

Report: Animal Rights 2013 National Conference

The Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM) held its 32nd annual Animal Rights National Conference in Alexandria, VA this June 2013. About 1,500 people, many from foreign countries including; Brazil, Canada, India and Europe, attended the four-day conference, themed “*Get Informed. Get Inspired. Get Active.*” The event was co-sponsored by fifteen different organizations and was chaired by Alex Hershaft of FARM. Ages varied among attendees but many were young (50 and younger) and female. The Animal Agriculture Alliance sent several staff members to the conference and this is their report on the activities, goals and initiatives promoted by the groups and individuals present.

Sessions:

Opening Plenary	Exposing the Meat Industry
Morning Plenary I	Promise of Civil Disobedience
Lessons From Amusement/Fur Campaigns	Vegan Nutrition for Activists
Developing Our Movement	Evening Plenary II
Speaking Truth to Carnistic Powers	Voice of Other Movements
Conducting Effective Personal Advocacy	Engaging Wall Street
Animal Abuse for Food	Engaging Agencies and Businesses
Lessons From Agriculture Campaigns	Lobbying Training
Activist Repression/Examining Strategies for Animal Liberation	Externalities of Animal Abuse
One Abolitionist’s Perspective	Engaging Media
Engaging Politicians and Laws	War on Animal Activism
Enforcing Protective Laws	We’re Winning
What about Abolition and Welfare?	

Opening Plenary (Thursday)

Michael Webermann (FARM), Dawn Montcrief (A Well Fed World), Shirley McGreal (International Primate Protection League), Nicole Meyer (In Defense of Animals), Nathan Runkle (Mercy for Animals), Anne Marie Vastano (Alley Cat Allies), Jen Riley (FARM), Alex Hershaft (FARM), Jerry Friedman, Norm Phelps & Bruce Zeman

Get Informed. Get Inspired Get Active. The opening ceremony began with candle lighting. Three candles were lit; the first honoring animals that are being harmed, the second for the animal activists who could not attend and the third for animal abusers.

Alex Hershaft, Founder of FARM and the conference chair, spoke about the history of the animal rights movement. The very first national Animal Rights conference was held in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1981. Hershaft then gave specific examples of animal abuses throughout history. He also mentioned that People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) began at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

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Norm Phelps, author of *Changing the Game*, spoke about his animal rights philosophy and the history of animal use. **“We’ve always wanted to use animals as resources and had the notion that animals are other or different than humans,”** said Phelps. **“We justify and legitimize exploiting animals because of this belief that they are ‘others.’”** When describing the different stages of human history and their role in animal abuse, Phelps compared the progression from older styles of farming to modern factory farms as going from **“house arrest to prison.”** Phelps then went on to say that animal welfare is often far worse in practice than in theory and that **“factory farms are the most loathsome form of torture devised by human beings.”** Phelps claimed that the trajectory of animal exploitation has begun to be disrupted by activists.

Jerry Friedman, animal activist and attorney, spoke about his views on animal rights philosophies. He said that animal rights are different than veganism because animal rights is about bringing action to animal abuse. He explained that animal rights means emancipation. Friedman is also advocating for the appointment of to any animal so that it can sue its oppressor or abuser. For this, Friedman outlined a strategy similar to the structure of legal guardianship for children. Friedman is very passionate about disrupting enemy alliances and creating stronger animal rights alliances.

Bruce Zeman, from In Defense of Animals, also spoke about animal rights philosophies. He said that every movement begins with words and that they have power. Zeman posed the question: “can we treat animals humanely while exploiting them?” Answering his own question in the negative, Zeman stated that **“we do not own animals but we are their guardians.”** Mr. Zema, looking at history, explained that throughout history, every major societal change has begun with a change in semantics; citing the Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Liberation, the protection of children and the recognition of the rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. **“Language can help and hurt the animal rights movement,”** said Zeman. **“Using terminology that is, in some cases, new or unconventional – yet realistic – forces us to take a look at how animals are really treated by humans.”**

Nathan Runkle, Founder and Executive Director of Mercy for Animals (MFA), spoke about his philosophy of animal rights and drew several comparisons between slavery and animal exploitation even using quotes from Harriet Beecher Stowe and Martin Luther King, Jr. Erica Meier moderated the morning panel and said there is so much progress being made for animals but there is still a long way to go. She also told the audience a joke before introducing the panel: **“How many animal abusers does it take to change a light bulb? None, because they want to keep us in the dark.”**

Morning Plenary: State of Our Movement

Jenny Brown (Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary), Michael Budkie (Stop Animal Exploitation Now!), and Greg Lawson (Vegetarian Society of El Paso)

Before Michael Budkie was introduced for the morning plenary session, the conference chair, Alex Hershaft said a few words regarding the animal rights movement. He said that there needs to be a focus on the language used when describing humans and non-humans [animals]. It is not an “us” versus “them” movement. Animals should live free of all human exploitation, according to Hershaft. **“Humans should not eat, wear, or use animals in any way.”**

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Michael Budkie began the morning panel. His activism has focused on animal use and abuse in laboratories. Budkie spoke about the use of chimps in laboratories and animal experimentation in general, stating that important money is being taken away from health care to instead fund animal research and experiments on animals in labs. Budkie emphasized the importance of replacing the use of animals for educational purposes. He went on to explain that the structure that supports animal experimentation in this country is crumbling, using Harvard's commitment to close its animal experimentation laboratories by 2015, as an example.

Next, Greg Lawson, a Park Ranger in Texas, took to the stage to speak about animal wildlife abuse. He began by saying that government agencies that have been set up to protect the animals have crumbled and have been used to kill animals instead. **"There is a war on wildlife,"** Lawson claims. He went on to say that **"30% of the Earth's land mass is used to raise animals for food,"** and that, according to a study conducted by the United Nations in 2006, **"18% of greenhouse gases are caused by animal agriculture."**ⁱ

The last speaker of the morning, Jenny Brown of Woodstock Farm Sanctuary, spoke about farmed animal cruelty. She stated that **"animals are someones not somethings,"** elaborating by saying that **"animals are individuals that have self-interests, just like you and I do."**

Developing Our Movement

Caryn Ginsberg (Author) and Alex Hershaft (FARM)

Alex Hershaft spoke about developing the movement. He outlined FARM's **vision** as: **animals have the right to live free from human exploitation**; this vision is based on the United States Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation. Hershaft repeatedly emphasized the importance of having public support—garnered through film and TV—and that publicity helps the movement go mainstream. **"The media helps to expose cruelty,"** said Hershaft, encouraging attendees to write books, develop animal rights courses, and educate the public using leaflets and videos.

Hershaft highlighted some accomplishments on the agriculture side of the movement, touting an alleged 12% reduction of meat consumption, made possible by; (1) the development of alternative proteins, (2) the Meatless Monday campaign, (3) new dietary guidelines, and (4) public education. Hershaft also discussed several issues facing the movement, including: vision vs. strategy, number of animals vs. number of vegans, institutions vs. individuals, militancy vs. education/legislation, and the role of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in animal rights politics. He then went on to discuss the unity and diversity of different animal rights movements and hypothesized that the reason the animal rights movement hasn't "come together" is for lack of a charismatic leader.

Caryn Ginsberg spoke next about further developing the movement, stating that market research was very important and to visit the website *humanespot.org* to see research studies, polls and opinions on the movement. Ginsberg stated that half thought that the movement was too extreme and that 1 in 5 people believed animal rights activists to be terrorists. She then said encouraged unity throughout the movement, citing the agriculture industry's ability to come together and speak with a common voice.

