

PHILOSOPHY 105

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INDUSTRIAL POULTRY

ANIMALS AS FOOD

- Is it morally permissible to kill an animal for food?
- What is morally relevant?
 - Being sentient (i.e. capable of feeling pain)?
 - Having interests or preferences?
 - Having certain kinds of cognitive capacities?

ANIMAL PRODUCTION

U.S. SLAUGHTER TOTALS, BY SPECIES (THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS)

- 1985 (4.9 billion land animals)
 - Cattle: 36,593
 - Chicken: 4,617,280
 - Turkeys: 175,181
 - Hogs: 84,938
- 2015 (9.2 billion land animals)
 - Cattle: 28,752
 - Chicken: 8,822,695
 - Turkeys: 232,398
 - Hogs: 115,425

CONSIDER THE CHICKEN



CHICKEN FARMING

- Two kinds of poultry
 - meat ("broiler" chicken)
 - egg-laying (egg-laying hens or "layers")

EGG FARMS

- Today's egg producing hens can produce over 300 eggs per year; this is over twice the average of 150 eggs per year in 1947.
- Raised with relatively little space
- Often killed after peak egg production years (1-2 years)
- Between 200 & 250 million male chickens are killed each year in egg industry

BROILER FARMS

- Broiler chickens are selected and bred for large-scale, efficient meat production
- Breeding produces "welfare" problems
 - Sudden death syndrom (acute heart failure)
 - Skeletal disfunction & lameness
 - Respiratory diseases (ammonia inhalation)

BROILER "PROCESSING"

- Broiler chickens are stunned/paralyzed but not rendered unconscious before slaughter
- On average 825,000 chickens are boiled alive each year due to improper slaughter conditions

SENTIENCE & SCALE

The vastness of the poultry industry means that if there is anything wrong with the system, there is something terribly wrong in our world. (JSF, Eating Animals, 136)

- If the relevant moral consideration is sentience then the poultry industry is facilitating or engaging in massively morally objectionable behaviour

IS IT CRUEL TO KILL CHICKENS FOR FOOD (MEAT & EGGS) IN THE WAY THAT THE IFS DOES?

1. Yes
2. No

DEFENSES OF FACTORY POULTRY FARMING

- Animals have evolved into dependents
- Pain is different from suffering
- FF is necessary to feed the world's population

SUFFERING IN NATURE

if suffering is bad for animals when we cause it, it is also bad for them when other animals cause it (McMahan, "The Meat-Eaters")

- If sentience & suffering are sufficient for moral obligation, should we engineer the animal world to be vegetarian? – Should we eliminate carnivorism?

