THIS LITTLE PIGGY WENT TO PRESS:

THE AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA'S CONSTRUCTION OF ANIMALS IN AGRICULTURE

by

CARRIE PACKWOOD FREEMAN

(Under the Direction of Carolina Acosta-Alzuru)

ABSTRACT

With the increasing industrialization of animal farming, the news media are an important source of knowledge about farmed animals for a largely urban public. This textual analysis of over 100 national news stories published between 2000-2003 in *The New York Times, Time, CNN* and *CBS Evening News* forms the foundation of scholarship on American news representations of farmed animals. Findings show news discourse largely supports the speciesist status quo by representing farmed animals primarily as resources for human use through commodifying them, failing to acknowledge their emotions and perspectives, and failing to describe them as inherently-valuable individuals. The media sometimes challenge the rules of discourse by showing that animals deserve to be rescued from cruel treatment, have emotional needs, make good companions, and should not be killed for food. Social change for animals is more likely if the media begin to construct stories which respect both human and animal interests.

INDEX WORDS: farmed animal, animal farming, representation, discourse, national news media, textual analysis

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DEDICATION

Vegetarian and animal activist George Bernard Shaw once stated “The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. That’s the essence of inhumanity.”

So, with Shaw’s sentiment in mind of expanding our ethic to acknowledge the significance of *all* sentient beings, I dedicate this research to any animal (human or non-human) whose exploitation is currently overlooked in society and whose death has gone unmourned. I do so in the hope that our society begins to construct a discourse which truly encourages “liberty and justice for *all*.”

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I would also like to thank my cat, Marley, who personally sat on every piece of text and served as my sole writing companion while I slaved away at the computer. Her furry beauty and goofy personality continually feeds my desire to help animals.

I would also like to acknowledge the work that animal protection groups, like Vegan Outreach and Farm Sanctuary (www.farmsanctuary.org), have done on behalf of rescuing farmed animals, providing them sanctuary, educating the public about their plight on factory farms (www.factoryfarming.com), lobbying for humane legal reform, and promoting the benefits of a vegan diet (www.whyvegan.com).

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Excerpt from NYT Dining cover:

> Big corporate operators have taken over the bulk of Iowa's pork production, with dire results not only for the small farmer but also for those of us who were raised on succulent pork chops and pork roasts. Fat gives pork some of its flavor, but modern hogs are bred to minimize fat; producers noticed that Americans were choosing chicken over beef. Raised in close quarters inside enormous metal buildings, the hogs foul the air for miles around, and their meat is bland, dry and tough when cooked (Apple, 3/29/00, p. F1).

This article warns of the 'dire consequences' we face at the hands of corporate hog farming conglomerates – its flavorless meat and air pollution – but what about the hogs themselves, who are forced to live on top of each other in these foul-smelling sheds? What dire consequences do *they* face? What is their perspective on the matter of their own living conditions in these metal sheds? We are never told. The story simply informs us where we can buy pork that *does* have real flavor. The interests of the core subject of this farmed animal story, the pigs themselves, ironically go unmentioned, indicating they are either considered peripheral or unimportant. Instead, this story presents a solely anthropocentric viewpoint on pig farming-- centering largely around human interests and welfare.

Stories like this led me to wonder, in news stories which are supposedly 'about' farmed animals, is the oversight of the animal's perspective so common in the discourse that it typically goes unnoticed by both journalists and audiences alike, indicating it may just be a cultural norm? What are the implicit and explicit meanings about farmed animals created in our culture by the representations constructed in the news? While it is natural for news organizations to write for their audience (some demographic of humans), what obligation, if any, does the media have to consider the interests of non-human life when writing stories regarding them?

In Tony Murphy's research on "The Human Experience of Wilderness," he found that media portrayals were an important site of meaning creation, especially for those viewers who had very little direct experience with wilderness (1999). Similarly, in our increasingly urban society, many Americans today have little contact with non-human animals besides companion animals like cats and dogs (Singer, 1990). Many of us may only have direct contact with farmed animals, such as pigs and cows, *after* they are slaughtered and appear on our dinner plates as bacon and hamburger. Therefore, our understanding of the existence, interests, attributes, and treatment of farmed animals relies less on empirical knowledge than it does on our existing beliefs built largely from children's books, combined with our exposure to farmed animals through the media (Singer, 1990).

Considering our isolation from modern farming practices, the media play a central role in educating America about the changing nature of animal agriculture and issues surrounding farmed animals that might otherwise be "out of sight, out of mind." In my textual analysis, I will explore how the media is answering this call to education for the public and for the animals through their choice of farmed animal representations in news stories.

Background - Public Perception of Animal Farming in America:

> "Much of this gore and suffering is legal… Much of it is also out of sight, with the meat-aisle shopper or the hamburger chopper unaware of the pain inflicted on animals in factory farms and slaughterhouses. The human-caused violence done to animals has been normalized, either through habit or culture, so that it's only the oddball who tries to see life also from the animals' viewpoint who is considered abnormal."
>
> *– Colman McCarthy, Staff Writer for "The Washington Post." (Davis, 1999)*

Historical Myths of Farming:

In his article "Farm Animal Production: Changing Agriculture in a Changing Culture," (2001a), animal science scholar David Fraser discusses two deeply rooted beliefs that shape Americans' views on animal farming. The first is the Judeo-Christian idea of the kind and nurturing pastoral shepherd, in the image of Jesus himself. The other is the political idea of agrarian living being linked with land ownership by the common man, representing the democracy and citizenship upon which this country was founded. The agrarian family was viewed as living wholesome and natural lives, which were free from the corruptions of city life. Fraser asserts that, "inasmuch as modern animal production is perceived by the public as conforming to one or both of these ideals, it is almost guaranteed a certain level of public trust and approval" (2001a, p. 4-5).

Fraser claims that people felt the animals on the farm led wholesome and natural lives just as the agrarian family did. "Thus, the agrarian ideal puts the family farm on a moral pedestal, and again the raising and killing of animals is seen as legitimate or even a virtuous activity so long as it happened in that context" (2001a, p. 5).

The American public likes to imagine a farm as having idyllic rolling green pastures with animals grazing about freely, and a quaint red barn nestled next to the family's charming old farmhouse. These ideals are the basis of bucolic farming images in our children's books and fairy tales. Unfortunately, the corporate farms of the post-World War II era severely deviate from the myth of the "Old McDonald's Farms" of yesterday. The reality today is much different and far from idyllic – for animals, the environment, and human health.

Modern Day Agricultural Practices:

In the last several decades, more and more small or "family" farmers have been forced out of business because they cannot compete with larger, corporate farms, sometimes referred to as "factory farms". "In the most restrictive of the confinement systems, animals spend most or all of their lives indoors with large numbers of others, and their freedom of movement and opportunity to perform natural behavior are greatly limited," (Fraser, 2001a, p. 5). He asserts that pigs and chicken have the most intensive confinement, dairy cows live in semi-confinement, and beef cows and sheep are the least confined.

Egg-laying hens, or "layers", are "housed in cages containing three to ten birds, often with thousands of cages per barn." (p. 5). This affords each bird only minimal, cramped space and no opportunity to dust bathe, perch, or retreat into a secluded nest for laying eggs, as they normally would prefer to do.

He describes the pigs as being kept indoors in pens on concrete floors with little space to walk freely or opportunities to root and explore as they naturally would. Pregnant sows have it the worst, as each time they are impregnated, they are typically kept in individual stalls, called

"gestation crates", which are so small that they cannot walk or turn around for three months at a time (2001a).

As intensive confinement systems become the industry standard in animal farming, animals are not the only ones who are suffering. Communities that house these factory farms are beginning to feel the negative effects – especially as it relates to their quality of life and health being diminished by pollution, odor, and antibiotic and hormone consumption. In the last few decades, news organizations have begun to cover stories related to these farms – usually emphasizing the problems they cause or threats they pose to humans.

Public Awareness, Public Relations Strategies, and Media Coverage of Animal Farming:

Corporate farmers have enjoyed much freedom and minimal government regulations (very few humane laws protect farmed animals, for example), perhaps due to their historical links to the "moral pedestal", as Fraser described it (2001a, p. 5). Naturally, corporate farmers have an interest in perpetuating the myth of "Old McDonald's Farm" so the grim realities of these new "factory" farms are hidden from the public's critical eye, and they do not have to deal with any resulting public outcry or possible government regulation. Therefore, they generally do not proactively invite journalists out to publicize the intensive confinement systems. Corporate farmers essentially seem to lay low when it comes to the media. However, Fraser points out that they have had to get more savvy in public relations over the last several decades as animal rights groups mount campaigns against them through the media and the legislature (2001b).

Animal protection groups proactively attempt to get media coverage to expose the way animals are raised in intensive confinement situations in the hope that there will be public outcry for animal welfare legislative reform or free-market reform through consumer boycotting of

animal products (via vegetarianism or the purchasing of organic or free-range animal products). Animal protection groups attack corporate farms from many angles, stating they:

- Treat animals inhumanely as if they were inanimate widgets on an assembly line;
- Pollute the soil, water, and air with their extensive animal waste and are ecologically unsustainable due to their resource-intensive nature.
- Perpetuate world hunger through inefficient use of plant crop nutrition to feed animals in first world countries; and
- Pose a threat to human health due to the hormones, antibiotics and medications, cholesterol and saturated fat in animal products.

Animal protection groups want the public to recognize animals as the main victims who are suffering in this new age of factory farming, while still painting a bleak picture of factory farming's effects on people and the environment as well. This is what Fraser calls the "new perception" of animal agriculture (2001b, p. 1).

As Fraser warned, taking farming out of the context of the wholesome family farm jeopardizes the historical and mythological legitimacy it had earned in our society (2001a). Intensive confinement farming is threatening to kick farming off its moral pedestal, and with that lost reputation, so goes the "public trust and approval". At least, that is, if the public finds out…. which is how news coverage becomes a critical factor in reforming animal farming.

Justification and Significance of this Study:

> "Approximately one million farmed animals are slaughtered every hour of every day in the United States." - *Fact from the Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) based on USDA statistical projections for 2003 (FARM, 2003).*

Although it would be more fashionable, and likely less controversial, to study media representations of more popular and culturally beloved animals like dolphins, eagles, puppies, chimpanzees, or horses, I have chosen to study farmed animals because they suffer and die in greater numbers at the hands of humans than any other animal. In fact, 98% of all animals killed in the United States each year are domesticated food animals. More than ten billion animals are killed for food as compared to less than a quarter of a billion animals killed in sport hunting, companion animal shelters, and research laboratories combined each year (FARM, 2003).

If billions of humans were being institutionally bred, enslaved in unnatural conditions and killed each year, I feel it is safe to assume their deaths would rightly be framed as a travesty of justice on the front-page news. Even if this happened to companion animals like dogs and cats, we would likely see a public uproar, based on our cultural affection for these animals as pets. But when this routinely happens to cows, pigs, birds, and fish in the name of farming, it attracts little news attention.

Is this an indication that the public does not see the life and death of this particular category of animals as an ethical issue of much importance? Understandably, because Americans have traditionally eaten these animals, it is customary to consider them in lower regard than animals (human or otherwise) to which we have personal attachments. For example, to think about "food" animals like we think about our companion animals would cause much cognitive

dissonance and discomfort because most people would not feel right about harming, killing, or eating someone they cared about and acknowledged as sentient. To maintain the status quo in a meat-based culture requires that we are rarely challenged to:

- Acknowledge farmed animals as sentient beings with personalities and feelings, similar to dogs, cats, or least of all, us,
- Confront the harsh realities of suffering and discomfort that farmed animals endure in intensive confinement units and slaughterhouses,
- Find credence in the concept that farmed animals have rights which we are morally obliged to respect and consider, and
- Question our need for animal products as part of a nutritious "American" diet,

Who is in a better position than the news media when it comes to having an opportunity to ask society to challenge these "status quo" notions on a more frequent basis?

As indicated in the background section of this proposal, times have changed when it comes to the treatment of farmed animals. In this age of farming animals behind closed doors in intensive confinement warehouses, the public is largely unaware of the extensiveness of the inhumane conditions in which farmed animals live today. If there was more media coverage of a critical nature regarding farmed animal welfare, I believe, according to the agenda-setting theory, that with public awareness of this issue would come public outcry, and possibly humane reform on the production side. I hope my study leads to greater understanding of how the media constructs public knowledge of farmed animals and what gets framed as an "issue" for public concern and what does not. I think this is a first step in laying the groundwork for more critical coverage of farmed animal issues both in the media and in academic research.

As my literature review reveals, there is a dearth of media research on animal protection issues, especially regarding farmed animal representation. Therefore, my analysis will help form the foundation of media scholarship on this subject. Looking at the big picture of media sociology, I hope to add to the knowledge of how the media function in our society as either agents of social change or agents of social control. Looking more specifically at media representations of animals, I hope the insights gained in my study may help public relations practitioners who are proponents of farmed animal welfare reform deal more effectively with the news media and craft more effective campaigns. It may also serve to enlighten journalists to the importance of their role in promoting animal welfare -- encouraging them to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. If we can raise the profile of farmed animals in the media and in academia and acknowledge their existence as sentient beings instead of just food items, I hope this will lead to an improvement in their status in society and a reduction in their suffering.

Research Questions:

Through this study, I will strive to answer the following three questions:

1) How are farmed animals represented in the national news media and what discursive strategies are used?
2) Based on these discursive strategies, what are the "rules" of news discourse on farmed animal issues?
3) How could and does news discourse play a role in challenging the status quo in favor of more positive social change for farmed animals?

Researcher Motivations:

My interest in animal rights began in 1989 when a friend from the dorm took me to a "Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals" group on campus my freshman year at college. I remember being horrified after finding out the reality of how animals are mistreated at farms and slaughterhouses in our country. By the time I graduated from college, I became an ethical vegetarian and refined my boycott of farmed animal products completely to go vegan in 1996. I have been involved in the animal rights movement for over a decade now. Of the many issues facing animals worldwide, I have frequently chosen to focus my activism on the plight of farmed animals, as I do in this study, for two reasons:

1. Farmed animals are by far the most exploited of all animals, with approximately *10 billion* animals slaughtered each year in this country alone (over 90% of these are birds, who are exempt from the Humane Slaughter Act). The number of animals killed each year is rising, not decreasing, due to increased demand for chicken. So as farming techniques are becoming more inhumane and intensive each year, the situation is worsening for farmed animals (FARM, 2003).

2. Through daily consumption of animal products, the average American plays a larger role in this issue than they do in other animal rights issue, and, thus, has more power to improve the situation if challenged to do so.

I believe that most people are kind-hearted and do not want to harm other creatures. It is the source of much dissonance and sadness for people to see all the suffering animals face at the hands of man. To feel helpless to better the conditions of animals in laboratories or circuses or farms can be frustrating. Yet, I believe people can feel a sense of empowerment and do something to help reduce animal suffering every day by choosing to eat plant-based proteins instead of animal products. My veganism is the decision of which I am proudest in my life because it is the most practical and meaningful way I can reduce animal suffering on a daily basis. Through my activism, I have shared this empowering option with other compassionate people who are interested in achieving consonance and peace of mind by having their actions and lifestyle be more in sync with their values.

I think activists can either concentrate on one of two paths to social change: the public or the law. I personally think it makes sense to change the views of the public so that laws will then follow with public support and pressure applied to legislators. And the best way to reach the public on a broad scale is through the mass media.

Animal protection groups (and all social justice groups) rely on the media as an inexpensive resource for social marketing and public education. Yet, there has always been a tense relationship and delicate dance between animal rights groups and the media. The media often overlook animal rights groups because they are less powerful and not yet mainstream. Typically, the only way they can get coverage is to act sensationally or controversially – but in doing so, they run the risk of negatively framed coverage that decreases the credibility of their movement and potentially trivializes their issues. As an animal protection activist, I have always wondered how best to play this game with the news media and win it so that the movement can gain more frequent, credible, accurate, and fair coverage for the benefit of the animals. I hope my thesis

research on the media is a step in this direction and helps bring salience to the topic of farmed animal welfare as a legitimate issue for serious debate in the media and academia.

> "To a man whose mind is free, there is something even more intolerable in the sufferings of animals than in the sufferings of man. For with the latter, it is at least admitted that suffering is evil and that the man who caused it is a criminal. But thousands of animals are uselessly butchered every day without a shadow of remorse. If any man were to refer to it, he would be thought ridiculous. And that is the unpardonable crime."
>
> -- *Romain Rolland, 1915 Nobel Prize Laureate (Davis, 1999)*

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is social scientific literature addressing the media's coverage of animal rights and activism and physical science literature addressing farmed animal welfare, there exists no significant research on the intersection between news media representation and farmed animals, specifically. In light of the lack of specific findings on this topic, my literature review will attempt to place it in the context of the broader research findings of communication studies that surround and support the topic of farmed animals, such as general media coverage and representation of: animals, animal rights activists, animal issues, and other oppressed groups.

Media Coverage of Animal Rights Issues:

There have been a few articles written about the media's coverage of animal rights issues. Most notably, Dena Jones wrote a series of four papers for the journal *Anthrozoos* (an interdisciplinary journal for human and animal studies) that addressed the media's coverage of activism, the media's role in public policy on animal protection, and activists' use of advertisements to promote animal protection (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). These articles underscored the importance of the agenda-setting potential of the media to affect positive change for animals and the need for messages to address larger cultural issues relating to animal use in our society.

Regarding advertising, for example, Jones found that when animal protection groups controlled the message through paid advertisements, the depiction of animal suffering was concluded to be an especially effective method for motivating audience action on behalf of animals. It was also deemed effective if the ads could make viewers question their current attitude towards an animal and see them in a different light, perhaps in a more human or personalized way. She concluded that, "techniques which call into question the core of human perceptions of animals offer greater potential for elevating animal status by making it more difficult for society to resume business as usual" (1997c, p. 158).

However, most activist groups, due to a limited budget, cannot afford to advertise and must rely on getting unpaid publicity through the news media. Jones noted that animal protection groups who ran campaigns that had greater activist participation ended up getting greater news coverage over the years. This was especially true for a vegetarian campaign known as "The Great American Meatout" (1997a). She concluded the longer-term success of the Meatout campaign was due to the fact that it was positive, offered benefits to participants, and could team up with the environmental movement (in their disdain for pollution caused by factory farms). In contrast, anti-vivisection campaigns showed declining media coverage and activism after 1990, which Jones concluded was due to: the topic being perceived as less newsworthy as novelty wears off, loss of resources by promoters, and countermovement organizing by corporations and the government who successfully communicate to the public that animal rights activist goals "present an unacceptable threat to the nation's economic and cultural status quo" (1997a, p. 72).

The political elite's efforts to undermine public support for animal rights issues by portraying them as threatening to the American way of life is echoed in the fact that an animal protection bill's chances of passing increases the more it is perceived as "being consistent with the

mainstream" (1997b, p. 8). The news media play a role in endorsing an issue as 'mainstream' through supportive editorials and favorable reporting (1997b).

Jones reinforced the agenda-setting power of media coverage to exert influence on public policy when it comes to animal rights legislation. She pointed to success with farmed animal legislation regarding transportation and slaughter. "Only two pieces of federal legislation address the treatment of farmed animals and both of these were enacted following intense media campaigns" (1997b, p. 8). Jones pointed to many instances where the passage of pro-animal ballot initiatives or humane legislation was positively correlated to the amount of positive, supportive coverage the issue received in the media, such as the passage of the Humane Slaughter Act in the '50s, the Animal Welfare Act in the '60s, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act in the '70s (1996). In further support of the theory of the agenda-building power of the media, Jones also pointed to opinion survey evidence that the predominance of anti-vivisection editorials by media magnate William Hearst in his nationwide chain of dailies "most likely succeeded in turning a significant number of uninformed readers against the use of animals in research," more so than was evidenced by readers of other papers (1996, p. 74).

However, a more recent look at news coverage of animal experimentation does not indicate such favorable coverage of the anti-vivisection stance as was given by Hearst years ago. Sociologist Corwin Kruse did a content analysis of national TV and magazine news coverage of vivisection from 1984 – 1993 and found that the news media granted less political standing to animal activists than vivisectors and usually framed animal activism events in a negative way (2001). However, Kruse found that news magazines were more likely to place activists' events in broader context and draw connections between events and issues, while television tended to focus mainly on the events and the activists, instead of the issues. Yet television was more likely

to focus on the pain and suffering caused to animals than news magazines. Kruse contended that this might be due to TV's reliance on dramatic video footage, in this case from inside the labs themselves (2001).

To further extrapolate trends in print media coverage about the ways in which animals and animal rights activists were portrayed, Dena Jones pointed to three content analysis studies by Stephen Kellert, Hal Herzog, and George Gerbner (Jones, 1996). Kellert's study of attitudes towards animals in newspapers in the 20th century up through 1976 found that the most common attitude expressed was utilitarian, where animals were seen as valuable tools (such as raising animals for food). The least frequent attitude expressed was that of the moralistic perspective, exposing cruelty towards animals (Kellert, 1982). Similarly, as part of his Cultural Indicators Research Project, Gerbner painted a bleak picture of television's representations of animals as mostly violent, where animals were twice as likely as humans to be harmed or framed as deserving of victimization. Additionally, the vast majority of portrayals of humans as "animal activists" were negative (Gerbner, 1995). Both Gerbner (1993) and Herzog (1995) concluded that media coverage of animal rights in the latter part of the 20th century hit its peak around 1990 and had declined by the time their studies concluded around the mid 1990's.

