

May 21, 2003

Public Lukewarm on Animal Rights

Supports strict laws governing treatment of farm animals, but opposes bans on product testing and medical research

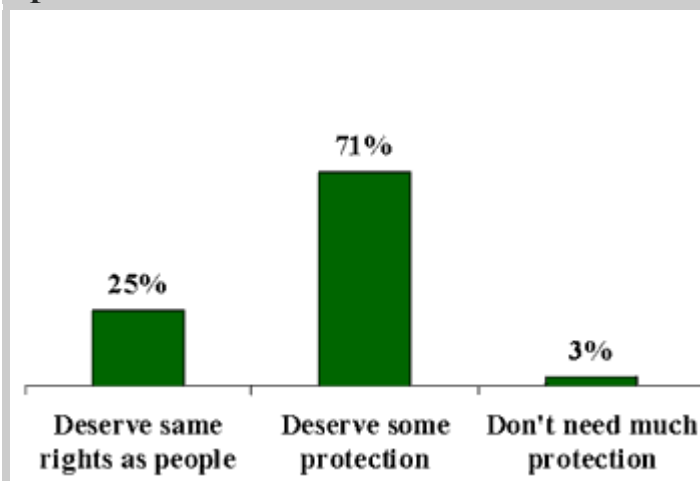
by David W. Moore

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- The vast majority of Americans say animals deserve at least some protection from harm and exploitation, and a quarter say animals deserve the same protection as human beings. But most Americans oppose banning medical research and product testing on laboratory animals. By an even larger majority, they oppose banning all types of hunting. A clear majority, however, favors strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals. Women are more likely than men to support animal rights, and Democrats more than Republicans, but there are few differences by age.

The poll, conducted May 5-7, finds 96% of Americans saying that animals deserve at least some protection from harm and exploitation, while just 3% say animals don't need protection "since they are just animals." Twenty-five percent of Americans say that animals deserve "the exact same rights as people to be free from harm and exploitation."

Opinion of Treatment of Animals



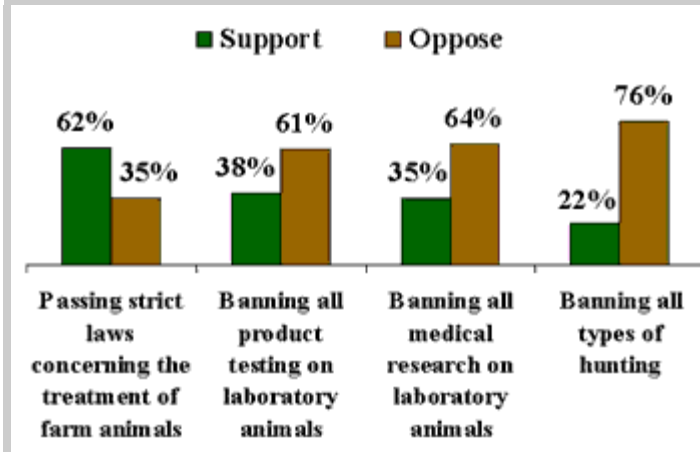
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The poll also shows that among four proposals made by animal rights activists tested in the poll, Americans oppose three and support one:

- By 64% to 35%, Americans reject banning all medical research on laboratory animals.
- Similarly, by 61% to 38%, Americans oppose banning all product testing on laboratory animals.
- And by an overwhelming majority, 76% to 22%, Americans oppose banning all types of hunting.

- On the other hand, Americans support passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals, by 62% to 35%.

Support and Opposition for Animal Rights Proposals



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"Same rights" may be an overstatement

Although 25% of Americans say they believe animals deserve the "exact same rights" as people to be free from harm and exploitation, many of these same people oppose proposals to limit the harm and exploitation of animals.

