal rights organizations that focused entirely on farmed animals—the Coalition for Nonviolent Food, Farm Animal Reform Movement, Humane Farming Association, Farm Sanctuary, and United Poultry Concerns—all struggled for nearly two decades in the shadows of organizations focused on vivisection, animal use in entertainment, and other campaigns that do not tend to go so far inside the average person's comfort zone as discussions of diet.

Arguably the most influential person in humane work worldwide in the mid-20th century was Eric Hansen, who at various times headed the Humane Society of Missouri, the American Humane Association, and the Massachusetts SPCA, which were then three of the five largest humane societies worldwide. Hansen saw farm animal welfare as a priority, unlike most of his contemporaries, but from an inverse perspective. Hansen believed, before the rise of factory farming, that the attention to animal welfare offered on the best small family farms of his era could become a model for responsible pet care, and for improving the care of animals in zoos and laboratories.

Hansen had some reason to think so. Despite the certainty of slaughter at an early age, most farmed animals in the mid-20th century got a great deal more fresh air, sunshine, and outdoor exercise than laboratory and zoo animals. Even in the U.S., many dogs and most cats still foraged and hunted on their own for most of their food, were not allowed indoors, and never received veterinary care.

Hansen at the MSPCA dismantled the financially struggling Bands of Mercy, begun by MSPCA founder George Angell to promote humane education, and the Jack London Clubs, begun by Angell's successor Francis Rowley as proto-animal rights groups, which mobilized teens to seek abolition of abuses including dogfighting and animal use in circuses. In place of sponsoring national youth organizations directed by the MSPCA through the subsidiary American Humane Education Society, Hansen forged alliances with the 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers of America. A model farm at the then-MSPCA headquarters taught what was then considered best practice animal husbandry, including the slaughter methods later institutionalized nationally by the Humane Slaughter Act of 1958.

Hansen was aware of the many routine cruelties commonly practiced on small traditional farms, but believed that the influence of humane societies aligned with farmers could introduce gentler methods. By the end of Hansen's MSPCA tenure, however, small traditional farms were already fast disappearing, and whatever possibilities might have evolved as result of Hansen's alliances with 4-H and the FFA were lost.

A Hansen initiative of more enduring success was the 1959 formation of the International Society for the Protection of Animals. Initially an MSPCA subsidiary, ISPA was in 1981 merged with the World Federation for the Protection of Animals, which had been founded in 1953 as a project of the Royal SPCA of Great Britain, and became the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

The World Federation was formed to help rebuild humane societies in western Europe after World War II. Later it sponsored national humane societies in developing nations which had been spun off from the British empire.

By the time WSPA came into being, both founding partner organizations had already often worked in the same places as the livestock gift charities now known as Heifer International, based in the U.S., and Send A Cow, an allied charity based in Britain.

Heifer International and Send A Cow were begun to rebuild animal agriculture in western Europe after World War II. They too expanded into the developing world after western Europe recovered. The Heifer International and Save A Cow founders, like Hansen, believed in the small traditional farms of the mid-20th century U.S. and rural Britain as role models. As in the U.S. and rural Britain, however, that model proved unsustainable. Where Heifer and Send A Cow have succeeded in introducing or reintroducing animal husbandry, as in western Europe, increased animal production has helped to reduce prices and stoke demand for animal products, until the cycle ends with small farms being swallowed up by factory farms which are capable of producing many times more animals, at less cost in human labor.

Elsewhere, in nations where the full cycle has not yet occurred, stimulating animal husbandry has often merely depleted soil and water. The July/August 2010 ANIMAL PEOPLE editorial, for instance, detailed how the effects of doubling livestock production in only 10 years destroyed topsoil and water holding capacity across much of Pakistan, contributing to catastrophic floods.

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Animal welfare guidelines

Even where encouraging animal husbandry has not yet brought either factory farming or eco-disaster, gift livestock recipients who sell the offspring of successful breeding programs to friends and neighbors (who may not have received Heifer or Send A Cow training) have often produced neighborhood animal welfare catastrophes, a tendency ANIMAL PEOPLE examined in May 2003 and January/February 2007.