The media tactics of one of the most well-known animal rights groups in latter part of the 20th century, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), was studied by Peter Simonson (2001). He concentrated on PETA's successful public relations strategy to use the entertainment media instead of directing their activism specifically towards the news media. He contrasted PETA's earlier attempts at making pubic noise and controversy with its more recent methods of expressing its beliefs through the music and entertainment industry and successful use of celebrity endorsements. This suggests that humane reform for animals may be better

advanced through the entertainment media as opposed to the news media, implying that the news media are generally less receptive to promoting pro-animal frames.

Reasons for this news media challenge faced specifically by vegetarian activists is proposed in several studies by Canadian agricultural scientist, David Fraser, who published articles in animal science journals regarding the "new perception" of animal agriculture (2001a, 2001b). These articles addressed communication and public advocacy strategies employed by both sides of the debate (animal activists/vegetarians and animal farmers/meat industry). Fraser contended that both sides end up polarizing the issue and confusing the public by over-generalizing and oversimplifying the issues and contradicting each other. He proposed ethicists and scientists should find a moderate middle ground from which to build consensus and accurately describe animal agriculture and its issues to the public (2001b).

The Language of Oppression:

A recent study by speech communication scholar Cathy B. Glenn (2004) describes successful efforts by the meat industry to rhetorically sanitize negative issues related to animal agriculture through its use of "double-speak" and talking animals. In this *Journal of Communication Inquiry* study, Glenn analyzed animal agribusiness rhetoric to show how effectively the industry uses euphemisms to soften the harsh realities, violence, and exploitation of intensive farming and make it appear more "benign," "comfortable," and "natural" to the public (2004). For example, industry and government officials refer to animals using marketing or commodified terms, such as "beef" instead of "cow flesh," and "grain-and roughage-consuming units" or "inventory" instead of "animals." Their harsh treatment was also sanitized through industry terms like

"individual accommodations" or "modern maternity units" instead of "crates" or "cages" to describe units which tightly confine calves and pregnant pigs, and words like "induced molting" or "fasting" instead of "forced molting" or "starving" to describe the process of farmers forcing another laying cycle from egg-laying hens (2004).

Glenn also focused heavily on industry advertising and paid special attention to their ironic use of putting words into the mouths of "speaking" animal characters to endorse their products. The author felt these discursive industry strategies have been powerful enough to hinder the success of animal rights and environmental groups to garner much regulation or reform to this industry in the face of serious ethical, environmental and health concerns (2004).

Similarly concerned with language that objectifies animals, Arran Stibbe also used critical discourse analysis to address discrimination based on species (2001). He asserted that language is relevant to the oppression of animals and that "the external discourses of animal product industries contain hidden ideological assumptions that make animal oppression seem inevitable, natural, and benign" (2001, p. 158). As minority populations have been "othered" in racist discourses through "us" and "them" divisions, Stibbe pointed out that these pronouns have been similarly used to divide "us" humans from "them" non-humans. Additionally, the pronoun "it" is typically used to describe animals instead of "him" or "her," which serves to objectify animals and create a limited perception of them as inanimate objects, property, or tools for human use (2001).

Like Stibbe, other scholars have made a comparison between how animals are shown as "others" and oppressed (especially farmed animals) and how different groups of people have historically been oppressed. Books such as Carol Adams' *Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), and *The Pornography of Meat* (2003), and Marjorie Speigel's *The Dreaded Comparison* (1997),

provide compelling correlations between the oppression of women and African Americans and the subjugation of non-human animals.

For example, in *The Pornography of Meat,* Adams analyzed advertising and other pop culture imagery to illuminate how farmed animals as beings are obscured as "absent referents" by successfully separating the animal from the meat we consume (2003). Adams described the dominant perspective of our culture as the "pleasurable consumption of consumable beings," and sought to explain "how someone becomes a piece of meat" (p. 13). She noted that the nature of advertising promotes hierarchy and subordination by "advancing someone over something," which ends up reinforcing the patriarchal "great chain of being" of man over women and animals (p. 39). Through advertising and media images, Adams exposes the hegemonic nature of patriarchy as an insidious force in our culture that allows inequality (like that towards farmed animals) to virtually "disappear as a privilege and is experienced as 'desire,' as 'appetite,' as 'pleasure'" (p. 171). Her analysis of the media images shows how women are animalized and animals are feminized (especially farmed animals, like chickens with breasts and thighs) … and both are often sexualized, to their ultimate detriment.

In *The Dreaded Comparison*, Spiegel compared human slavery and oppression to that of animal slavery, which has several parallels for farmed animals as slaves (1997). In one passage, she quoted from Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World,* describing how slaves were often treated like livestock:

> The Portuguese…marked slaves 'as we do sheep, with a hot iron,' and at the slave market at Constantinople, Moryson saw the buyers taking their slaves indoors to inspect them naked, handling them 'as we handle beasts, to know their fatness and strength' (Thomas, 1983, p. 44).

Spiegel (1997) also exposed parallels in the way both masters and farmers: crowd slaves in housing and transport; deny and disregard slaves' feelings and family ties; rationalize that slaves are better off and happier under their protection and care; reinforce the perceived differences between slaves and the oppressing group of humans in society so the slaves can continue to be viewed more as property than beings; interpret religious teachings (like the Bible) in ways which justify the oppression of slaves and make the oppressing group morally superior; and hide the disturbing reality of mistreatment of slaves by separating them from the public to avoid any resulting outcry and regulation (1997).

Along these lines of oppression, in his book *Animal Liberation* (1990), Peter Singer, the Australian philosopher and "father" of the modern day animal rights movement, coined the term "speciesism" in 1975 to represent discrimination against a living being based on species (similar to the notion of racism or sexism). He dedicates a large section of his book specifically to the speciesist attitudes that perpetuate farmed animal slavery and mistreatment on modern day farms.

In conclusion, although rarely media specific, the topic of animal welfare and rights, including that of farmed animals, is addressed by many academic disciplines such as: animal science, philosophy, ecology, sociology, speech communications, and psychology. Many of these academic articles cite some of the more popular books written on the subject of farmed animal welfare, such as: *Animal Liberation* (Singer, 1990), *Animal Machines* (Harrison, 1964), *Beyond Beef* (Rifkin, 1992), and *Slaughterhouse* (Eisnitz, 1997). The fact that so many disciplines address farmed animal treatment as a concern shows that it is a lively topic for debate and study and is indeed newsworthy. Although, clearly the field is ripe for academic discovery when it comes to the study of social constructions of farmed animals in the news.

CHAPTER 3:

THEORY AND METHODS

Theoretical Perspective:

The insight and perspectives that informed my study was based on three theoretical areas: representation, deep ecology, and animal liberation. The first relates to the power of communication and the latter two are normative theories relating to animal ethics. They shed light on how the meanings our society generally has of farmed animals as resources are not fixed or naturally existent. They are consciously constructed in our culture through particular representations of farmed animals, such as those created by the news media. And they have been cultivated over the years to encourage our continued view of these animals as an appropriate and necessary source of food.

The two theories on animal ethics suggest that this limited representation of farmed animals is damaging and unjust to them, as it serves to facilitate their continued exploitation and slaughter. This inhibits any fundamental changes or improvements in the way we treat and view them in comparison to other living beings.

Theories of Representation:

> "Discourse…is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized." - Foucault, *The Order of Discourse* (1990b, p. 1155)

In deciding how to analyze news coverage of farmed animals, I needed to have a theoretical basis for exploring the media's function in representing animals and creating meaning. Not only what the news stories represent, but how, and why it is important. In selecting a theory, I considered how I viewed the media's function in creating meaning in our culture:

- Do the media function as a mirror that reflects things as they "really" are (a normal mirror or a distorted one)? OR
- Do the media function as a lens through which we view issues – helping us focus on certain elements? And if so, is the lens in focus or blurry? Does this media lens limit our view of issues by boxing in or framing only certain aspects or angles?

I identify more with the latter description of the media's role in meaning creation and not the former. However, even the latter that focuses on the media's role as framers of the news, fails to fully describe the deeper and more fundamental role of the media as news *constructors*, first and foremost. While I recognized the journalistic practice of framing as a key part of the discursive strategies I would highlight from the text, I did not view this practice as a rich enough theory to stand-alone. So, for a theoretical framework for this analysis, I dug deeper to theories of the media's larger role in the social construction of meaning through the power of representation -- in this case, the representation of farmed animals.

A good place to begin is to ask how meaning originates. According to Stuart Hall, things do not "naturally" have meaning in a culture. Meanings are social constructions through language.

"We give things meaning by our use of them and what we say, think and feel about them -- how we represent them. Through:

- The *words* we use about them
- The *stories* we tell about them
- The *images* of them we produce
- The *emotions* we associate with them
- The ways we classify and conceptualize them, and
- The *values* we place on them." (Hall, 1997, p. 3)

In Hall's quote, I italicized the "meaningful" items that Hall says are placed in news: words, stories, images, emotions, and values. Further, I underlined the actions media organizations take with respect to these "meaningful" items; they use, tell, produce, associate, classify, conceptualize, and place these items in ways that construct meaning for the audience about the thing or subject in question. My focus on verbs is intended to foreground the media's active role in the production of meaning in a culture.

Regarding the different constructionist theoretical approaches to meaning, I used the discursive formation approach, credited to Michel Foucault. According to him, discourse is a certain construction of knowledge on a topic that functions in a society at a particular time, one based on groupings of "ideas, images, and practices" which work to organize our way of discussing that knowledge (Hall, 1997, p. 6). Foucault felt discourse served to define the limited ways, which were suitable to talk about, treat, or engage the topic so its meaning is comprehensible to a society. Furthermore, this wasn't just a linguistic organizing device, but

much more powerful and political. "They (discourses) are concerned with the 'effects and consequences' of representation -- the politics" (Hall, 1997, p. 6).

Foucault expanded the meaning of the word "discourse" away from just linguistic definitions of "related texts or speech" to one of both language and practice. Through practice, discourse operates under a system of relations and rules found in society.

Regarding societal relations, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault posits that what we believe to be true about something, like farmed animals, for example, emerges not from language or the animals themselves but from relations "between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterizations; and these relations are not present in the object" (Foucault, 1990a, p. 1133).

Regarding societal rules, discourse has the power to rule in and rule out (limit) ways of talking about a topic, by:

> [d]efining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself… It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (Hall, 1997, p. 44).

Words from the above quote such as "defining", "governs", "influences", and "regulate", indicate that discourse is inextricably linked with power in a society. "Discourse must be understood as a means of controlling social practices and preserving institutional power through its management of knowledge" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 901). Foucault felt that knowledge was created through discourse, and possession, creation and control of knowledge maintains

systems of power in society. Knowledge comes to be seen as "right" based on "elaborate relationships of communication and power that subsist among social institutions that use and control knowledge" (p. 916).

In explaining Foucault's views on power and knowledge through discourse, Stuart Hall highlights Foucault's idea of how all these concepts work together to maintain a hegemonic belief system that Foucault calls a "regime of truth."

> Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.'… This led Foucault to speak, not of the 'truth' of knowledge in the absolute sense – a truth which remained so, whatever the period, setting, context – but of a discursive formation sustaining a regime of truth" (Hall, 1997, p. 49).

Truth is a key concept in what constitutes knowledge, and hence, power in a society. According to Foucault in his book *Power/Knowledge*:

> Truth isn't outside power… Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one

> to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned… the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Because of its roots in widespread societal practices, discourse cannot function based just on one text, rather it is a result of a wide variety of sources (texts, forms of conduct, different institutions, etc). They can be said to belong to the same "discursive formation" if they share the same style and strategy about an object – "a common institutional, administrative, or political drift and pattern" (Hall, 1997, p. 44). Certainly the media is a significant source of discourse in society. By analyzing a variety of national news media in my research, I hope to uncover the discursive formations present in news stories.

I studied the discourse around farmed animals by drawing on Hall's interpretation of Foucault's discursive analysis and suggestion that it should include the following six elements:

1. "Statements" about farmed animals which give us a certain kind of knowledge them.
2. "The rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics and exclude other ways" – which dictate what is "sayable" or "thinkable" about farmed animals during a particular time period.
3. "Subjects who in some way personify the discourse" (the animals, the farmers, the USDA, the meat eating public, etc.), with the "attributes" which are expected in the current system of knowledge construction.

4. How this knowledge about farmed animals "acquires authority, a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it." How does it come to represent the "truth of the matter?"
5. The "practices within institutions for dealing with the subjects whose conduct is being regulated and organized according to those ideas." For example: the way the USDA might regulate or penalize agribusiness in relation to its compliance with the Humane Slaughter Act or waste storage requirements. The way agribusiness might regulate the animals in its production through confinement or manipulation, such as the use of debeaking, forced molting, gestation crates, battery cages, etc.
6. Acknowledgement that "a different discourse, or episteme, will arise at a later historical moment," replacing the current one, and creating a new discursive formation, and producing new conceptions of farmed animals. These new discourses will have "the power and authority, the 'truth,' to regulate social practices in new ways" (Hall, 1997, pp. 45 & 46).

Through my analysis of what news stories say and do not say about farmed animals, I intend to elucidate how journalists work within the "rules" of the discourse to define both the nucleus and the boundaries of the meanings regarding farmed animals. I believe analysis of these journalistic discursive strategies will result in clarification of the rules themselves.

After absorbing Foucault's and Hall's theories of representation, it is my theoretical stance that news organizations both produce discourse as well as function at the mercy of it. They affect discourse and at the same time are affected by it. They have some power and authority to construct meanings and play a role in supporting or challenging a regime of truth, but they are not the only source of power that defines a discourse, so in that respect they are also at the mercy of other powerful institutions in society. News organizations cannot easily construct meaning

outside of the current regime of truth or it wouldn't make sense to the audience. In this sense, news organizations must play within the rules of the discourse when constructing news on farmed animals.

According to my interpretation of representational theory, the rules of the discourse are determined by elements and practices that go beyond the realm of journalism -- societal norms such as:

- Society's historical relations with farmed animals: how we have interacted with them. For instance, they have not traditionally been companions, but they have historically been used as resources for food, fiber and labor. If most of the pubic did not eat farmed animals and instead kept them as beloved family members, would news stories reflect a different view of these animals?
- Society's values regarding farmed animals: how much does society traditionally care about farmed animals and how much do we view them as beings deserving of moral consideration within our sphere of ethical concern? What is the dominant religion in America and how does it perceive our ethical obligations to animals?
- What words are traditionally used to represent farmed animals? For example, are they referred to as "beings", "animals", "him", "her", (living beings with implied inherent value) or "livestock", "it" (commodities with instrumental value)? Are their dead body parts referred to directly as "flesh", "muscle", "corpses", "bloody", (what they actually are) or are body parts more commonly referred to indirectly as "meat", "beef", "pork", "steak", "juicy", etc. (what we use them for)?

- The familiarity of the public with animal farming practices: Is it practiced out in the open so as to be highly visible to the public, or is it largely done incognito, "out of sight, out of mind?" If the latter, could the public be easily swayed into ignoring the subject or believing primarily what the media or industry portrays regarding animal farming since they have little direct experience or first-hand knowledge themselves?
- What laws exist regarding farmed animals? Do the laws benefit primarily people or animals? For example, many laws exist related to meat safety and labor (benefiting people). Not many laws exist regarding protection of farmed animal welfare (ex: farmed animals are excluded from the Animal Welfare Act). The Humane Slaughter Act is the only piece of federal legislation specifically addressing farmed animal welfare, yet 98% of the total farmed animals slaughtered in the U.S. each year (birds) are not covered by this act (FARM). The amount of laws protecting farmed animals affects the amount of legal action taken on their behalf. More courtroom drama would mean more newsworthiness and more public awareness and exposure to farmed animal welfare issues.
- Who has the money and influence (power) when it comes to determining the fate of farmed animals? Who primarily owns and controls farmed animals? The authority is in the hands of agribusiness and the government (though the USDA) and not animal protection groups, for example. What if farmed animals were autonomous?
- What is the structure of the economic system in America, and how reliant is the economy on animal farming? Is it a major industry with large economic impact? Does the government view it as important enough to subsidize it with taxpayer funds? If the industry were dismantled or made substantially less profitable, would society possibly face economic losses

that would result in a lower quality of life for some Americans? Since this is the case, it explains why there are many institutions in society bent on protecting this industry.

These societal norms help form the basis for the current discourse on animals. In order to foreground our cultural influences on the discourse, it is useful to ask questions about each of these norms and how it would be if things had been or were different. We need not have the answers to these questions to gain the benefit of stepping outside of the box and viewing from a different perspective how farmed animals are situated in our culture and how that profoundly influences the current discourse within which journalism operates.

Deep Ecology Theory:

In considering the representation of farmed animals and the power it has to regulate their treatment in society, it is also necessary for me to outline my perspective on how I think they should be treated. Deep ecology theory provides an ethical theoretical framework for acknowledging humans' obligations to the non-human world -- one that does not place us at the pinnacle of moral relevance but recognizes the equal moral status of all other life on earth. Deep ecology theory is a theoretical perspective which is radically different from the current discourse on human interactions with non-human life, one which may hopefully arise in a different episteme if news media and other powerful producers of discourse start to challenge the status quo discourse on farmed animals as resources.

"Deep Ecology" was first coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in the 1970's as a way to differentiate shallow from deep environmental perspectives. Deep ecology suggests a more holistic and less anthropocentric worldview is necessary to cure the serious environmental

problems facing our world. Philosophizing about this radical change in outlook is referred to as "ecosophy" (Des Jardins, 1993). Other academics such as sociologist Bill Devall and philosopher George Sessions have supported and enhanced Neass' Deep ecology theory. Here are the eight basic principles that reflect the assumptions of this theory (principles 1, 3 & 8 relate most directly to my study):

1. "The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes" (Des Jardins, 1993, p. 217).

This normative theory informs my study on the basis of the anti-anthropocentric viewpoint noted in principle one which affirms that the lives of non-human animals, in this case farmed animals, have inherent value that should be respected beyond their use to humans as food items. Furthermore, principle three states that humans should not cause harm to non-human life unless it is necessary to satisfy "vital needs". Food certainly is a vital need to any animal, but since our species can find adequate nourishment in a plant-based diet, when available (as proven by the Hindus and Buddhists for thousands of years), the taking of animal life is largely unnecessary (Singer, 1990). By this token, humans have a moral responsibility to reduce the suffering and killing of farmed animals as much as possible. Principle eight suggests this obligation on the part of mankind.

News organizations can play a key role in fulfilling this obligation to "implementing necessary changes" by educating the public about the institutionalized suffering of animals on farms and demonstrating, through the sensitivity and framing of their coverage of the issue, that the lives of these animals should and do matter.

Animal Liberation Theory:

A theory of animal rights serves to narrow deep ecology principles about nature towards animal species in particular; animal liberation theory challenges us to remove species discrimination from our discourse on farmed animals.

In 1975, Australian Philosopher Peter Singer is credited with jumpstarting the modern animal rights movement through his book *Animal Liberation* in which he makes the case for a utilitarian defense of animal rights. Although, he would emphasize that the word "equality" does not mean equal rights in the case of animals since a cow does not need to attain the "right" to vote or drive a car, but he would argue that the cow deserves the right to equal consideration. Singer builds the case for this by stating that "[t]he basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment; it requires equal consideration" (1990, p. 2). Therefore, we need not treat members of other species, such as a pig, the exact same way as we would treat our child, but we can grant the pig equal consideration for her own interests and desires that are important to her quality of life.

Singer contends that when you consider that:

> equality must be based on the moral principle of equal consideration of interests rather than on the possession of some characteristic, it is even more difficult to find some basis for excluding animals from the sphere of equality (1990, p. 237).

Just as most of us would find it morally indefensible to exclude a person from our sphere of equality based on their possession of different characteristics such as race, gender, age, or mental capacity, so we should not exclude non-human animals from our sphere of concern based merely on their species. Singer coined the term "speciesism" to describe this discrimination based on species.

Traditionally, the western world has put humans on a pedestal above the rest of the animal kingdom, largely based on the Judeo-Christian viewpoint that humans are made in God's image

and are therefore unique and superior to other species (1990). The basis of discrimination is to elevate your own group by lowering the status of others, and speciesism operates under those same principles (1990). This is the worldview that deep ecology radically challenges, as well. Singer points out how egocentric and arrogant it is to assign intrinsic worth only to a group to whom you belong, excluding groups you control: "Our fellow human beings are unlikely to reject the accolades we so generously bestow on them, and those to whom we deny the honor are unable to object" (p. 239).

When you create hierarchies, you pave the pathway for discrimination. This often leads to mistreatment, where the "superior" group feels justified in sacrificing the major interests of the "inferior" group to satisfy their own minor interests. Indeed, animal agriculture is based on the speciesist premise that it is justifiable to control and sacrifice the lives (major interests) of farmed animals to satisfy our own taste for their flesh, milk, and eggs (our minor interests). He asserts that we should make it a "simple general principle to avoid killing animals for food except when it is necessary for survival" (p. 229).

Singer's philosophies draw on deep ecology principles 1, 3 and 8 and serve as the basis for my assumptions in this study that animal agriculture does need reduction and reform on a moral basis. One of the best ways to set this reform in motion is to put animal agriculture on the public agenda by having critical and animal-centered stories published in our nation's news media.