Newcomer Orientation 1

Dawn Montcrief (A Well Fed World), Veda Stram (All-Creatures.org) and Michael Webermann (FARM)

The Newcomer Orientation began with Veda Stram encouraging the conference attendees to consider new points of view. Michael Webermann began by stating the goal all vegans share: **animals have a right to life and a right to live free from all forms of exploitation.** Webermann related this goal to the work that FARM does in working to eliminate animals used for food production, explaining the difference between animal welfare and animal activism. **“Those who advocate for animal welfare believe that animals are ours to use, we just need to use them humanely,”** explained Webermann. **“On the other hand, animal activists emphasize that we cannot take away animals’ agencies and will to live and still claim that we treat them humanely.”**

Webermann then identified a hierarchy of animals, with humans being at the top. However, he hypothesized, if animals are able to suffer and understand, then shouldn’t we treat them as humans? **“The only way to prevent animals from being used and exploited, is to not have them be born,”** said Webermann, comparing drinking the milk of dairy cows to drinking pregnant women’s milk. **“Animals should have the power to do with their bodies as they like,”** advocated Webermann. **“We need to begin taking away power from humans and give it to non-humans.”**

Raising Funds for Animals

Carrie LeBlanc (Mercy for Animals)

Carrie LeBlanc began by stating that as a movement, animal activism is failing in terms of funding. **“It is both an art and a science raising money for animals,”** said LeBlanc. **“The main thing to keep in mind when trying to raise money is sharing the right information at the right time from the right person to the right person.”**

“In order to be successful in raising money for the animals, you need to be friendly and share your message in a respectful way,” explained LeBlanc who then shared a story about flying to Canada and speaking with the gentleman sitting next to her. The gentleman sitting next to her was eating a pulled pork sandwich, but after LeBlanc spoke to him about Mercy for Animals, he had written her a check for \$500. **“We must give people the opportunity to share in our work,”** she states. **“People who give money care about what you’re doing and we must keep that in mind.”**

LeBlanc went on to say that activists can’t be shy in asking people for money. **“We need to ask people for money because they are willing to give,”** emphasized LeBlanc. **“We all have moral obligations in raising money for the sake of the animals.”**

As non-profits, she said, each organization must have a database which allows your organization to track and engage with donors. LeBlanc highlighted some ways to engage with donors, including; developing newsletters, communicating by e-mail, sending cards on their birthday, finding different ways to say thank you and sending handwritten notes.

Organizations must also find passive and active ways to raise funds. Passive ways include sending newsletters and engaging with potential donors on various social media platforms. Active ways of

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engaging potential donors include contacting and maintaining relationships with major donors as well as having an annual fund. According to LeBlanc, an annual fund can play a major role in the organization's funding. By implementing an annual fund it allows for unrestricted giving. The most strategic time to ask individuals for money is during the holidays because they are looking to make that tax-deductible gift..

Organizations must be frugal and not spend money because that is the quickest way to make money. Similarly, an organization cannot undermine the power of volunteers. According to LeBlanc, volunteers are the people that help get everything to run smoothly. Before closing out her talk, LeBlanc stressed that we must take time to be kind and say thank you and we must always engage others in our cause. As organizations, we cannot focus on ourselves but must focus on donors and the successes we've achieved with their contributions.

Understanding the Mentality of Eating Animals

Melanie Joy (Author of *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs and Wear Cows*)

Melanie Joy spoke about the psychology of human's desire to eat meat and be carnistic. She says that often the vegan message gets silenced. She focused on two points: (1) why do people deny atrocities, and (2) how can we transform denial to awareness? Dr. Joy described Carnism as the invisible belief system that conditions people to eat certain animals and shapes the way we feel about eating animals, stating that the way people alleviate moral discomfort is by changing their values and perceptions of the behavior.

"Most people think that it's a given that you should eat meat," said Joy. **"People then try to justify why they are eating meat and some common justifications are that it's natural, normal, and necessary."** Placing animals in categories or seeing them as objects also helps justify why it's acceptable to eat meat. **"Often times, people can see with their eyes but can't see with their heart and that stops them from realizing eating meat is wrong,"** explains Joy, emphasizing that people won't see animal exploitation with their hearts until they are ready.

Some techniques to encourage people to see with their hearts, include; (1) sharing your own story, (2) being compassionate when you are communicating your message, and (3) finding common ground with your own carnism is an important way to bridge the gap to help others come to the truth. Lastly, Dr. Joy encouraged activists to view non-vegans as victims rather than the enemy. **"Water the right seeds because people have compassion so just acting on that compassion that is already there will help them reach the conclusion faster."** Dr. Joy stated that the vegan movement is winning – because veganism has doubled in the past three years.

Conducting Effective Personal Advocacy

Bruce Friedrich (Farm Sanctuary) and Victor Sjodin (Vegan Outreach)

Victor Sjodin, Vegan Outreach, spoke first about tactics and strategies that can be implemented for conducting effective personal advocacy. He stressed the effectiveness of leafleting, stating that **"for every 60 leaflets handed out; one person goes vegan/vegetarian or greatly reduces their meat consumption,"** and that the most important thing about leafleting is to **"lock your arm in the front of your body and not allow people to walk past without taking a leaflet."**

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Mr. Sjodin also stressed the importance of social media and encouraged attendees to constantly share and post things on Facebook about animal exploitation, claiming that every person who goes vegan saves 35 animal lives. Humanizing animals is also vitally important; Mr. Sjodin noted that the “dog/pig analogy” (You wouldn’t eat your dog, so why would you eat a pig?) is very effective. Sjodin also reminded activists not to forget to discuss the health and environmental issues that come from eating meat. Be sure to emphasize that **“the truth is on our side,”** said Sjodin.

Bruce Friedrich of Farm Sanctuary spoke about some of the tactics that can be used to help further your personal advocacy. His main point was, **“it’s not what you say, it’s how you say it,”** and encouraged the room to **“be genuinely likeable and a person someone can trust.”** Friedrich also discussed the use of leafleting, having a sticker on your laptop, having a bumper sticker on your car, or wearing a t-shirt. The top five things that Friedrich said were the best tactics to use were: **(1) always be courteous, (2) have the courage of your convictions, (3) make the message, (4) create opportunities, and (5) channel Socrates (help people see that they agree with veganism).**

Running Effective Campaigns

Michael Webermann (FARM) and Caryn Ginsberg (Author)

Caryn Ginsberg began the session with an example of a mini-campaign to get you to buy clothes only from thrift shops. It was an example of an ineffective campaign because she gave too much needless information about buying clothes at thrift shops and it was too negative. One of the things she emphasized was that intent matters and consumers make decisions based on one question: What’s in it for me?

