

Animal Tracker – Wave 2

An HRC-Managed Research Study, March 2009



Report in Brief

This report summarizes results from Wave 2 of the *Animal Tracker* annual survey of U.S. adults regarding attitudes and behavior toward animals. The first survey (Wave 1, 2008) included sixteen questions; the Wave 2 survey repeated six questions from Wave 1. In summary, the most recent survey continues to show strong support for the protection of all animals, although in some instances that support decreased slightly compared with the Wave 1 results.

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HRC Information

The Humane Research Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to maximizing the effectiveness of animal advocates by applying professional, cost-efficient, and informative consumer and market research methods.

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Overview and Discussion

WAVE 2 RESULTS IN BRIEF

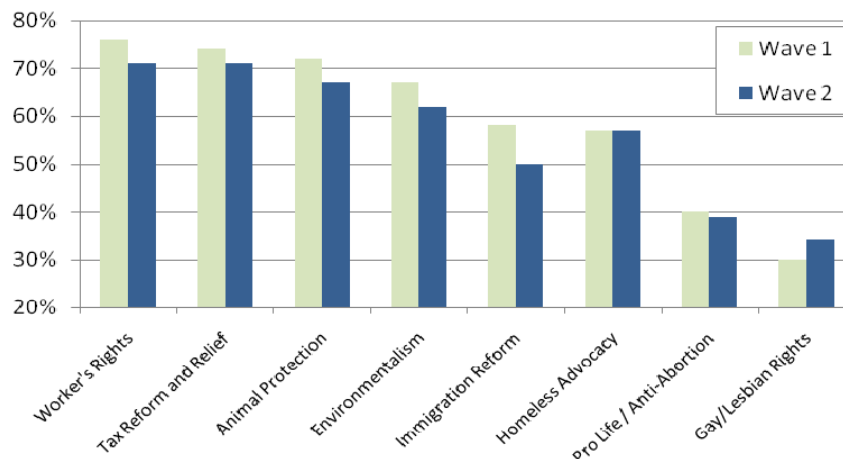
- ❖ 67% of U.S. adults have a “favorable” opinion of the animal protection (AP) movement, which is ranked third among the causes/movements listed.
- ❖ 32% give AP groups “significant” credibility regarding information about animal welfare, ranked second only to veterinarians (but comparable to family/friends).
- ❖ 52% have talked or heard about AP “frequently” or “occasionally” in the past three months.
- ❖ 79% or more believe the welfare and protection of animals is “very” or “somewhat” important for all of the animal situations listed.
- ❖ Perceived adequacy of laws protecting animals varies by type of animal, ranging from 23% “adequate” (for animals in laboratories) to 60% “adequate” (for companion animals).
- ❖ 31% of U.S. adults would “strongly support” a law requiring that farmed animals are given enough space to behave naturally.

CHANGES FROM WAVE 1 RESULTS

In most cases, the findings from Wave 2 are consistent with the results from the Wave 1 survey (allowing for an error margin of +/- 3.1%). However, there were a few significant differences, which are outlined below by subject area.

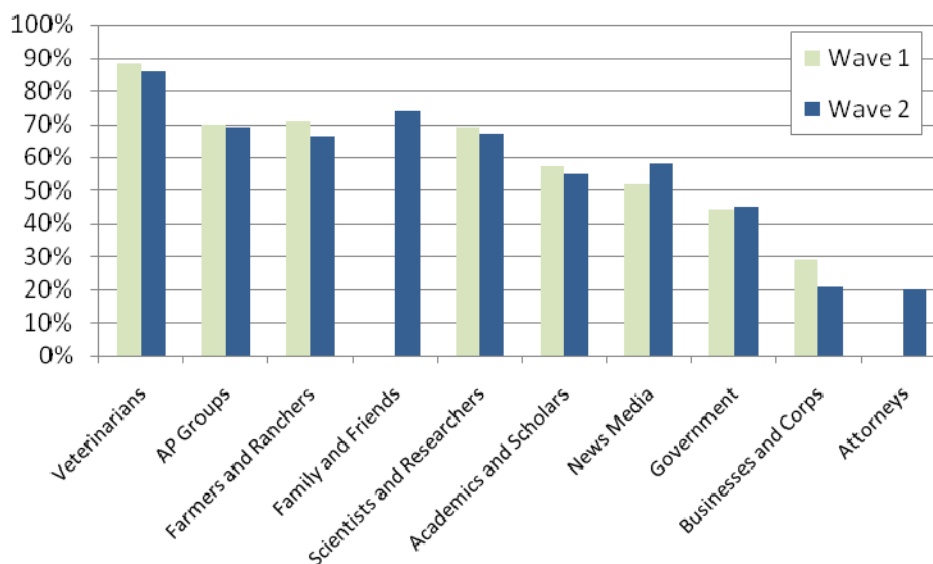
- ❖ **Favorability (Q1)** – Perceived favorability of the AP movement dropped by 5% from Wave 1 to Wave 2 (72% vs. 67%). However, the AP movement kept its third-place ranking among the causes listed, largely because favorability declined for most of the other causes as well. Favorability of “immigration rights” declined the most, falling 8% from Wave 1. The only issue that increased in favorability from Wave 1 to Wave 2 was the gay/lesbian rights cause, which increased by 4% (from 30% to 34%).