Under criticism, Heifer International eventually adopted a set of "Animal Well-Being Guidelines," introduced as part of all Heifer-sponsored projects. The seven focal points include:

- * *Giving preference to purchasing animals who are already acclimatized to the area.*
- * *Providing full training to farmers before they receive any livestock.*
- * *Using appropriate shelter and separate pens for animals of different species.*
- * *Teaching zero grazing techniques, which enhances animal health and ensures that adequate food and water are provided.*
- * *Emphasizing nutrition, including providing clean water at least twice a day,*
- * *Encouraging indigenous breeds.*
- * *Providing project participants with all initial vaccinations.*


Most of these guidelines are only the basics of animal care in any captive context, but Heifer International defines "zero grazing" as "keeping livestock in an enclosed, shaded area and carrying fodder and water to them, instead of letting them wander in the open where they are more likely to catch diseases or damage the environment."

Simply translated, "zero grazing" is raising animals in close confinement—the basis of factory farming. Though Heifer International works at the village and family level, and does not undertake corporate-scale developments, the "zero grazing" approach is in effect cultural preparation for accepting factory farming when corporate investors take over the markets that Heifer helps to create.

Of course Heifer International resists recognizing the “zero grazing” policy as a precursor to factory farming. Instead, Heifer International touts it as part of “agroecology,” defined as “the sustainable use and management of natural resources, accomplished by using social, cultural, economic, political and ecological methods that work together to achieve sustainable agriculture production.” Heifer International emphasizes that animals kept in “zero grazing” systems are not overgrazing pastures and eroding hillsides with their hooves—but cultivating the same erosion-vulnerable land to produce high-yield fodder crops has the same net effect, or worse.

Further, instead of grazing animals distributing dung fertilizer wherever they wander, to replenish the topsoil, confined animals leave dung where it is easily collected and sold, or burned for fuel. The net effect—unless the farmers buy chemical fertilizer to rebuild the nitrogen and other nutrient content of their topsoil, and grow and plow under “green manure” crops such as winter wheat—can be more loss of productive land.

RIGHT: Broiler king Frank Perdue in front of a slaughtering line. His son Jim prefers a far more innocent image.

Send A Cow adopted the same animal care guidelines as Heifer  International, plus the Five Freedoms:

* *Freedom from hunger and thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.*

* *Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.*

* *Freedom from pain, injury and disease: by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.*

* *Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.*

* *Freedom to express normal behavior: by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of animals' own kind.*

Heifer International does not promote the Five Freedoms, which were first articulated in 1967 by the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, formed by the British government in response to Animal Machines. This committee in 1979 became the present Farm Animal Welfare Council.

Though not codified into international law as such, the Five Freedoms are the foundation concept behind the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Animals During International Transport (1968), Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes (1976), and Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter (1979). Portions of these conventions have now been enacted in binding form by the European Union. A succession of individuals and organizations have since 1924 sought the adoption by first the League of Nations and later by other bodies a document which has in many amended forms, been variously called An Animals' Bill of Rights, A Declaration of Animal Rights, an International Animals Charter, and A Charter of Rights for Animals. WSPA in June 2000 introduced the current version as the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare, hoping that it might eventually win adoption into international law by the United Nations.

EARLIER VERSIONS had addressed various abuses of farmed animals, but the June 2000 Universal Declaration was the first to pay explicit attention to factory farming, albeit in just one sentence: “Animals raised under the control of humans or taken into captivity by humans should be afforded the provisions of the basic Five Freedoms.”

This one passage in the WSPA version of the Universal Declaration is to date the apparent whole of WSPA policy pertaining to the use of animals for food. Yet WSPA—like the rest of the animal advocacy cause—has become increasingly active on

behalf of farmed animals. WSPA representatives have prominently lobbied for the European Union farmed animal welfare requirements, and for legislation that would improve the lives and ease the deaths of farmed animals in many other venues.

WSPA is scarcely unique in lacking a comprehensive policy delineating what it institutionally believes about farmed animals or the use of animals for food, and what it seeks to do on behalf of these animals. Few animal welfare organizations have comprehensive farmed animal policies.

Partly this may be a matter of oversight: until farmed animal welfare became a focal issue, such policy statements were seldom needed. Animal advocacy organizations may also wish to avoid possibly alienating meat-eating donors, and to avoid becoming marginalized by animal use industry attacks on a vegetarian or vegan policy as “extremist.”

Yet global public opinion may be racing ahead of animal advocacy strategists. Vegetarianism is now relatively well understood in much of the world. The concept of veganism is recognized in Europe and North America.