Among those who support the "same rights" for animals as people:

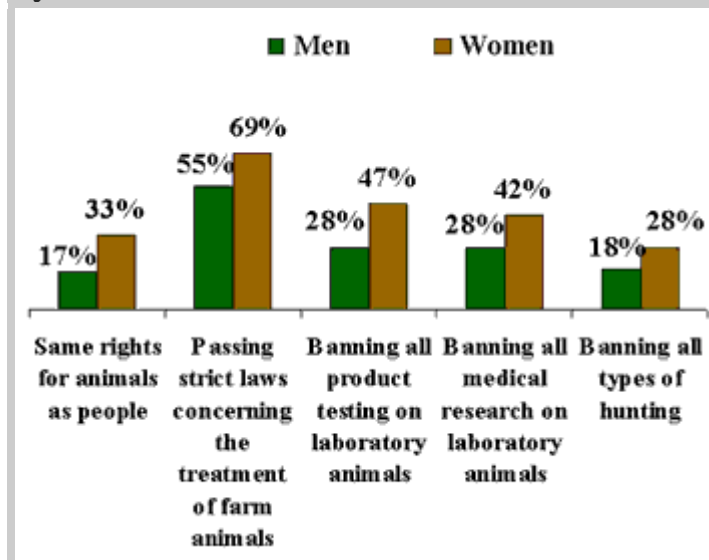
- Forty-four percent oppose banning medical research on laboratory animals.
- Thirty-eight percent oppose banning product testing on laboratory animals.
- Twenty-three percent oppose passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals.
- And 55% oppose banning all types of hunting.

Of course, the percentages opposing these proposals are much higher among people who say that animals deserve only "some protection." The substantial numbers of people who oppose these proposals -- despite saying they want the same rights for animals that people have to be free from harm and exploitation -- suggest that the issue may be more complex than some initially expected. Perhaps the initial question evoked images of pets rather than "laboratory" animals, and the latter question may conjure up pictures of mice and rats rather than, say, dogs and cats.

Gender gap in support for animal rights, but no significant generational differences

Women are twice as likely as men to say they want the same rights for animals as people, with 33% of women and just 17% of men taking that position. In addition, women are 14 percentage points more likely than men to support strict laws for the treatment of farm animals, 19 points more likely to support banning product testing on laboratory animals, 14 points more likely to support banning medical research on laboratory animals, and 10 points more likely to support banning all types of hunting.

Support for Animal Rights Proposals: By Gender



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The poll finds few differences by age, suggesting no generational trend in any of these attitudes related to animal rights.

There are, however, significant differences by party, with Democrats and independents more likely to support animal rights than do Republicans.

% Who support each proposal

Republicans Independents Democrats

	%	%	%
Same rights for animals as people	15	28	34
Passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals	53	66	67
Banning all product testing on laboratory animals	31	39	46

Banning all medical research on laboratory animals	25	38	43
Banning all types of hunting	15	23	30

Democrats are generally 14 to 19 percentage points more likely than Republicans to take the pro-animal rights position, while independents fall between -- but always closer to Democrats than Republicans.

Survey Methods

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,005 national adults, aged 18+, conducted May 5-7, 2003. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

Which of these statements comes closest to your view about the treatment of animals – [ROTATED: animals deserve the exact same rights as people to be free from harm and exploitation, animals deserve some protection from harm and exploitation, but it is still appropriate to use them for the benefit of humans, or animals don't need much protection from harm and exploitation since they are just animals]?

	Same rights as people	Some protection	Don't need much protection	OTHER (vol.)	No opinion
2003 May 5-7	25%	71	3	*	1

Here are some specific proposals concerning the treatment of animals. For each one, please say whether you strongly support this proposal, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose this proposal. How about ... [RANDOM ORDER]?

A. Banning all medical research on laboratory animals

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No opinion
2003 May 5-7	12%	23	26	38	1

B. Banning all product testing on laboratory animals

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No opinion
2003 May 5-7	13%	25	31	30	1

C. Passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No opinion
2003 May 5-7	29%	33	21	14	3

D. Banning all types of hunting

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No opinion
2003 May 5-7	9%	13	29	47	2

SUMMARY TABLE: ANIMAL RIGHTS ISSUES

<i>2003 May 5-7 (sorted by "total support")</i>	TOTAL support	TOTAL oppose
Passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals	62%	35
Banning all product testing on laboratory animals	38%	61
Banning all medical research on laboratory animals	35%	64
Banning all types of hunting	22	76

* -- less than 0.5%