Overall Favorability, Wave 1 vs. Wave 2

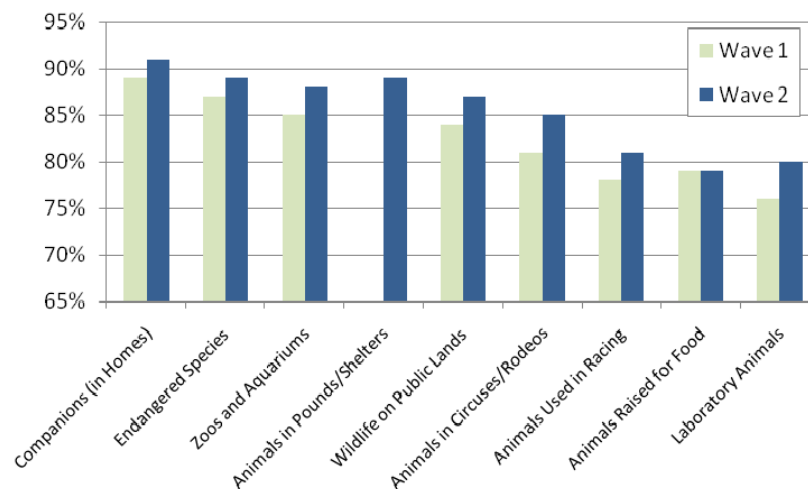


- ❖ **Credibility (Q2)** – The perceived credibility of various sources of information about animal welfare was mostly unchanged from Wave 1 to Wave 2. However, the proportion of U.S. adults saying that businesses and corporations have “significant” or “moderate” credibility declined by 8% (from 29% to 21%). Similarly, perceived credibility of farmers and ranchers declined by 5% (from 71% significant/moderate to 66%). The only source whose credibility increased from Wave 1 to Wave 2 was local/national news media, which increased by 6% (from 52% to 58% saying significant/moderate credibility). Interestingly, people generally seem to give more credibility to sources of information that are most hands-on with animals, including veterinarians, farmers, and AP organizations.

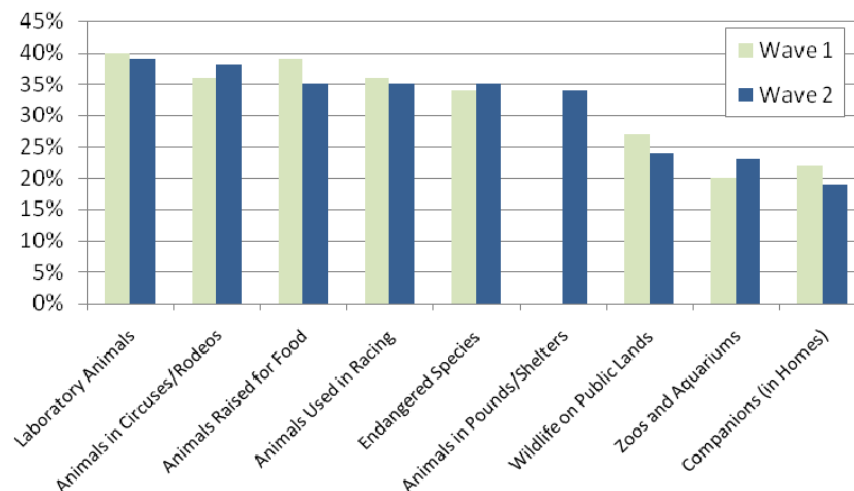
Perceived Credibility (“Significant/Moderate”), Wave 1 vs. Wave 2