ANIMAL PEOPLE has editorialized since our very first edition in 1992 that pro-animal organizations should be forthrightly vegetarian in their food presentations at public events, and should *as a matter of policy favor an end to animal slaughter.*

We recognize, however, that even today many pro-animal organizations may remain reluctant—for cultural, strategic, and economic reasons—to define themselves as advocating for vegetarianism. We further understand that for organizations which set standards for animal husbandry—such as Compassion In World Farming, the Royal SPCA of Great Britain, Humane Farm Animal Care, the American Humane Association, and the Animal Welfare Institute—adopting a pro-vegetarian policy could be self-defeating. As a matter of strategy, organizations seeking to improve the well-being of farmed animals here and now are more-or-less obligated to operate as trusted allies of animal producers, whose certifications help producers using methods less onerous for animals to take market share from the rest.

Even as the longterm goal of animal advocacy should be to end the exploitation of farmed animals, reducing the sum of misery resulting from animal husbandry also requires encouraging short-term efforts such as fulfillment of the Five Freedoms.

With that concession acknowledged, ANIMAL PEOPLE believes that even if an

animal welfare organization promotes measures such as the expansion of cage-free egg farms to replace egg production from battery cage farms, promoting the expansion of animal agriculture itself is self-defeating. Moreover, promoting animal agriculture is not what animal advocacy donors support, nor is it what the public expects.

Incoming American Humane Association president Robin Ganzert, for example, went far beyond necessity in declaring in her first public statement that under her tenure, the AHA would not be “accepting extreme ideas purported by those who argue that..people have no right to raise animals for food.” The directors of other organizations that accredit “humane” production methods have not felt a need to denounce animal advocates who believe animals should not be eaten—and agribusiness itself has for the most part accepted vegetarians and vegans as a market sector worth courting.

The global rise of concern about farmed animal welfare has been produced by animal advocates presenting a clear ethical challenge to agribusiness, to which much of the otherwise uninvolved public has responded in a positive way, motivated by personal discomfort about food choices. The effective message has been simply, “This treatment of animals is unacceptable.”

The legislation scaring agribusiness into accepting animal welfare reforms has defined what animals must be able to do—such as stand, turn around, and stretch—while leaving the development of techniques that meet the test of public acceptability mostly up to those who use animals.

The success of this approach is illustrated, ironically, by the debate spotlighted in the July/August 2010 edition of ANIMAL PEOPLE between the Humane Farming Association and the Humane Society of the U.S. over the concessions made by agribusiness representatives to avoid having an initiative similar to one passed in 2008 by California voters on the November 2010 Ohio state ballot. Not so very long ago leading animal advocacy strategists questioned whether political mobilization on behalf of farmed animals could even be done. Now the strategic question is whether the mobilizers are driving the best possible bargain against an industry which clearly wants to minimize public exposure.

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WSPA &amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;amp; Heifer International

Concern about farmed animal welfare has evolved parallel to increasing recognition of the ecological consequences of intensive animal husbandry, including soil erosion, water pollution, and global warming. Much of the public is now at least vaguely aware of ecological arguments against further expansion of animal agriculture. Thus the time is now for animal advocacy organizations to press the case, especially in the wake of major news events such as nationwide outbreaks of salmonella poisoning and natural disasters which have been made hugely worse by inappropriate animal husbandry.

And thus two recent WSPA media releases have stirred considerable discussion, consternation, and feelings of betrayal among some animal advocates.

Neither release appeared to represent an intentional WSPA policy statement. Neither was even seen by WSPA director general Mike Baker prior to distribution. Reflecting a shift away from top-down management under Baker, who became director general in mid-2009, both press releases were authored and distributed by U.S. interim executive director Silia Smith, who has long headed the WSPA Canadian office. Neither media release attracted much media notice. Both, however, were soon widely forwarded by animal advocates.

The first media release, issued on August 23, 2010, was distributed by PRNewswire-USNewswire, and was archived at NewsLibrary, but was apparently not picked up by any mainstream periodicals.

Began the release, "Joining more than 2.2 million people and organizations worldwide, Heifer International today signed on to support the WSPA 'Animals Matter to Me' campaign—a movement to encourage changes in policies and legislation to improve animal welfare worldwide."

