Considering the Ethical Matrix for Animal Welfare

DIVERSE VOICES IN AGRICULTURE
A Seminar

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Overview

Part 1
• What is the Ethical Matrix?

Part 2
• Applying the Ethical Matrix: Considering the morality of California’s Proposition 2

Part 3
• Questions and comments
What is the Ethical Matrix?

• Developed by Ben Mepham, University of Nottingham, Food Ethics Council, UK
• Offers a structured way of working through ethical issues
• Aim: Promotes “rational thought and democratic deliberation”
What is the Ethical Matrix?

• Employs a principled-based approach
• The three major principles are:
  a. Respect for well-being: consequentialist
  b. Respect for autonomy: rights-based
  c. Respect for justice: institutional/distributive

• The principles reflect common morality
## What the Matrix looks like

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect for:</th>
<th>Well-being (health &amp; welfare)</th>
<th>Autonomy (freedom &amp; choice)</th>
<th>Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry agents</td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmed animals</td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Represents specific interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying the Ethical Matrix

• Assessing the Morality of California’s Proposition 2
CA’s Proposition 2

• Short title for the proposed law: “Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act”
• Expansion of existing anti-cruelty laws
• Motivated by growing public concern
CA's Proposition 2

What the law says (purpose):

• “To prohibit the cruel confinement of farm animals in a manner that does not allow them to turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their limbs.”

• Covered animals: veal calves, egg laying hens and pregnant pigs

• Implemented by 2015
CA’s Proposition 2

Exceptions

- Animals used in research, transportation, rodeos, fairs, 4-H programs, lawful slaughter, veterinary purposes

Violation

- Misdemeanor penalty and a fine of up to $1,000 or imprisonment up to six months (180 days) in county jail
The Ethical Matrix and Assessing the Morality of Proposition 2

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry agents</td>
<td>Cost and jobs</td>
<td>Coered or free choices and actions</td>
<td>Laws and farming practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Food safety and improved quality of life</td>
<td>Democratic participation</td>
<td>Impact on consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmed animals</td>
<td>Implications to welfare</td>
<td>Freedom to move</td>
<td>Exercise of species specific behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>Vulnerability to food bioterrorism</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengths

- Multi-principled
- Focused
- Concrete
- That is, the matrix gives a framework to envision and assess advantages and disadvantages as well as other moral values, and to consider implications to interested parties
Limitations

• Are the principles sufficient?
• Is the principled approach the best way to consider competing interests and moral values?

• If the aim is to aid democratic and rational deliberation, then it is a helpful decision-making tool
Resources

• www.foodethicscouncil.org


Questions and Comments

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