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Animal Rights International

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In sharing "some thoughts on pigs" ("Animal Farms," Review & Outlook, June 14), your readers can hardly be expected to understand the outright horror inflicted on animals in factory farms when you present the issue in terms that never get more vivid than "size and scale" ... "integration of processes" ... boosting choices to consumers." Perhaps your writer has never had an opportunity to see this perversion of nature firsthand.

In more realistic terms, "size and 'scale" means relegating animals to the status of machine parts. This translates into hundreds upon hundreds of sows parked like so many cars in narrow steel crates in dark buildings the size of aircraft hangars; veal calves living out their lives in dark wooden crates so small - they are unable to even turn around; egg-laying hens confined to an area smaller than half this page; animals so stressed that only a constant diet of drugs keeps them alive until they are shipped or dragged to their slaughter.

You suggest that this Institutionalized cruelty may be justifiable because it is cost-effective -- but so is prison labor and child labor. Clearly, there's more to commerce than cost-effectiveness at any price.

Furthermore, there would be no need for the "tear-jerking ads" your writer derides if the media were providing readers with the facts about current practices in animal agriculture. But most of the consuming public hasn't a clue as to what kind of hell their dinner went through on the way to the table. Shouldn't our society be based on informed consent?

Beyond satisfying our addiction, meat has no demonstrable benefits. The consumption of meat is linked to cancer, heart disease and diabetes. And it inflicts horrendous pain on the more than six billion animals eaten in this country each year.

At the very least, we should be able to agree that we need to encourage industry and government to develop, promote and implement systems that reduce farm animal suffering as long as people continue to eat them.

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