As effective communicators we must be prepared to answer question the correct way for the person on the receiving end. **“We all weigh the costs when making decisions and see the benefits and barriers,”** said Ginsberg. **“We must make it as simple as possible for the person to make the decision we want them to make; we do that by making our products, or what we’re trying to sell, fun, easy, and most of all, popular.”**

With regards to veganism, Ginsberg said that **“you must make ‘veg’ fun!”** If you want to win people over to your cause you must not focus on what someone is giving up; shame, guilt, or judgment. Instead, said Ginsberg, allow people to draw their own conclusions. **“You must also make it fun for businesses to employ veganism by stressing that veganism reduces labor costs, eliminates competitors, and keeps employees,”** explained Ginsberg. **“You must make it beneficial for individuals and businesses to adopt veganism.”**

Michael Webermann spoke about FARM’s **Sustained Vegan Outreach** campaign and how it works in converting people to veganism: by paying individuals \$1 to watch a 4-minute video about factory farming, people feel an obligation to support FARM and become vegan. At the end of video there is a call to action. People can pledge to be vegan 2-3 days a week, 4-5 days a week, 5-7 days a week, or not at all. **FARM has found that because people take ownership of the dollar they are given, 3 out of 5 people will pledge to be vegan 2-3 days a week.** Not everyone will stay true to their pledge, so FARM has a way of following up with everyone who pledges; by sending out personalized e-mails three months after the person watched the video congratulating them on becoming vegan. Webermann stated that **“FARM is**

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aware most people go back to eating meat but this way it ‘guilts’ them into staying true to their pledge.”

“One of the important things to keep in mind is the measurable impact you’re having,” said Webermann, emphasizing that organizations must come up with a formula to measure their impact and apply it to campaigns. Each campaign that is carried out must be measured, tested and assessed.

“We must keep in mind that our ultimate goal is to save the most animals,” concluded Webermann.

Animal Abuse for Food

Mary Finelli (Fish Feel) and Bruce Friedrich (Farm Sanctuary)

Bruce Friedrich from Farm Sanctuary spoke about animal abuse for food, stating that **“97% of Americans agree laws should be in place to protect animals from abuse.”** Based on this fact, the main goal of the movement should be to break down the barriers so people can be aware. He quoted Dawkins, **“When we eat animals we are essentially eating beings same as us.”** Friedrich makes the argument that pigs were found to be better at video games than chimps and that pigs are known to be smarter than 3 year olds. He also claims that chickens have foresight and can see a future for themselves. He stated that **“the most abused animal is a chicken,”** saying that they are in **“constant chronic pain.”**

Friedrich further told the attendees that **“we are not changing the way people believe but changing the way they think,”** and claimed that **“when you eat a vegan meal, you are lashing out at an animal oppressor.”**

Note: The power went out during this session so it was cut short, but the film *“What Came Before”* by Farm Sanctuary was going to be shown.

Practicing Effective Communication

Noel-Teru Gibson (nonprofit consultant)

Noel-Teru Gibson began by emphasizing the importance of having more activists to educate the public about animal suffering. **“We must always think, what will resonate with my family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and consumers,”** said Gibson

Gibson stated that people know that animals are being tortured but eat them anyways; **“these people are sick and confused and we need to educate them.”** **“Animal activists are martyrs,”** declared Gibson. **“We must bear witness to the atrocities happening with animals but must not keep putting ourselves through the trouble and pain of watching the horrific videos.”**

Attendees were then instructed to break up in to groups and talk about issues they had encountered when communicating to a non-vegan about the vegan way of life. In one Alliance staff member’s group, one of the women who was in the group told a story about a person who was fishing at the river that is behind her house, but not part of her property, and asked the group what she should do. The woman stated that she had already spoken with her neighbors and had asked them to stop fishing but they had not complied with her request. A young woman in the group told her that she should make signs with the homeowner’s

association logo on it and put it around the river telling them that fishing was prohibited. The group was generally in agreement over using tactics—even blatantly lying—to achieve their goal of veganism.

Lessons From Agriculture Campaigns

Jaya Bhumitra (Compassion Over Killing), Jon Camp (Vegan Outreach), Katie Cantrell (Factory Farming Awareness Coalition), David Coman-Hidy (The Humane League), Nick Cooney (Farm Sanctuary), Alex Felsing (FARM), Eddie Garza (MFA) and Patrice Jones (VINE Sanctuary)

Katie Cantrell from Factory Farming Awareness Coalition (FFAC) spoke on her organization's campaigns. FFAC looks at the holistic overview and the interconnectedness of animal rights issues. They take the approach that animal suffering moves people the most and take an objective approach that is fact-based. FFAC is **“empowering people to give regular people the ability to give a speech against factory farming.”** FFAC is located in San Francisco and have received free advertising on San Francisco public transportation; these advertisements reach approximately 300,000 people daily.

Patrice Jones from Vine Sanctuary (VS) spoke next about VS's campaigns. VS are active in rural regions and are now located in **“dairy country.”** VS works on campaigns that show how different forms of oppression collaborate and are interconnected. Jones explained that the movement is failing to account for material and social factors within the animal agriculture industry. She thinks that the movement is too focused on promoting veganism when there should be major focus on animal agriculture. She explained that, **“to end animal agriculture the movement has to drive down demand and raise the costs and people will stop purchasing so much meat, thus bringing an end to the industry.”**

Nick Cooney from Farm Sanctuary also spoke about its recent and successful campaigns. Farm Sanctuary is the oldest and largest sanctuary; they have over 1,000 animals in their care. They are working on legislation and have lobbied to prevent the use of battery cages and reduce the use of antibiotics in livestock production. **Farm Sanctuary's litigation department is currently working on maintaining the ban on foie gras in California, and trying to get the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ban foie gras nationwide.** Farm Sanctuary is also campaigning against genetically engineered fish. Mr. Cooney then promoted Farm Sanctuary's video, *“What Came Before.”* The video is narrated by the celebrity personality Steve-O and tells stories of three Farm Sanctuary animals and their lives “before” they came to live at the sanctuary. Lastly, he told the group to go to animalactivism.org to see where each non-profit is ranked.

Eddie Garza from Mercy for Animals (MFA) spoke about their recent campaigns and successes. **Mr. Garza believes MFA's biggest success to be their undercover video investigations at farms and slaughterhouses.** MFA believes it is making **“major progress in the corporate world.”** Mr. Garza gave specifics about investigations at a Butterball farm – five employees plead guilty for animal cruelty. MFA has also started a campaign against Hudson Valley Foie Gras by launching the website amazoncruelty.com, which is meant to encourage Amazon to prohibit foie gras sales on their website. Another campaign MFA is very proud of is the Wal-Mart cruelty campaign. MFA activists are traveling around the country going from Wal-Mart to Wal-Mart protesting against the use of gestation crates. These protests include placing a giant inflatable pig in a crate with painted blood to show how the animals suffer. **Mr. Garza emphasized MFA's confidence that Wal-Mart will reverse its decision on the use**

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of gestation crates by the end of the year. The website for the Walmart campaign is: walmartcruelty.com.

Another campaign that MFA will be conducting again this year is the “*Pardon Turkey*” at Thanksgiving. MFA encourages people to go vegan on thanksgiving, using the website pardonturkey.com. MFA has also compiled a new vegetarian starter kit that they plan to distribute throughout the year.

Jaya Bhumitra from Compassion Over Killing (COK) also spoke about COK’s successful campaigns. Bhumitra indicated **that 50% of Americans have heard about Meatless Mondays and one in five Americans is participating in Meatless Monday.** COK actively campaigned for Meatless Monday in Los Angeles schools, by meeting with every council member and sharing their proposal. COK also promotes their Earth Day campaign which is a seven day vegetarian pledge, and is also working on campaigns in multiple languages, specifically, Spanish.