Singer asserts that the media do not do enough to educate the public on this topic because their coverage of animals is mostly in nature programming. "The average viewer knows more about the lives of cheetahs and sharks than he or she does about the lives of chickens or veal calves" (p. 216). Singer claims the main time viewers are exposed to animals on TV is through

advertisements for food products gained at the animals' expense. He goes on to critique newspaper coverage by suggesting that:

> Their coverage of non-human animals is dominated by human-interest events like baby gorilla births at a zoo…; but developments in farming techniques that deprive millions of animals of freedom of movement go unreported (1990, p. 216).

This is precisely why I chose to examine the stories that news organizations do produce about farmed animals, to evaluate whether or not they are facilitating increased justice for animals by challenging the current discourse or just maintaining the status quo of speciesist views of animals as existing only for human use.

Methodology:

Textual Analysis:

To evaluate the news coverage regarding farmed animals, I used the qualitative method of textual analysis, which allowed for the kind of open-ended analysis necessary for delving into this unexplored topic to elucidate the multiple meanings present. To do so, I followed Stuart Hall's description of textual analysis, as outlined in his introduction to "*Paper Voices*" (1975). This included a three-step process:

1. A long preliminary soak in the text – initial readings of all text that allowed me to focus on issues while still seeing the big picture.
2. A close reading of the text – getting more focused and detailed to start identifying strategies and themes.
3. Interpretation of the text – explaining what and how meanings were constructed and what realities were represented (1975, p. 15).

To structure my approach, I also used the circuit of culture as a blueprint, as described in the book *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (Du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, and Negus, 1997) and as applied by Dr. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru in her research. Following Raymond Williams' social definition of culture as inextricably linked with meaning, through my cultural analysis, I sought to "clarify meanings and values implicit and explicit in particular ways of life" (Du Gay, et al., p. 12). Of the five "moments" in the circuit (production, representation, identity, consumption, and regulation), I focused mainly on representation as "the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language" (Du Gay, et. al., p. 24).

And while my thesis does not specifically analyze the other moments in the circuit, for example, by focusing only on the news text and not talking to the audience or the journalists, the circuit reminds me that cultural meanings of farmed animals are inextricably linked to all its moments, beyond the ways farmed animals are constructed in the news. While focusing on the text, the circuit still allows me to recognize the broader picture of the way the public identifies with and consumes farmed animals in our society as food, verses how they view other animals, to the way farmed animals are recognized by our legal system as property, to the way they are

treated as commodities by our farmers, who are now caught in the business of producing and selling food within the context of this new global economy.

Selection of Texts:

For breadth, I chose to examine American national news coverage over a four-year time frame at the turn of the century, from 2000 to 2003, from the premier single sources of national news in both broadcast (network and cable) and print (newspapers and news magazines) media.

It was important to include print news media because newspapers hold the esteem of being the oldest and most established news source in America, and they are still highly popular today, despite our newfound fondness for electronic media. Non-tabloid national newspapers still set the bar for journalistic standards of excellence in the profession. Additionally, print news sources typically have the space to go more in-depth than does television, allowing for a richer source of text to analyze (Kruse, 2001). However, since many farmed animal stories do not make the national newspapers and evening news unless something drastic or dramatic has occurred (ex: mad cow disease outbreaks), I rationalized that including print news magazines in addition to newspapers would allow me to analyze more feature stories that may cover "everyday" issues regarding farmed animals and not just occasional dramas or crisis.

For a major national newspaper, I chose *The New York Times* (NYT) because it is often used as the sole national paper examined in many media studies due to its popularity and award-winning journalism, as well as its agenda-setting power with political elites and other newspapers (Gitlin, 2003). Because it is a large, daily publication, there were substantially more articles in this medium than the others in my sample. To keep the text sample to a manageable size, without cutting back on the years included in the study, I limited the selection of NYT

articles to just those that had the heaviest focus on farmed animals (versus other broader-related issues such as agriculture and vegetarianism). Additionally, there was an abundance of NYT articles related to major disease epidemics, so much so, that it could have easily been the entire focus of my thesis. To avoid this, I tended to select only the most prominent or in-depth articles on mad cow and foot and mouth disease and eliminate ones that were repetitious, small or too far removed from any discussion of the animals themselves. This was mainly done in March of 2001, at the height of the foot-and-mouth outbreak in Europe, and in December 2003 when the first case of mad cow was discovered in the U.S. because during these outbreaks the NYT might have multiple stories on this topic daily for weeks. Yet even with the omission of some farmed animal disease stories (maybe one fourth), it was still the most popular topic in my NYT selected texts, which is representative of its prominence in the newspaper at the time.

In the category of major print news magazine, I originally considered *Time, Newsweek,* and *U.S. News & World Report*. Of these, I chose *Time* since it had the largest readership, reaching 23 million people a week, which comprised almost half (44%) of all news magazine sales weekly in the U.S. (Time, 2003).

In addition to print, I also wanted to include broadcast news because I typically get my news from TV, and this is a more accessible and common source of news for many Americans than is the newspaper. Additionally, TV news allowed me a richer opportunity to analyze visuals that accompanied the text, since this medium is more reliant on visuals.

For purposes of accessibility and budget, I included only broadcast news that was available through the Vanderbilt Archives. For network news coverage, the options were limited to evening news only on ABC, CBS, and NBC. I chose CBS because, from my initial keyword searches (using Lexis Nexis) of all three stations over the last ten years, CBS had twice as many

farmed animal-related stories than either of the other networks. Additionally, CBS has been used by many scholars (Gitlin, 2003) as a reputable and leading network news source for academic research.

For cable news, CNN was the obvious choice. Not only is CNN the most popular and established cable news network on television, it is also the only one available through the Vanderbilt Archive that dates back through 2000. Their archive does not record news on a 24-hour basis (for example, *Headline News* coverage is not recorded), but is limited to only certain CNN programs in the evenings, such as *NewsNight, Wolf Blitzer Reports,* and *WorldView*.

There are advantages to including both broadcast and print media in my study, from both a comprehensive standpoint and a comparative standpoint. As Kruse found in his content analysis, broadcast and print journalists varied in the frames they typically used (2001). Studying both TV and print afforded me the opportunity to compare and contrast the varying and overlapping discursive strategies that were employed in the different mediums, adding extra value and depth of understanding to my research findings (see Appendix). Through analyzing several types of both print and television media, I got a more well-rounded and fairly comprehensive picture of the popular national news that existed on farmed animals during the turn of the twenty-first century.

Handling Visuals:

To emphasize the importance of visual imagery to a story, the print articles that include visuals tend to lend more appeal and salience to a story as it competes for viewer attention on a page. In our busy world, if readers do not make time to read the article in its entirety, the only impression they might get from the article may be the inferences they draw from the visuals they

see flipping through the pages. Another aspect of the salience of visuals in print media would be their accompaniment with headlines and captions. The marriage of words and pictures must be analyzed as a single, meaning-producing unit.

With broadcast coverage, I extracted meanings not only from the footage content itself, but more importantly, from its alliance with the words used to introduce, explain, accompany, or narrate the film footage. I believe the language both embedded in the footage itself and narrated as a voiceover significantly impacts the construction of the message by emphasizing certain frames and directing the viewer's attention in one way verses another. Although "a picture is worth a thousand words" in its power to relay meaning quickly, its power is surely enhanced and channeled through the accompaniment of explanatory text and dialogue.

In either medium, I noticed aspects of visual content, such as: the size and prominence of the visual image; the primary focal point/object of the picture as being reflective of the overall emphasis of who or what is important in the news story (is it a person or an animal?); whether or not the farmed animal is displayed prominently in the visual and the extent to which the accompanying dialogue/text reflects a focus on the animals as beings (shown alive) or as production units/commodities (shown or discussed as flesh); and the relative emotions evoked from the visual (positive or negative) and whether the accompanying caption captured that emotional sentiment, contradicted it, or ignored it.

Qualification Criteria:

In order to determine which stories qualified for my sample, I largely focused on stories that were centered around animal farming/animal food production or the farmed animal in its live state. I sought out stories on both fish farming and commercial fishing. However, stories just

about animal-based food products, health-risks associated with certain meats, healthfulness of a vegetarian diet, or meat-recalls did not qualify. Additionally, stories that merely mentioned animal farming as a peripheral element were also not considered rich enough to qualify. I used the occasional stories about farmed animals out of a food context, such as those in sanctuaries or those used for medical research.

Keyword searches in Lexis Nexis database included many words, such as: cow, beef, dairy cow, veal calf, pig, hog, pork, chicken, hen, duck, sheep, foie gras, egg, fish, ocean fishing, farm animal, animal welfare, vegetarian, mad cow, etc. I narrowed down most of the searches by combining the animal's name with the word "farm," which helped to keep them in context.

Definitions & Terminology:

For this study, I elected to define "farmed animal" as the animals most commonly raised for food in America, namely chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs, cows, sheep, and fish, as opposed to less commonly farmed animals (ex: emus, rabbits, or alligators).

A basic assumption of this textual analysis study is that language is crucial to creating meaning in our culture, so it was important that I be sensitive to the terminology I used. Therefore, throughout this study, I refer to these animals as "farm*ed*" animals instead of "farm" animals, for the same reasons that authors may choose to use the term "enslaved" people instead of "slaves". I did not want to limit these animals' identities through the misuse of language solely to their instrumental value as a farm product and ignore their inherent value as living creatures. So, the use of the word "farmed" reminds us that some person is choosing to farm these non-humans who are not in a position of power to refuse their enslavement. It therefore recognizes their status as victims. I feel this takes a small step towards acknowledging these

animals as sentient beings, deserving of individual attention and respect (outside of their "use" for food), which is the premise of what I hope my study will help to achieve on their behalf.

To describe both my selected text and its news consumers, I have also used selected terms. I use the term "audience" to represent all the consumers of news in my text, the newspaper readers and the television news viewers combined. Additionally, in my analysis and conclusion chapters when I refer to "the news" or "the news media," I do not mean to generalize to all news media, rather just those who are represented in my text sample, which I feel reflects some of the most prominent and influential news producers in our nation.

CHAPTER 4:

ANALYSIS

If the media are a lens through which we view farmed animals, then where are they pointing the camera and what are they focusing in on?

The answer is "at human problems" – problems such as economic, health, and safety issues which relate to animal agriculture, especially to corporate farming. One of the major problems both caused and faced by farmers is a disease epidemic, such as mad cow and foot-and-mouth disease, which comprise the largest portion (40%) of news segments in the text.

To further provide an overview of the content of the text sample, the second and third most frequent topics in the text are environment (15%) and animal welfare (14%). Stories about the environment are mainly focused on problems caused by over-fishing or commercial fish farms, but also include stories on factory farms on land causing the environment to be polluted and people to be sickened. Other topics of farmed animal stories, in order of popularity, include: small/traditional farming, science/genetics/cloning, modern/corporate farming, human health/food safety, economics/business, and religion.

A brief overview of the text reveals that, of the 106 total news stories taken from the years 2000-2003, the vast majority, 72%, were from the NYT and over a third of all these are cover stories, in sections such as main, science, dining, business, and metro. Almost half of all the stories in the NYT are located in the main section (A), including ten cover stories, primarily due to mad cow hitting the U.S. and Canada in 2003. In fact, half of the newspaper text occurs in the

year 2003, which also seems to be the most popular year to feature stories on fishing's effects on the environment and new trends in animal welfare.

However, when it comes to broadcast (comprising 18% of the text sample) and news magazine coverage (comprising 10% of the text sample), 2001 is the most popular year, due to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe. While disease is still the most popular topic for both of these media outlets, *Time* seems to focus more on human health than other media, while CBS has a larger proportion of stories on genetically modified/cloned animals. Topics such as the environment and small/traditional farming are less popular in these media than in the newspaper.

To gain a more detailed, quantified overview of the entire text sample, organized by medium, topic, year, size/location, and visuals, please refer to the Appendix. In the rest of this analysis chapter, I will attempt to illuminate more implicit meanings about farmed animal representations embedded in the major themes and patterns of the text.

After analyzing all the news stories in the text sample and trying to look for the fundamental ways animals are represented, it struck me that they really were not directly represented much at all, making this seem a difficult research question to answer at first. The stories revolve around farmed animals but rarely stop to focus directly on them. The news stories background farmed animals by seldom turning to view the situation from their perspective or ever discussing their feelings or best interests as sentient living beings. Stories which appear on the surface to be about animals are not really about them specifically, but more about how they affect us. We humans are the significant ones. The farmed animals themselves are often absent and unimportant to the story. We generally talk around them but not about them. We talk about us. In this way, what these news stories are saying is that what is important about farmed animals is

not what matters to them inherently as sentient beings but how they matter to us instrumentally as resources.

Therefore, in the first section of this analysis chapter, I will examine this anthropocentric viewpoint more deeply by outlining three major ways in which farmed animals are often portrayed as resources. In the second section, I will discuss this portrayal in opposition to that of other animals, both wild and domesticated. In the final section of the analysis, I will describe four main ways in which farmed animals are occasionally portrayed more positively as sentient beings. Throughout this chapter, I will directly cite from more than half of my text sample to elucidate these thematic structures and better support my findings.

Ways Farmed Animals Are Represented as Resources:

The bulk of news stories support the status quo by portraying farmed animals as instrumentally valuable resources instead of inherently valuable living beings through the following three discursive methods:

1. Talking about them as commodities,
2. Failing to critique the ethics of the situation from the animal's perspective (and ignoring emotional issues they face), and
3. Denying them individual identities.

Talking About Them as Commodities:

Considering that farmed animals are primarily raised to be sold for profit, it is not surprising that economic terminology would be an essential part of the discourse. However, it is not necessary that their economic worth be the only way in which they are defined as valuable, just as we do not narrowly define human workers in purely economic terms. This fails to recognize their inherent value and dignity as sentient beings. Yet we often find this resource-oriented viewpoint of farmed animals dominating the discourse in news stories. This limited definition strips farmed animals of their rightful status as living beings and reduces them to inanimate objects on a production line – essentially making them no more than commodities. A commodity is defined in the dictionary as "a useful thing, an article of trade, a product" (Ehrlich, 1980, p. 126). The examples below show how news stories represent animals primarily in commodified terms as useful products to be bought and sold.

Commodification begins through the words we use to refer to farmed animals – words that objectify them and separate them from us and other living beings. For example, animals raised for food are often referred to using labels that represent their purpose and ends, such as "livestock", "beef cattle", "pork", "dairy cows", "veal calves", "poultry", or "seafood", instead of "cow", "pig", "bird", or "fish". In a *Time* article regarding fish, cod is referred to as "beef of the sea" (Smith, 11/7/02, p. A3). In its reference to pigs, a NYT article informs us that "four big meatpackers slaughter about 60% of the nation's pork" (Barboza, 4/7/00, p. 17). While it is a living animal who is being slaughtered, not a piece of meat, that unpleasant reality is tempered by indirect references such as these that focus on the body and not the being.

Regarding birds, an obituary on the "father of the poultry industry" in the NYT refers to chickens as products:

> The industry needed a bird that could produce a lot of meat and grow to market size quickly. By cutting down on production costs, Mr. Saglio came up with a more desirable product" (O'Connor, 12/21/03, p. A58).

The article reveres Mr. Saglio for engineering birds into a more profitable food product. In this way, the focus remains on the birds being profitable to the farming industry and fails to acknowledge any health issues the birds themselves face by being selectively bred to grow unnaturally fast and large.

Sometimes the commodification occurs by discussing animals purely as objects of trade. In the NYT article on the cover of the business section, entitled "Market Economics", the story details how difficult it is for the U.S. poultry industry to break into the chicken market in India due to cultural differences in food preferences and their resistance to globalization (Dugger, 6/14/00, pp. C1, C6). A poultry industry economist counters at the end of the article with the optimistic statement that America would win over the Indian market in the end because "[w]hat talks is convenience and the pocketbook, and that is what American agriculture can offer" (p. C6). The focus of animal production is on the economics of supply and demand, which American agribusiness manages in order to produce animals in large quantities for maximum efficiency and lowest cost.

Considering all the money being made off of this large supply of animals raised for food, it is no wonder that when diseases like mad cow disease or foot-and-mouth disease threaten the lives of farmed animals, the farm industry and governments jump into crisis mode to reduce economic losses. Therefore, most disease stories have an emphasis on the disease epidemic being largely an economic crisis, first and foremost. This is evidenced by the fact that very early on in the

stories reporters tend to mention how much money might be lost due to the crisis, based on the large number of animals which must be "destroyed". The losses are typically listed in the millions or billions of dollars. While economic losses can have tragic effects for people, journalists would not tend to frame a human disease epidemic mainly as an economic crisis (like loss of laborers). The focus would always be on preserving human life as valuable and precious, showing humans' inherent value far outweighs their instrumental value. Farmed animals do not garner anywhere near the same respect in these stories, as their safety for their own sake is not a concern – preserving their lives so they may be sold for profit and protecting consumers are the main foci of the stories.

In fact, one *Time* article openly acknowledges this tendency to commodify animals, in this case regarding the foot-and-mouth epidemic in Europe. In it, several sources mention the global economy being a large problem in spreading the epidemic and causing economic crisis because animals were being dragged all over the world in large numbers "like any other global commodity" (McAllister, 3/26/01, p. 51).

In another example of how animals are valued purely as livestock in disease stories, a *Time* article reporter explains that while foot-and-mouth disease does not actually kill the animals, it makes them "useless commercially," and since they are not valuable for any non-commercial purpose, they will be killed (Kluger, 3/26/01, p. 50). Since foot-and-mouth disease does not endanger human lives, a NYT reporter calls it "a completely economic plague" (Cowell, 4/1/01, p. 2). The implication is that the animal lives lost are only worth money and nothing inherently more. It would take human lives being lost before the economics may not be the primary issue of this plague.

Additionally, the titles of articles focus on the economic aspect of the crisis, showing how the animals are valued monetarily as meat, eggs, or dairy. Titles include:

- "A Killer Economy" (Cowell, 4/1/01, Sect 4, p. 2),
- "U.S. Scours Files to Trace Source of Mad cow Case: The Beef Market is Down" (Wald, 12/25/03, p. A1),
- "Meat from Europe is Banned by U.S. as Illness Spreads: Sick Livestock in France: Big Impact on Pork, but Cured or Smoked Items and Most Cheese will be Allowed" (Marquis, 3/14/01, p. A1), and
- "Avian Flu Raises Concerns on the Economy" (Braccidiferro, 3/23/03, Sect 14CN, p. 3).

Phrases within disease articles also reinforce the monetary value of food animals. For example, in the NYT's article, "Virus is Killing Thousands of Salmon", the first half of the article focuses on specific details regarding economic losses (Revkin, 9/7/01, p. A10). It tells us that hundreds of thousands of "valuable" fish on the farm must be destroyed due to illness. The disease is said to have dealt a "costly blow" to Maine's fishing industry which is worth "$100 million a year," with financial aid from the USDA being sought to "compensate farmers for herds of livestock lost to illness" (p. A10). A manager at the fish farm describes it as "a very serious disease and economic loss and a problem for the industry" (p. A10). The economic rhetoric of many disease articles follows this similar pattern of framing the disease not as a problem for the animals themselves, but for those humans who will not be able to make money off of them. The disease is therefore framed as a shame for agribusiness profits, not for the sick animals.

While disease is an issue sometimes faced by the fishing industry, most of the fish articles deal with the problems caused by over-fishing in the oceans or pollution/contamination of natural water sources due to fish farms. While many of these stories are framed as ecological disasters, rightly showing concern for the health of all ocean species, simultaneously or independently, some are additionally framed as food supply disasters, where the oceans are viewed mainly as a resource for human consumption. In the NYT's article, "Has the Sea Given Up its Bounty?", threatened marine life is sometimes referred to as "resources", "fish stocks", or just simply "protein" (Broad & Revkin, 7/29/03, p. Science Section, p. 1). Here again, these labels objectify and create distance between the seafood product and the fact that he/she is a living creature.

Similarly, in that and other articles, a recent report issued by a private commission of scientists and fisherman, the PEW Oceans Commission, is critical of commercial fishing fleets for damage to what they call "America's marine resources" or "valuable natural resources" (Revkin, 6/5/03, p A32). The commission encourages the "sustainable" use of fishing to do three things: preserve the livelihood of fisherman, protect an important source of protein for humans, and protect marine ecosystems for ecological sake (Revkin, 5/15/02, p. A16). When the words "resource" and "sustainable" are used so frequently, it indicates we believe that humans own the oceans and are responsible for managing aquatic animals primarily for our use and consumption.

This dominion viewpoint is bolstered by another NYT's article profiling a scientist, Dr. Pauly, who has bleak predictions for aquatic life and who blatantly states humans own the oceans and are therefore responsible for protecting the "marine stocks" (Yoon, 1/21/03, Science Section, pp. 1, 4). Dr. Pauly states improvements will only occur if "the true owner of the ocean's resources, the public, demands it" (p. 4). He indicates we need to worry about it if we do not

want our children to end up eating "plankton stew" in years to come (p. 4). Again, the main emphasis on protecting aquatic animals is not for their own sake but so that we humans may continue to catch, sell, and consume them without having to make any sacrifices to our quality of life.

