

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

Respect for:	Well-being (health & welfare)	Autonomy (freedom & choice)	Justice
Industry agents	Represents specific interests		Represents specific interests
Citizens		Represents specific interests	
Farmed animals	Represents specific interests		Represents specific interests
The environment		Represents specific interests	

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

Respect for:	Well-being (health & welfare)	Autonomy (freedom & choice)	Justice
Industry agents	Cost and jobs	Coered or free choices and actions	Laws and farming practices
Citizens	Food safety and improved quality of life	Democratic participation	Impact on consumers
Farmed animals	Implications to welfare	Freedom to move	Exercise of species specific behaviors
The environment	Pollution	Vulnerability to food bioterrorism	Sustainability

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
- Mepham, B (2005) *Bioethics for the biosciences: an introduction*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Kaiser, M and Forsberg, E-M (2001) Assessing fisheries - using an ethical matrix in a participatory process. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 14, 192-200.
- Schroeder, D and Palmer, C (2003) Technology assessment and the 'ethical matrix'. *Poiesis Praxis* 1, 295-307.
- Mepham, B (1996) Ethical analysis of food biotechnologies: an evaluative framework. In Mepham, B (ed) *Food ethics*. Routledge, London: 101-119.

Questions and Comments

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