David Coman-Hidy from the Humane League spoke about their campaigns. The organization has three pillars of outreach, campaigns, and education. **They concentrate on leafleting at college campuses and concerts to reach a very broad audience and also go into high school and college classrooms to educate and empower people about saving animals.** Humane League also stock news racks with info and vegetarian starter kits to anyone for free. They have online campaigns on Facebook and Google ads to direct people to see factory farm videos. Coman-Hidy stressed the importance of the use of social media because **“it’s hitting the demographic they are after and it’s FREE.”** The website that Humane League promotes is vegguide.org. Humane League is also actively holding meetings with dining services to discuss key issues including cage-free eggs and gestation crate-free pork, and is trying to work with Aramark and Sodexo to help dictate policy in college cafeterias nationwide. Recently, Humane League worked to encourage the sandwich chain, Au Bon Pain, to phase out battery cages and gestation crates and was also successful in getting Johnsonville to phase out gestation crates.

Jon Camp from Vegan Outreach spoke last about that organization’s progress and successful campaigns against animal agriculture. Vegan Outreach prints and distributes information and leaflets about the mistreatment of farm animals and have gotten **2.75 million booklets** handed out and **1.8 million of those have been distributed on college campuses.**

Morning Plenary II – One Abolitionist’s Perspective

Gary Francione – Abolitionist Approach

Gary Francione, author of the Abolitionist Approach, spoke on Saturday morning about his book and his views on “happy meat” and the animal welfare reform movement. He stated that **“all sentient beings are equal for the purpose of not being used exclusively as a resource,”** and explained that **“cognition doesn’t matter – we are all equal; animals may not have human reasoning – but they can suffer.”** Francione stressed that the animal welfare campaigns don’t do anything to help animals and that they [welfare campaigns] only help make animal products more economically efficient. He used the example of the Humane Slaughter Act and how it actually increased production efficiency [in slaughterhouses.] Francione believes that **“animal welfare reforms are increasing animal exploitation and helping the bottom line of animal industries.”** He also claimed that there is no proof that animal welfare reform is

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reducing meat consumption, thus, Francione stated that **“the movement can’t accept anything less than veganism.”**

What Do We Want? How Do We Get It?

Michael Webermann (FARM)

In this session Michael Webermann talked about the vision, strategies and tactics to be employed in order to achieve the movement’s goals. Webermann reiterated the ultimate goal of the movement: **all animals should roam free and not be exploited by humans for food.**

Some of the tactics that can be employed in order to convince people to become vegans include: **(1) using personal stories and making them relatable, (2) saying what you believe not telling someone what to do, (3) turning the attention on yourself and not the other person, (4) not setting an either/or standard, and (5) not denying “our truth” and offering the path forward.** Webermann emphasized that not everyone can become vegan overnight, and thus activists must be good stewards and guide others towards the correct path.

Webermann also indicated that though there are many differences within the animal rights community, the ultimate goal should be related to **farmed animal exploitation and eliminating animal agriculture.** **“The only thing that matters is the animals and we must work on ending their hurt and suffering,”** said Webermann. **“It’s not simply enough to simply stop eating animals; animals are individuals that need to be respected.”**

In order to win people over to the cause, Webermann stated a few effective ways to get the point across including relating farm animals to companion animals in order to help people understand. **“To have the most positive result and to be effective, we must be willing to meet people where they are at and ask for what we want,”** said Webermann. **“If the ethics aren’t there, people won’t want to become vegans.”**

Engaging Politicians and Laws

Nora Constance Marino (attorney and political activist), Peter Muller (League of Humane Voters) and Paul Shapiro (HSUS)

Peter Muller from the League of Humane Voters spoke first on how to engage politicians and help get bills enacted. He explained what a PAC (Political Action Committee) was and gave two examples, the NRA (National Rifle Association) and the **American Farm Bureau Federation**. Muller said that the NRA and AFBF are examples of very successful PACs with a lot of power in Congress and within the states. Electioneering, which, explained Muller, is taking an active part in an election campaign; lobbying is conducting activities to help get your cause recognized. He then talked about the King Amendment that was in the United States House of Representatives version of the most recent Farm Bill. He reassured the crowd to not worry about that amendment because it would never pass, stating that **“it’s only a ‘feel good’ bill for farmers and ranchers.”**

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Paul Shapiro of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) also shared his views on engaging politicians and being active in the legislative process. Shapiro reminded everyone that there are currently no federal laws that protect farm animals and that many states have exemptions on agricultural practices. Shapiro also claimed that the **“animal agriculture industry is so far from what the people want and that the industry is extremely vulnerable.”**

Shapiro emphasized that the animal agriculture industry is in business to **“keep consumers in the dark and that the animal rights activists have the job of shining the light on the darkness of animal production.”** He stated that the industry’s response to the activists’ investigations are “Ag-Gag” laws, and that the activists have beaten the American Farm Bureau Federation in 11 out of 12 states on these measures so far.

“Because of these ‘outrageous’ bills, the American people now know all about ‘factory farming,’ said Shapiro, praising the segment on the laws that was featured on the Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Shapiro also used a screenshot photo of himself and the **Animal Agriculture Alliance’s Communications Director, Emily Meredith, on a CNN interview** debating the laws. **“You can see that they [HSUS] sent their most handsome and eloquent speaker to the debate”** joked Shapiro. The audience loved his negative comments about Meredith and laughed alongside him. Shapiro also featured a quote from **Kay Johnson Smith, President and CEO of the Animal Agriculture Alliance.**

When Is Collaboration Justified?

Saurabh Dalal (International Vegetarian Union) and Paul Shapiro (HSUS)

Paul Shapiro began the session with a PowerPoint presentation raising questions about working with the opposition and posed the question: **“why would we ever want to join with the opposition when we are under constant assault,”** concluding that, **“we do it for the animals.”** Shapiro emphasized that the activist groups must be willing to work with opposition in order to give animals a voice and cater to their interests. Shapiro stated **“every time we collaborate with our opponent, we are winning.”**

Despite Shapiro’s arguments in favor of working with the animal rights groups opposition—like the industry, or corporations like McDonalds—in the end, most attendees disagreed that collaboration with the opposition is a viable tactic. At times, much of the attendees were not supportive of Shapiro’s insights, and appeared to disagree with many of the Humane Society of the United States’ tactics.

Enforcing Protective Laws

Vandhana Bala (Mercy for Animals) and Doll Stanley (In Defense of Animals)

The general counsel for Mercy for Animals, Vandhana Bala spoke about the undercover investigations that the organization conducts and how Mercy for Animals get abusers prosecuted. She said the most important thing that Mercy for Animals can do is **“going to the District Attorney with solid evidence showing a pattern of cruelty that is malicious or egregious.”** The media is also a powerful tool used to bring national attention to cruelty and pressure the District Attorney’s office. Bala reminded everyone of the progress being made, stating that **“criminal prosecutions of farm animals were not prevalent just**

few years ago.” She explained that building relationships with District Attorneys is crucial and helps persuade them to prosecute cases.

What About Abolition and Welfare?

