

## Animal welfare

## What PETA wants

By BRUCE FRIEDRICH, PETA

It was an Australian philosopher and college professor, Peter Singer, who wrote the most important and influential work on animal rights. His landmark 1975 book *Animal Liberation* introduced the term "speciesism" to the world and suggested that animals have the right to lead their own lives and not to be harmed and exploited by people. It was Singer's work that in 1980 inspired the founder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in the United States. PETA goes by a single guiding principle: animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment.

A quarter of a century later, this is still our motto. The goal we strive for is a world in which everyone chooses to eat fabulous vegan meals rather than animals; enjoys cotton and synthetic fabrics instead of fur, leather, and wool; relies on cutting-edge non-animal scientific methods to prevent and cure disease; and refuses to imprison animals in zoos and travelling shows. This is the ideal but our feet are planted firmly on the ground. In practice, our campaigns are directed at exposing and eliminating egregious mistreatment and improving living and dying conditions for the greatest number of animals.

Undercover investigations in experimentation facilities across the US has led to the exposure of abuse and the bringing of criminal charges against the people who harm animals. While we have been successful in improving the treatment of animals in these facilities, we agree with a growing number of

scientists that it's in the interest of our own health to move away from the use of animals in research. An article published last year in the *British Medical Journal* notes the appalling lack of evidence that exists to support the belief that animal studies benefit humans in any way. A survey commissioned by Europeans for Medical Advancement found that more than 80% of physicians in general practice believe that animal tests are worthless and even dangerous to their patients.

Similarly, we work to end the worst abuses of the farmed animal industry, even as we educate the public about the ethical and health benefits of a vegan diet. Our previous campaigns show that large corporations can change. Following more than 100 PETA protests at McDonald's, America's largest fast food chain, the company became the first in US history to improve conditions for factory-farmed animals. The \$US36 billion a year corporation pledged to increase space for laying chickens, to stop starving hens in order to

force increased egg-laying, and to conduct unannounced inspections of slaughterhouses and suppliers. We then persuaded Burger King and Wendy's to follow McDonald's lead.

Not everyone agrees with our belief that animals do not belong to us to eat, wear, experiment on or use for entertainment. But whatever your view on animal rights, PETA urges you to learn about what happens to animals in these industries so that your choices are fully informed. PETA will keep protesting, educating, and investigating to make sure that the animals have a voice. ■

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## What the public wants

**A number of polls in the US clearly demonstrate that Americans want more humane treatment of farm animals and are willing to pay more for higher welfare animal products.**

■ **An Ohio State University survey** reported on May 9, 2005, found that:

**92%** of Ohioans agreed that it is important for farm animals to be well cared for,

**85%** believed the farm animals' quality of life is important,

**81%** felt farm animal well-being is as important as the well-being of companion animals, and

**75%** agreed that farm animals should be protected from experiencing physical pain.

■ **A Zogby International poll** for the Animal Welfare Trust reported on October 22, 2003:

**82%** of the 1032 Americans surveyed agreed that there should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse,

**72%** believed farms should be inspected by government officials to ensure laws protecting animals from cruelty are being followed,

**66%** found farm animal exemption from state cruelty laws to be unacceptable, and

**68%** found it unacceptable that animals on the farm are not protected by any federal laws and are specifically excluded from the federal Animal Welfare Act.

■ **In a Gallup poll** reported on May 21, 2003:

**62%** of the 1005 Americans surveyed supported passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals.