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The Negative Consequences Factory Farming has for Animals

Most people don't think about where their food came from or what happened to it before it reached their plate. This kind of ignorance is causing food-borne illnesses to rise all around the world and is becoming a major problem, but is also burning a hole in the world of animal welfare. When people inquire about the source of their products and discover the truth, they are shocked by the horrors that have been hidden from them for so many years. The real question most people should be asking themselves is why do we put animals through so much pain and torment in the name of sustenance? With all the modern technology, it is more than possible to end the needless suffering and careless injury caused to the animals before they become our lunch.

Since the beginning of time, humans have consumed meat in one form or another. The unethical ways people have treated animals before death has however remained virtually the same. Dating back to the 14th Century, Europeans began organizing systems to slaughter animals more efficiently (Gregory, 1). Most British meat sellers baited their bulls with dogs in order to keep the meat as tender as possible. Baiting bulls consisted of a male cow being placed in a specially constructed ring and tied to an iron stake so that it could move in an area of about 30 feet (Gregory, 1). The object of the sport was for the dogs to immobilize the bull before the butchery began. With bull-baiting outlawed, this sort of practice no longer exists, but most of the processes used in modern factory farms are easily comparable to this atrocious act of cruelty.

Most all of the meat supplied in America was brought from a factory farm, a large-scale industrial site where many animals (chickens, turkeys, cattle, or pigs) are confined and treated with hormones and antibiotics to maximize growth and prevent disease (Gregory, 1). Eventually assembly lines and machines replaced manual labor and the conditions of the farms continued to get worse. National organizations such as the United States Food and Drug Administration have regulated laws that the companies must follow to ensure proper ethical treatment of the animals, but with no questions about the supplied product, altercations rarely come up when it comes to the moral aspects of meat processing (Nierenberg, 2).

The horrible butchering methods used by factory farmers didn't always exist and have failed to take over the nation completely. Few family-owned farms exist today in the United States where the animals are raised with value, decency, and are able to roam free in giant fields to graze on the pasture. As the population continues to grow in the United States, so does the demand for food and the processes of making it had to change in order to increase the production of animal products. Animals only have fair circumstances in places such as Rizal, a small province in the Philippines, where farmers naturally raise animals without hormones and ethically handle them (Nierenberg, 2).

Of course there are rules and regulations that were established for the slaughter of the animals to guarantee proper moral treatment within the major meat companies. The problem still remains when it comes to what is fair and reasonable procedure and who gets to make that final decision (Nierenberg, 2). Small cage confinement, slow death without stunning and separation of babies from their mothers are all examples of how most animals are continuously treated in modern day factory farms. When the consumers are unaware of these horrible behaviors, they continue to get worse and worse.

As fast food restaurants and grocery stores continue to demand more and more meat, factory farmers have come to realize that the natural growth of an animal was not enough to meet the growing need. The companies began injecting the animals with hormones to make them grow abnormally large at an alarmingly fast rate (Gregory, 1). These hormones injected into the animals cause them a great deal of pain because their bodies cannot take the stress of growing more than it physically is able to (Nierenberg, 2). By consuming the meat that was injected with hormones, it also raises the risk of health problems in humans. National inspections were set up by the United States Food and Drug Administration to ensure safety for the consumers once the homogenizing began, but inspectors were easily paid off if the facility did not meet standards (Gregory, 1). With the public completely in the dark about the source of their food, factory farms are now able to do whatever they want to the animals without consequences.

There is without a doubt a connection between animal and human behavior because both species are able to feel sickness, fear, pain and extreme thirst and hunger. Most of these emotions are experienced on a daily basis by any animal that is confined within a factory farm. According to animal psychologists who study the animals' stress levels while put under in these certain circumstances, animals who suffer a great deal of stress tend to have poorer quality meat (Gregory, 1). The cruel mistreatment of these miserable creatures is causing so much trauma to them that the value of their flesh is actually going down, not only putting humans at greater risk of illnesses, but making the methods of factory farming both uncalled for and unnecessary.

The unspeakable acts that are done to the animals in factory farms would never be repeated on a companion animal such as a dog or a cat. This again raises the question about what is fair and reasonable treatment that should be performed upon the animals we raise to slaughter. If people find factory farming so disturbing and uncalled for, there are many different

ways to abolish it without losing meat production all together (Nierenberg, 2). In order to begin the process however, people need to be educated about the sources of their foods and care about what happens to the product before it gets to them. There are people out there who do honor an animal's right to live and chose to follow the vegetarian lifestyle where they eliminate all animal products from their diet. In the United States alone there are 12.4 million vegetarians, but with factory farming's atrocious system being exposed to the public, the numbers are slowly beginning to rise (Nierenberg, 2).

By questioning the source of our food and paying a little bit more to support local farmers that raise their animals with reverence, there might still be a chance to put an end to factory farming's disgusting treatment of animals. It is only when people stop and think about the fact that their diet mainly consists of dead animals who were mercilessly tortured and slaughtered that everyone starts to see a trend of knowledge filled protests in the name of better animal welfare in the food industry.