Gary Francione (Abolitionist Approach) and Bruce Friedrich (Farm Sanctuary)

Gary Francione and Bruce Friedrich discussed the differences between animal rights and animal welfare. Francione began by saying that welfare is incorrect and is moving the movement in the wrong direction. Instead of abolishing the use of animals as food, animal welfare is regulating the use to reduce the suffering of animals. Francione emphasized that **“the only goal should be eliminating the use of animals.”** Francione stressed that veganism must become the world baseline. **“Animals have interests that matter and we need to be sympathetic towards them and put ourselves in their places,”** said Francione. **“We would want someone to be fighting for our rights if we were animals.”**

Friedrich expressed that welfare reform is closer to abolition than we think, stating, **“we must use psychology and emotions to get others to relate to the animals.”** **“We must empathize with the animals and imagine that they are humans,”** explained Friedrich. **“In the same way that we cannot afford to be prejudiced or racist, or sexist we cannot be speciesist.”**

In order for veganism to become the world baseline, you must begin by asking individuals to do something small and gradually continue asking them to do more. **“Welfare actually brings us closer to animal liberation,”** stated Friedrich. Both Francione and Friedrich agreed that ordinary people understand the suffering of animals and if they understand this then they can understand that animals matter and **we cannot eat, use, or wear them.**

Exposing the Meat Industry

Mary Finelli (Fish Feel), Harish Sethu (Counting Animals) and Dave Simon (Author)

Harish Sethu from Counting Animals spoke about the animal agriculture industry and some things they want consumers to believe. He said that the industry doesn’t care about their animals, the environment, and that animal production is not good for the national economy. Sethu then showed a graph with Tyson and McDonald’s annual advertising budget and compared that to the total amount of money that the animal rights organizations raised last year. Sethu further **claimed that the animal rights movement is responsible for a 9% decline in meat consumption since 2006.** His website is *countinganimals.com*.

Dave Simon, author of Meatonomics, talked next about the Checkoff programs. He gave a little background about the programs, explaining that they were **“formerly voluntary and now are a tax-like assessment is imposed on all producers, mandating that they contribute to the Checkoff programs.”** The purpose of Checkoffs, explained Simon, is to improve the market and to encourage people to buy certain types of meat and to pay for research showing that animal products are healthy [a claim Simon refuted]. Simon stated that the **“externalized costs of animal agriculture are roughly \$414 billion; which includes healthcare costs account related to heart disease, strokes and diabetes.”**

Raising a Vegan Generation

Karen Budkie (Stop Animal Exploitation Now), Marla Rose (Chicago Vegan Family Network), Anne Dinshah (Author), and Bruce Zeman (In Defense of Animals)

Karen Budkie began by stating that the word vegan gets thrown around too much and too freely. She stressed that a plant-based diet is not vegan. **“Being vegan is a lifestyle: no fur, no leather, no going to the zoo or circus, and definitely no meat,”** explained Budkie. **“Veganism is all about supporting animal rights and countering any action or industry that exploits or uses animals.”**

Marla Rose spoke about building children’s confidence about veganism, and doing so by encouraging them to advocate for animal rights in simple ways including: wearing t-shirts to school, setting up booths to hand out information, writing speeches, working on projects for classes, and making art. All of these are proactive ways that children can build their own confidence and can help other children see the importance of animal cruelty, explained Rose. Rose also encouraged attendees to bring children to protests and give them a first-hand experience of what the animal rights movement is all about.

“Consistency is the key in raising a vegan child and generation; we must have them be involved,” said Marla Rose. **“One of the earliest things that we can teach our children and the upcoming generation about empathy.”**

Bruce Zeman began by stating that children are not receiving the correct information regarding animal rights in schools and they need to be made aware of the cruelty that is happening to animals. He affirmed, **“we [humans and animals] are all the same.”** Zeman advocated for changing the terminology when referencing animals—**“we must personalize and give animals human characteristics, instead of calling animals “it”, need to change the reference to “him” or “her”.** Zeman stated that one of the most effective ways to help children understand the movement is to compare farm animals to companion animals. **“Use pets as examples,”** said Zeman. **“By doing so, we make are able to connect with kids on their level and help them make the connection between companion animals and farmed animals.”**

All of this panel’s speakers agreed that bringing vegan food to school for presentations or show-and-tell is a good way to promote a vegan agenda. Moreover, attendees were encouraged to reiterate that it’s not enough to eat and be vegan, being vegan is a lifestyle. Everyone must help educate children about animal cruelty.

Promise of Civil Disobedience

George Guimaraes (VEDDAS), Ryan Shapiro (MA Institute of Technology) and Michael Webermann (FARM)

Michael Webermann from FARM first clarified the difference was between civil disobedience and direct action. Civil disobedience is the refusal to obey government demands or commands, especially as nonviolent actions. Direct action is the strategic use of tactics seeking an immediate political aim or directly preventing an undesired act. Webermann described three principles that help with civil disobedience and direct action. The first is to plan strategically; is civil disobedience really what is needed? The second is to be flexible and be able to change your plan on scene. The third is to dress the part. Webermann strongly encouraged people to **“dress professionally and not look like the**

‘individual’ that they are because they are more likely to not be taken seriously or get in more trouble with the police.” He used some examples of his experiences with civil disobedience and being arrested for protests that he has participated in.

Ryan Shapiro, an activist who has been arrested for the ‘open rescue’ that was performed years ago at a foie gras farm in New York, discussed his experiences of being in prison and trying to get the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to follow through with his Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Shapiro currently boasts more than 500 active FOIA requests pending with the FBI and is in the middle of a trial trying to get the information released. Shapiro also warned the audience that many activists are being labeled and charged as domestic terrorists and he thinks that it is unbelievable that activists can be charged with that felony when **“all that they [the activists] are doing is conducting open rescues and use arson against farms.”**

When Is Direct Action Justified?

Dave Simon (Author), Norm Phelps (Author), and Peter Young (Animal Liberation Frontline)

During this session Peter Young and Norm Phelps also discussed when direct action would be justified. Peter Young, who has been in jail for “freeing” animals, said that he **“would take the necessary action to free the animals, even if it means going to jail.”** Norm Phelps said that **“it is better to employ militant direct action when dealing with the animal abusers.”**

Young described himself, and all subsequent animal rights activists, as animal liberators. He declared that **“animals are not better off left in a cage and that it is inherently dangerous to let animals be murdered.”** He went on to say that **“animal abusers forfeit all of their rights when they abuse the animals.”** He went on to say that anything the animal abusers own is forfeited because they **“cast the first stone”** and that **“the actions we take to free the animals are morally their own justification.”**

Norm Phelps was wary of direct action such as burning or bombing a laboratory because the explosives and fires could have uncontrollable consequences and do more harm than good. He went on to say that there could a lot of backlash when taking direct action. Direct action can elicit dangerous and threatening action to us and the movement overall.

Both Young and Phelps agreed that animal rights activists need to **“do more of what works but not seek permission from anybody.”** Young went on to emphasize that compromise does not always work and we must be mindful of this and **“know when to take action,”** explaining that **“direct action is best applied to weak links such as the fur industry or foie gras farms.”** Young also said that **“people who know that animals are abused and choose to eat meat anyways are Nazis.”**

Phelps said that **“we will not win the whole country because there will always be people who don’t care and won’t change.”** **“We must get the public thinking about what is going on with the animals,”** added Phelps. **“We must make them aware of the suffering and abuse they suffer and make the fork to mouth connection.”**

Both activists agreed that saving [animal] lives justifies itself. The intention of rescuing and saving the animals is always about the animals, never the owners; only about freeing their captives. Any collateral

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damage is justified based on the emotional and physical distress they [owners] inflict on the animals.

There is never intention in inflicting fear on the general public or the owners, but if it happens as a means to free the animals, then it is justified. The general consensus among attendees was that the ends always justify the means.