Another example of discussing sea life as property is evidenced in a cover story of the NYT, "Delta Farmers Want Copyright on Catfish," detailing how farmers in the Mississippi Delta want to put a copyright on catfish to protect their industry from competition by Vietnamese fishing imports of similar fish also sold under the name "catfish" (Becker, 1/16/02, p. A1). Copyrights are for legal business protection of unique assets usually reserved for products or inventions, not for animals, unless they are viewed primarily as an object of trade, as is the case with this fish.

Not only are fish and other animals copyrighted or referred to as objects, the news stories indicate they are also groomed from birth as an economic resource, with specific rearing methods to make them as profitable as possible. Examples in the text are often given about how some higher-end farmers or fisherman go to painstaking lengths to avoid doing anything to their farmed animals (during the animal's life or slaughter) that would compromise the quality or flavor of the meat and the high price it can command. Even though the animals' treatment is sometimes humane, they are still primarily treated and raised as a means to an end – and that end is making money, as the following news stories remind us.

In the NYT's article, "How to Grow a Giant Tuna", wild caught-tuna, who are then fattened in an unusual underwater feedlot in Mexico, command a high price per pound on Japanese restaurant menus -- the record was $160,000 for a 410 pound tuna (Apple, 4/3/02, Dining Cover).

> Tsukiji pays the highest prices in the world, but its buyers insist on quality…Mr. Charat takes extraordinary steps to meet Tsukiji standards – some during the harvest, others before it starts (p. F2).

The reporter explains that after catching the tuna in large nets, the farmers transport them very carefully and slowly back to the farm in that same net so as not to increase stress and chemical production in their systems – which would cause the flavor to suffer. And just before "harvest," the farmer explains that he moves the fish to special, less crowded pens so they do not get over-stimulated while being caught "lest they thrash about and damage one another" and bruise their valuable meat (p. F2).

In another example of profits dictating treatment, the NYT's article, "No Days Off at Foie Gras Farm", is subtitled "Workers Complain, but Owner Cites Stress on Ducks" (Greenhouse, 4/2/01, Metro Cover). The reporter explains that foie gras, a French-style gourmet delicacy of engorged duck liver, is produced by over-feeding corn into ducks' stomachs through the insertion of metal feeding pipes into the ducks' throats three times a day. Despite what seems like obvious cruelty to the ducks, ironically the article asserts the owners are kinder to the ducks than they are to the immigrant farm workers when it comes to reducing stress. The owners of the foie gras farm insist on having the ducks have the exact same person force-feed them throughout the course of the duck's short life of thirty days because "the quality of the results" would be damaged if the ducks were additionally stressed by having a different person feed them. Through several different quotes, the farm owners explain that the immigrant farm workers cannot have a day off in that month because if they did, the ducks' "livers would not grow as fast or be as tasty" (p. B1). In this case, the article is framed to make it clear that profits are dictating not only

the ducks' mistreatment, but also the mistreatment of the farm workers themselves. However, because the ducks' livers are the prioritized commodities, the farm workers feel "the conditions of the workers are crueler than the conditions for the ducks" (p. B1).

Another objectifying aspect of the product quality issue is that it seems like the recipe starts before the animals are even killed – by what they are fed, how they are raised, and how and when they are slaughtered. These articles, mainly in the dining section, essentially promote the fact that animals are raised like meals-on-wheels since birth in order to provide a higher quality product than consumers can get on factory farms. For example, a NYT dining cover article favorably describes small farmers "finishing" sheep in Nantucket on grasses near the sea which are saltier and make the mutton more flavorful (Hesser, 11/5/03, p. D1). The farmer is quoted saying "They are finishing from the day they're born. They go when the grass goes" (p. D8). Similarly, another article quotes a particular small farmer who raises grass-fed beef and does not think of himself as a cattleman. He sees himself as a farmer who "raises grass," harvested ultimately through the cow's meat (Burros, 5/29/02, pp. D1, D3). He also focuses on the improved taste of grass-fed animals. "Taste after all is what will ultimately sell his product on the open market," the journalist informs us (p. D3). Another small farmer similarly states, "We raise grass. The lambs harvest it" (Apple, 4/19/00, pp D1, D6). These quotes by the farmers allow the reader to reduce the animal down even further than just the animal's flesh, to simply the grass upon which he/she was fattened. To allow the farmers to erase the animal from the picture and say they are only farming grass seems like a blatant act of objectification, which is a key part of discussing some-one as some-thing, a commodity.

Further examples of recipes for raising more expensive meat include increased exercise. A sheep farmer describing his lamb's meat as "better toned" because of the fact that his animals

can move around a lot, and their muscles get toned like an athlete's, coupled with the fact that they are killed young, at six months (Apple, 4/19/00, p. D6). The reporter seems impressed that the farmer even does his own slaughtering "to ensure the lambs were killed properly and the carcasses chilled slowly, to avoid toughening them" (p. D6). And the Nantucket sheep farmer says the hills work like a "stairmaster," to make the lamb's meat more "flavorful and succulent" (Hesser, 11/5/03, p. D1). A small pig farmer also agrees that the amount of movement his pigs get by free-roaming accounts for "firmer, juicier, tastier pork" (Apple, 3/29/00, pp F1, F9). The articles focus on the principle that better taste equals better profits: "The Biensens know that their pork tastes better, but for them, what is most important is that it commands a premium price" (p. F9).

A contrary and unusual example of one of these farmers treating his animals as beings and not beef during the rearing process is the Nantucket sheep farmer who considers his sheep's preferences by planting a variety of organic grasses for them to eat. The reporter explains that the farmer thought the sheep would appreciate the variety in taste so they would not get bored with the same old grass. This was the only accommodation any of the stories mentioned that was made for the animal's sake and seemed to have nothing to do with rearing animals according to a recipe for profits.

In summary, it is ironic that many of these examples of commodification are not about cold and impersonal factory farms pumping out animal products, but instead about small farmers or fisherman using more old-fashioned farming methods. This shows that even animals raised in more traditional or humane ways are still largely objectified as tasty commodities in news discourse, whether the story be about economic loss of millions of "volume" animals due to

disease or just the high-end price commanded for specially raising an extra tasty one. Production of a profitable animal product is a primary focus of many of the news stories in this text.

Failing to Critique the Ethics of the Situation from the Animal's Perspective (and Ignoring Emotional Issues They Face):

An extension of commodifying animals is the creation of news stories which focus solely on the producer or consumer's perspective regarding the animal as a product instead of focusing on the animal's own perspective and interests as a fellow living being. A cursory glance at the news headlines tells us most stories about farmed animals revolve around problems. And while being raised in captivity for slaughter would be a problem for anybody, the stories rarely focus on the ethics of this angle, but instead the criticism is directed at modern, large-scale commercial farms or fishing industries and the human-centered problems they cause. For example, industrial agribusiness is often criticized as being:

- bad for consumer safety/health (ex: diseases like mad cow, health risks of heavy use of antibiotics and hormones, or questions regarding consumption of genetically modified or cloned animal products)
- bad for small farmers ("real" hard-working middle Americans who cannot compete and still retain the integrity of old-fashioned farming or fishing traditions)
- bad for taste and quality of meat (ex: bland or bruised)
- bad for the environment (ex: pollution which threatens human health or the livelihood of small fishing communities, or threatens biodiversity in the oceans)

With a few exceptions, outlined later in the third section, corporate farming is rarely criticized from an animal welfare standpoint (ex: increased mistreatment, confinement, and/or pain and

emotional suffering the animals endure). Because reporters rarely make welfare an issue, nor bring any ethical questions to the table regarding the animals' feelings or possible discomfort, the reader is implicitly invited to overlook the animals altogether and focus solely on anthropocentric matters as the only priority. The underlying message is that humans are not morally obligated to consider farmed animals because the animals are so dissimilar to us and do not have our complex ability to think and feel deeply. Using many of the story frames outlined above, the following examples show how concern for the animals themselves is often overlooked in the news text.

Since disease articles dominate the text sample, it is important to examine the perspectives they represent – which is mainly the farmers or the consumers. In every disease epidemic article, we are informed of how many hundreds to millions of animals are being killed to stem the outbreak from getting any worse. It is framed as a massive "crisis" not only in words but also by the sheer proliferation of prominently placed news stories which cover the diseases as they develop. The reporters usually talk to smaller farmers who express such negative emotions as stress, frustration, and worry. Most empathetic comments from the reporter relate to feeling concerned about those industry folks or farmers whose livelihoods will suffer, or even the public who must be concerned for their health, but not for the animals suffering from disease and then death.

For example, in a NYT's article on foot-and-mouth disease, the reporter explains "[t]he disease does not usually affect humans but can have dire financial consequences for farmers" (Daley, 3/6/01, p. A4). The NYT's article on mad cow disease, entitled "Second Farm is Quarantined, and Cattlemen are Worried" includes phrases such as "farmers growing increasingly anxious", "their troubles began unexpectedly", and "[I]t's just very stressful right

now for the industry" (Kershaw, 12/27/03, p. A14). There is no mention of the troubles or stresses to the animals. In another article, the discovery of exotic newcastle disease in a California egg farm is said to send "a shiver through the state's $3 billion poultry industry" (Janofsky, 12/28/02, p. A15). The reporter's choice of the word "shiver" tends to personify the poultry industry itself as if it were a person who is worried about his/her livelihood. But there is no personification of the chickens, or indication that they might be shivering about the fact that 100,000 of them are going to be killed prematurely in an attempt to stem the disease.

Another aspect of the disease coverage that overlooks ethical animal perspectives is the fact that so many countries would solve a disease crisis through such lethal means as mass slaughter, without much remorse for the deaths as anything more than an economic tragedy. A few articles do admit it is a controversy that leaders of European countries chose to eradicate the epidemic by instituting a system of forced slaughter rather than vaccinating animals and keeping them alive, as many farmers would have preferred. It is said that the reason the British government resisted vaccination was because it would have "hurt Britain's livestock and meat exports" (Cowell, 3/28/01, p. A1). It seems national economic interests were put before the local farmers' economic interests and certainly put before the animals' interests of staying alive. At least a few articles do critique this practice of mass slaughter as a "harsh" and "draconian" solution (McNeil, 3/14/01, p. A8), but the majority report on it uncritically as simply the process by which government experts felt the epidemic should be handled.

Additionally, while the disease stories typically inform us of how many animals have been killed to date to stem the epidemic, they almost never address *how* the animals are being killed and whether it is done following approved humane slaughter regulations. We are often shown or told about the burning carcasses or mass graves, but the part about how the animals were killed

goes unmentioned, indirectly implying that no one needs to be prioritizing humane treatment of animals in economic emergencies like these.

Some exceptions include a *Time* article (Lemonick, 1/29/01, p. 58) that mentions the killing is done by army marksmen who were sent in to help the exhausted "sleepers" (the name for the professional slaughterers who kill animals with bullets, bolts and lethal injection). Also, several TV stories mention killing at "gunpoint" via interviews with distraught farmers who are notably saddened by the violent and sudden slaying of their animals, presumably out of a sense of stewardship they feel for their animals on these small farms. A CBS story interviews a husband and wife whose entire pedigree dairy herd had just been slaughtered. The woman is crying as she says, "[I]t's a bereavement. I do not think I've ever felt as desperate as I did last night when I could hear the gun going off" (Fenton, 3/13/01). A male farmer interviewed next, Trevor Cligg, has a shaky voice as he shows us the building that used to house his live herd of dairy cows, but now we see it just has a pile of their corpses. We then see a lone horse. Mr. Cligg explains, "[t]his is my daughter's pony. He's the only animal left on the – alive on the farm except for the dog and the cat" (Fenton, 3/13/01).

In another CBS's story, Tom Fenton interviews a British farmer, Mr. Holland, who is an example of a farmer who did not want to cooperate with government-mandated slaying. He seems to have ethical concerns for his pigs and is visibly upset as he tells us:

> They're going to be shooting sows in a hut with babies in there, and you'll never get that sow out unless you feed it or something like that. And there's no way we're going to encourage the animal out of the hut with food and then just blow it away" (3/16/01).

The next scene shows a veterinarian cradling a lamb and saying how hard it is to kill so many animals due to the foot-and-mouth epidemic, "[y]ou never get used to it. You almost have to think of it in terms of the big picture" (3/16/01).

These few examples of emotional commentary are what is needed to put a face on the tragedy from an ethical perspective (both human and animal). Considering the frequent use of gruesome and disturbing visuals showing piles of dead bodies in disease stories, it seems odd that the emotional aspect is rarely commented upon by the reporters. If it were more beloved animals burning, such as dogs or chimpanzees, I assume there would surely have been some reporter commentary on the animals' deaths as a tragedy for their own sake –some sense of mourning. Surely if it were human carcasses burning or people's corpses in open mass graves, most news organizations would have deemed the visuals too disturbing to show, and the whole event would have been framed as a horrible travesty, and most certainly criminal. But no reporter uses emotional words such as "murder", "criminal", "travesty", "shameful", or "depressing" to describe the farmed animals' deaths in these disease stories. The reporters tend to use more straightforward terms like "burn", "destroy", "kill", "slaughter", "bury", etc., thereby neutralizing any sense of injustice or mourning in the animals' deaths.

While most television and newspaper reporters use neutral or clinical language to describe the killings, in a few limited instances *Time* magazine reporters trivialize it by using cutesy language that seems inappropriately light-hearted. For example, a short *Time* article, entitled "Mad Lambs: Why Are These Sheep Headed to Slaughter?" features a photo of a head-on stare from a lone sheep's face looking out of an oval opening in his confinement unit. The picture is serious and sad, as that particular sheep, slated for death, looks straight at the reader. Yet, that gravity is juxtaposed by a pun in the caption which reads "A baaad situation for 30 dozen sheep."

Additionally the reporter jovially says the USDA is not taking any chances that mad cow disease will get a "hoofhold" here. These puns seem inappropriate because they ultimately trivialize the emotional aspects of animal deaths and encourage readers to smile rather than cry.

Another example of trivializing an animal issue through humor is a CBS news segment on state ballot initiatives across the nation, which includes an unusual Florida referendum to ban intensive confinement of pregnant pigs in gestation crates. While the reporter does briefly allow Wayne Pacelle of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to defend the need to have pigs at least be able to turn around freely, the reporter spends most of the time interviewing the single farmer in Florida who now uses gestation crates for his fifty sows. The farmer and reporter mock the legislation as trivial and insignificant and the reporter ends with a humorous plea to "free the Florida fifty" (Andrews, 11/5/02). By failing to put this legislation in context for the audience as far as the bigger picture of how this humane legislation would deter new corporate hog farms from moving into the state and by failing to critique the intense confinement these animals endure as routine agricultural practice on commercial farms, the issue is oversimplified and framed merely as animal activist agenda-pushing. Without this context, the audience would likely view it as an inconsequential misuse of the ballot initiative process.

One piece of farmed animal legislation which is taken seriously is the USDA's ban of allowing meat from downed cows (animals who cannot walk due to illness or injury) into the food supply, namely because it is a human health risk. The ban was instituted at the end of 2003 in immediate response to a downed dairy cow causing the first known case of mad cow disease in America. There are several NYT's articles criticizing the USDA for not being proactive enough to institute the ban earlier as a preventive safety measure for human health and the economy considering that a bill called the Downed Animal Protection Act was stymied several

years in a row in Congress. Several NYT's articles do feature brief quotes from animal protection groups, the HSUS and Farm Sanctuary, in regards to this downed animal legislation, but they are purely consumer-safety oriented comments. Only one quote, by Wayne Pacelle of the HSUS, partially relates to welfare issues for these downed animals. The reporter paraphrases Mr. Pacelle as saying downed animals "are pushed by bulldozers or dragged by chains, and are a threat to the food supply" (Wald & Lichtblau, 12/24/03, p. A1). However, the reporters do not seize this opportunity to extend the stories into the welfare realm and incite public sympathy for more fundamental change to animal agriculture. For example, there are no photos of downed or sick animals accompanying any of the stories.

Concerns about consumer-safety also overshadow animal welfare concerns when it comes to the genetic modification or cloning of farmed animals. While the subject of cloning humans is almost universally tabooed as grotesque, the only ethical concerns these science articles suggest about animal cloning research is that the resulting food products might be detrimental to human health or the environment. This is exemplified in the CBS news headline, "FDA Issues Positive Report on Food From Cloned Animals, But Questions Still Remain About The Safety of Such Food" (Andrews, 10/31/03). In some frames, while skepticism of cloning is mentioned, it is countered by an explanation of the benefits genetically modified (GMO) foods can provide consumers. In an earlier CBS story, reporter Wyatt Andrews says:

> Congress has put the brakes on human cloning, but out here on the farm, livestock cloning is off and running. Farmers are making perfect copies of their high-producing milk cows, their prize bulls, their meatiest and most flavorful pigs (Andrews, 3/6/02).

A NYT's article also describes how pigs are being genetically engineered to produce leaner pork in the hopes that these direct consumer benefits might make it easier to market GMO foods to a somewhat skeptical public (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A1).

In fish-related GMO stories, the main critique seems to be concerns of GMO fish getting loose and threatening wild fish populations, but the articles still allow for the sales pitch of consumer benefits that might outweigh such environmental risks. A NYT reporter paraphrases the president of a biotech fish farm who sees his fast-growing GMO salmon as part of a "blue revolution" that could "feed more people more efficiently and more cheaply" (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A1). A similar consumer sales technique is used in a *Time* article where it is claimed that GMO salmon allow farmers to provide "more fish for more people at a lower price" (Golden, 3/6/00, p. 62). In any of these examples, there is no mention of the ethical dimensions of manipulating non-human animals genetically so they will be tastier or more profitable for our uses, just questions about whether the economic benefits outweigh the safety risks.

In addition to genetically modifying animals for the food supply, two NYT's articles explain how farmed animals are used in medical research to produce pharmaceutical products, and while the research seems to be strange and sometimes inhumane, the reporters do not critique the research from an ethical standpoint. The NYT's article, entitled "If it Walks and Moos Like a Cow, it's a Pharmaceutical Factory," highlights the use of GMO farmed animals as "bioreactors" who "earn their keep as living chemical factories" to produce pharmaceuticals (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A20). In it, Canadian scientist Dr. Francois Pothier optimistically declares "[t]here is no limit to what can be done" (p. A20). While this scientific freedom does appear to be a benefit to human medicine, it also implies that there are no moral limits to how animals might be fundamentally manipulated to serve human purposes.

In one especially egregious example, the journalist describes how Dr. Pothier has modified pigs to produce a drug in their semen and paraphrases him explaining that the pigs could be "trained to donate" large quantities of semen regularly. While many people may feel this is crossing more than one line of decency, especially if the animal was a dog, the journalist does not question it when done to a pig, and he certainly does not include a visual.

Consumer safety is again highlighted when a scientist tells us that GMO goats who produce silk fiber in their milk are not going to get a decent burial as they age and their production dies down, but rather, they will be killed for food. At issue is not the treatment or death of the goats, but instead the confirmation of whether or not their flesh is safe for the public to consume.

This "Pharm Animals" article is more a feature story on the wonders of biomedicine and does not seriously address ethical concerns relating to using these animals as pharmaceutical receptacles. It only contains one sentence on ethics, which states that animal rights groups think that "the use of animals as living factories raises troubling ethical issues," but it does not elaborate on what those issues are or let any animal activists speak directly. It simply states that animal rights groups have been "relatively quiet on the issue" (p. A20). Additionally, the selected photographs all feature generic headshots of healthy and happy farmed animals like goats, chickens, pigs, and sheep, along with explanations of medical uses under each photo. If this reporter had chosen a more critical or ethical angle for the story, she could have shown photos of animals stuck in laboratory cages, which might have garnered public sympathy instead of merely public curiosity.

In another unusual example of medical research, a NYT's article describes how the red combs of chickens are possibly the best source of hyaluronan, a compound used for wrinkle reduction, among other benefits to humans (Ault, 12/23/03, p. F1). A Pfizer scientist in Sweden,

Dr. Rolf Bergman, describes how they have been selectively breeding roosters to have "superhuge combs," but that they had to stop at the point where the combs were getting too heavy "because all of a sudden the rooster couldn't keep his head up" (p. F1). This quote was followed up by his assurance that the roosters were taken care of "in keeping with Swedish ethical laws" and that it makes sense for Pfizer to treat the roosters well because Pfizer gets "a higher quality" product (p. F2). While it is timely that the journalist chose to allow the scientist to discuss the humane treatment of the roosters right after describing the science experiments they do on them, there is no evidence that the scientist is speaking in defense of any critique by the journalist on how the scientists manipulate chickens to have uncomfortably large combs in the first place.

Consider this article's headline, "From the Head of a Rooster to a Smiling Face Near You". Its light-hearted nature disregards any issues the chickens face from living as genetically modified research subjects and focuses on the end benefit to humans. Surely, if anybody would be smiling, it would be the youthful-looking person who benefited from the hyaluronan injection and not the birds whose heads apparently hang heavy in the laboratory cages. While the accompanying photos focus on birds and not people, we do not see anything uncomfortable because the only photos were generic close-ups of chicken's faces with normal-sized combs.

Another place where one might expect to see some discussion of animal welfare is in articles promoting family farming, where it is presumed animals are treated better than they are on intensive confinement farms. Yet, in my previous "product quality" discussion on commodification of animals, I described how the articles only focused on how small farmers or fisherman used more traditional or high-quality methods of rearing animals so that the animal products were tastier and worth more money. What was missing from that news commentary

was any appreciation that these traditional animal husbandry practices were better for the animals themselves or any real contrast with the discomfort they would have endured on a factory farm.

