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No Need to Be Boxed in: Group Pens and Grain for Veal Calves

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tion there are evidenced feelings of ambiv-
align, as well as ambivalence toward the
natural order and the role of human-
kind in it. Some have found in the scrip-
tural material the impetus for great acts
of kindness, others the justification for
unspeakable cruelty. This might have been
expected, considering the ways biblical
materials have been used in other con-
traversies throughout history. In truth,
the bible represents an open tradition: it is
questive; full of awe at times, of
fear at others. But it is clear that, “What
people do about their ecology depends
upon what they think about themselves
in relation to things around them. Hu-
man ecology is deeply conditioned by
beliefs about our nature and destiny—
that is, by religion” (White, cited by Der-
rick, 1972). St. Thomas Aquinas has writ-
ten (Summa Theologica I, 99:44-45): “God’s purpose in creation was the com-
ication of his own goodness, in which his
creatures participate by reason of their
existence and in the measure of it.”
That measure is now large, now small.

Only by the most heavy-handed and
insensitive treatment can the bible be
used to support the view that the natural
world is “at our disposal.” What place
and what value the animal world and
the rest of the created order have is in-
tricately bound to the question, “What
values do we have, and why?” H. Paul
Santmire (1970) has written, “Nothing
comparable to modern exploitation of
nature was known in biblical times. Ex-
ploration and compulsive manipulation
were simply not possible on so vast a
scale in pre-industrial, pre-technocratic
societies.” This assessment remains true,
but needs to be tempered by archaeo-
logical data which show that the critical
measure here was not humankind’s intent,
but merely the state of its technology
and its numbers.

The ecological ills of the present
that are sometimes said to be the result
of biblical influence (especially the com-
mmand to “have dominion and subdue it”) are not at all a necessary outgrowth of
that statement, as I hope I have shown.
The Israelite tradition, at least, did not
evidence these sorts of sentiments. A
case can be made quite to the contrary,
evasive consequence of men’s ef-
fort to transcend their mortal and
 insecure existence and to establish
a security to which man has no right
(Niebuhr, 1941).

And finally, as Shakespeare comments:
“If the heavens do not their visible
spirits
send quickly down to tame these vile
offences,
It will come.
Humanity must perform pray on
itself,
Like monsters of the deep.”
—King Lear, IV, ii.

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Michael S. Mosner

Background
My family has been in the whole-
sale veal business for 30 years. The basis
of this business has been various breeds
of female beef calves that are slaughtered
at less than 500 lb. These calves are al-
lowed to suck from cows and graze until
they are ready for market. Beef calves,
have, however, tend to vary in quality and
quantity depending on the time of the year
that they are purchased and raised. Gen-
erally, calves become scarce in the spring,
when feeders are buying calves to put
out on pasture. Then, in the summer and
fall, large numbers of calves usually become available, thereby depressing prices. Again, in the winter, calves become scarcer and consequently more expensive.

In the early 70's, there was a chronic shortage of calves. However, feed was cheap (interest rates were, too), and feedlot operators were snapping up everything that moved for beef. As a result, my father, David Mosner, had some difficulty procuring calves for veal pro-
duction. At that time, Dr. Gardner of Brigham Young University was experimenting with the use of a grain diet for calves raised for veal. He concluded that there was no difference in taste or tender-
ess between grain-fed and milk-fed veal. After learning about Gardner's work, my father suggested that I do some work on grain-fed calves while I was attending Cornell University. Dr. R.G. Warner of Cornell agreed to sponsor and supervise me in an independent research project on the economical feasibility of grain-supplemented rations for veal calves. I concluded from these initial studies that grain-fed veal could be raised economically. The only remaining hitch was to find a means to end up with a calf carcass pale enough to satisfy the current preference of consumers.

However, after the huge grain sale to Russia in 1974, the cost of feed skyrocketed. Indeed, a worldwide food short-
age ensued. As a result, feed costs became exorbitantly high, and feedlot operators stopped looking for calves. This slack in demand caused a decrease in the price of calves, and the necessity of feeding grain to calves for veal pro-
duction was greatly diminished.

Upon graduation from Cornell, I started raising milk-fed calves. Through-out the first 3 years, as a prime veal feeder, I continually experimented with different grain rations for calves. During most of 1980 and 1981, the price for fi-
nished milk-fed calves was quite low. Many growers were forced out of busi-
ness. Also, skim milk and whey prices rose, thereby placing extra economic pressures on the grower. The balanced price for prime veal fluctuated by as much as 86 cents per lb; there was no stability in the market. Then, in 1981, I be-
gan to raise only grain-fed calves, in order to circumvent the constraints of the tradi-
tional marketing channels.