Amanda Hitt of the Government Accountability Project (GAP) spoke about whistleblowing. She said it **was important to work at the intersections of other movements to help garner strength and help to make the movement larger.** She described a classic whistleblower as someone with a regular job who sees something disturbing and reports it – then is subject to negative repercussions due to their actions. There are also witnesses and insiders that work within a government organization that “leak” information and get it to the right people/media. She talked about one of her clients, the meat inspector who was recently featured in the Kansas City Star in an article entitled, “*Abuses Persists at Some Slaughter Plants.*” She says that he is an example of a classic whistleblower.

Wenonah Hauter of Food and Water Watch spoke next about the basic history of Farm Bill and how it has progressed over time.

Engaging Wall Street

Dave Simon (Author), Lee Slonimsky (Ocean Partner LP) and Andy Stepanian (Sparrow Media Project)

Dave Simon then spoke about engaging shareholders and Wall Street. He said that the easiest consumer action is to write letters, make phone calls, and participate in pickets and boycotts. **Simon said that 52% of Americans own stock in public companies,** and emphasized that “**people can divest their stocks from companies who support animal abuse.**” Simon gave the example of Bill McKibben and his global divestment campaign for companies that are environmentally unsound; explaining that when you divest you sell stock and drive down price of the stock. Simon also said that you could submit a proposal but the requirements are that you have to hold \$2,000 in stock for one year and that there are content restrictions. He then reiterated that externalized costs of animal agriculture are approximately \$414.8 billion.

Lee Slonimsky, a hedge fund manager of Ocean Partner LP, explained that 7,000 managers in the U.S. hold roughly \$2 trillion in assets. He suggested that the movement work to persuade these managers to forward funds directly to animal rights. **He made sure that everyone in the room knew that all ‘factory farming’ companies are publicly traded and in the stock market.** Slonimsky believes that if people gathered together and short-sold company’s stock it would ultimately drive them out of business. He estimated that roughly 70% of hedge fund managers are vegan or vegetarian so he thinks that this could really gain traction and work, citing Oprah Winfrey as an example of someone that uses her money for non-animal exploitation purposes.

Speaking Our Message

Victoria Moran (Author)

Victoria Moran encouraged the audience to listen to great speakers such as Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King Jr., to see how they conduct themselves when speaking to an audience and to use their tactics to advance the vegan agenda. When speaking, explained Moran, one must make active effort to weave their stories together. She also cautioned the audience not to judge people because **“we don’t know their hearts or where they are at in life.”** Lastly, Moran said that speakers are allowed their signature stories and went on to tell her signature story about visiting a cattle processing plant.

Moran said that upon seeing the truck with cows arrive, she watched them make their trip to the entrance where one cow, courageously, decided to stop in her tracks. According to Moran, she [the cow] **“smelled the blood, heard the awful noises coming from inside, and was aware that she was walking to her demise.”** From a ledge above, someone **“whistled to the cow making her believe that he was her friend and she continued on to her death.”** Upon walking inside, Moran described that she **“felt as if she was walking to a scene from Dante’s Inferno; she just could not believe that the carcass she was looking was once a beautiful living cow.”** As she was telling the story, many people in the audience were very emotional. Moran used this story as an example of how to get through to an audience and to affirm, or change, their beliefs.

Engaging Agencies and Business

Matt Rice (MFA) and Paul Shapiro (HSUS)

Matt Rice from MFA spoke about tactics and strategies to engage agencies and businesses. He said that it was important to know your audience really well and to set goals for what you want to accomplish. He stated that profit margins drive all decisions in agencies and businesses. Rice also said that **“the undercover investigations are helping cast negative attention on businesses so they are more willing to work towards animal welfare reforms.”** **“These investigations help put pressure on companies to do the ‘right thing.’”** As was said in many sessions, social media is the big key to helping persuade companies and businesses to change their stance of practices. It was also stated that guilty convictions help companies make changes. Rice applauded the fact that **more and more states are passing legislation regarding animal welfare and it’s becoming easier to convince companies to require different reforms.** Rice emphasized the importance of relationship building with large corporations including WalMart. Mercy for Animals is extremely confident that Walmart will reverse their stance on gestation crates.

Paul Shapiro of the Humane Society of the United States also spoke about HSUS’ current strategies. Shapiro used the example of Bill Gates and his belief that meat consumption must decline, citing Gate’s recent investment in *Beyond Chicken*; a non-profit committed to reducing the cost of chicken-substitute products so more people will choose those products instead of real chicken. Shapiro also discussed the Meatless Monday campaign and explained that the campaign began during WWI to encourage people to save meat for the troops. The campaign was since reignited in 2003 to wage a war on animal exploitation, health and the environment. Shapiro stated that **“the Humane Society of the United States is going**

around making appointments with dining directors of schools, hospitals and other public eating places to convince them to adopt the Meatless Monday campaign.”

Designing and Printing Our Message

Coleen Holland (Veg News Magazine) and Nathan Runkle

Nathan Runkle began by asking if your organization needs to be producing and printing a lot of content and material or can it be disseminated online? **“Messages must be designed and tailored according to the audience you are trying to reach,”** said Runkle. An easy exercise, Runkle suggested, is to go to a book store and look at the magazine section and see how each magazine is targeted towards specific demographics. What we would surely find is that there are pop culture icons on the cover of magazines targeted towards young people, such as Teen Vogue, and older actors on the cover of magazines targeted towards the older demographic, such as AARP. One of the most important things to focus on when creating a message is choosing the correct audience. Runkle stated that an organization does not need to appeal to everyone, just the demographic that you want targeted.

Another thing that Runkle told the audience was that an organization must give the targeted public tools. **“We must tell stories, not statistics, and appeal to the audience by citing the popularity of the movement,”** explained Runkle. Runkle and Coleen Holland then went on to discuss fonts, messaging, and logos to use in print and online campaign materials.

The Ghosts in Our Machine Sneak Preview

Liz Marshall (director of *The Ghosts in Our Machine*), Jo-Anne McArthur (animal rights photojournalist, *We Animals*)

Liz Marshall who directed the film, *The Ghosts in Our Machine*, spoke about what the documentary was about. It follows photojournalist Jo-Anne McArthur and her quest to get some of her photos published. There was a sneak preview and she said that the film will probably debut in the United States this fall. Jo-Anne McArthur then spoke about her book, *We Animals* that will be in bookstores this fall. The trailer and additional info on the film is available at this website: www.ghostmachine.com.

Utilizing Psychology for Social Change

Nick Cooney (Farm Sanctuary)

Nick Cooney then discussed the scientific method. He said that science equals testing and the movement needs to know the kind of impact it's having on the general public. Cooney told attendees that they need to be storytellers when informing people about the vegan lifestyle. He went on to say that though statistics can be convincing at times, telling stories has a greater impact and is more likely to generate change than statistics alone.

“You need to ask people one optimal request: significant change in which they can picture themselves doing,” stated Cooney. **“The majority of the public doesn't want to picture themselves as vegans, but a lot of people can picture themselves eating less meat or becoming vegetarians.”** In order to get through to the public one must appeal to the social norms; tell people that veganism is popular and that everyone is doing it. Most people won't take any action or change their lifestyle unless

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they see that everyone around them is doing it, and **“we must use this to our advantage,”** declared Cooney.

Cooney also acknowledged that you must dress like the people you are trying to reach. **“We need to look as similar to the target public as possible because appearances do matter and people relate and listen to people who are like them,”** said Cooney. Cooney explained that if appearances didn’t matter as much he would probably wear thrift shop clothes, have dreads, a long beard, and not smell very good—but appearances do matter, so he dresses professionally.