When corporate farms were mentioned in articles about small farmers it was usually just to contrast how the meat from those factory farms did not taste as good or was not as pure as those from smaller farms – again, focusing on the human perspective and not the animal perspective. In a NYT's article, Mr. Biensen, a small pig farmer, gives two reasons why supermarket pork tastes less flavorful than his, and both reasons relate to drawbacks of corporate farming. The first is that pigs raised in confinement have meat with no muscle tone due to lack of exercise. The second is that a gene which causes Porcine Stress Syndrome in factory farmed animals accounts for weight gain but meat which is pale, soft, and dry (Apple, 3/29/00, p. F9). The journalist claims that corporate farms have "taken over" the bulk of pork production with "dire results" (p. F1). But these dire consequences are only for small farmers who cannot compete and for consumers who have to eat mass-produced meat, which is "bland, dry, and tough when cooked" (p. F1). Certainly there are dire consequences for the animals when the main method of production has become much more intensive, unnatural, and stressful. Yet, the news stories imply that the deprivation of the animals' quality of life is a non-issue in comparison to the deprivation of our own palates.

Many of the articles about small or family farmers focus on human emotions of family and heritage, as they wax poetic about the bucolic scenery and the nobility of this traditional method of farming. Most of these articles do not directly address animal happiness or even admit that animals have emotional preferences, rather it just seems to be assumed that the animals must be healthier and happier in this traditional 'animal husbandry' scenario too – or perhaps it is not

mentioned because it is irrelevant what the animals prefer. However, two NYT's articles by R. W. Apple do outrightly assure us the animals are happy, such as a small pig farmer stating they "watch their pampered porkers running around in happy circles every morning" (Apple, 3/29/00, p. F9), or Apple describing wild-caught tuna living in underwater feedlots as living the "life of Riley, splashing happily about in circular pens" (Apple, 4/3/02). While it is nice to see these few stories actually admit that animals can experience happiness, Apple does not provide any detail as to why they know the animals are happy on these farms, so one wonders if the animals' state of contentment is mentioned primarily as a selling point to consumers so we feel more comfortable about their captivity. To feed us the agreeable idea that farmed animals are happy before they die makes it easier for us to digest, literally and figuratively.

Rather than addressing animal emotions, the emphasis of most of these articles is usually placed on the wholesomeness of the old-fashioned farm and the traditional American values (sometimes in contrast to big agribusiness methods) making it worthy of our respect and financial support. Because of the flattering picture painted of family farmers, one does get the sense that eating animals from small farms or local fisherman is ethically (and physically) superior to eating factory-farmed animals, but the articles rarely ask us to consider supporting these free-range products for reasons of animal welfare.

Sometimes animal emotions are glossed-over or left ambiguous through the reporter's use of emotionally neutral language. In a NYT's article on the controversy of foie gras farming surrounding an animal rights activist rescue raid, the reporter herself comments on watching the ducks' force-feeding. She claims, "there were no visible signs of distress" to the ducks who were new to force-feeding but admits that the older ducks (two weeks into the force-feeding) are "so fat they moved little and panted" (Brown, 9/24/03, p. D4). Her choice of words are a benign

and clinical way to describe the situation, where she never really ascribes any emotional reaction to the ducks in what would intuitively seem to be an uncomfortable and unappealing process. Despite the fact the reporter does not think the ducks are stressed, when I view the accompanying photo showing the male farm worker force-feeding a duck with a metal tube, I notice that the other ducks seem scared of him. The ducks are all pressed up against each other, squeezed as close to the bars as possible to get away from him as best they can in their tiny pen. In contrast, you can see in the other pens that do not have a worker in them that the ducks are more casually dispersed throughout the pen and seem calmer. It only makes sense that mealtime should be a little more appealing to anybody if he/she were really enjoying it. The reporter fails to comment on this.

While that was an example of farmed animal emotions being disregarded, sometimes, they are belittled. For example, when a cow who miraculously escapes the slaughterhouse is ultimately spared and sent to a sanctuary, we are told by New York's Animal Care and Control Representative that "[I]t's going to live a happy life for a cow. Whatever makes a cow happy" (Dewan, 8/17/00, p. B3). Apparently, the concept of a cow having human-like emotional needs, such as happiness, seems hard for this animal care worker to define (as well as the cow's gender), or perhaps she just thought it made her look a bit silly to act as if she could relate at all to a cow's version of happiness. In this case, she does not really serve as a spokesperson for the animal's perspective and ultimately questions the extent of their emotional complexity. Perhaps if the journalist had interviewed the sanctuary owner, the audience would have been given more of a sense of the animal's perspective.

Even a NYT's article on scientific research about farmed animal welfare seems to mock some of the emotional research as silly, based on the comical studies the reporter chooses to

profile and the use of cartoon drawings as visuals instead of photos (Barboza, 9/28/03, section 4, p. 7). While the findings in each of these research studies seem to clearly indicate that farmed animals do indeed have some emotions and preferences, the research language describes the results so clinically that it fails to make any real comment on what any of the findings mean for our attitudes towards animals or what obligations farmers have to improve conditions for these beings who are clearly sentient.

Surprisingly, even in a prominent and lengthy *Time* cover story on vegetarianism, entitled "Should We All be Vegetarians?" the journalist still fails to address farmed animal suffering as a direct answer to the headline's question. Instead, the vast majority of the nine-page spread is dedicated to discussing health and environmental issues related to a vegetarian diet, and the reporter only touches on animal rights in the last five paragraphs at the end (Corliss, 6/15/02, p 56). Even then, the discussion on animals is mainly a debate as to whether or not being vegetarian actually saves more animal lives than eating grass-fed animals would, considering the fact that field animals are inadvertently killed during harvesting plant foods. It never addresses the issue of animal suffering in modern-day farms as a legitimate reason to avoid eating them. In the end, the answer to the article's main question about whether or not we should be vegetarian seems to be "not necessarily". The journalist concludes that man is at the "top of the food chain and must live with his choice to feed on the living things further down" (p. 56). So, even this in-depth article on vegetarianism still follows the pattern of most news stories, remaining focused on human-centered benefits, and failing to regard the animal's perspective, hence we the readers are not asked to consider it either.

Denying Them Individual Identities:

Another major way news stories disregard the sentience of farmed animals and allow us to view them impersonally is through the representation of farmed animals as having a mass identity instead of as individual beings with distinct personalities and interests.

Much of this impersonalization process begins with the words used to refer to them, by name and gender. For example, the first cow to die of mad cow disease in England in 1984, a dairy cow, had no name. She was called by her tag number, #133 (Grady, 12/30/03, p. F1). Flash forward two decades later and times have not improved much for farmed animals, as the first cow in the U.S. to officially have mad cow disease is often referred to by many reporters as "it", even though dairy cows are obviously female. However, in three major NYT's articles on mad cow disease cases in the U.S. and Canada, the reporters do correctly use a female pronoun once to describe each country's first infected female dairy cow, but then they also call her "it" several other times in the same stories, even when referring to obvious female traits, such as calves "it" had birthed (Krauss, 4/23/03, Wald, 12/25/03, and Clemetson, 12/28/03). There is not a single story where the reporters refer to the infected cows' female gender in a consistently correct or personal way. Most of the time, they just use generic terms like "the Holstein", "the dairy cow", or "the diseased animal" instead of using any pronouns at all.

According to the Associated Press Stylebook, the rule for journalists when writing about animals is to avoid using a personal pronoun except when the "sex has been established or the animal has a name" (Goldstein, 2000, p. 16). Most farmed animals do not have individual names, but as in the American mad cow disease case, the vast majority of them are female (ex: dairy cows, battery egg hens, broiler hens, etc.). Yet most farmed animals are referred to as "it" anyway, even when the gender is known, implying that giving individual animals any

personalization or identity is apparently seen as unimportant in most stories. For example, a feature story on the largest dairy in the world, found in Saudi Arabia, either uses the word "cows" or "it," but never a single female pronoun (Smith, 12/31/02). Calling living beings "it" puts them in the category of an inanimate object, which is an indirect way to make individual beings sound generic and less like complex mammals, making it easier for us to talk about killing and eating them. Presumably, it makes us less uncomfortable to kill "it" than to kill "her."

Similarly, it is also easier for readers to hear about animal experimentation when the animals are referred to as "bioreactors", "living chemical factories", or "domesticated beasts" than it is when they are called "birds", "piglets", or "goats". The latter tends to elicit more of a recognizable and appealing image of a living, breathing animal with a face. The NYT's article which calls these animals "pharm animals" because they were "given the ability to produce pharmaceuticals…in their milk, eggs, or semen" is a rather egregious example of a reporter using labels which strip animals of their identity and make them sound like automated machinery (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A20). It is hard for readers to conjure up an empathetic, warm or fuzzy image of a "pharmaceutical factory" in order to identify with him/her and object to the experimentation as unjust.

To identify with someone, it helps to be introduced to them and learn about their personality and traits. Yet, even in stories which promote animal welfare, the reporter still typically avoids introducing us to any of the animals individually, and instead, tends to only profile the family farmers or animal caretakers, focusing on their traditional values or compassionate nature. The stories explain how the people pamper their animals, name and get to know them, yet they do not let the reader get to know the animals too. For example, in the NYT's article entitled "On Farm

of Pampered Cows, Couple Cringes at the Mention of Mad Ones", we are told the farmer names her small herd of dairy cows and dotes on them just like her children, but the reporter then only tells us the names of her children and not those of any of the cows (Jones, 12/28/03, p. A27).

The NYT's article entitled "They Save Animals. Who'll Save Them?" which profiles a farm sanctuary having legal and financial difficulties (Fischler, 2/9/03, Sect. 14LI, p. 4), is framed to promote empathy for the troubles of this compassionate, animal-loving family. However, there is no attempt to profile any of the animals specifically or address the animals' own histories, stories, or struggles prior to ending up at this sanctuary. The people clearly have a personality and a story and love their animals as companions, but we never find out who the animals are.

Also, a *Time* article about the pollution in Texas caused by animal waste tells us of a small town in Texas which has a statue in front of its courthouse of a cow whose pun-inspired name is "Moola" (Ivans, 8/6/2001, p. 26). The sign below her udder honors the dairy industry and all the millions of dollars it has brought the town each year (how she earned her facetious name, one presumes). Besides being an example of how cows are commodified and valued in economic terms, this is also an excellent example of how they are given a mass identity, since this cow is a generic representative of all her fellow dairy cows as a whole. While dairy cows are given a collective identity as profitable animals, the reporter then informs us that since milk prices are now declining, communities are also viewing dairy cows as problematic from an environmental standpoint. While the only photo accompanying the article is a close-up of cows in a feedlot, the article never discusses any cows individually but only discusses them en masse as wreaking havoc on Texas with their collective waste.

As we have seen, very few adjectives ever describe the animals when they are alive -- their personalities or preferences go unmentioned by most news stories. Are the animals'

personalities assumed to be unimportant or perhaps non-existent? When they are alive, they are defined by their ends – as walking meat. Ironically, we know more about their dead bodies or products than we do about them. This is because most adjectives describe them after death – describing how good they taste. In fact, some descriptions (especially in the dining sections) are so romanticized that it sounds like they could be describing fine wine instead of flesh: buttery, soft pink, smooth, succulent, delicate, sweet, tender, etc.

For example, the only thing the reporter tells us about cod when alive is that their "lethargic swimming style" makes them conveniently easy to catch. Once dead, he describes their flesh as the "whitest…low in fat, high in protein, and easily filleted" (Smith, 11/7/02, p. A3). Additionally, we do not learn much about Pacific blue fin tuna in their living state, but after the fish are killed, the reporter describes their valuable meat as:

> fabulously tender and buttery, ranging in color from a soft pink to a deep winy red. Obviously too luscious to cook. Begging to be eaten raw (Apple, 4/3/02, p. F1).

Doug Flack, who raises grass-fed cows for beef, does not tell us anything about his cows' personalities, but he does say their meat is "exquisite" and:

> not a smooshy tenderness, a nice texture and not lean…ours is juicy and smooth, not gristly. It's beef that tastes like that sweet smell you smell when you go into the barn (Burros, 5/29/02, p. D3).

However, fish known on menus as “Sea Bass” are described in both their live and dead states, the latter being a menu item with “mild flavor and firm, milk-white flesh” (Revkin, 5/21/02, p. F4). This reporter does tells us some interesting facts about the fish while alive, such as: they are called Patagonian Toothfish, live 50 years, grow large, and can survive in extremely cold water.

It is the rare article that describes the animal primarily in his/her live state. At a cage-free egg farm in Colorado, the farmer’s daughter is a proponent of animal welfare and describes the chickens as “intelligent, sensitive, and social” (Markels, 9/1/02, p. C6). This welfare article is unusual because it never describes the bird meat after death (or even explained if and when they will be killed), nor how their eggs look or taste. However, in keeping with trends I am outlining, the article’s main focus is on the topic of cruelty-free farming as a business and profiling the rationale of this particular facility tapping into a new consumer market, rather than profiling any chickens themselves.

And while the articles may feature the faces of some of these animals while alive and discuss their meat generically after death, that particular animal in the photo is never linked directly to any corresponding pictures of meat. For example, some of the articles, especially in the dining section, show cute lambs or cows grazing on the front page and then the inside pages show the flesh cooked up in a gourmet meal (complete with recipe). The reporter never mentions any irony over skipping right from the pleasant farm scene to the pleasant meal, while leaving out the unpleasant business of the slaughtering process. Neither do they mention whether the specific lamb on the front cover was used to make the braised lamb chops with rosemary in the back. He/she probably was not, but who was? Readers would likely find the recipe and meal photo

less appetizing if they had to personally identify with the animal while alive and look him/her in the face on the front page first.

To exemplify this aversion to knowing who our meat comes from, a brief commentary in *Time*, entitled "Babe Lives! World Sighs" informs us that fans were distraught by a rumor that Babe, the pig actor from the movie, was slated for slaughter due to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak (7/2/01). Apparently, fans were relieved to find out that it turned out to be a different pig actor, who was ultimately spared. Due to the lack of public outcry for the mass slaughter, one may assume that the public has not been mourning for the millions of nameless and faceless mammals being slaughtered to stem the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, but when they think Babe is a victim, and they identify with him because he was anthropomorphized in a popular film, they do care and recognize it as a tragedy (and it is therefore newsworthy). The public seems to want to protect Babe from harm because they know and like him. But the public has not had much of a chance to identify with any of the millions of other animals killed to stem the disease because the news is not introducing us to any of these animal victims or asking us to care for them as individuals. It is easier to ignore the nameless and faceless than someone we know more personally.

As we have seen, by commodifying the animals as economic units, by largely ignoring their welfare, perspective, or emotional complexity, and by failing to introduce us to them as individuals, news discourse has allowed the farmed animals to disappear into the background of these stories and for people's issues to rise to the foreground. Another way to illuminate how farmed animals are represented in ways that make them less meaningful as individuals is to contrast their portrayals with that of other common animals for whom our society typically holds more esteem.

Opposition: Who Farmed Animals Are Not

Americans have a schizophrenic relationship with animals when you consider how drastically we vary in our treatment of different species. We have anti-cruelty laws protecting some, yet ignoring others. We admire and observe some in nature, yet shoot others for sport. We open up our hearts and homes to some, yet exterminate others. We pet some, yet eat others. And some, like rabbits, might end up as a pet, a laboratory subject, a fur coat, or a meal on any given day.

Farmed animals typically are not the ones who are getting legally protected, admired, welcomed into the family home, or lavished with affection. They are the ones who tend to get ignored or overlooked by both the media and the public. You cannot get too attached to an animal who is about to become your next meal. By contrasting the kinds of media attention farmed animals get in comparison to other species, we can gain a better understanding of who we think they *are* by recognizing how the news media acknowledges who they are *not*.

With the exception of wild food animals caught in the ocean, animals used for human food are predominantly domesticated, and are therefore rarely portrayed with the values we might attribute to wildlife, such as: exotic, intriguing, beautiful, mysterious, skilled, or precious. The media will often feature wildlife issues because the public finds them interesting and entertaining. Consider the popularity of nature programs on TV. The stories often have an angle that promotes the morality of protection of wild species and preservation of their habitat.

One of the NYT's stories in the text discusses how the fishing industry is working to reduce the number of unwanted wild animals, known as bycatch, who are caught in their nets. Notice that the title "Challenge to Fishing: Keep the Wrong Species out of its Huge Nets" acknowledges

that some species are right while others are wrong – this all depends on which species we value instrumentally verses inherently (Pohl, 7/29/03). The article specifically mentions that 300,000 dolphins and whales and 100,000 albatrosses are killed annually in fishermen's nets or lines, implying that these animals' deaths are tragic since they have more inherent value in our culture than do fish (p F3). An environmental activist is quoted saying that it is hard to garner any public support to demand legal protection for "lower profile" animals who are either "ugly" or "do not taste good" (p. F3). This is an extremely telling statement about how we value animals largely based on their aesthetic appeal to us or utility to us as a food resource. If an animal is not attractive or tasty they do not get much media attention.

In opposition to most wildlife, domesticated animals are viewed as resources of some kind and usually must serve some useful purpose to man in order to earn their keep. For farmed animals, historically this purpose has been providing food (and fiber and labor too in some cases). Because of this tradition of using farmed animals, the news discourse usually discusses them in terms of their purpose or usefulness rather than their inherent qualities as living beings. Because of this limitation in framing, we rarely get to know any farmed animals as individuals or recognize anything about them as personal, admirable or beautiful. However, not all domesticated animals are portrayed for their purpose instead of their personalities. The following examples look at news representations of farmed animals in opposition to how other domesticated animals in America, such as horses, dogs, and cats, are typically portrayed.

Horses border on the brink of still being considered a farmed animal. However, with the advent of cars and machine power their status to humans seems to have predominantly elevated from work animal to companion or show animal. With this esteemed status, the horse has largely earned a pardon from the death sentence of being considered a food animal. While the

horse is considered a food animal in other cultures, in most states in the United States, it is illegal to eat horsemeat. CBS did a story on how the health risks associated with foot-and-mouth disease and mad cow disease were causing an increased demand for horsemeat in Europe, and how much of that demand was being fed from horses killed here in America and exported overseas (Andrews, 4/26/01, CBS). The reporter, Wyatt Andrews, frames this horsemeat trade as a "hidden fallout" of the disease epidemic that he predicts Americans will find "hard to digest" or an "outrage". The horse slaughter market is described by the reporter as a "dirty secret".

This story does not address the irony that we are killing and eating other animals by the millions each day in America or that it is equally sad that other farmed animals are also suffering ill fates due to these disease epidemics. Based on the slant of the story, Andrews seems to agree that horses are worthy of our concern and our help to spare their lives, while other farmed animals are not necessarily. Andrews' sympathy for horses is evidenced by the fact that the main source for the news story is a husband and wife who run a horse rescue organization. Even when a horsemeat industry spokesperson tries to point out practical reasons why slaughter is a "humane ending for horses past their prime," Andrews lets the horse rescue activists get the first and last words, even showing upsetting film footage of horses being slaughtered. Mr. Tracy Young of Lost and Found Horse Rescue makes a profound point about the status of horses in our society in opposition to farmed animals. He said:

> Yeah, it's recycling unwanted animals (he agrees with reporter). That's not the issue. The issue is: What is a horse, and what place does it have in this country? (4/26/01)

Clearly, a horse's place in this country is not as a lowly food animal. Mr. Young likens them more in the category of a beloved companion animal, worthy of our protection and affection.

> The same way we do not slaughter dogs and cats, we do not think we need to be slaughtering horses (4/26/01).

As members of millions of American households, cats and dogs have earned an enviable position among domesticated animals. Even though dogs and cats may still be valued instrumentally for their role as companions, service animals, protectors, research subjects, or pest controllers, stories about them would tend to also recognize them as individuals with personalities too. Considering how farmed animals are frequently represented so impersonally in the news text, in contrast, a cursory glance at pet stories suggests that cats and dogs would:

- Be the focal point in more photographs.
- Be referred to by name (ex: "Max" versus just "dog" or "it").
- Be personalized with details about their personalities and preferences.
- Not typically have their dead bodies shown in photographs – whether as pieces of flesh or full corpses.
- Not be shown being killed or burned.
- Not have their illnesses or epidemics be controlled via mass extermination campaigns, verses less lethal means like vaccination, when possible.
- Not be shown in obvious discomfort without some sympathetic commentary as to their plight.

- Not be discussed in purely economic or utilitarian terms, as food commodities or research subjects, and not sentient individuals.

Through journalistic methods such as those listed above and previously described in more detail in this analysis, farmed animals are not given as much personalization, respect, empathy, focus or admiration as one might expect to see from stories about more beloved categories of animals, such as companion animals. Consider the following examples from the text that admit to this contradiction.

A brief *Time's* article entitled "Ducks of the World Unite" tells of the controversy over the cruelty in force-feeding ducks for foie gras. In it, an animal rights activist from Gourmet Cruelty said, "[I]f this were being done to dogs or cats, the producers would without a doubt be in prison for animal cruelty" (McCarthy, 9/29/03, p. 20). Not only is this true and revealing of our own schizophrenic animal cruelty laws, which often exclude food or laboratory animals (any animals upon which industry depends for profits), but it is also indicative of the esteem our society holds for companion animals and our low tolerance for abuse to them, where we do allow for abuse (or overlook it) to other "lesser" animals – like ducks, in this case.