- ❖ **Awareness (Q7)** – Awareness of AP issues increased substantially from Wave 1 to Wave 2. In Wave 1, 43% of respondents had heard or talked about AP topics “frequently” or “occasionally.” In Wave 2 this number increased to 52%, including 13% of respondents (about one in eight adults) who said that they had heard about or discussed AP issues “frequently.”
- ❖ **Animal Welfare Importance by Situation (Q9)** – The perceived importance of animals in different situations increased from Wave 1 to Wave 2 for every type of animal listed in the survey. However, this mostly indicated a shift from “somewhat” to “very” important. Specifically, those rating the situations as “very” important increased by 8% for animals in zoos and aquariums, 7% for animals in circuses and rodeos, and 7% for horses and dogs used in racing. Those saying “very” important also increased for animals in laboratories (+5%), wildlife on public lands (+5%), endangered species (+4%), and animals raised for food (+4%).

Perceived Importance (“Very/Somewhat”), Wave 1 vs. Wave 2

- ❖ **Current Laws (Q13)** – The perceived adequacy of existing laws affecting different types of animals did not change significantly from Wave 1 to Wave 2. However, those saying that laws protecting animals raised for food are “not adequate” declined by 4% (there were no other significant differences). The change from Wave 1 to Wave 2 for laws protecting farm animals may be because people perceive that more is now being done for these animals, given recent initiatives, laws, and coverage in the media.

Perceived Inadequacy of Laws (“Not Adequate”), Wave 1 vs. Wave 2

- ❖ **Farm Animal Confinement Law (Q14)** – Support for a law “requiring that farm animals including pigs, cows, and chickens are provided with enough space to behave naturally” declined from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Specifically, those who would “strongly support” such a law dropped 9%, from 40% in Wave 1 to 31% in Wave 2. Those who would “somewhat oppose” such a law increased by 6%, from 8% in Wave 1 to 14% in Wave 2. These results are particularly interesting when considered in the context of the overwhelming passage of Proposition 2 in California.

Key Implications for Animal Advocates

The *Animal Tracker* is designed to be a longitudinal study, therefore the results will be most meaningful after we have collected several waves of survey data. When we have at least three or four data points for each survey question, then we will be able to begin making time-series comparisons and understanding how public opinion is changing over time. The implications from Waves 1 and 2 are therefore somewhat limited because we do not yet have sufficient data. Please refer to the Wave 1 report for general implications; the following are focused on changes from Wave 1 to Wave 2.

- ❖ The increase in awareness and discussion of AP issues is encouraging and it will be very interesting to see if this finding holds true in future survey waves. This change may be due in part to the visibility of the Proposition 2 campaign in California.
- ❖ Similarly, the increase in perceived importance of animal welfare for a wide range of animal types is good news, although it is impossible to tell why this occurred.
- ❖ The decline in favorability of the AP movement is discouraging, but it is also consistent with declines for most of the movements listed in the survey. This may be due to a bit of “cause fatigue” following the U.S. presidential election in late 2008, or it may be evidence of growing skepticism among U.S. adults when it comes to social movements.
- ❖ Finally, the decline in support for a law to improve conditions for farm animals is also discouraging, although overall support remains high. The decline may be due to some polarization of opinions after the Proposition 2 campaign in California. It is also interesting to note that the perceived credibility of farmers and ranchers (as well as businesses in general) declined from Wave 1 to Wave 2.

Summary Results by Topic (Wave 2 Only)

- ❖ **Favorability (Q1)** – When it comes to overall favorability, the animal protection (AP) movement ranks third among the eight causes listed. Two-thirds (67%) of U.S. adults have a “favorable” opinion of AP, compared with 71% for workers’ rights and 71% for tax reform/relief. AP ranks ahead of environmentalism (62%) and even homeless advocacy (57%). All of the causes listed receive a majority “favorable” response except for two: gay/lesbian rights (34%); pro life (anti-abortion) (39%).
- ❖ **Credibility (Q2)** – AP groups rank third when it comes to credibility regarding animal welfare information. 86% of respondents say veterinarians have “significant” or “moderate” credibility and 74% say the same about family and friends (which was a new option in Wave 2). This compares with 69% saying that AP groups have significant/moderate credibility, 67% for scientists/researchers, and 66% for farmers/ranchers. Conversely, 46% of respondents give “very little” or no credibility to governments and 66% say the same about businesses and attorneys (which was also a new option in Wave 2).
- ❖ **Awareness (Q7)** – Awareness and discussion of animal issues over the past three months has been moderate, but appears to be growing. In Wave 2, a slight majority of respondents (52%) said they have heard about or discussed AP issues either “frequently” (13%) or “occasionally”

(39%) over the past three months. By comparison, 28% say “rarely” and only one-fifth of respondents (20%) say they have not discussed AP issues at all during this time.