What exactly that meant was not clearly explained. Clarified WSPA U.S. communications manager Laura C. Flannery almost a week later, "This means that Heifer signed the following declaration (there was no funding or pledge for funding involved): A universal declaration for animal welfare (UDAW) is crucial to achieving international recognition that animal welfare is important, not only to animals, but also to the people who care for them. By promoting better living standards for animals, we are in fact improving the lives of people. If endorsed by the United Nations, UDAW would become a set of non-binding principles that would encourage nations to put in place or, where they already exist, improve animal welfare laws and standards."

In other words, Heifer International merely endorsed a statement which has already been endorsed by numerous other organizations. Few of the others, if any, rated a WSPA media release. Acknowledged Flannery, "We worked directly with Heifer's communications department to develop and approve this press release." Thus Heifer International saw the release in advance, though Baker did not see it at all, he said, until ANIMAL PEOPLE showed it to him two weeks later.

Heifer International did not issue their own press release. Instead, the WSPA release incorporated Heifer International talking points:

"The health and well-being of animals are vital to our organization's mission to help people obtain sustainable food and income sources," said Terry Wollen, Interim Vice President of Advocacy for Heifer International. "For nearly 65 years, humane animal handling and protection has been one of our cornerstone principles and a vital part of our management and training programs. Today, we proudly affirm to that ideal by supporting WSPA's 'Animals Matter to Me' movement."

Heifer, which recently ranked as one of the top 10 most trusted nonprofits in America, joins more than 266,000 people and 40 organizations in the U.S.—including the American SPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, and International Fund for Animal Welfare to name a few—that have expressed their support for WSPA's campaign.

"We are thrilled that Heifer has joined us in furthering the animal welfare movement," said Silia Smith. "We're confident that the organization's prestige and support will help us reach our goals of changing existing policies and legislation, as well as inspiring positive attitudes toward animals in every corner of the world."

Added an afterword, "Heifer's mission is to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. Since 1944, Heifer International has provided livestock and environmentally sound agricultural training to improve the lives of those who struggle daily for reliable sources of food and income."

Even the most committed vegan abolitionist may concede that Heifer International is larger and wealthier than any animal advocacy charity, and widely recognized and respected, regardless of whether it deserves to be. The Heifer International endorsement may help to advance the Universal Declaration, which if adopted by the United Nations as a covenant similar to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species may hugely benefit all animals.

Accordingly, a press release announcing the endorsement may have been warranted.

Endorsing the Heifer International program, however, stepped well beyond necessity—and, since Heifer International did nothing similar to boost WSPA,

went well beyond the normal bounds of quid-pro-quo politics.

Asked ANIMAL PEOPLE, "Does WSPA perceive a conflict of interest in partnering with an organization whose mandate is expanding animal agriculture?"

Replied Flannery, reciting Heifer publicity in evident ignorance or disregard of the actual record, "Heifer's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. As part of its animal management and training program, Heifer teaches several strictly-followed animal well-being guidelines. Heifer's consideration of animal well-being is certainly in line with WSPA's 'Animals Matter to Me' campaign and the UDAW statement."

Technically one might be able to reconcile the Heifer International requirement that animals be watered twice a day, minimal though that is, with the Five Freedoms requirement of "ready access of fresh water."


Technically one might argue that there are examples of "zero grazing" husbandry that satisfy the Five Freedoms by "ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering," and allowing "Freedom to express normal behavior."

But despite the possibility of parsing the rhetoric to discover exceptions, reality is that Heifer International has from inception existed to expand and encourage animal agriculture. Reality is that "zero grazing" means confinement. Reality is that the Five Freedoms were drafted in the first place in response to the growth of confinement husbandry.


Even in absence of a detailed WSPA policy on animal agriculture, the longstanding WSPA promotion of the Five Freedoms would appear to preclude accepting the Heifer International animal well-being guidelines as adequate.

¶ RIGHT BELOW: A "downer" cow being dragged to the slaughterhouse. Much too often the word compassion has no meaning in our treatment of animals, especially those who have denominated "food animals."

Livestock disaster

Had Smith and Flannery not so fulsomely praised Heifer International on  August 23, their August 27, 2010 press release about the WSPA role in Pakistan flood relief might have passed without particular notice. Most of it paralleled releases about previous disasters in which WSPA partnered with local organizations, veterinary universities, and government agencies to feed stranded and starving livestock.