Another animal rights article featuring a rescue mission to an egg farm has Miyun Park, from Compassion Over Killing, using a similar rhetorical technique of trying to tie farmed animal suffering with companion animal suffering in an effort to have the public make more of a sympathetic connection with their plight. She says:

> Birds feel pain just as strongly as cats and dogs, but it's perfectly legal to inflict pain on egg-laying hens every day. If those sheds were filled with kittens, there would be an uproar (Becker, 12/4/02, p. A20).

Similarly, when it comes to animal research, it is not a coincidence that the animals profiled as GMO "bioreactors" in the pharmaceutical article were all farmed animals and not dogs, cats, primates, or other animals for which people have higher regard and concern (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A20). If there were dogs being bred to donate medicine in their sperm, I imagine the tone of the article would have been more critical and considered the perverse aspects of using another sentient being in this solely instrumental and oddly sexual manner. The article then may have asked whether or not there were more ethical methods for achieving the same medical ends besides using animals. But the implication is that when it is just a pig or goat, using them for our own gain is standard, and even strange uses are apparently above reproach so long as there is a human benefit.

Companion animals seem to be a bridge between humans and the rest of the animal world; therefore, cats and dogs are the subject of many analogies regarding farmed animals. This discursive technique, typically used by activists, not journalists, asks us to view agricultural practices in a different light. Because we would not wish our cats or dogs to be treated as farmed animals are, it better reveals abuses inherent in farming which are normally hidden by custom and tradition. For example, how would the news have covered pyres of burning animal corpses in the European foot-and-mouth crisis if it were piles of poodles? Or how would the news have covered a government policy of forced mass slaughter of both diseased and healthy horses to stem an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, instead of choosing the vaccination route?

Extending this analogy to its furthest point, it is revealing to recognize how significantly farmed animals are disrespected in the news discourse by comparing their coverage to the respect afforded to our own species, humans. Humans are obviously the most inherently valuable of all animals to us because who better to identify with than ourselves, family, friends, and neighbors, etc. Historically we have not acknowledged the equality of different members of our own species based on gender, race, religion, etc, but thanks to social justice movements, the American news media now attempts to reflect these different people more equitably. As philosopher Peter Singer acknowledges, American society is still largely speciesist when it comes to our view of other species (1990). Even our choice of the special label "humans" tells us that we consider ourselves in another category from "animals" altogether.

Considering this, many people would likely think it absurd and even insulting to dare to compare farmed animals to humans in the first place. Obviously the gap is great between the way we value them as resources and the way we value ourselves inherently. In order to foreground the size of the gap we place between them and us, I am using the following rhetorical technique of substituting a word representing a human (underlined) in place of the words which represented farmed animals (in parenthesis at end) in several quotes taken directly from the news text.

> Geert Dewulf, manager of a Belgian-owned slaughterhouse in Texas: 'Slaughter, when done correctly, is a humane ending for <u>people</u> that are past their prime. Slaughter serves the purpose of disposing of the unwanted <u>people</u> (Andrews, 4/26/01, CBS). (horses)

Regarding British policy of killing animals verses vaccination to prevent disease:

The British authorities and some scientists have argued that vaccination, even as an emergency measure, is unreliable, costly and would divert personnel from destroying people (Cowell, 3/28/01, p. A10). (animals)

The dairy's technology includes transponders at each milking station that identify the woman, monitor its output and send the info to a central database where each woman's fate is eventually decided. Mr Gibbs says no woman is kept once its output falls below 8 liters a day, though most women birth 10 times before they are worn out (Smith, 12/31/02, p. A4). (cow)

Endowed by scientists with foreign genes, often taken from other species, these people, or bioreactors, as they are also known, earn their keep as living chemical factories (Yoon, 5/1/00, p. A20). (animals)

The Tar Heel plant – which can process up to 32,000 humans a day – is an efficient killing machine. Squealing people funnel into an area where they are electrocuted, stabbed in the jugular, then tied, lifted, and carried on a winding journey through the plant. They are dunked in scalding water, their hair is removed, they are run through a fiery furnace (to burn off residual hair), then disemboweled and sliced by an army of…laborers (Barboza, 4/7/00, p. C17). (hogs)

When we see how morally reprehensible it is to ever think of discussing people's lives in such disrespectful and dehumanizing ways, it helps illuminate for us how profoundly we distance farmed animals from us in the news discourse and in real life. From a moral standpoint, there is a long way to go before the news and our society gives more respect to farmed animals. In Foucauldian terms, we would have to enter a new episteme. Until then, I will illustrate some positive examples of us transitioning from our current discourse on farmed animals to perhaps a more respectful episteme in the future.

Ways Farmed Animals Are Represented as Sentient Beings:

Although in the minority, there are several examples of news stories that in whole or in part represent farmed animals in ways that showcase their inherent value over their instrumental value. News stories in the text do this in the following four ways, by recognizing that:

1. Animals deserve to be rescued from cruel treatment (7 stories)
2. Animals have emotions and preferences which farming should respect (6 stories)
3. Animals make good companions (1 story)
4. Animals should not be killed for human food (2 stories)

They deserve to be rescued from cruel treatment:

By showcasing people who are willing to take risks to stand up and protect farmed animals from cruelty, news stories show audiences not only that some people think animals are deserving of being rescued but also that their conditions are indeed considered cruel and unacceptable to

some people. An obvious example of this would be animal rights activists who work on behalf of animals, and there are three brief stories about some protests and campaigns against mistreatment of chickens, specifically by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Two NYT's stories in 2003 involve PETA's boycott of Kentucky Fried Chicken, which includes backing from famous Beatles rocker Paul McCartney. The other is Joel Stein's humorous and irreverent article in *Time*, which details him participating in a publicity stunt raid on a grocery store's meat department with PETA's Commando Chicks. They label poultry products with stickers that read "Warning: this package contains the decomposing corpse of a small tortured bird" (Stein, 8/7/00, p. 20). While Stein could care less about animals and certainly would not go to jail to save them, PETA's Tracy Reiman puts jail time in perspective by telling him "it's a good time to remember that there are animals in cages that never get to leave" (Stein, 8/7/00, p. 20). So even though Joel Stein clearly mocks animal rights, his article does allow a small platform for PETA to get the word out about why and how they stick up for animals.

There are also three main examples (explained below) of people taking larger risks to help rescue animals from cruel conditions: two are illegal animal rights activist rescue raids to save egg-laying hens and ducks raised for foie gras, and the other is American Indians protesting (through legal means) the treatment of pigs on a factory farm on their reservation.

The NYT's article entitled "Advocates for Animals Turn Attention to Chickens" describes how members of the group Compassion Over Killing (COK) "court arrest" by going into egg farms at night to film and rescue birds (Becker, 12/4/02, p. A20). The reporter describes how COK feels legislation on behalf of animals is happening too slowly and juxtaposes this with the opposing viewpoint of the industry, "[l] egislators, they say, need to be jolted by what they call investigations and rescues – and what industry officials call breaking and entering" (p. A20).

COK's founder Paul Shapiro selflessly said, "[h]e would be willing to go to jail, but he does not want the hens returned to their cages" (p. A20). The reporter is sympathetic to the activists and gives them a lot of non-critical coverage and direct quotes to explain why the hens need rescuing and how the birds' situation could be improved through humane legislation. The story's large photo even features a female activist in a compassionate light, cradling the rescued hens.

Conversely, the NYT's article entitled "Foie Gras Fracas" explains that foie gras activists in a group called Gourmet Cruelty vandalized restaurants serving foie gras in San Francisco, harassed the chefs and owners, and raided a foie gras farm to rescue four ducks (Brown, 9/24/03, pp. D1, D4). Unlike the largely sympathetic COK article, this story has a heavy focus on critiquing the increasing illegal activity and "violence by animal rights extremists" (p. D4) – "domestic terrorism" as the FBI describes it (p. D1). Again, this government and industry criticism is juxtaposed with the activists' own viewpoint on their activity. They call themselves "duck freedom fighters" and feel they are not stealing but rather "liberating" the animals (p. D4). The story's text and photos are geared more towards questioning the ethics of the activists, but the reporter does focus on the conditions of the birds towards the end.

Another NYT's article details Lakota Sioux Indians in South Dakota who are risking their jobs by complaining to and suing the managers of a hog factory farm built on their reservation because they claim the farm mistreats animals, people, and the land (Peterson, 11/15/03). The reporter seems sympathetic to the tribe members' plight, features them in photos, and quotes them heavily. The reporter describes disturbing video footage taken by the Sioux tribe members documenting the poor conditions in which the pigs are kept:

> …showing animals so tightly packed in their pens that strong hogs begin to cannibalize the weak, eating off tails and ears. Other pigs are shown with soccer-ball size abscesses hanging from their bellies. During some weeks, hundreds of pigs die, some employees say, from mistreatment and disease (Peterson, 11/15/03, p. A8).

Tribe members also tell of first-hand accounts of seeing dozens of piglets frozen to death when left on a truck overnight and also getting smothered or burned to death from struggling to get near the few heat lamps the piglets have access to. Tribe member Marlene Covey is quoted saying she and other workers were told to kill pigs that were sick, so they "picked them up by the hind legs and smacked their heads on the floor" (p. A8).

The COK article also describes animal cruelty when the reporter explains an undercover video tape, "filming the rows of hens crammed 10 to a cage the size of file drawer cabinet. They get close-ups of swollen eyes, infected skin and shattered wings entangled in cage wire" (p. A20). This article also paraphrases a cooperative response by the egg industry on welfare improvements they intend to make to increase cage space "improve procedures for trimming chickens' beaks; and figure out how to force chickens to molt, which induces them to lay more eggs, without starving them for several days" (p. A20). It is unusual to find out from the industry themselves what they understand is considered cruel and must be improved. This also leads into a lot of text detailing all the many humane farming improvements made in Europe (such as bans on battery cages and forced molting) and in America already. This gives COK activists a platform to describe changes they feel still need to be made in this country, which, when described, seem rational and not outlandish. The reporter never criticizes the activists' requests. For example, Paul Shapiro of COK sees chickens as simply having a right to a decent

life and natural living conditions, "[c]hickens have a right to be chickens. To walk on the ground, scratch the earth, spread their wings, roost, take dust baths" (p. A20).

The foie gras article does also quote the activists describing foie gras as a "delicacy of despair" (p. D1) but does not allow the activists to describe the cruel conditions specifically nor does the reporter respond to any undercover video footage, as in the other articles. Instead, the reporter, Patricia Brown, went in and described the force-feeding herself in more neutral terms. There is also a photo of the force-feeding process so readers can judge it for themselves. The article does tell us of all the many European countries who have banned foie gras farms and also of many of the other humane farming improvements made largely in Europe and to a limited degree in America. This allows the readers to understand the treatment of these animals is controversial and seen as immoral in other cultures.

Additionally, these three articles all make analogies between mistreatment of animals and mistreatment of people, linking animal rights and welfare with other social justice movements, namely civil rights. This gives the concept of animal rights some credibility, considering the success of the civil rights movement at convincing the bulk of our society that oppression of others is unjust.

For example, the Sioux tribe members draw direct links between their oppression and that of the animals. The reporter blends the complaints of the workers' racial discrimination and mistreatment with their complaints of mistreatment of animals and the land. Tribe member and former hog farm worker, Alvin Covey, describes the management of the hog farm as greedy and unsympathetic. He says, "[a]ll they really care about is getting their money" (p. A8).

In another example, Miyun Park of COK builds a bridge to social justice by saying of animal rights, "[t]his is the next anti-oppression movement" (p. A20). The Gourmet Cruelty activists

use references to the successful abolitionist movement in America by claiming they are part of an "underground railroad for ducks" and that "these birds are literally slaves to our appetite" (p. D4). Additionally, we are also told New York state assemblyman Jack McEneny introduced a bill to ban force-feeding of ducks because he says the only justification for this cruelty is tradition, "but society progresses. Tradition does not make something right" (p. D4). Similarly, every social justice movement must battle against this argument where the dominant group claims current treatment of an oppressed group is legitimate and socially acceptable so long as it is considered standard, historical or traditional.

Needless to say, with articles such as these, which credibly portray people taking stands to protect animals and exposing the cruelty against them, corporate farming has a public relations problem on their hands.

<u>They have preferences which farming should respect:</u>

There are four stories in the summer and fall of 2003 that detail a shift in consciousness for food suppliers towards a concern for improved animal welfare – three by David Barboza in the NYT and one by Wyatt Andrews for CBS.

According to the articles, much of this coverage was prompted by McDonald's and other major fast food chains that recently started requiring some major humane reforms from their meat and egg suppliers. This change is often credited to pressure from animal rights groups that have created increased consumer awareness of welfare and health issues on modern factory farms. To prepare to deflect some of this consumer backlash, the articles explain that some agribusinesses are starting to hire animal welfare specialists and researchers who can tell them what humane changes the animals need.

While most of the articles do not significantly mock the welfare research, they do admit that it would have seemed trivial a decade ago, when the farming industry was still mainly focused on researching ways to increase efficiency and profits and did not consider animal welfare a priority. Now, even the Director of Social Responsibility for McDonald's sees welfare as a legitimate consumer concern that he calls "mainstream" and no longer just a far-fetched idea or fad (Andrews, 11/5/03).

And to further legitimate the necessity of welfare reform, there seems to be an underlying agreement in the stories that factory farming is inhumane because the reporters are not tempering it with words like "supposed" or "so called" cruelty as they often do when animal rights activists are prompting the story. Consider the straight-forward photo caption to the NYT's article on the cover of the Business Section which uncritically explains how the scientist in the photo…

> …studies what pigs like in part of an effort to make treatment of farm animals humane. Fast food chains are paying for such research to deflect criticism of factory farming methods (Barboza, 6/25/03, p. C1).

Additionally, there does not seem to be any question that animals do have preferences, and are not just inanimate, unfeeling food products. This is implied by the fact that agribusiness is hiring researchers to find out what animals like and prefer. And while the reporters might make light of some of the specifics of the research occasionally, the overall message is that animals do indeed have preferences in the way they are treated and industry is earnestly trying to improve their treatment and meet consumer demand for more humanely raised farmed animals.

Although, one NYT's article does admit that it is hard for researchers to define happiness in animals, instead they go the opposite direction emotionally and just try to "reduce the number of negative emotions" such as "pain, suffering, and frustration" (Barboza, 6/29/03, p. 5). However, the articles do not usually reveal what the findings of this welfare research are so readers can get a feel for what the animals actually do prefer and what changes should be made on their behalf.

In the case of the CBS story, a large egg farmer shows the reporter how he has given the hens a bit more space in each cage by reducing the number of hens per cage from nine to seven. The reporter seems a bit skeptical that this is indeed much of a significant improvement, and asks the farmer if seven birds in a cage is humane, the farmer replies, "[t]he scientists tell us it is" (Andrews, 11/5/03). This is an unusual example where the audience does find out some scientific findings regarding humane reforms and can critique its benefits for themselves.

To form their own opinions, it is advantageous that the audience gets to see film footage of the hens in the battery cages. That is one of the benefits to the television coverage over print -- its ability to expose the audience to footage from intensive confinement farms and contrast that with footage of cage-free facilities. None of the print articles on animal welfare research ever show a photo of a farmed animal actually enduring normal crowded farming conditions. Even though the print articles do verbally describe some of the factory farming conditions that were thought to be cruel, it is not nearly as effective as the television footage at evoking more emotion and increased understanding for what the animals in factory farms actually endure.

In his NYT's weekly review article on animal happiness, David Barboza is able to editorialize and be more sympathetic towards animals as he describes how animals grow to market size faster these days. He concludes that "[I]f the animals' lives are destined to be short, perhaps it's all the more important that they be sweet" (6/29/03). While not an animal rights

sentiment, it is a pretty fundamental and socially acceptable definition of what "animal welfare" means to many Americans.

The NYT published several stories which profile people who do try to ensure their animals have a "sweet" life on the farm, and these stories' inspiration comes in some unexpected places – such as within the mad cow disease crisis or in the business and technology section, as the following examples illustrate.

At the height of the U.S. mad cow disease scare, the NYT profiled the Bechtolds, who own Stoney Croft Farm, a small dairy which seems immune from the mad cow epidemic since its small herd of twenty cows were all born and raised on their farm – where the cows seem to be treated like queens. The reporter said of Mrs. Bechtold that she seemed to "dote on the animals as she would her three children" (Jones, 12/28/03, p. A27). We are told she names each of her twenty "moo cows," "unapologetically" pampers them, and lavishes them with care. She believes that "a happy cow" makes for "good cheese" (p. A27). This is the kind of idyllic farm everyone wants to believe all their dairy products come from, especially during a disease scare, but this dairy is profiled because it is a bit of an anomaly in a world of increasingly industrialized farming.

But perhaps dairy farming will become a bit more humane in the future, at least according to a NYT's article in the technology section, which informs us that a new robotic milking machine on the market has benefits for both farmers and cows. This story stands out from most other stories because, while it does concentrate on benefits to producers and consumers, it does not ignore the animals' perspective. For example, a Canadian farmer admits the previous morning and evening milking schedule was an "unwelcomed ritual for both the cows and the people" and that "the cows were not happy" with it (Austen, 1/23/03, p. G8). The farmer and cows feel

liberated from the rigid schedule because the new robotic milking machine lets his cows choose to be milked "whenever they fancy, day or night" (p. G8). A final stated benefit is that the machines are gentler to the cows and cause them less suffering from udder illnesses. While this article's angle is intended to be on a high-tech invention and not on ethics, it is a good example of how a story can also include animal welfare concerns and show some respect and recognition for animals as living beings who have emotions, individual preferences, and the ability to feel pain.

Another example of a business-oriented story incorporating concern for animal welfare, entitled "A Marketing Cry: Do not Fence them in" (Markels, 9/1/02) profiles a cage-free egg farm in Colorado that raises more than 14,000 chickens. This article's interest in humanely raised eggs is mainly from a sales and consumer-demand standpoint because of its location in the business news section, but it still seems to give favorable coverage to the idea of humane farming for ethical reasons too. For example, the farmer's daughter is the marketing manager and is quite outspoken about her disdain for what she calls "concentration camp growing conditions on factory egg farms" (p. C6). Her father also chimes in and claims it is "inhumane" to keep chickens in tiny cages where they cannot even lift their wings, and as a multi-generation farmer he is "convinced that a more humane approach could still make a profit" (p. C6). He is proud to show the reporter his barn because the hens have sunlight, fresh air, and still have their beaks. Hinting at a painful factory farming practice, the farmer asks, "[h]ave you ever seen a chicken with its beak cut off? It's a darn awful sight" (p. C6). Through frank and emotional commentary such as this, readers gain an understanding of what average egg-laying hens endure in intensive confinement and that there is a more humane alternative gaining popularity in the market.

They Make Good Companions:

While some people do keep a few farmed animals as pets, and not as food, there is not a feature story covering this type of relationship, but there is a closely related story profiling a farmed animal sanctuary going through financial and legal troubles. The sanctuary profiled, called Circle of Life Farm and Rescue, features a female owner, Jo-Elynn Vega, and her family who take care of 150 animals (Fischler, 2/9/03, p. 4). Ms. Vega names her animals, and the article opens by mentioning "Norman the steer, Charlie the goat, and Pattycakes the sheep" (p. 4). It also describes how Ms. Vega sits and talks to the animals each night in the barn. She must have passed her compassionate values on to her son because the reporter marvels at how he chose to spend $400 of his money from a summer job to save four goats from slaughter instead of buying a go-kart he had wanted. These animals are considered companions to the Vegas, and the reporter seems to feel it is admirable that they are willing to go into financial debt and do without in order to continue taking care of them. Ms. Vega states, "I do not want to give up these animals. We are giving up our home so we can continue to have them as family members" (p. 4).

It is heartwarming to see a story that is giving flattering coverage to people who care so deeply about farmed animals as friends, without mocking them or questioning their sanity or priorities. This is the only article which ever refers to farmed animals as "family members", like you would a household companion animal or child. It could have gone even further in promoting animal sentience, however, if the reporter had chosen to profile any of the animals themselves instead of just the human owners of the sanctuary, so the readers could get to know the animals too.

They Should Not Be Killed For Human Food:

The subject of vegetarianism rarely comes up in any of the text; however, there are two stories that focus on it. One is a lengthy *Time* cover story, "Should We All be Vegetarians?" but it mainly focuses on health-related reasons people would be vegetarian as opposed to ethical reasons (Corliss, 7/15/02). It does discuss animal rights at the very end, but it spends most of that space in a debate about whether or not a vegetarian diet actually reduces animal deaths or not (due to field animals accidentally killed in plant harvesting). The journalist did not seem convinced that it did, so the resulting effect is not one where ethical vegetarianism is fairly defended, adequately explained, nor promoted.

However, a NYT's article does focus on ethical vegetarianism in relation to how it was on the rise in the U.K. in response to all the coverage of mass slayings for foot-and-mouth disease (Hodge, 4/1/01). The article states the increase in vegetarianism is probably not motivated purely by consumer self-interest because foot-and-mouth disease is not a threat to human health. The reporter proposes that this rise in vegetarianism is rooted in a concern for animals:

> People are reacting to the vast coverage in newspapers and on TV that has focused on heaps of carcasses being incinerated and on affecting images of farmers grieving over the animals being sacrificed in the mass cull now under way…the images have also engaged the traditional British concern for animal welfare (p. A4).

