



Animal rights groups pick up momentum¹

The growing influence of animal rights **activists**² increasingly is affecting daily life, touching everything from the foods Americans eat to what they study in law school. « *There's been an explosion of interest in animal **welfare**³ issues* » says David Favre, a Michigan State University law professor and animal law specialist. « *Groups like the Humane Society of the United States and PETA have brought to our social awareness their concerns about animals and all matter of creatures.* »

« *Animals are made of flesh and blood and bone just like humans* » says Bruce Friedrich, PETA's vice president for campaigns. « *They feel **pain**⁴ just like we do. Recognition of that grows year by year. The animal rights movement is a social justice movement (similar to) **suffrage**⁵ and civil rights.* »

« *I think it's clear that animal issues are part of the public domain like never before* » says Michael Markarian, executive vice president of the Humane Society, the largest animal welfare organization. « *People have started thinking more and more about how we treat animals in our society.* »

Animal rights campaigns are moving on several fronts:

- Over the past three years, 330 colleges have stopped or dramatically reduced the use of eggs from hens in **cramped**⁶ wire **crates**⁷ called battery **cages**⁸, **retailers**⁹ including Burger King, Hardee's, Carl's Jr. and Ben & Jerry's now use eggs produced by cage-free **hens**¹⁰.
- More than 90 American law schools now offer courses in animal law, compared with only a handful 10 years ago.
- Many New Orleans residents were forced to leave **pets**¹¹ to die in 2005 when they were evacuated during Hurricane Katrina.

Animal welfare organizations are riding a wave of popularity. The Humane Society says it has 10.5 million members or supporters, up from 7.4 million five years ago; during the same period, PETA says its **rolls**¹² have doubled to 1.8 million.

« *People realize we have so much power over animals* » says Markarian of the Humane Society. « *We can use that power to be cruel and indifferent, or to be kind and careful **stewards**¹³.* »

Source : http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-01-27-animal-activists_N.htm



VOCABULARY

1. **Pick up momentum** : gather support, become more visible, accessible, influential.
2. **Activist** : a person who advocates or opposes a specific cause or issue. For example : a political activist, an animal rights activist, an anti-war activist.
3. **Welfare** : the condition (health, happiness, etc) or well-being of a person, animal, organization, etc. For example : Looking out for your personal welfare, the welfare of others.
4. **Pain** : physical, emotional or psychological suffering
5. **Suffrage** : the right to vote. For example : women's suffrage
6. **Cramped** : confined or severely limited in space. For example : Five hens that live in one battery cage live in very cramped conditions.
7. **Crates** : a container that is usually used for storage or shipping
8. **Battery cage** : a particular type of wire crate used to confine egg-laying hens. As many hens as possible are usually put into these cages- even if it means they cannot walk, turn around or spread their wings.
9. **Retailers** : companies that sell goods or products (food, clothes, etc) to consumers. For example : McDonalds, H&M, etc.
10. **Hen** : a female chicken (usually referred to when talking about the sale or consumption of eggs)
11. **Pets** : companion animals, usually those that live at home, such as dogs or cats. Pets are usually viewed with a higher status than other domesticated animals (such as cows, pigs and chickens), in that you don't eat them for dinner.
12. **Roll** : a list or registry of a group of people. Usually people who become members of, or support in some capacity, an organization become added to that organization's list (or roll) of supporters.
13. **Steward** : someone who is in charge of another's financial, domestic or general affairs. In this sense, it can also mean « advocate » or « representative ».

QUOTATIONS FOR FURTHER DEBATE

“ The question is not, « Can they reason ? » nor, « Can they talk ? » but rather, « Can they suffer ? »

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), was an English gentleman, jurist, philosopher, and legal and social reformer. He is best known as an early advocate of individual and economic freedom, including the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, animal rights, the end of slavery, the abolition of physical punishment (including that of children), the right to divorce, free trade, and no restrictions on interest. He supported inheritance tax, restrictions on monopoly power, pensions, and health insurance.

« The thinking [person] must oppose all cruel customs no matter how deeply rooted in tradition and surrounded by a halo. When we have a choice, we must avoid bringing torment and injury into the life of another... »

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), German theologian, musician, philosopher, and physician. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.

« We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. »

Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), was a British biologist, known as « Darwin's Bulldog » for his defence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.