Current Operation

At present, there are three types of veal. These include the beef-type calves (discussed above), baby "bobby" calves, which are slaughtered immediately after birth, and milk-fed calves. The production costs entailed in raising prime veal are particularly high. The sophisticated sys-
tems necessary for strict climate control and expensive automatic feeding ma-
tines place the price of milk-fed veal be-
ond the reach of most consumers. In contrast, bob calves are relatively inex-
pensive, but they provide a poor meat-
to-bone ratio to the packer and there-
fore represent poor utilization of live-
stock. As mentioned before, beef breeds tend to vary considerably in both quality and quantity throughout the year. Thus, grain-fed veal appeared to be a viable option for making consistently high-quality veal available to consumers at a rea-
sonable price. Also, the public would be pleased because of the favorable meat yields attainable from grain-fed veal.

In our operation, calves are raised in group pens rather than in individual stalls. This allows the calves room to move around and to "socialize." This practice eliminates much of the stress put on the calves in crate systems. Fur-
ther, because there is some iron content in the grain, the calves do not become as anemic as milk-fed calves. Anemia is a well-recognized stressor to calves, and a reduction in stress means that disease is less likely to develop. In addition, grain-
fed veal provides better nutrition to the consumer, because of the additional iron in the meat. This decrease in anemia is accomplished while the low levels of fat and cholesterol for veal is noted. In essence, grain-fed veal constitutes a highly desirable commodity, since it can be produced inexpensive-
ly, is a high-quality product, and is afford-
able to the average consumer.

We are currently operating in a con-
verted free-stall dairy barn. We have capacity for about 600 calves. (However, additional stock can also be penned out-
doors.) We buy calves that have an ini-
tial weight between 150 and 175 lb for grainfeeding. However, sometimes eco-
nomics may dictate that we buy baby calves—in this case, milk replacer is of-
fered until weaning, which occurs at 6 weeks of age. Calves are housed inside the barn and sorted into pens in groups of 20. Each pen is 12 by 32 feet, thereby allowing each calf about 20 square feet. Calves are finished at 450-500 lb, live weight, and this increase in weight re-
quires about 4 to 5 months. Straw and old hay are used as bedding. When older calves first come into the barn, they are given an initial check for general health and an injection of vitamins. The calves are offered hay and a commercial calf starter. After 3 weeks, the calves are switched to the finishing ration, which consists basically of corn, with a protein supplement and essential vitamins and minerals. Baby calves, after weaning, are switched from milk to calf starter and 14 lb water; after they have con-
sumed about 100 lb of starter, they are switched to the finishing ration.

In the beginning, we used baby Hol-
steins in our operation. However, we have found that it is also economical to use other breeds, such as Hereford, An-
gus, and Charolais (purchased at 200-
300 lb, live weight).

A salient advantage of this system is that labor costs per animal are sub-
stantially lower than with conventional milk replacer systems. Since the calves are not individually penned and food is consumed as needed, one man can take care of several times more calves. How-
ever, without individual pens, it is not as easy to assess how much a particular calf consumes or to discern illness. For these reasons, skilled management is a critical factor in this program, as in all group pen operations. Another advantage of the grain-fed program is that there are usually a wide variety of grain suppliers to choose from, in contrast to the small number of milk replacer sources.

My finished calves have been graded as choice veal and are distinguished by a light pink hue and excellent confor-
tion. The major problem we have faced thus far arises from the myth perpetuated by some feed companies—that veal must be white to be of premium quality. Con-
sumers have been repeatedly told that "If it's not white, it's not veal." I believe that this is an obvious fallacy that must be countered by effective educational efforts.

The Future of the Veal Industry

Over the last decade, the per capita consumption of veal has steadily declin-
ed. Perhaps the most important reason for this decline has been the high price of veal and the resulting substitution of other meats. Consumers are now buying more of the reasonably priced products, such as poultry and pork. Chicken, tur-
key, and pork cutlets are currently being featured in many supermarkets and res-
taurants. Not only are these meats less expensive than veal, but they taste good, too. In my opinion, unless the veal grow-
er can find ways to cut the costs entailed in production, he will simply price him-
self out of business. I believe that grain-
fed veal is the best economic alternative to all other types of veal, for many rea-
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Current Operation

At present, there are three types of veal. These include the beef-type calves (discussed above), baby “bob” calves, which are slaughtered immediately after birth, and milk-fed calves. The production costs entailed in raising prime veal are particularly high. The sophisticated systems necessary for strict climate control and expensive automatic feeding machines place the price of milk-fed veal beyond the reach of most consumers. In contrast, bob calves are relatively inexpensive, but they provide a poor meat-to-bone ratio to the packer and therefore represent poor utilization of live stock. As mentioned before, beef breeds tend to vary considerably in both quality and quantity throughout the year. Thus, grain-fed veal appeared to be a viable option for making consistently high-quality veal available to consumers at a reasonable price. Also, veal producers would be blessed because of the favorable meat yields attributable to grain-fed veal.