And the article goes on to explain that vegetarianism in Britain was not only a response to grotesque news imagery, but the Director of the Vegetarian Society of the U.K. additionally felt people were finally making deeper connections between flesh sold in the supermarket and the

"fluffy little lamb being held by a crying farmer on TV" (p. A4). This indicates the idea of identifying with animals and putting a face onto our meat does make it less appetizing to us.

This NYT's article includes the only real admission in the entire text that reveals that a portion of the public was disturbed by news coverage of the mass slaughter of animals. Their emotional response was strong enough, in fact, to get them to change their eating habits. Instead of leaving this news angle largely unremarked upon, it seems there were many more opportunities for journalists to have tapped into this public sentiment in their stories. This could have been accomplished if the reporters would have interviewed the public (and asked them about welfare instead of consumer health concerns) instead of primarily focusing on using government officials and farmers as news sources, whose concerns are mostly economic. Yet by failing to mention this public concern for animal welfare, it appears as though it is a non-issue, when this one NYT story indicates otherwise.

Analysis Summary:

Most news discourse on farmed animals represents them primarily as resources for human use, and hence, centers less on the animals themselves, and more on what they mean to us in terms of human benefits and problems. This anthropocentric focus indicates that human interests are substantially more important than farmed animal interests.

The news media tend to objectify animals in three primary ways. First, the news media discusses them as commodities by using labels and words which focus on their end use – the economic value of their bodies, not their inherent value as beings. In dining articles, their

rearing methods are described like a recipe, which starts at birth -- their treatment being largely dictated by profits.

Second, news stories tend to ignore the animals' perspective and emotions when evaluating any issue that relates to them. Issues such as cloning or mass slaughter would normally receive ethical critique by a news journalist if done to humans or more beloved creatures, but when done to farmed animals, the focus is simply on the risks or benefits to humans. Their suffering in any of these situations is largely overlooked by the reporters, who primarily use language, which neutralizes or trivializes the emotional aspects of animal deaths. When it comes to portraying animal emotions, news discourse tends to ignore its existence, assume complacency, leave it ambiguous, or even mock it in some cases.

Finally, by failing to introduce farmed animals to the audience, news discourse often does not provide these animals with any sense of strong identity for the audience to become attached to or concerned about. For example, farmed animals do not generally receive names, proper personal pronouns, or individual profiles in news stories. Reporters tend only to describe animals after death as tasty food items rather than using any adjectives that describe their individual personalities while alive. In these ways, the news does not let us "meet the meat we eat", or provide details in photos or text which attach a specific face to any flesh.

But the news media do tell us who farmed animals *are* in contrast to who they are *not*, by discussing humans, wild animals or companion animals in more respectful, personal, empathetic or admirable terms. Many other animals are emphasized as inherently valuable or precious, while farmed animals are discussed largely as a means to an end.

However, while the bulk of the news articles tend to support the status quo by foregrounding anthropocentric issues and overlooking farmed animals as sentient individuals, there are some

positive representations in the text. They can be categorized into four main ways farmed animals are receiving more respectful treatment from humans: as deserving of rescue from cruel treatment; as having emotions and preferences which farmers and consumers should consider; as making good companions; and as not existing just for human food. These few examples, primarily found in 2003, represent a possible challenge to the current discourse through news portrayals that acknowledge a change in sentiment by industry, animal activists, and consumers who are all paying increased attention to the value of farmed animal welfare.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS

Representations of Farmed Animals and the Rules of Discourse:

My analysis details the discursive strategies present in the text sample to answer my primary research question about how the national news media represents animals – which is, as resources for human use. These animal resources are largely portrayed as newsworthy when they become problematic to humans and threaten our economic or physical health. This is indicated by the fact that the majority of news stories prominently address the issue of disease epidemics because they were indeed a crisis to humans from an economic and food safety standpoint. If the reason were not anthropocentric, then the news would also feature stories on other diseases and illnesses which plague farmed animals, either commonly or sporadically, regardless of whether the illnesses damaged the animals as a resource and affected our ability to sell and eat them.

And if these diseases, or anything else about farming, cause the animals to suffer, the news rarely makes this an issue. While no journalist explicitly states "the interests of farmed animals do not matter" or "the feelings of farmed animals are unimportant," on the whole, the news stories implicitly state this sentiment by failing to address the animals' feelings, perspectives, or emotions in most stories. The news does not generally center on the animals as beings nor ask us to care about them as individuals. In opposition to my ethical perspectives of deep ecology and animal liberation, the stories remain largely anthropocentric in focus and reinforce the current

worldview that human interests, however trivial, largely outweigh even the most critical interests of farmed animals. If the news continually disregards the interests of farmed animals in its stories, it implicitly gives the public permission to keep disregarding them too, keeping them off the radar of the public's agenda.

In my analysis, I categorized three main ways in which the news discourse reinforced this status quo and represented animals as resources: 1) by discussing them as commodities, 2) by failing to critique the ethics of the situation from the animals' perspective and ignoring their emotions, and 3) by denying them individual identities.

My second research objective was to identify the rules of discourse. Based on my analysis of the discursive strategies that objectify animals in the text, I conclude that the "rules" of the news discourse on farmed animals can be defined as:

- Do not introduce the audience to anyone that they will be eating/using.
- Do not ask the audience to get to know or care about farmed animals as individuals with personalities.
- Describe and refer to animals largely in terms of their end use, not according to their personal characteristics.
- Use the pronoun "it" to describe a single animal. The gender is often unimportant.
- Show concern for wild aquatic animals as either a food source to be harvested responsibly or for the sake of biological diversity of the oceans.
- Do not address the animal's perspective on most issues. Remain anthropocentric.
- Do not anthropomorphize and acknowledge any emotions the animals might be feeling, especially if they are assumed to be negative.

- Focus on product quality when describing how the animals are raised while alive and how they taste after death. Do not address or show photos of the slaughtering process, or anything gory or painful, in most cases.
- Address farmed animal welfare only if industry or animal protection groups initiate that angle. An animal rights (or ethical veganism) standpoint is best addressed only in response to animal rights activism, and then from a critical and balanced standpoint because it is not mainstream.
- Do not typically use the general public as a source of quotes or opinions regarding farmed animal treatment. Let it be assumed that they largely do not have a strong opinion, as this is a trivial issue in comparison to other problems in the world.
- Get your sources mainly from the industry, the government, or the scientific community. Reserve quotes from environmentalists or animal rights advocates mainly to when activism has prompted a story, and then always balance it with the industry's response.
- Do not use overly emotional, critical, or judgmental words to describe animal agriculture, such as "wrong", "unjust", "exploitation", "miserable", "murder", "travesty", or "oppression". Stick with more neutral or supportive language.
- Do not ask or expect consumers to change their consumption habits in America's meat-based culture. Do not question their fundamental right to eat animals. Focus on critiquing the supply-side rather than emphasizing solutions.
- Do not criticize the struggling family farmer. Profile them as hard-working Americans and be sympathetic to their plight. Focus on the higher product quality from small farms and their noble struggle to preserve traditional American values in a modern, global

marketplace. Assume their animals are better treated and more content than they would be on intensive corporate farms.

- Recognize that large animal agribusinesses dominate animal farming today and comprise a major industry that is important to the U.S. economically and as a source of sustenance. As a business, corporate farms and the meat industry can be given a mass identity in opposition to the family farms. Criticize corporate farming primarily when they cause problems for humans related to health, food safety, lower product quality, worker mistreatment, or environmental pollution.
- Respect the hierarchy of species in American society. Put people's interests before the animals', such as human safety and economic well being. It is considered degrading to compare humans to animals. Among animals, farmed animals are in a lower category than more inherently esteemed animals such as those in the wild or kept as pets. However, because they are instrumentally valuable, farmed animals are in a higher category than nuisance animals that serve no beneficial purpose to man.
- Do not question or criticize the use of farmed animals in medical or scientific experimentation. While the cloning of humans is still morally unacceptable today, the cloning of farmed animals is practiced legally and considered useful. Only critique the latter from a consumer safety standpoint, based on scientific evidence.
- Do not question or critique the inequalities in America's lack of legal protection for farmed animals verses laws that exist to protect other categories of animals. Laws that protect consumers or industry take priority over humane laws for animals.

Although there are certainly some exceptions, these rules form the basis of how news organizations generally construct stories about farmed animals in keeping with the current discourse that seems to be acceptable, understood, and unchallenged by the majority of the public. By following these rules, the news stories do not significantly challenge the status quo regarding a farmed animal's role in society.

To explain the ways the rules of discourse function in more detail, I will refer back to my section on justifications, where I identified four main ways in which a meat-based culture, reliant on farmed animal use, is sustained in our society as a whole by its: 1) failure to acknowledge farmed animal sentience or allow them to be personified as unique individuals, 2) failure to fully confront the harshness of modern farming methods and the pain and suffering the animals endure here, 3) failure to give any credence to the concept that farmed animals have any rights as individual beings which we are morally obliged to respect or consider, and 4) failure to question the need for animal products as part of a nutritious, standard American diet.

These four methods for maintaining a meat-based culture are largely supported by the rules of discourse that news journalists follow in constructing stories regarding farmed animal issues. They all function to keep society feeling comfortable with the current "regime of truth" by avoiding any feelings of guilt, attachment, identity, immorality or injustice regarding humans' use of farmed animals for food.

The first two methods function specifically by keeping people disconnected from and personally unattached to farmed animals, as well as ignorant to the extent of the pain and sadness the animals might endure due to the harsh conditions on factory farms. The rules of discourse the news media follow generally correspond to these methods by failing to introduce the audience to farmed animals as individuals or letting them see the animals' personalities in a

comparable light to that of a loveable companion animals. The news also fails to frequently address, visually expose, or critique the miserable conditions the animals endure on factory farms that might have enabled the audience to feel sympathy or outrage. The exception to this is when news stories occasionally cover events by animal activists that do call attention to egregious mistreatment of certain farmed animals.

Typically, the public is kept comfortably separate from the reality of modern farming methods and its negative effects on the animals themselves. Because the audience never "meets their meat" in the news, they are rarely forced to face the faces of their meat or address the unpleasantness and moral issues regarding paying other people to raise, kill and dismember someone's body parts for their consumption. In news representations, animals rarely become "someone" at all, much less, someone with whom the audience can identify as worthy and in need of saving.

The third and fourth methods mentioned above for maintaining a meat-based culture function in a more hegemonic and subtle way by keeping people complacent with, and unquestioning of, the current worldview which places humans at the pinnacle of moral concern and views farmed animals as naturally existing only for humans' use as a necessary part of their survival. The idea is that animal agribusiness is responsible for handling any major problems so that the American public can be provided affordable access to the traditional diet to which they feel culturally entitled. The rules of news discourse are even more supportive of these fundamental methods of maintaining the status quo. The news does this by keeping the focus on the farming industry, instead of on consumers, and failing to address vegetarianism as a humane and sensible alternative.

Even the few articles that do discuss welfare issues, do not take the more "extreme" step of addressing the deeper philosophical issue of whether it is ethical to raise and eat animals in the first place. The news never frames farmed animals as slaves or as exploited beings, and the idea of animals having rights is certainly never endorsed and is rarely addressed at all. In fact, in several stories from the text, a particular journalist chooses not to refer to animal rights activists (from COK or PETA) as such, but uses more moderate terms like "animal welfare advocates" and "animal advocacy group" (Becker, 12/4/02 & 1/6/03). These more affable labels likely reflect a more supportive frame by the journalist due to the fact that the articles are about humane reform of animal farming but not directly advocating, or even mentioning, something as controversial as veganism. It seems that when the activists stay closer to the mainstream and restrict their comments to improving farmed animal treatment instead of questioning the basic morality of killing animals, the news stories tend to be more sympathetic and favorable to the activists' platform.

Regarding the advantages of sticking closer to the mainstream, one of these NYT's stories about PETA boycotting Kentucky Fried Chicken and calling for humane reforms ends with a chicken industry spokesperson using a scare tactic by saying that PETA's real agenda is not to reform the meat industry but to abolish it (Becker, 1/6/03). This indicates that associating PETA with vegetarianism is considered threatening enough to the status quo that it might discredit their work towards basic animal welfare reforms by making the reforms seem like an insidious stepping stone to more extreme animal rights legislation.

Additionally, two NYT's articles profiling a cage-free egg farm and a small, free-range dairy are supportive of humane treatment of animals and are critical (both directly and indirectly) of cruelty on factory farms (Markels, 9/1/02 & Jones, 12/28/03). But there is no mention of what

happens to these beloved dairy cows and egg-laying hens when their production dies down. One may assume they are killed and sold for meat, just like the birds and cows on larger farms, but by failing to address their fate, the articles remain uncontroversial and raise no distressing connections between "humane" eggs and dairy and the concept of any violence done to these animals. These articles also never offer the idea of vegetarianism to consumers as an additional and obvious humane alternative to factory farming. Again, it seems to be assumed that most people will continue to want animal products, so farmers need to find a way to provide them to the public with a clean conscience.

In general, stories almost never suggest that people are going to (or should) go vegetarian, regardless of the problems caused by meat or the industry. The main point, especially in disease-related articles, seems to be warning people of the risks or assuring them risks are minimal if certain precautions are taken. Interestingly, the articles do not provide any direct statement that animal products are especially healthy or necessary to the human diet, but they seem to assume that most people enjoy eating meat, dairy and eggs as part of their cultural food ritual and do not want to change. Articles sometimes allude to this inevitable consumer demand with phrases like "meet the voracious appetite for fish sticks, chips, and fried fish sandwiches" (Smith, 11/7/02, p. A3), or "the world's appetite for tuna seems insatiable," (Apple, 4/3/02, p. F1).

By keeping the focus on the production-side, news articles rarely call upon consumers to take responsibility for any of the problems associated with modern animal farms or over-fishing. Whether it is the pollution problems caused by pig farms, or mad cow disease health risks to animals and meat eaters, or destruction of the ocean seabed and endangerment of fish species due to trawlers, the articles do not insinuate that consumers should cease to eat pork, beef or seafood. The onus seems to be on the supply-side to solve the problems they cause and still meet the

inevitable consumer demand for animal products. With the exception of two stories which mention boycotting certain endangered fish (Revkin, 5/15/03 & 5/21/03), news stories simply warn the public of problems but do not ask them to change in order to solve them. In this way, the traditional concept of farmed animals existing only for food is not challenged, and the public does not have to take responsibility for improvements or social change.

Challenging the Status Quo on Behalf of Farmed Animals:

As my analysis suggests, there are some ways in which news discourse does occasionally challenge the status quo by portraying farmed animals in a more sympathetic and inherently valuable light. Through these representations, the journalists deviate from the standard rules of discourse by showing that animals: 1) deserve to be rescued from cruel treatment, 2) have emotions and preferences which farming should respect, 3) make good companions, and 4) should not be killed for human food. The latter two are the rarest representations.

The first three representations are not as radical or directly threatening to the idea of a meat-based culture because they concentrate more on improving the treatment of farmed animals while failing to specifically argue that they have the right to live free from exploitation on farms. However, if these three representations were more common in news discourse, it would build a bridge towards creating a different worldview that begins to see farmed animals in a more personal light by portraying them as innocent victims who are capable of experiencing pain and sadness due to their unjust living conditions.

The fourth representation example is the most radical because it presents a more overt threat to our cultural norms by suggesting humans can survive on other foods besides animal products. But as I discussed in this section, we rarely see this news angle manifested as a direct promotion

of people going vegetarian for ethical reasons. However, a few articles do allude to some people who do eschew eating animals for moral reasons. While not a common theme in news stories, the more this angle is taken and the more frequently the idea of vegetarianism is connected to farmed animal stories, the more mainstream vegetarianism will begin to become. Eventually, this might put meat-eaters on the defensive, forcing them to justify why they participate in killing others for food when it is not necessary for their survival.

Limitations of This Research:

As discussed in the methodology section, I limited this thesis to just one moment in the "circuit of culture", representation. Representation is heavily influenced by other moments such as production (news media's perspective) or identity and consumption (audience perspective), which are not addressed here. Hence, in this study, the only person's opinions and observations on the text are mine (researcher perspective).

Selecting the content was also challenging when searching for what constituted a "farmed animal story". Due to the fact that "farmed animals" is such a broad topic, it was problematic to operationally define, which sometimes made it unclear to know where to draw the line in ruling in and out articles for the text sample.

Additionally, because there were so many stories on foot-and-mouth and mad cow disease, it would have been too cumbersome and quite repetitious to include them all in a textual analysis, due to the depth it requires. However, if this were a content analysis, all those articles could have been included, and it would have helped to give a more complete picture of the frequency and prominence with which farmed animals are portrayed in the news. While my text sample

may not be all-inclusive, it is considerably close and quite extensive. I did quantify and categorize the sample (see Appendix) so that readers could get a detailed picture of the explicit elements of its content. I also provided relevant statistics to show proportions and major relationships in the content of the text, related to: topics, mediums, years, placement, visuals, etc.

Additionally, the sample included only major national news and excluded local or regional news sources. Farmed animals may be represented in different ways and proportions in the local news, depending on the area. They may also have been represented differently on other national news media, such as morning news or a 24-hour cable station like CNN Headline News. However, when selecting the broadcast media to include in the sample, I was limited to what was available through the Vanderbilt Archives, which only contains evening news on certain national channels.

Future Research Opportunities:

Building off of some of the limitations of my study, future projects could enhance it by:

- Adding other aspects of the circuit of culture, such as interviews with news journalists or editors (production) as well as with the audience (identity and consumption) to gain other perspectives on the text.
- Content analyzing news media to focus more on frequency and prominence of farmed animals as a subject for news content, which might answer questions related to framing and agenda-setting.
- Selecting local print and broadcast media in a variety of rural and urban areas throughout the United States for comparison. Alternately, one could expand the scope and compare

the American news representations in this study to national news representations of farmed animals in other countries. For example, one could examine how a variety of other countries all chose to cover a certain common farmed animal issue, such as foot-and-mouth disease.

Because this study is broad and includes all farmed animal species in all kind of situations, future studies could narrow the focus and get more in-depth by animal or topic, answering questions, such as:

- How are wild-caught aquatic food animals represented differently than farm-raised animals (either aquatic and/or land animals)?
- How are genetically modified food animals represented in comparison to farmed animals who are raised in more traditional/natural ways?
- How is the subject of farmed animal welfare represented in the news (perhaps comparing controversial issues such as veal calf confinement, battery cages for egg-laying hens, or the force-feeding of ducks to make foie gras). How is humane or free-range farming compared to modern farming? How is the topic of humane legislation for farmed animals represented?
- How is the treatment of farmed workers (who are predominantly immigrants) portrayed in comparison to the treatment of farmed animals? Is there a correlation in the way modern farms treat workers and animals?

Or a researcher could choose to study related issues, instead of the animals themselves, such as:

- How are animal rights activists (who work on farmed animal issues) portrayed in the news? Which of their media campaigns seem to be the most effective at garnering more

prominent and supportive news coverage on behalf of farmed animals, and which ones seem least effective?

- How is the subject of veganism portrayed in the news? How are the frames supportive or unsupportive, and how do they relate the dietary choice to the larger philosophical and moral issues of raising other creatures solely for food?

Researchers could remain focused on farmed animal representations, but study them in media other than news, such as entertainment media (like film, TV, and magazines), documentaries, or web sites. For example, how might a cable TV channel, such as Animal Planet or National Geographic, represent farmed animals in comparison to other animals (domesticated and/or wild)? Or a researcher could compare web pages on farmed animal welfare produced by animal protection organizations verses those produced by the meat industry. Because so little academic research has focused on the intersection of representation, farmed animals, and the media, the area is wide open for future research from many creative angles.

Implications of This Study:

While this study has concentrated on farmed animal representations, its findings can be abstracted to suggest broader implications for mass communication theory, particularly related to the media: as an agent of social control/hegemony/power, as constructors of discourse on marginalized groups, and as a strategic outlet for public relations campaign messages in social justice movements.

The Media as Agents of Social Control:

Those, like the media, who have the power to craft representations for the masses, hold a very influential position in a social order – one that carries with it many implications and ethical obligations for society. Bernard Cohen helped define the agenda-setting theory by stating that the media do not tell us what to think, but they tell us what to think *about* (Cohen, 1963). The media's choice of how to represent someone tells the audience *how* to think about that group – what to say and not say about them. Representations are the basis of discourse, as what is said about a group bleeds into how they are treated in a society; language and practice collaborate to form the rules. If anyone starts to behave towards or talk about the represented group in ways which contradict the mainstream rules of discourse, then that person comes across as abnormal, comical, implausible, or nonsensical (and can be presented as such by the news media). If someone appears to be talking nonsense, or behaving abnormally, then society, and the media themselves, are more at liberty to ignore them.

The findings in this thesis reinforce the idea that Dena Jones found regarding the fact that the media give more quantity and quality of coverage to issues which are considered mainstream and do not significantly threaten or contradict the structure of the current system (such as animal welfare being a more acceptable topic than animal rights). In this way, the news media tend to function more as agents of social control than social change, largely reinforcing hegemonic discourse that supports the dominant group.