While animal advocates are certainly willing to donate funds to aid suffering animals of any kind in a disaster situation, leadership of animal charities soliciting donations should feel obliged to consider if these funds should be used to support and sustain animal agriculture. Often the net effect of aid to farm animals is merely to keep animals alive and moving for a little while longer so that farmers can sell them to slaughter instead of suffering a total financial loss by having the animals die under conditions in which their meat cannot be butchered and sold. Nonetheless, the animals caught in disaster are suffering sentient beings, and—if the circumstances are properly managed—providing them some relief can help animal advocacy to develop recognition and support.

 The trick is to help the animals without encouraging repetition and expansion of the practices that put them in crisis.

The August 27 WSPA press release flunked that test.

"WSPA's 30-year history treating animals in disasters has shown that animals are crucial to the recovery of the region," wrote Smith, apparently unaware that for 5,000 years the people of the Indus River region have kept fewer animals and eaten less meat than almost anyone else in the world. "Agriculture, including livestock, is the livelihood mainstay of nearly 90% of the flood-affected community in Pakistan's rural areas," Smith continued. "These animals are so important to the people of Pakistan. Your gift will not only help the animals,


it will help their whole community recover too.”

In other words, according to Smith, the WSPA intervention in Pakistan was undertaken chiefly to rebuild animal agriculture, which was largely responsible for causing the disaster. By contrast, the Karachi-based news magazine South Asia recognized the harmful effect of the recent doubling of the regional livestock population by reprinting most of the July/August ANIMAL PEOPLE editorial about it, including the conclusion that “The present calamity offers a chance to promote a permanent downsizing of animal agriculture.”

“Pakistani livestock experts agree that there are too many animals, though they are more concerned with low productivity than high populations,” affirmed Christian Science Monitor staff writer Ben Arnoldy.

“We as professionals involved in the livestock sector have always advocated decreasing the number of livestock and increasing the productivity,” agreed Lahore University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences faculty member Muhammad Abdullah.

WSPA’s strategic plan

 WSPA director general Baker, a vegan, is personally familiar with the Indus River region from his previous service as chief executive officer of the Brooke Hospital for Animals. Acknowledging unfamiliarity with Heifer International policies and history, Baker personally assured ANIMAL PEOPLE that, “We certainly do not want to encourage any expansion of animal agriculture,” either in Pakistan or anywhere else.

ANIMAL PEOPLE president Kim Bartlett asked Baker if he would remove the August 23 and August 27, 2010 media releases from the WSPA website, to avoid conveying an erroneous perception of the WSPA mission. Baker said he would have to look into them first. At press time both releases remain posted, without subsequent clarification or amendment.

To ANIMAL PEOPLE editor Merritt Clifton, Baker pledged to investigate before WSPA does anything further in partnership with Heifer.

Meanwhile, Baker delivered the most comprehensive WSPA statement to date on issues and strategies pertaining to animal agriculture on September 7, 2010 at the Africa Animal Welfare Action conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

“The case showing good economic models for livestock that are also positive for animal welfare is not as advanced as it is in areas such as disaster management and working animals,” Baker began. “This is something that WSPA is now committed to changing. And there are concrete examples of where good animal welfare can make a difference to the economics of farming. For example, more humane handling by farmers, transporters and slaughtermen has been shown in studies to reduce bruising by 15%. Bruising costs the farming industry millions of dollars in lost meat and improved humane handling can save them millions.

This has been shown in work in both the US and Uruguay. The benefits of humane slaughter can be great too, and not just for the animal. This is something that we have worked with industry and government on in both China and Brazil.

“WSPA believes though,” Baker continued, “that we need to make the case for humane production above all. This is something we have been discussing with HSUS, CIWF, RSPCA and Eurogroup, among others and will be taking forward, with a view to producing models that demonstrate that animal welfare-friendly farming is also people friendly.

“The positive models will vary from region to region and animal to animal,” Baker projected. “In fact they are more likely to be positive principles with added concrete examples. They may not yet be properly demonstrated and fully

articulated, but one thing is clear: the alternative is the industrialization of the farming industry.”