- ❖ **Animal Welfare Importance by Situation (Q9)** – For each of the nine animal types or situations listed in the survey, more than three-fourths of respondents (79% or more) said that the “welfare and protection of animals” is very/somewhat important to them. Relatively more importance is placed on companion animals (including animals in pounds and shelters, which was added in Wave 2), endangered species, and animals in zoos/aquariums. Relatively lower importance is placed on the importance of welfare for farm animals, animals in research laboratories, and horses/dogs used in racing.
- ❖ **Current Laws (Q13)** – Regarding the perceived “adequacy” of legal protections, only companion animals received a majority response saying that current laws are adequate (60%). A plurality of respondents feel laws are adequate for animals in zoos/aquariums (47%), wildlife on public lands (44%), animals in pounds or shelters (39%, added in Wave 2), and endangered species (38%). A plurality believes that current laws are *inadequate* for animals in laboratories, animals raised for food, and animals in circuses/rodeos. This question yielded very high “don’t know” rates (21-39%), representing a plurality of respondents for horses/dogs used in racing.
- ❖ **Farm Animal Confinement Law (Q14)** – There is strong support for “a law requiring that farm animals including pigs, cows, and chickens are provided with enough space to behave naturally” (though lower than in Wave 1). About two-thirds of U.S. adults (65%) support this statement, including 31% who say “strongly.” About a fifth of respondents (21%) oppose such a law (7% “strongly oppose” it), and 16% of U.S. adults say they don’t know.

Background and Methodology

STUDY BACKGROUND

The *Animal Tracker* is a collaborative research project that provides animal advocates with an accurate and consistent understanding of the opinions and behavior of U.S. adults over time. The initial *Animal Tracker* survey (“Wave 1”) was completed in June 2008 and included a larger sample size (N=1,500) for baseline analysis; Wave 2 was completed in March 2009. Both waves of the survey were fielded using the Knowledge Networks panel, which combines offline random digit dialing techniques with online panel research capabilities. This results in a true probability sample and survey data that are much more accurate than most other online surveys.

The Wave 2 sample size is 1,000 respondents, although this number is slightly lower for most questions due to refusals, which were less than 1% in almost all cases. This sample size yields a maximum margin of error of +/- 3.1% for the entire sample, at a 95% confidence level; the error margin is larger for subgroups. Note that the possible answers were randomized for all survey questions except 7 and 14. Additionally, the results have been weighted to account for differences between survey respondents and the population being studied, in this case all non-institutionalized adults (ages 18+) currently living in the United States.

WAVE 2 VITAL SIGNS

- Field period: 3/5/2009-3/12/2009
- Total number of surveys fielded: 1,666
- Total number of surveys completed: 1,000
- Survey response rate: 60.0%
- Median completion time: 6 minutes
- Questions included: 6 questions (#s 1, 2, 7, 9, 13, and 14 from the Wave 1 survey)

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

It should be noted that using online research methods can be subject to limitations given that some groups are not fully represented online; this typically results in under-representation of non-white, lower-income, and elderly individuals. Weighting the survey results reduces this bias considerably, but does not eliminate it entirely. Another caveat to these results is the reliance on self-reported data. Respondents' answers may differ from their actual opinions or behavior for a variety of reasons, particularly for questions involving predictions of the respondents' changes in the future.

Sponsorship Information

The *Animal Tracker* (Wave 2) was sponsored by a consortium of animal advocacy organizations including Alley Cat Allies, American Humane Association, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Animal Legal Defense Fund, Animal Welfare Trust, Born Free USA, Farm Sanctuary, Humane Society of the United States, and World Society for the Protection of Animals (USA). The Humane Research Council initiated the collaborative study and provided discounted consulting services related to project planning, survey design, research, and analysis.

Wave 3 of the *Animal Tracker* will be fielded in the first quarter of 2010 and will include a subset of the survey's original 16 questions (excluding those asked in Wave 2). The exact cost of sponsorship for Wave 3 is likely to be in the range of \$500 to \$1,000 per sponsor. The benefits of sponsorship are significant, including access to more detailed survey results (including "cross-tab" data for key demographic segments) and full permission to use the results publicly with the media, in reports, etc. New sponsors for Wave 3 will be considered through December 31, 2009.