Cooney also encouraged attendees not to share too much information when speaking with the public. **“Leave other issues off of the table,”** Cooney elaborated. **“In order to really get through to the public, we cannot talk about other issues we believe in and support, rather we must focus on the animals’ suffering.”** Cooney also emphasized the importance of leading by example and showing people the right path to follow. **“We need to believe that the public is able to make the changes and have them have confidence in themselves,”** said Cooney. **“If a person is confident in themselves, they will be more likely to believe that they have the ability to change their eating habits and lifestyle choices.”**

In order to get the public to choose the vegan lifestyle, one must break down barriers. Cooney explained that one shouldn’t focus on taste, convenience, social concerns or health, but instead focus on the benefits of eating less meat. **“The people that we need to target are female, young (between ages 16-30), democrats, smart people (higher education), singles, and those who do not follow the Judeo-Christian beliefs,”** said Cooney. **“In targeting these groups of people, our message will most likely be heard and taken to heart and will have the greatest impact.”**

“Ultimately, it is not enough for people to become vegans because of health concerns,” declared Cooney. **“We must be proactive in getting them to see the cruelty that happens to the animals and how veganism is saving them.”**

Engaging Young Adults

Jon Camp (Vegan Outreach) and Michael Webermann (FARM)

Jon Camp began the session by saying that **98-99% of animals are raised and killed on factory farms** and we must make the public aware. **Each vegetarian spares 30-35 birds and mammals each year.** **“By beginning conversations this way,”** said Camp. **“We will make the public aware of the atrocities of eating meat and the benefits of being vegan.”**

Michael Webermann stated that the major issue facing the movement today is peoples’ attention spans. **“Attention spans today are very limited and we must find a way to resonate and captivate a young audience,”** explained Webermann. **“One of the best ways to interact with people is to find boring people to talk to.”** According to Webermann, boring people are ideal because **“they have nothing better to do than to listen to you.”** Another way to engage an audience is to target people waiting in line, said Webermann, because people waiting in line have nothing better to do, so they are more likely to accept a leaflet and listen to what you have to say.

“In order to get through to people, we must take them on a journey,” said Webermann, explaining that by getting people involved and talking about their own personal pets, it will be easier to get the message of animal suffering across. Webermann cautioned attendees not to use too many statistics and to only use statistics when they are “sticky”—meaning that the statistic is both shocking and intuitive. An example Webermann gave was that **98.5% of land animals killed for food are chickens**; he explained how most people will remember this statistic because it is shocking to them and intuitive; not something they were aware of before.

Webermann also encouraged participants to always address the “how,” stating that **75% of people who try out vegetarianism and veganism go back to eating meat**, allegedly because no one addresses how important it is to make the vegan lifestyle stick. **“We must take active steps in addressing the how to people we want to influence and remind them of the suffering animals go through because of meat-eating people,”** said Webermann.

Both Camp and Webermann addressed the importance of specifically targeting college students and young people. Camp cited the *Vans Warped Tour* saying what a success he had giving out leaflets to the attendees. Another project Camp touched on was the *Adopt a College* program where people can go and distribute leaflets on college campuses. Camp explained that young people are an excellent target for the movement because **“they are the ones who go with the trends and if everyone else is doing it, they won’t want to be left out.”**

Dr. Aysha Akhtar of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) spoke about the impacts of animal agriculture on health, saying that there are health related consequences from animal agriculture including pollution/climate change, a rise in chronic diseases, and a rise in infectious diseases. Akhtar further explained the effects of animal abuse on areas surrounding farms/ranches included asthma and other respiratory diseases, and the stench, or quality of life outdoors for people who lived near these “factory farms.” She went on to say that **chronic diseases and obesity account for 1 in 5 deaths in the U.S. and that 65% of Americans are either overweight or obese**. Akhtar discussed infectious diseases and listed four contributing factors to the rise in these diseases: **(1) Climate change increases vector borne diseases (2) Pathogens are in animal products (3) Pathogens released into the environment are in factory farms, and (4) Transmission of pathogens to factory workers and larger populations**. Akhtar stated that **“every phase of factory farming is releasing pathogens into the population.”** She used emotional appeal when telling the audience that approximately **1 million animals are slaughtered per hour. She says that chicken products have 98% chance of having bacteria in the meat and that they are responsible for influenzas A, B, C.**

Externalities of Animal Abuse

Aysha Akhtar (Author), Demosthenes Maratos (Sustainability Institute at Molloy College) and Dawn Moncrief (A Well-Fed World)

The next speaker was Dawn Moncrief of A Well Fed World and she discussed the global hunger crisis, saying that meat consumption is “over consumption” and that meat consumption is expected to double as developing countries gain ground economically. Moncrief was adamant about reducing meat

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consumption in order to solve the global hunger crisis, saying that the United States must make a reduction in meat consumption a priority so that other countries will follow suit.

The next speaker was Demosthenes Maratos from the Sustainability Institute, Molloy College and he spoke about animal abuse and its impact on the environment and global warming. Maratos said that **“farmed” animal emissions are higher than transportation emissions; accounting for 51%.**”ⁱⁱ He exclaimed to the audience that raising animals for food imperils the planet more than any other thing we do, elaborating that **“80% of all agricultural land is used for raising food for the animals and that this land should be used instead for crops that humans can eat.”** Maratos also said that by 2048 fish will be completely eradicated from the oceans. He ended his section by saying that **“veganism is even more beneficial to the environment than driving a hybrid car and that veganism reduces climate change mitigation costs by 80% reduces emissions 7 times more than eating locally.”**

Challenging the Humane Hoax

Hope Bohanec (Author) and Liqin Cao (Untied Poultry Concerns)

According to Hope Bohanec, there is no such thing as happy meat or humane meat. There is no such thing as an “alternative” meat production. **“Animals are someone, not something,”** stated Bohanec. She went on to say that people are starting to care about animals’ wellbeing which is why so many people buy humane meat and organic eggs. Bohanec, however, thinks that “humane meat” and “organic eggs” are just a hoax—**“although abuse is bad, killing is worse.”**

Bohanec stated that **“you get a felony charge and a fine if you kill a dog but a paycheck for killing cows.”** Upon hearing this, the audience began loudly cheering. Bohanec then asked the audience if they would rather be hit by a baseball or die. Most people would choose the baseball bat, explained Bohanec, because human life is valued. **“In that same way, animals’ lives are also valued,”** said Bohanec. **“Animals, just like humans, fight for their life and consistently choose life.”**

Bohanec explained that there is no difference between selling animals for slaughter and human trafficking. **“Businesses make money off of sentient beings and the bodies of others,”** declared Bohanec. **“This is no different than human trafficking because in both practices people are making money off of sentient beings and bodies of others.”**

Engaging Media

Alex Hershaft (FARM), Will Potter (Green is the New Red) and Nathan Runkle (Mercy for Animals)

Nathan Runkle from Mercy for Animals spoke about his organization’s approach to engaging with the media; saying that you have to be savvy – not just compassionate because **“the industry knows how to work the press and we need to learn how to work it.”** Runkle claimed that the truth and issues people care about are on “our” side. He said to be prepared to get your message across and explains how the Associated Press and Reuters works as news wire services.