In our operation, calves are raised in group pens rather than in individual stalls. This allows the calves room to move around and to “socialize.” This practice eliminates much of the stress put on the calves in crate systems. Further, because there is some iron content in the grain, the calves do not become anemic as milk-fed calves. Anemia is a well-recognized stressor to calves, and a reduction in stress means that disease is less likely to develop. In addition, grain-fed veal provides better nutrition to the consumer, because of the additional iron in the meat. This decrease in anemia is accomplished while the low levels of fat and cholesterol for veal is noted by some feed companies- that veal must be white to be of premium quality. Consumers have been repeatedly told that “If it’s not white, it’s not veal.” I believe that this is an obvious fallacy that must be countered by effective educational efforts.

The Future of the Veal Industry

Over the last decade, the per capita consumption of veal has steadily declined. Perhaps the most important reason for this decline has been the high price of veal and the resulting substitution of other meats. Consumers are now buying more of the reasonably priced products, such as poultry and pork. Chicken, turkey, and pork cutlets are currently being featured in many supermarkets and restaurants. Not only are these meats less expensive than veal, but they taste good, too. In my opinion, unless the veal grower can find ways to cut the costs entailed in production, he will simply price himself out of business. I believe that grain-fed veal is the best economic alternative to all other types of veal, for many reasons. Grain-fed calves offer the consistent high quality that the beef breeds do not.
Reporting Requirements Under the Animal Welfare Act: Their Inadequacies and the Public's Right to Know

M. Solomon and P.C. Lovenheim

Introduction

The Animal Welfare Act is the only federal statute designed to protect animals used in laboratory research. Under this law, research facilities are required to register with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and to meet minimum standards of housing, care, and treatment for most warm-blooded animals. The Act is administered by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), an agency of the USDA.

The Animal Welfare Act established by law adequate veterinary care, including the appropriate use of pain-killing drugs. The petitioners consider all provisions of the Animal Welfare Act important, but none more so than those that concern animals used in painful experimentation. The number of animals used in such procedures is great, and has increased over the years from 65,501 in 1974 to 122,650 in 1980, according to APHIS (1975, 1981) reports. (These figures are cited for comparative purposes only since their reliability is questionable.) Since 1970, congress has required research facilities to show that during actual research and experimentation, pain-relieving drugs are used “appropriately” and in accordance with “professionally acceptable standards.” The chief reasons for the failure of APHIS with information sufficient to demonstrate that researchers are using pain-relieving drugs “appropriately” and in accordance with “professionally acceptable standards.” This was congress’ intent and the System does not define “pain” or “distress.” Regulations require research facilities to report annually to APHIS on the use of animals in “actual research, testing, or experimentation.”

Statement of the Problem

Current regulations and guidelines do not define “pain” or “distress.” Without such definitions, researchers can appeal to conflicting standards in interpreting these terms. Current regulations require research facilities to report annually to APHIS on the use of animals in “actual research, testing, or experimentation.” We conclude from the analysis that the Reporting System, as presently administered, fails to achieve its primary statutory objective: it does not provide APHIS with information sufficient to demonstrate that researchers have used pain-relieving drugs “appropriately” and in accordance with “professionally acceptable standards.” The chief reason for this failing are: (1) regulations and guidelines do not define “pain” or “distress,” (2) regulations and guidelines do not adequately define “routine procedures,” and (3) regulations and guidelines do not require meaningful explanations for the withholding of pain-relieving drugs in procedures acknowledged to cause pain.

The Reporting System, as presently administered, for the same reasons, also fails to achieve a secondary— but nonetheless important— objective: it does not generate reliable and meaningful information to the public about the use of animals in research. When congress passed the Animal Welfare Act amendments in 1970, it declared that animals used in research “deserve the care and protection of a strong and enlightened public.”

We conclude from the analysis that researchers have used pain-relieving drugs “appropriately” and in accordance with “professionally acceptable standards.” The Act requires APHIS to demonstrate that researchers have used pain-relieving drugs “appropriately” and in accordance with “professionally acceptable standards.” The chief reason for this failing are: (1) regulations and guidelines do not define “pain” or “distress,” (2) regulations and guidelines do not adequately define “routine procedures,” and (3) regulations and guidelines do not require meaningful explanations for the withholding of pain-relieving drugs in procedures acknowledged to cause pain.

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