

*To eat or not to eat animals,
that is the **perhaps most important** question of ethics*

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*To eat or not to eat animals,
that is the **perhaps most important question of ethics,**
because the ecological future of mankind
is at stake.*

SocialLab - Animal Husbandry in the Mirror of Society

- since 2015 (until Dec. 2018)
- interdisciplinary project of 5 universities and 2 research institutes (mostly: socio-economists, psychologists and ethicists)
- aims at a deeper understanding of the criticism of animal husbandry and at recommendations for improvements
- 12 tasks (www.sociallab-nutztiere.de)

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what people demand to be protected:

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 2. Awareness of such appreciation develops particularly when one is **concerned or worried** about that value.
 3. **The stronger those concerns, the stronger the demands.**

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- Regarding animal husbandry a large majority of SocialLab interview participants **spontaneously** demanded better **protection of the welfare of farm animals** as well as improved **environmental and climate protection**.
- We conclude,
 1. “**people**” **are concerned** about farm animal welfare and about environmental and climate protection,
 2. “**people**” **value** both **their own welfare** and the **welfare of other individuals** (humans and animals) as well as the **preconditions of welfare** (in particular a healthy environment and a stable climate).

Eurobarometer 2006:

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Eurobarometer 2015:

- The vast majority of Europeans (**82%**) believe “that in general the welfare of farmed animals in (their country) **should be better protected** than it is now”.

Special Eurobarometer 270 (24.565 interviews in 10/2006; representative for all EU Member States, age15+)

Special Eurobarometer 442 (27.672 interviews in 12/2015; representative for all EU Member States, age15+)

Eurobarometer 2005:

- **57%** of EU citizens mentioned they would “be willing to pay an additional price premium for hen’s eggs sourced from an animal welfare friendly production system”.

Eurobarometer 2006:

- **62%** of EU citizens mentioned they would “be willing to change (their) usual place of shopping in order to be able to buy more animal welfare friendly food products”.

Eurobarometer 2015:

- **59%** of EU citizens mentioned they would “be willing to pay more for products sourced from animal welfare-friendly production systems”.

Special Eurobarometer 229 (24.708 interviews in 03/2005; representative for all EU Member States, age15+)

Special Eurobarometer 270 (24.565 interviews in 10/2006; representative for all EU Member States, age15+)

Special Eurobarometer 442 (27.672 interviews in 12/2015; representative for all EU Member States, age15+)

Another task of SocialLab considers **conflicts of aims**.

- Our **questions**:
 1. What hindered **people** to buy what they wanted to be bought?
 2. What hindered **politicians** to improve the protection of farm animal welfare (e.g. between 2006 and 2015)?

Experimental discussion (Nov. 2017) on five conflicts of animal welfare:

1. farm animal welfare vs. food price
2. antibiotics for farm animals: pros and cons
3. free-range vs. environmental and climate protection
4. food from animal origin vs. global food security
5. farm animal welfare vs. traditional husbandry forms

We wanted to observe how people make their decisions when they find themselves within a **conflict of aims** between:

1. their own **welfare** and the **welfare** of animals
2. animal **welfare** and the **welfare** of other humans
3. animal **welfare** and general preconditions of **welfare**

Observation 1:

Immediately after they had realised that they were asked to **vindicate their decisions in the five conflict areas**, the participants were ...

1. in rather **bad mood**,
2. **aggressive** against the moderator,
3. **willing to leave** the experimental discussion, and
4. more or less **unwilling to make the decisions** they were asked to make and to debate.

Observation 2:

After we had clarified that we (just) want to observe how decisions are made in conflict areas, **participants entered into a very constructive discussion.**

Under pressure, they developed **various strategies** to

1. free themselves from the impression to be in a **dilemma** and
2. to come to **constructive decisions.**



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- e.g. Conflict 5: “Traditional husbandry forms (e.g. permanent tethering) are clearly less important than prevention of animal suffering.”

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- e.g. Conflict 3: “We need a radical reduction of the numbers of farm animals and must abandon meat, milk and egg consumption as everyday routine.”
- e.g. Conflict 4: “We must end the food competition between humans and animals. That means also, we must abandon meat, milk and egg consumption as everyday routine.”

Conclusions – If our **model** is correct ...

1. the answer to our question might be:

It is the first level of our autonomous decision-making tool that hindered **consumers** to buy what they want to be bought and **politicians** to improve the protection of farm animal welfare. – **Both groups are actively not aware of the drawbacks of their decisions.**

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2. In practice, **the variety of food labels** signals a **dilemma**: E.g. if a banana is labelled “fair trade” and the banana next to it is labelled “organic”, the consumer must make a decision between the first product which is **not** organic and the second one which is **not** from fair trade. – **We suppose this situation has no good influence on consumers’ mood and their motivation to buy label products on a regular basis.**

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3. it is possible to anticipate the next thought of your dialog partners. – **When talking about conflicts of aims, we recommend to clear each of the four levels thoroughly before entering the next level.**
4. NGOs who want the majority of people to change their food habits should perhaps modify their strategies. – **If people are actively not aware of the drawbacks of their decisions, they must (actively) be hindered to escape.**

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5. the first level of our autonomous decision-making tool **hinders all of us to realize the disadvantages of our decisions.**

For this reason and **as a bridge to the podium talk**, I was asked to address one ethical question to each of my colleagues:

- @ Guillaume Betton:

What do you think about the **environmental** (e.g. NH₃) **and climate** (e.g. Methane or NH₃) **problems** of keeping farm animals? And what about rearing food animals (with the exception of ruminants on grassland) in regard to **global food security**?

- @ Tarique Arsiwalla:
Insect protein may be used in **intensive husbandry** e.g. of poultry or fish. **What do you think about such use and its indirect support of intensive animal husbandry?**

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Insect protein may be used in **intensive husbandry** e.g. of poultry or fish. **What do you think about such use and its indirect support of intensive animal husbandry?**
- @ Kurt Schmidinger:
Research on in-vitro-meat is based on **Fetal Calf Serum** (FCS, FBS) which is derived from the blood of unborn calves of slaughtered cows. The bleeding of the live calves (until they are dead) is considered to cause suffering. At some point in the future, researchers want to find less problematic growth factors. – **Do you think, research for an ethical improvement may start like that?**

Thank you for your kind attention!

My part of SocialLab results will be published as a book (Luy, Jörg: **Der faire Deal**) in November 2018 (print + open access pdf).