Please contact the Humane Research Council at (206) 905-9887 or info@humaneresearch.org if you or your organization is interested in sponsoring Wave 3 of the *Animal Tracker*.

Wave 2 Data (Topline Percentage Responses)

NOTES ABOUT THE WAVE 1 AND WAVE 2 SURVEYS

- The question numbers below correspond to the numbering used during Wave 1 (to make tracking easier between survey waves). For the complete Wave 1 results and to see all 16 original questions, please visit <http://www.humanespot.org/node/2901>.
- The numbers in parentheses show the change from the previous wave, where available and only if the difference is outside of the survey's overall margin of error (+/- 3%).
- Missing data (blanks/refusals) have been omitted from the analysis; however, blanks represent at most 1.7% of the response for any individual question or element.
- Where applicable, "don't know" (DK) and "no opinion" (NO) responses have been combined.
- Responses are ranked by the first column of data in most cases. For some questions, however, it makes more sense to sum columns for a more accurate impression of public opinion.

[Q1] What is your opinion of each of the following social causes or political movements?

	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>	<i>NO/DK</i>
Workers' rights	71% (-5%)	7%	23%
Tax reform and relief	70 (-4%)	8	22
Animal protection	67 (-5%)	10	23
Environmentalism	62 (-5%)	12	26
Homeless advocacy	57	9	34
Immigration reform	50 (-8%)	17	33 (+8%)
Pro life (anti-abortion)	39	34	27
Gay/lesbian rights	34 (+4%)	33	33

[Q2] How much credibility do you give to each of the following sources when it comes to information about animal welfare?

	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Very Little</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>DK</i>
Veterinarians	57%	29%	6%	3%	6%
Animal protection groups	32	37	17	8	6
Farmers and ranchers	25 (-4%)	41	18	6	10
Family and friends (wave 2 only)	29	45	16	5	6
Scientists and researchers	25	42	17	6	10
Academics and scholars	17	38	23	9	13
Local or national news media	14	44	29	7	6
Government (federal or state)	9	36	35	11	9
Businesses and corporations	4	17 (-7%)	47	19	13
Attorneys (wave 2 only)	4	16	40	26	15

[Q7] In the past three months, how often have you talked about or heard someone talking about animal protection, including animal rights and/or animal welfare? Please include any personal discussions, items heard on the news, issues read about in magazines, etc.

Frequently (i.e., daily or almost daily)	13%
Occasionally (i.e., weekly or monthly)	39 (+6%)
Rarely (i.e., once or twice)	28 (-7%)
Not at all	20

[Q9] How important to you is the welfare and protection of animals in each of the following situations?

	<i>Very Imp.</i>	<i>Somewh at Imp.</i>	<i>Not Very Imp.</i>	<i>Not at All Imp.</i>	<i>DK</i>
Animals kept as companions or pets	65%	26%	4%	2%	3%
Endangered species	64 (+4%)	24	7	2	3
Animals in zoos and aquariums	57 (+8%)	31 (-5%)	6	2	4
Animals in pounds or shelters (wave 2 only)	56	33	5	2	3
Wildlife on public lands	55 (+5%)	32	7	2	4
Animals in circuses and rodeos	49 (+7%)	36	9	2	4
Horses and dogs used in racing	48 (+7%)	33 (-4%)	11	5	4
Animals raised for food	48 (+4%)	31 (-4%)	10	6	5
Animals in laboratories	47 (+5%)	33	11	4	6

[Q13] Do you think that laws protecting animals from inhumane treatment are adequate or inadequate for each of the following kinds of animals?

	<i>Not Adequate</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>DK</i>
Animals in laboratories	39%	23%	38%
Animals in circuses and rodeos	38	27	36
Horses and dogs used in racing	35	27	38
Animals raised for food	35 (-4%)	33	32
Endangered species	35	38	27
Animals in pounds or shelters (wave 2 only)	34	39	27
Wildlife on public lands	24	44	32
Animals in zoos and aquariums	23	47	30
Animals kept as companions or pets	19	60	21

[Q14] Would you support or oppose a law requiring that farm animals including pigs, cows, and chickens are provided with enough space to behave naturally?

Strongly support	31% (-9%)
Somewhat support	34
Somewhat oppose	14 (+6%)
Strongly oppose	7
Do not know	15