



Short communication

The role of meat consumption in the denial of moral status and mind to meat animals ☆

Steve Loughnan^{a, b, d} , Nick Haslam^b and Brock Bastian^c

^a University of Kent, United Kingdom

^b University of Melbourne, Australia

^c University of Queensland, Australia

^d School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NZ, United Kingdom

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Abstract

People enjoy eating meat but disapprove of harming animals. One resolution to this conflict is to withdraw moral concern from animals and deny their capacity to suffer. To test this possibility, we asked participants to eat dried beef or dried nuts and then indicate their moral concern for animals and judge the moral status and mental states of a cow. Eating meat reduced the perceived obligation to show moral concern for animals in general and the perceived moral status of the cow. It also indirectly reduced the ascription of mental states necessary to experience suffering. People may escape the conflict between enjoying meat and concern for animal welfare by perceiving animals as unworthy and unfeeling.

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