

Imagine that some people think we humans just aren't good enough to own or use animals. In fact they're so convinced of this that they have formed large organizations that work tirelessly around the clock and around the world to eliminate animal farming, eating of meat, use of animals in research, hunting, circuses, zoos, and yes, as pets. This isn't just a bad dream -- it's real. Those people are called the 'animal rights' movement. While there probably aren't more than a thousand people in the U.S. who accept the whole idea -- that humans should be completely separated from our animals even if that means that many species become extinct -- they are supported by many more who support important parts of the movement.

For example many believe that eating meat is wrong. Some think that medical research using animals is unnecessary and cruel. Other thousands believe most pet owners are irresponsible. And it is those people, the ones who support small parts of animal rights, who are carrying the movement forward with their financial contributions and the push for legislation to support their own little part of The Cause.

This is America: It is our right to believe whatever we want and to try to convince others of what we believe. However the AR movement goes beyond that. The biggest thing they do is pass laws that make animal use, breeding, and ownership steadily harder and more costly.

This happens in several steps:

1. They invent problems or magnify small ones. The real problems generally are much less than the good that comes from the same activity but what we are told about is only the problem.

For example: "Hunting is cruel and unnecessary" -- never mind that for many species hunting is a main way of controlling population to prevent starvation and other problems.

"'Pet overpopulation' leads to the tragedy of euthanasia" -- although the animal shelter euthanasia rate has been falling steadily for decades, is probably now only 10-15% of what it was 30 years ago and many areas of the country now actually have a shortage of dogs.

“Pet breeders are just exploiting animals for money” -- although if there were no breeders there would be no pets; and incidentally, it's almost impossible to make money if you breed as a hobby.

“Animals are dangerous and cause human health problems” -- though most of us have pets, serious problems are rare and study after study shows that pet owners are happier, have lower stress levels, and may live longer than other people.

“Animal farming is cruelty” -- though cruelty is already illegal and the practices being attacked are ancient and often inspected and specifically approved by the government.

The attack will always fall where most people will say “Oh -- that's not something I do” or “That's not important.” Only 7% of the population hunts, something like 2% farms, and much less than 1% breeds dogs at home. Because many important animal practices are unfamiliar to most of us, we may not see what's wrong with these AR campaigns and may not really be very interested in them.

2. The animal rightists batter public officials to ‘solve’ these problems. Although they are a small minority, they never stop complaining.

Los Angeles, for example, is on its fourth well qualified animal control director in five years. Why? Because no director delivered the ‘no kill’ shelter they demand -- an unattainable goal for a properly run municipal shelter in a large city. The shelter's statistics are not bad and they are improving rapidly -- but that's not good enough.

3. When officials say “Okay, tell us what to do,” the ARs are there with examples of laws passed in other places. They cite misleading or phony statistics, even outright lie about the success of the law and if pressed on the issue, simply repeat their views.

For example when they're proclaiming 'horrible pet overpopulation' they promote laws requiring all pets to be spayed or neutered and requirements for hobby breeders to get expensive licenses and permits. “This law was a big success in San Mateo County,” they say.

If you tell them "This law did not work in San Mateo County" they say "This law was a big success in San Mateo."

If you answer "But the shelter euthanasia numbers went UP in San Mateo" they say "This law was a big success in San Mateo."

Surprisingly, when the subject is unfamiliar, the bigger the lie, the more likely people are to believe it. This 'big lie' tactic isn't often encountered by lawmakers and since doing independent research is time-consuming for them, they usually end by accepting the lies. Especially if there is no one on the other side to point out the lies.

4. Since the new laws never solve the 'problem,' the ARs seek greater punishments and new laws that will help enforce the old ones, such as a requirement for all pets to be microchipped with the numbers in a government database. They talk only of the good effects -- "This will help more lost pets get home" -- although the real purpose is to catch people who are violating their other laws. If they've managed to pass a three-dog limit in your town and then require microchipping, you'll be caught in the net if you happen to have four dogs.

They can nearly always find important organizations that will support the proposal because (for example) "Veterinarians can't be against a law that just improves enforcement of something that's already the law." (Quote from legislative liaison of the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association when the VVMA supported an animal rights bill requiring veterinarians to report rabies vaccinations -- with owner's name and address, breed, spay/neuter status, etc to county treasurers.)

5. As one law becomes common, the next step begins -- go back to #1, above.

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Here are some quotes from leaders in the animal rights movement:

Ingrid Newkirk, president and co-founder of PETA: "I am not a morose person, but I would rather not be here. I don't have any reverence for life, only for the entities themselves. I would rather see a blank space where I am. This will sound like fruitcake stuff again but at least I wouldn't be harming anything."

Michael W. Fox, Scientific Director and former Vice President of HSUS: "Man is the most dangerous, destructive, selfish, and unethical animal on earth."

"Les U. Knight" (pseudonym), "Voluntary Human Extinction," Wild Earth, Vol. 1, No. 2 "If you haven't given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a chance, I think you might agree that the extinction of Homo sapiens would mean survival for millions, if not billions, of Earth-dwelling species ... Phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental."

Wayne Pacelle, President of HSUS: "One generation and out. We have no problem with the extinction of domestic animals. They are creations of human selective breeding."

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The truth is that animal rights is mental illness masquerading as philosophy.

There are no longer any nationally known organizations that just want good care for animals; from 1980-on, they were all taken over by animal rights zealots who continue to operate them under the "animal welfare" banner.

Today, HSUS, PETA, the ASPCA and dozens of less familiar organizations spend about \$200 million a year sent by people who want to help animals, working against animal ownership. Never give money to any of these organizations! If you want to give to help animals, give directly to your local animal shelter: they nearly always use contributions to provide real care, and they always need more than they get.

What's going on is a quiet, mostly non-violent war for the future of America. The major battles are just starting and will be fought and won by one side or the other over the next five to 10 years. For example, between the end of 2005 and mid-2006, Long Beach California, Los Angeles County, and Albuquerque, New Mexico all passed new laws making it much more difficult to own and breed pets. Each of these new laws was in turn the worst ever seen in the U.S. and we are likely to see yet worse in the months ahead.

If those who believe that humans and animals belong together don't turn the tide, then 20 years from now our country will have many fewer good pets and will be less happy and less prosperous than it is today. None of us asked for this war, but if we do not fight and win, the losses to future generations won't be undone in a century.

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