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Poultry program

✘ Baker cited as an example the Rural Backyard Poultry Development program, introduced by the Indian Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2009 as an attempt to help local egg producers keep their remaining 30% of the Indian national egg market share, after losing 70% to industrial poultry conglomerates. The program is intended to help about 270,000 backyard egg producers over the next five years with a variety of technical and promotional assistance.

“This is an infinitely better and more sustainable model than the battery hen route,” Baker said, after giving a rather glowing and garbled description of it, apparently based chiefly on promotional literature from a company involved in supplying breeding stock and pharmaceuticals to the program. This same company is also a major supplier to Indian industrial egg producers.

The Rural Backyard Poultry Development program is designed according to Gandhian economic principles, though Mohandas Gandhi only promoted vegetarian forms of agriculture and cottage industry. It has been lampooned by Indian media as the “Rural Backward Poultry Development program,” who have noted the failure of many past rural development programs based on the Gandhian model, and appears to be widely seen as a boondoggle meant to attract rural political support for the present government, while having little chance of success.

The goal of the program is to boost the size of existing backyard flocks to the range of “20 to 50 birds per [participating] family,” which will be difficult to do in the cramped confines of Indian village housing without resorting to close caging. Even if backyard flocks can be increased to that extent, the effort is likely to increase the neighborhood conflicts already resulting from poultry noises, odors, traffic injuries to free-roaming birds, egg thefts and bird-snatchings by dogs, and the tendency of flocks to lure predators including snakes, jackals, and leopards into villages.

Most likely, “success” would necessitate moving “backyard” flocks beyond the present village limits, into more-or-less conventional poultry farms undertaken on a smaller scale. The end fate of the birds would be essentially the same as for any poultry, except that they might be killed and sold closer to home.

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Consumption development

Baker’s larger point was that it is in agriculture, especially in the developing world, “more than anywhere [else] that our interests overlap with development, and where we must reach out and work to help both animals and people. This will be a major priority for WSPA,” Baker pledged. “We’re going to ramp up our efforts from next year.”

BELOW: Jim Perdue –heir to the Perdue poultry fortune and current CEO of Perdue Farms –has taken a far more sanitized and devious approach to selling his broilers.

✘ This raises complex ethical issues.

If a particular approach to animal agriculture, such as the Rural Backyard Poultry Development program, really can reduce animal suffering, in successful competition against factory farming, this is a preferable choice, but only within the limited sphere of recognizing that human consumption of animal products worldwide is not likely to end or even substantially diminish at any time soon.

Animal advocacy has helped to achieve reductions of consumption in the developed world of some animal products produced by particularly cruel methods,

such as veal. Younger and better educated Americans and Europeans are consuming much less meat, fewer eggs, and less milk than their elders.

Documenting the influence of exposure of animal welfare issues on animal product consumption in the U.S. since 1982, livestock economists Glynn Tonsor of Kansas State University and Nicole Olynk of Purdue University reported on September 16, 2010 that "pork and poultry demand increases over the last decade would have been 2.65 percent and 5.01 percent higher, respectively," if not for the increasing volume of exposes of abuses in factory farming.

However, animal product consumption in the developing world is continuing to rise at a greater rate than gains against consumption are made in the U.S. and Europe.

Exposure of abuses associated with factory farming has rapidly increased in India and China too, and has helped to build animal advocacy in opposition to animal product consumption, as well as against specific harmful practices.

However, most analysts within both the livestock industry and animal advocacy believe that animal product consumption in both India and China is likely to continue to rise for several years, at least, before the influence of activism and ecological limiting factors such as stress on topsoil and water catches up to the factors pushing demand.

The trends in India and China probably presage those of the rest of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where animal product consumption is also fast rising, with animal advocacy on farmed animal issues having barely begun and the ecological limiting factors usually somewhat less evident.

Nonetheless, despite recognizing the need to eliminate animal suffering as much as possible in the expanding animal industries of the developing world, as well as in U.S. and European agribusiness, eliminating human consumption of animal products is the longterm goal of animal rights advocates. This is the only way to completely end animal suffering in food production, and to raise the moral status of animals across the spectrum of issues.

The bedrock issue for animal advocates in promoting agricultural reform is to avoid co-option of guiding principles—whether "animal welfare" in nature or "animal rights"—and be wary of alliances with animal use industries or industry front groups that may cause them to lose gains on behalf of animals that are already favored by the public and within political reach.

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