For example, most news sources in my sample come from those in power (industry or government) rather than those who are tackling the system (activists) or are its powerless subjects (animals). Through representations that withhold, restrain, or mischaracterize the

dissident voices of those less powerful, the media has the control to discredit or disregard anyone who challenges the system.

Additionally, by creating stories that fail to question fundamental philosophical principles that serve as the basis for the current power structure, and by asking for minor reforms instead of major changes or abolition, the news media may help to slowly improve the system, but not to topple or replace it. Since the news media tend to focus on the major institutions or industries and their problems and spend less time concentrating on solutions (especially those which implicate the public as a responsible party), then it ultimately leaves the system to straighten itself out, or otherwise to assure the public that the situation has been adequately handled.

This ignores the power of the public, who through the form of collective voice or social movements, is an effective force in creating social change. It is often the public who forces industry or institutions to change. The animal rights movement was influential in getting consumers to demand more humanely raised food, and hence, restaurants to start providing it. Then the discourse shifts and the media can cover the shift as news, since novelty is newsworthy. My finding suggest that the news media do not typically initiate the change through proactively crafted stories challenging the power structure; the public initiates change in institutions and the media responds to it. So, although the media do not function as proactive agents of social change, they can reinforce it through their choice of supportive representations in response.

Constructing Discourse on Marginalized Groups:

Based on my analysis of the rules of discourse on farmed animals and their welfare, it suggests the media support social hierarchies in society. The news media show us who is more important than whom based on which stories take precedence and whose perspectives and angles

are favored over others. The media construct the frame that defines the problem itself on any issue and implies whose perspectives on those problems are more important to society than others. When the problems or perspectives of marginalized groups are ignored or covered with less emphasis, this indicates who is considered trivial and less significant in a society. By backgrounding less powerful groups and not legitimizing their perspectives, the news media indirectly give society permission to treat that group with less regard.

The language of oppression, which is part of the discourse, serves to objectify the powerless group by focusing on their utility to the dominant group. The news media may create stories that reinforce and romanticize the benefits of the powerless group's role in society, masking the issue of injustice or inequality in favor of a patronizingly appreciative or pleasant tone. So long as the stories emphasize the practical and economic benefits to the dominant group over any disadvantages and injustice suffered by the exploited group, and it appears that the exploited group is in a comfortable position that best fits them, then society can maintain the status quo with a clear conscience.

Another unfortunate consequence of favoring more powerful groups over others (mainstream over marginal) is that the news stories then lack diversity and dimension. Issues can then seem black and white, and oversimplified, masking the true complexities and different implications for all parties. By failing to be introduced to the perspectives of those less powerful, then the audience is less likely to consider them, form an opinion, care about them, and act on their behalf. Because they are not put on the agenda, the audience is less likely to get to know them, understand them, form attachments, or identify with them.

This detachment is part of maintaining any system of oppression – keeping some distance between the dominant group and the marginalized group, so the former is less likely to identify

with the latter, see similarities, and start to question the basis of their own supposed significance or entitlement over the other. If the audience recognizes that the significance and hierarchies are just a societal creation, a function of discourse and not necessity, then the dominant group may no longer be able to morally justify their control over the other, and the hierarchies can be dismantled in favor of more equality.

Media Strategies for Social Movement Groups:

Examination of the way animal welfare and animal rights is handled by the news media in my text sample suggests media strategies which might be effective for public relations professionals looking to advance social movements. If the news media tend to give higher quantity and quality of coverage to issues that do not significantly threaten mainstream ideologies, then social movement groups should package their public relations messages in ways that emphasize reform and not abolition or fundamental changes to the status quo. This should result in news coverage that is more supportive of their cause and less critical in tone, while still allowing the issue to receive public attention in the news. If more fundamental or radical angles are sought, perhaps groups should follow PETA's lead and focus on the entertainment media, instead of the news media, or produce those messages themselves through web sites, pamphlets or advertisements.

Social movement groups can also take advantage of major events which are already receiving greater attention in the news, such as mad cow disease, and package their message in relation to that event so it is more likely to be perceived as newsworthy. This allows the social movement group's perspective to be brought before the public to add another dimension to a topical issue.

In lieu of getting publicity through latching onto an already hot news topic, most social movement groups must get publicity for their issue by staging an outrageous event, or in some cases, the news may proactively cover it if the powerful institutions/industries are already responding to a shift in public awareness of the social justice issue. While the outrageous events are a way to open the door to news coverage that can raise awareness, the group should strategically package their resulting soundbites in ways that relate to the mainstream discourse; this can build some credibility that may have been lost by any critical coverage of their illegal activity or sensational staged event. If not, the resulting news frame may tend to trivialize and criticize the movement perspective because it is perceived as too radical or nonsensical.

This finding was confirmed in Kruse's framing research regarding the news media's tendency to focus on the activists and not the issues, especially in television. But, as Kruse suggested, because television does tend to show dramatic footage of animal cruelty, public relations professionals should ensure they provide this footage to television stations to increase the chances of a sympathetic frame. Visual imagery such as this could be very powerful, as audiences do not often see the faces of the animals up close nor see the harshness of the conditions in which they live and die. Visuals should be constructed to tell a story about an animal as an individual -- to give him/her a face and a personality. Visual imagery such as this could serve as a way to build sympathy, identification, and awareness between farmed animals and the public, to start to break down the dominant discourse that defines these animals as resources.

Prescription for Future Change:

If society wants to know if the popular slogan from animal rights t-shirts (and The Smiths' album title) is true, is meat actually murder, they shall never know, or be asked to consider it, by consuming the news in my sample as it stands today. However, if the news media begin to challenge the current discourse and begin portraying farmed animals as sentient, inherently valuable individuals who are unjustly victimized in our modern farming environment, this may result in some improvement in their treatment. If farmed animal mistreatment were put on the news agenda, and consumers were portrayed as a responsible and influential party in the problem-solving process, the public might start to make demands, either for more humane laws or more humane foods, and farmed animals would start to see a reprieve from the extent of their current exploitation.

The issues and problems faced due to modern agribusiness are legitimate, and I believe they can begin to be effectively engaged in the twenty-first century if the news media approach farmed animal stories more directly and critically, centering on the animals' interests as well as humans' interest. The news media can continue to serve in the laudable role of investigative journalists who are watchdogs for injustice and promoters of positive social change in our culture. But this time, they have the opportunity to extend this protection to *all* sentient beings, both man and animal.

> Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.
>
> I take culture to be those webs - *Clifford Geertz* (Geertz, 1973, p. 56).

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APPENDIX A:

DESCRIPTION OF TEXT SAMPLE CONTENT

Overview of Entire Text Sample of 106 Stories:

2000: 12% of sample (13 stories)

2001: 25% of sample (27 stories)

2002: 20% of sample (21 stories)

2003: 43% of sample (45 stories)

TOPIC	NYT	CBS/ CNN	Time	Total Stories by Topic	% of Text by Topic
Disease	26	11	4	41	39%
Economics	3	0	0	3	3%
Environment	14	1	1	16	15%
Modern Farm	7	0	0	7	7%
Religion	1	0	0	1	1%
Science	5	3	1	9	8%
Small Farm	9	1	0	10	9%
Welfare	11	2	2	15	14%
Human Health	0	1	3	4	4%
Total Stories by Medium	76	19	11	106	
% of Total Text by Medium	72%	18%	10%		100%

Which animals were represented and in which type of stories?

- BIRDS: Environmental problems. Labor issues. Avian Flu. Newcastle Disease. Animal Welfare. Obituaries of two poultry researchers.
- COWS: Mad cow. Foot-and-Mouth. Grass-fed (small farm). Economics. Cloning.
- PIGS: Environmental problems/Health. Labor issues. Mad Cow. Foot-and-Mouth. Animal Welfare.
- SHEEP: Grass-fed (Small farms). Dining section.
- AQUATIC ANIMALS: Small vs. large scale fisherman. Environmental issues of pollution and overfishing/extinction. Wild vs. farmed. Cloning/GMO.

Which type of stories were found where?

An overview of stories by medium (1.newspaper, 2. magazine, and 3. television)

1. NEWSPAPER

There were 76 newspaper stories in my text sample:

Newspaper Breakdown by Year:

- 2000: 13% (10)
- 2001: 18% (14)
  - 70% of the newspaper articles in 2001 dealt with disease, primarily the Foot-and-Mouth disease outbreak in Europe.
- 2002: 20% (15)

- 2003: 49% (37)

  Almost ½ of all newspaper articles in the text sample appeared in 2003. The main concerns in 2003 were:

  – Disease: the resurgence of mad cow disease, now on the North American continent,

  – Environment: the problem of over-fishing depleting our oceans, and

  – Welfare: the treatment of farmed animals and reforms to the industry, prompted by the animal rights movement and the fast food industry.

Newspaper Breakdown by Topic:

TOPIC	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total # by Topic	% by Topic
Disease	2	10	3	11	26	34%
Economics	1		1	1	3	4%
Environment	1		3	10	14	18%
Modern Farm	1	1	2	3	7	9%
Religion		1			1	2%
Science	2	1	1	1	5	7%
Small Farm	2	1	3	3	9	12%
Welfare	1		2	8	11	14%
						100%
Total Stories by Yr	10	14	15	37	76	

DISEASE was the most popular topic in which to discuss farmed animals (26 stories), comprising a third of the entire newspaper text sample. The vast majority of these were split between foot-and-mouth disease in Europe and mad cow disease in America. A few articles were about avian flu, one on exotic newcastle disease in birds, and one on a virus at fish farms killing wild and domestic salmon.

- Timing: Most disease articles appeared in 2001 (due to foot-and-mouth disease) and 2003 (due to mad cow disease).
- Visuals: The pictures ran the gamut from showing live animals to farmers and government officials. The most gruesome pictures were in 2001 of animal corpses related to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Europe and their campaign of mass killing and burning. The mad cow disease case in America in 2003 prompted more photos of meat/flesh than live animals, but no photos of full corpses.
- Sentience: Four articles showed some respect for animal sentience, but they were all drastically different, from a profile of a friendlier small farm to discussing the cruelty downed animals endure (in the case of the first mad cow who was a downer) to how vegetarianism is becoming more popular in Britain (due both to disease threats and a general concern for animal welfare).
- Size and Location: Almost ¾ were located in Section A, and seven made the cover of the NYT (mostly dealing with U.S. discovery of mad cow disease at the end of 2003). The only other disease-related cover was one in the Science section, related to the causes of mad cow. There were only four articles categorized as "large," and they were all covers of section A.
- People Represented: The overwhelming majority of quotes came from government officials justifying the systems they have in place to control the epidemic and attempting to reassure

the public. The other major players were the farmers who were concerned about their economic losses and invasiveness of government regulations. Animal rights activists were briefly quoted in only two articles in the context of how the movement has been trying to ban the sale of downed animals prior to the outbreak of mad cow disease in America due to the sale of a diseased, downed animal. One article quoted many British vegetarians explaining why they choose to eat less meat. This was the only article that focused on vegetarianism as a response to problems with farmed animal treatment or dangers with the meat supply.

ENVIRONMENTAL topics were the second most frequent newspaper topic, comprising 18% of the text sample. 85% were about the ecological problems caused by commercial fishing (over-fishing threatening fish stocks and livelihood of small fisherman), and the remaining 15% were about pollution and health risks due to confined animal operation units (CAFOs) on land.

- Timing: 70% were in 2003, most likely prompted by several major studies on commercial threats to fish populations worldwide. None were from 2001.
- Visuals: The photos were mainly of people and were often accompanied by charts or diagrams. The only two articles that showed live animals were both related to fish. Regarding dead animals, fish meat or flesh was only shown once, and there was one photo of a dolphin killed in fishing nets and one of an under-employed cod fisherman holding up a dead codfish (the article showed sympathy to the fisherman because there aren't enough cod left for him to kill for a living).
- Size and Location: 64% were in Section A and the remaining 36% were in the Science section. Those in the Science section tended to be more in-depth, while half of the articles in Section A were small. Only one environmental article made the cover of the NYT, and that

was a large article about a hog farm in Iowa possibly causing major health problems to local neighbors. There were two other cover articles, this time in the Science section, both related to over-fishing in the ocean.

- Sentience: None of these articles portrayed animals as sentient. The concern was either more anthropocentric (as in not having enough fish as a resource to meet consumer demands) or biocentric (as in over-fishing upsetting the natural balance of fish populations – ecological concerns for species).
- People Represented: The most prominent players in environmental stories were the government, environmentalists, and small fisherman, usually in opposition to the commercial fishing industry.

ANIMAL WELFARE was the third most popular topic, comprising 14% of the newspaper text sample.

- Timing: An overwhelming majority of welfare stories appeared in 2003, 80% of them, in fact. Does this indicate that it is becoming more in vogue to be concerned about the treatment of farmed animals? Will we see this trend in increased news coverage of animal welfare continue? Might this trend be correlated to increased salience of disease epidemics in the news? This is unclear because disease epidemics are rarely overtly mentioned as a factor in selecting a welfare angle for a story. Typically, welfare articles credited the animal rights movement and the fast food industry for bringing humane reforms to the forefront. However, it also seems more than coincidental that welfare articles coincide with increased critical coverage of modern, intensive farming methods causing disease and environmental problems.

- Visuals: None of the photos showed any animals dead or merely as flesh. Almost all stories which had pictures showed both live animals and people. The people shown were mainly farm workers, who were not as prominent as the groups of farmed animals. In only one case was a farm worker shown in a situation that could be construed as cruel (when he was force-feeding a duck using a metal pipe in a foie gras pen). In only one case was an animal rights activist featured, and she was shown softly cradling a battery hen she rescued.
- Size and Location: The welfare articles were represented in a variety of newspaper sections, with no clear trends. However, the most popular were Section A and the Business section (with three articles each). The business articles have to do with the meat producers responding to consumer demand (prompted by animal activists) and either making welfare reforms or at least researching or responding to them. The majority of welfare articles were small or medium-sized. However, the only two large ones were also the only two to be cover stories (one on industry research on welfare reforms was on the cover of the business section, and one on the controversy surrounding foie gras cruelty was on the cover of the dining section).
- Sentience: Not surprisingly, concern for animals as sentient beings was expressed to varying degrees in all of these articles, which was overwhelmingly not the case for other topics, where farmed animals were usually discussed as commodities.
- People Represented: More than half had some mention of animal rights activists, either the movement as a whole or a variety of activist groups involved in specific campaigns, like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (against KFC) or Compassion Over Killing (rescued egg laying hens from battery cages). Interestingly, even when activists were illegally raiding farms to rescue animals or aggressively boycotting a fast food chain, the

activists and movement were not portrayed in a particularly critical or negative light. This category has less government officials speaking and instead has more industry groups responding to welfare issues. There are also three articles featuring researchers discussing their research on farmed animal preferences and emotions.

Small Farming as opposed to Modern Farming: These topics ranked fifth and six in the newspaper text sample. The nine profiles of the struggling or creative small farmers and fisherman were either in the dining or local sections of the paper, and always seemed to show sympathy for those hard-working and noble farmers trying to preserve a traditional way of life in a changing world. The articles in the dining section were usually promoting natural or grass-fed meats and profiling a farm from which you could order this higher-quality meat (and most were cover stories). Conversely, there were seven profile stories about modern farming, three of which were critical (all cover stories) and the other four complimentary. Two of the critical stories were sympathetic towards the plight of immigrant farm workers, describing how they are mistreated at foie gras farms in upstate New York. The other critical story characterizes Smithfield Farms as a giant taking over and monopolizing hog farming. This was the only profile of an individual animal agribusiness anywhere in my text sample. Other, more non-critical stories focus on the marvel of modern farming techniques allowing agribusiness to milk cows more efficiently, grow tuna larger, and breed turkeys commercially when they are too large to mate naturally. There were some stories that criticized modern farms from an animal welfare standpoint, but these were categorized under the topic “Welfare.”

Newspaper Breakdown by Section and Topic:

Over a third of all farmed animal newspaper stories made the cover of a section (26 covers out of 76 articles), which is significant because cover stories tend to be more prominent and lengthy.

- 49% in SECTION A (Main Section): Disease, Health Risks

  10 front page covers of the NYT (over half in 2003 and due to Mad Cow disease in Canada and U.S.) out of 37 articles in Section A.

- 12% in the SCIENCE SECTION: Environmental problems in the ocean. Disease. Health risks. Cloning/GMO. Research on farmed animals.

  Four cover stories out of nine articles in the Science Section.

- 9% in the DINING SECTION: Small vs. Large Farm (esp. sheep/lambs), Grass-fed or natural meats. Foie Gras Cruelty/Animal rights activist attacks.

  Six cover stories out of seven articles in the Dining Section (85%).

- 9% in the BUSINESS SECTION: Disease, Trade/Globalization/Foreign farming, Corporate Farms, Animal Welfare in Fast Food Industry.

  Four cover stories out of seven articles in the Business Section.

- 8% in the METRO SECTION: Labor issues/farm worker complaints (pig and duck/foie gras farms). Small fisherman struggling.

  Three cover stories out of six articles in the Metro Section.

Differences between newspaper stories and magazine or television stories:

- More frequently covered farmed animal issues.
- More stories focusing on environmental problems, especially in our oceans.
- More personal profiles on small farmers or struggling farm workers.
- Fewer stories focused on human health, apart from farmed animal diseases.
- Some coverage of humane farming reforms.
- Half the text came from 2003 (while 2001 was the most popular year for coverage in magazines and broadcast).

2. MAGAZINE:

There were 11 *Time* magazine news stories in my text sample.

Magazine Breakdown by Year and Topic:

2000: Two stories. A humorous feature about going on a PETA pro-vegetarian raid at a grocery store and one on GMO salmon.

2001: Five stories (almost half the sample). Four of them were about disease and one was about water pollution in Texas caused by factory farms.

2002: Two stories. Both were related to human health. One was on the risks of using antibiotics in farmed animals and the other was a lengthy cover story on vegetarianism.

2003: Two stories. One was about the fight between small farmers and agrochemical companies over labeling milk as "hormone-free," and the other was about an animal rights raid on a foie gras farm to rescue four ducks.

Magazine Breakdown by Topic and Section/Prominence:

Disease: Four stories.

1. One on American risk for European based mad cow threat (Science/Medicine Section. 1.5 pages with many graphics).
2. One on killing sheep in Vermont who were at risk for mad cow (Notebook Section. ¼ page. Tiny photo).
3. One on pig actor from Babe not being killed for fear of foot-and-mouth (Notebook Section. 1/8 page. Tiny photo).
4. One on world-wide efforts to stem foot-and-mouth outbreak (Science Section. Double page spread. Four graphics).

Health: Three stories.

1. one on antibiotics (Health Section. Double page spread. Multiple, large graphics).
2. one on hormones in dairy (Health Section. 1 page. 2 photos).
3. one on whether or not we should be vegetarians (Cover Story. 10 pages, including cover. Very heavy on the eye-catching graphics and photos throughout).

Animal Rights: Two stories about animal activist raids relating to food animal mistreatment.

1. one on PETA activism in a grocery store (Notebook Section. ¾ page with small photo).
2. one on activists who raided a foie gras farm to rescue ducks (Notebook Section. ¼ page with one small photo).

Environment: One story on water pollution caused by factory farming in the Texas community where George W. Bush vacations. (Viewpoint Section. 1 page with a photo).

Science: One story on genetically modified farmed salmon, called “Frankenfish.” Science Section (1.5 pages with large photos).

Differences between magazine stories and newspaper or television stories:

- Less frequent coverage of farmed animal issues.
- Some articles are more playful or light-hearted about disease epidemics.
- Human health is a more prominent focus for a topic.
- Less profiles on small farmers and none on struggling farm workers.
- Half the text came from 2001 (same as TV) but different from the NYT.

3. TELEVISION:

There were 19 broadcast news stories in my text sample (15 CBS, 4 CNN).

TV Breakdown by Topic and Station:

- Eleven (over half) were about disease -- all foot-and-mouth and mad cow disease, with one on anthrax. (CBS & CNN: The four total CNN stories in my text sample were all about disease).
- Three were about cloning/GMO (CBS).
- Two were about farmed animal welfare reforms (CBS).
- One was about human health issues in dyed salmon (CBS).
- One was about environmental issues in the ocean affecting lobster fishing (CBS).
- One was a small-town, humorous feature story about chickens (CBS).

TV Breakdown by Year and Topic:

- 2000: Only one story was from 2000 and it was about mad cow disease.
- 2001: All stories aired in 2001 were related to disease (particularly foot-and-mouth). This year had the most stories aired (8), comprising half of the total TV text sample.
- 2002: Four stories aired in 2002, but none of them had to do with disease – just GMO/cloned foods, oceanic environmental problems, and a farm animal welfare reform ballot initiative passed in FL.
- 2003: In 2003, mad cow disease hit Canada, so several of the six stories that year were dedicated to Mad Cow disease. Others included a health issue related to dyed salmon, a "humorous" feature about using DNA tests to prove a dog killed some chickens in a neighbor's coop, safety issues related to cloned food, and farm animal welfare reform driven by the fast food industry.

Differences between broadcast and print:

- Less focus on environmental problems or over-fishing.
- More focus on disease epidemics.
- More graphic footage of diseased, dying, caged, or killed animals.
- Much fewer profiles of small farmers or struggling farm workers.
- Half the sample came from 2001, as is the case with *Time* magazine, but not the NYT.