Runkle also emphasized how **“social media is a game changer”** and that **“you must target and get support from bloggers and minor celebrities on the social media sphere.”** He said that the press will pick up stories that are “shocking,” “weird,” and “have an emotional appeal.” He also said that the story

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needs to be controversial and that if you have an “expert” to give an interview about the, then you will come across as more professional and not crazy. **“Anytime there is a meat recall we need to put out press releases, write letters to the editors and get out the angle of the activists,”** said Runkle, citing Mercy for Animals current campaign of using giant blow up pigs in gestation crates. **“This [campaign] has garnered a lot of media attention because it has a bold, controversial statement,”** said Runkle, also saying that hiring a PR firm can help and has helped their organization greatly.

Runkle finished with tips for media interviews and encouraged activists to **“paint a picture with words to help the viewers or readers understand what you are saying.”** **“Always use pictures of animals in “factory” farms,”** encouraged Runkle. **“When conducting a media interview make sure you’re ‘all theater;’ be emotional, but don’t go too negative—be professional and positive.”**

Alex Hershaft from FARM spoke about the importance of writing letters to editors of newspapers. He said that the editorial pages of newspapers are the **second most read page after the front page.** **“If you get a letter into a newspaper once a month, the vegan message can reach several hundred thousand people,”** explained Hershaft. **“Keep your letters short and make sure that they are timely with an event such as a new ‘ag-gag’ law or a meat recall.”**

War on Animal activism

Sarahjane Blum (Support Vegans in Prison Systems), Elizabeth DeCoux (Florida Coastal School of Law), Will Potter (Green is the New Red) and Ryan Shapiro (MIT)

Will Potter, author of *Green is the New Red*, spoke about the trends facing animal activism. He said that fragmentation of the activists is happening and that social movements tend to work horizontally and vertically. Corporations and politicians are trying to expand the differences between the different movements to create a divide and tension between the groups. Potter said that a direct reflection of fragmentation is that authorities are targeting individuals for their beliefs and involvement in movements like the animal rights movement. **“Politicians and industries have used the same tactics throughout human history,”** said Potter. **“Fear became rage and rage becomes organizing potential.”**

Elizabeth DeCoux spoke next about the different types of “ag-gag” laws. She explained that in North Dakota, Montana and Kansas it is now illegal to take a picture on a farm and that in Missouri there is an additional requirement of reporting abuse within 24 hours of seeing it. The audience was outraged at the reporting requirement and many thought it absurd to have to report abuse within such a short timeframe.

Ryan Shapiro spoke next about his pending Freedom of Information Requests with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). [Please note: this is discussed in detail above]. **“The FBI is trying to instill fear in activists and that’s because the activists are making progress,”** said Shapiro. **“The industry is afraid of this and is in cahoots with the FBI to try to block more from being radical and advocating for animals.”**

Advocating for Animals Online

Pulin Modi (Change.org) and Adam Orand (VegFund)

Pulin Modi stated that **“all movements and causes share the same root problem: oppression.”** Modi discussed how we can advocate for animals online by using social media websites like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube*. Modi said that on *Facebook*, you should always include photos with posts, because this way, people will not only read what you are posting but also have a visual that goes along with it. Another thing he encouraged was to ask people to share the post on their timelines so that their friends could see it as well. **“Some of the most important questions that we must answer to the public are who we are, what our values are, and why it matters,”** said Modi. **“By doing this, we will gain the public’s trust; we must also keep in mind that we are the change we want to see in the world and must always display this in our interactions with the public.”**

Adam Orand talked about the logistics of advocating for animals online and online advertisement. **“We must be able to measure our virtual presence and impact,”** said Orand. **“We must have campaigns that are targeted at specific demographics and have specific web content, we must pay for advertisements choose the best way to measure our impact.”**

Orand also laid out some best practices tips for organizations, which included having a professional design and layout for your website because as this sets the tone for what kind of impact you will have. Another thing Orand suggested was to always have a call to action on your website. In doing this, you will let people know what kind of impact you want to have on the public and what you want them to choose to do. Orand cautioned attendees about using graphic footage because not every website allows it and not everyone can stomach the cruelty. He also suggested that you encourage engagement at all times. **“Engaging the public is a very important step in having the biggest impact,”** said Orand. The last thing he suggested was to use metrics to refine strategies. **“By measuring what kind of impact your organization has, you are able to refine your strategies and campaigns so that they will have an even bigger impact,”** explained Orand.

Closing Plenary – We’re Winning

Colleen Holland (Veg News Magazine), Victoria Moran (Author) and Will Tuttle (Author)

Will Tuttle was the master of ceremonies for the final plenary of this conference and he began with a piano piece that he composed himself and dedicated to animals.

The first speaker during the final session was Colleen Holland, founder and publisher of *Veg News*, who discussed the three major reasons why veganism is going mainstream: (1) Vegan Products—there is now a convenience about vegan foods and non-dairy milk and this industry is a **\$1.3 billion industry and is continuing to grow**. She also said that vegan products are in **25% of American households already**; (2) Restaurant chains: Holland applauded restaurants such as *The Veggie Grill*, *Loving Hut* and *Nature Food Café*. “90% of people eating at these restaurants are non-vegetarians,” said Holland; and (3) Vegan Food Technology: products such as *BeyondEggs*, *Beyond Meat* and *Kite Hill Cheese* are paving the way for tasty non-meat foods for consumers. She stated multiple times, **“We are winning.”**

The next speaker, Victoria Moran, started her presentation with the quote, **“We’re winning like the abolitionists of slavery didn’t know that they were winning.”** She absolutely believes that the younger generations will live to see the day when animals aren’t used for food anymore.

Will Tuttle then offered his closing remarks. **“The vegan revolution is liberating us as we awaken to liberate animals,”** said Tuttle. **“The Vegan Revolution is showing us that the [animal agriculture] industry is failing.”** His last comments were that the **awakening is happening** and that it is not enough to advocate veganism – we have to embody it.

Conclusions

The 2013 Animal Rights Conference taught many valuable lessons: (1) Animal Rights activists use emotional pleas and comparisons to frame campaigns which they hope will advance their cause; (2) That the animal rights organizations are shifting their focus to target college and high school age students heavily; and (3) The Animal Rights Movement is trying to become unified as one to strengthen overall.

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice” stated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights movement. This was just one of the most quoted sayings throughout the conference. Emotional appeals were common when talking about veganism; most speakers focused on the animals and their alleged suffering. The focus of presentations about farm animals was always on the “horrendous conditions of the animals,” how it was “our” [humans’] doing, and the revelation that the vegan lifestyle is the only moral and humane choice. By focusing on these talking points, activists see themselves able to convert the public to veganism.

Activist groups are also clearly targeting students; they see this age group as most vulnerable because students are even farther separated from having any real knowledge of agriculture. Activists see this target audience as the prime age group to help further their movement. Lastly, it was abundantly clear that there are many tensions between individual activist organizations, yet every speaker emphasized the importance for the groups to unite. The movement is trying to put aside differences and work together to

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For more information: emeredith@animalagalliance.org

become one unified voice for animals. There are still a lot of major differences that need addressing, but it's apparent that the younger generations of activists are ready to come together and fight the industry as one.

After attending this conference, it is clear that the animal rights movement is gaining momentum—many presenters argued that they were “winning.” Unfortunately, activists are gaining ground by taking advantage of people who are uneducated about animal agriculture.

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ⁱ This report, entitled “Livestock’s Long Shadow,” (available here: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a0701e/a0701e00.pdf>) has since been widely discredited. In a 2013 FAO report, the United Nations called livestock production in the United States the most “sustainable in the world.” The report is available here: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>.

ⁱⁱ This figure derives from a report released by the World Watch Institute. Visit WWI’s website here: <http://www.worldwatch.org/>