

Overview of Animal-Related Philosophies, Organizations & Some Guidelines for Recognizing Patterns

The space allocated to each category does not reflect either the number of organizations of each type or the number of people who would agree with the values described. It is not possible to depict here the gradations of technical values within organizations any more than it is to categorize one's own or another's attitudes towards animals commonly regarded as being vermin, prey, dangerous, endangered, useful, loyal, edible, cute, old, pet, etc., etc.

ANIMAL ABUSE

"Animals were put here for our use, or abuse. They are our absolute property. They probably don't perceive pain as we do and even if they could it doesn't matter."

Groups advocating or conducting activities which are illegal (for the most part) in this country. Most of these were not prohibited in the past and may not be prohibited in other countries and cultures. Most involve the pain or death of animals just for the fun of the spectators.

Bull fighting
Dog fighting
Cock fighting

(legal in some states)
Live pigeon target shooting
Killing or injuring horses etc. for the movies or TV
"Sports" which pit animals of some kind against another kind

Breed carefully for contests. Eventual suffering of animal unimportant.

Don't care in what ways, or how traumatically, living creatures are killed.

Breaking current laws or rules.

Puppy Mills:
Substandard commercial breeding facility where dogs are kept and bred without regard for health, welfare, socialization or ultimate placement.

"The end justifies the means. We have a right to have fun and do whatever we want with and to animals even if it means breaking the rules or the law."

RESPONSIBLE ANIMAL USE

"Animals are here for our use but we must be responsible about them. We should attempt to spare them pain and suffering if possible"

To insure minimal animal abuse and to be fair, all groups have rules by which their sports or hobbies are conducted. Some are regulated by law. The trend is for rules to become stringent with censure for those people not abiding by them.

Groups promoting:

Hunting
Trapping
Fishing
Rodeos
Exotic animal keeping
Horse and dog sports
Various other kinds of animal events
Pure breeds of dogs, cats, horses, livestock, etc.

Associations representing industries such as commercial pet breeders, laboratory animals, livestock producers, game farmers, circuses, zoos, horse and dog racing, etc. Wildlife "Conserve-so-can harvest" groups.

At best, hobby and sport breeders breed carefully for best genetic and health potential, cull, socialize, choose responsible owners and will take back offspring if home doesn't work out. At worst, breed just for glory or to support expensive hobby.

Advocate the killing or harvesting of animals, birds, fish, etc. for food or other uses. Killing should be as swift and painless as possible.

Less likely to want present laws increased or strengthened. May have fought any regulation at all. Insist they "can police their own houses."

ANIMAL CONTROL

"We're here to enforce the laws, ordinances and regulations agreed to by our lawmakers. No more, no less. It's not our fault people are irresponsible."

Municipal and county animal control agencies, state and federal wildlife, livestock, disease control and other regulatory agencies. The USDA (enforcement agency for the federal Animal Welfare Act), state, regional and national animal control organizations and federations.

Usually have trouble getting the existing regulations obeyed. In favor of more regulation, if sensible, and funds, provided for enforcement. Beset by pro- and anti-regulation individuals and pressure groups.

Local animal control agencies may choose to adopt many or all of the principles used by animal welfare shelters and programs.

May provide animals for research.

Veterinary organizations.

More and more advocating or encouraging / requiring spay/neuter.

Required to destroy surplus animals.

Work within the existing laws and systems to accomplish goals. Publicize and document animal abuses and work to raise public and official consciousness to get changes made.

ANIMAL WELFARE

"People should treat animals as kindly as possible. They should be required to do so. If they can't or won't, we have a duty to protect them and to look after the homeless."

National groups working for all animals, or for specific species or issues. State and regional federations of humane societies.

Independent local humane societies, SPCA's, animal welfare leagues, etc., dog breed rescue groups. Those with shelters cannot be too far ahead of local value systems as they are dependent on the public for operating funds. For example, hunters, rodeo fans and people who wear fur are often valuable supporters of pet animal welfare.

Local animal welfare agencies may contract with governments to conduct animal control programs and/or house impounded animals. Usually have more stringent adoption requirements and may keep animals longer.

Will not provide animals for research.

Require spay/neuter. Believe that as there are too many pet animals, almost no one should have the right to breed them.

Willing to euthanize surplus pets rather than let them suffer.

Sometimes include self-styled anti-cruelty investigators and individuals who "rescue" strays and cruelty cases without benefit of due process.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

"Animals have intrinsic rights, which should be guaranteed just as ours are. These rights include not being killed, eaten, used for sport or research or abused in any way."

National and local animal rights groups. Anti-vivisection societies. Private, non-profit, no-kill organizations, with or without shelters. Home-based "save-a-life" rescue schemes and animal old age homes. Any local or national group devoted to saving an animal that they will not consider killing under any circumstance.

Local groups without shelters may espouse the more liberal causes and speak out against rodeos, factory farming, hunting, trapping, use of animals in research, etc.

Wildlife "save-no-matter-what" groups.

Divided between regulationists willing to work for regulating activities such as rodeo, research, etc., and abolitionists calling for their total ban, i.e., total animal liberation. **May blame or even hate animal control/animal welfare groups for "compromising."**

Depending on each individual's sensitivities and integrity, members do not hunt or patronize entertainment or sports involving animals; they avoid eating meat, eggs and milk products, oppose wearing leather, furs, or utilizing animal-based medical research, e.g. drugs, vaccines and cosmetics. They also oppose the breeding of dogs and cats and in most cases will only keep pets that were rescued.

Some would say pet animals have a right to breed. Most would require spay/neuter.

Unwilling to sanction any taking of life. This may have philosophical and/or empathetic origins.

In order to save the animals involved and to bring their plight to the attention of the public, may advocate civil disobedience, confrontation, harassment, and the illegal removal of experimental, pound or other animals considered to be suffering or likely to be destroyed.

"The end justifies the means. Our cause of ending animal suffering is so just that we have the right to break the law."

ANIMAL LIBERATION

"Animals should not be forced to work or produce for our benefit in any way. We should try to eliminate all types of animal use as well as abuse."

Groups openly calling for animal liberation. These often feel that animal liberation can be accomplished only by a complete restructuring of society's economic base and property rights. Many animal liberation activists condone or encourage civil disobedience, illegal methods, or even violence.

◆ Clandestine or underground groups using illegal and sometimes violent tactics.
◆ Increasingly militant in England where people have been victimized, animals of all kinds have been liberated in raids and 'blood' sport activities blocked.

◆ Some won't keep pets at all, considering it a form of enslavement

The belief that animals should be treated responsibly and humanely (animal welfare) represents the dominant view of what constitutes proper human—animal interactions in Western societies. Animal control agencies enforce the laws that arise (democratically) from those values.

"The end does not justify the means. The very basis of our system of government is the premise that no matter what the issue, people can't just take the law into their own hands. There are means available to redress wrongs and to change the rules, regulations and enforcement levels."

Gray areas are often the focus of animal activists. Controversies and conflicts arise because the line between animal use and abuse varies from culture to culture, jurisdiction to jurisdiction and within industries and sports.

