



## Debunking False and Harmful Beliefs about Animals, Including Humans

*We're all in trouble when universities deceive for animal-abuse industries rather than enlighten for informed policy-making.*

By David Cantor, Executive Director

*"Ignorance is preferable to error; and he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing, than he who believes what is wrong."*

- Thomas Jefferson

*"The difficulty is not coming up with new ideas, but undoing the old one."*

- fortune cookie

At Responsible Policies for Animals' events, in letters to officials and heads of our colleges of agriculture (CAs), and elsewhere, I constantly point out that "animal science" programs at our CAs teach false and harmful beliefs about animals, including human beings, to rationalize providing countless billions of dollars' worth of training, research, collusion, sales, lobbying, and propaganda for the meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries. RPA's 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign debunks the false and harmful beliefs promoted daily by "animal science."

What, exactly, are the false and harmful beliefs relied upon by "animal science," its thousands of instructors, the thousands of students aiming to build careers in meat, dairy, fish, egg, veterinary medicine, other allied industries, and government agencies charged with regulating the animal-abuse industries? A few typical examples from CA letters to RPA will give a good idea.

To emphasize that the 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign is a *political* and not a *personal*

endeavor, and to maintain communications with CAs, I will not name the CA letter-writers quoted below. Nor will I address, here, the public-relations tactics employed in the letters (doublespeak, meaningless phrases, etc.) – indications that "animal science" cannot stand on substance. I'll address each CA statement *as if it said what it appears to say*. Copies of CA letters are available on request.

**"Animal science" bunkum:**

*"[M]eat production and consumption have been social and economic drivers since the beginning of humanity."*

**Reality:** *Humans evolved as plant-foraging herbivores on the African savanna. "Social drivers" were not needed – humans are innately social animals like many others. There was no such concept as "economic drivers": Original humans moved about the landscape in their extended-family troupes selecting from approximately 75 edible leaves, flowers, berries, seeds, legumes, nuts, and roots typically available at a given time. Meat consumption became*

*widespread late in humans' existence; meat production much later still.*

**"Animal science" bunkum:** *"[T]he need for sophisticated, scientifically based methods of animal production and highly trained scientists, producers, employees, and regulators has never been*

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**"Humans evolved as plant-foraging herbivores on the African savanna."**

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*greater" because "meat is environmentally inefficient and we can always do a better job of stewarding our animals."*

**Reality:** *There is no possible way for any kind of worker, regardless of training or application of science, to make the meat, dairy, fish, or egg industry ecologically sound or "efficient." Humans being herbivores,*

# One RPA Member's Journey

By Beverly Foster,  
Outreach Assistant

I have long been deeply concerned about the countless ways we human beings make other animals suffer. In the late 1970s, I read Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation*, which made a groundbreaking case for improving the treatment of nonhuman animals by giving equal consideration for equal interests, revealing many atrocities human beings perpetrate against other animals. I eliminated all animal products from my diet and dedicated myself to rescuing stray and feral cats and demonstrating against some of the worst abuses. I gave money to animal-welfare groups and read their literature. As an attorney, I litigated against wasteful government projects that damaged

**"I believed my words and actions would change other people's minds ...."**

the local environment.

Without recognizing the significance, I had become an animal *welfarist*. I believed my words and actions would change other people's minds about nonhuman animals and that changing attitudes would change practice and policy. If you were aware of factory farming, the widespread abuse of pets, the horrors of hunting, trapping, live-

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**Responsible Policies for Animals**

[RPA@rpa1.org](mailto:RPA@rpa1.org)

P.O. Box 891, Glenside, PA 19038, USA

[www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org)

215-886-RPA1

pigeon shoots, and other lawful atrocities, how could you not object? And the literature constantly told me I was "making a difference."

After the Internet emerged, I spent hours online reading about the burgeoning field of animal law. I joined the Animal Legal Defense Fund, a nonprofit organization established by attorneys mainly to help enforce anticruelty laws. I took a course in animal law. As legislatures strengthened laws aimed at protecting pets and Congress enacted the Endangered Species Act, I thought the animals' plight must be improving.

Eventually I heard about Gary Francione, a Rutgers University law professor who criticized animal welfarism and promoted *abolitionism*. Francione brilliantly explained how eliminating nonhuman animals' legal status as property of humans, legislating bans on extremely inhumane uses of other animals, and promoting veganism – consuming and purchasing nothing derived from

or tested on nonhuman animals – could abolish all nonhuman-animal exploitation as our recent ancestors had abolished human chattel slavery.

As the years passed and I kept at it, I didn't see improvement to the plight of nonhuman animals. The standard American diet ("SAD" to nutrition scientists), with its factory farming and such ancient atrocities as mutilations, continued to predominate in the United States. And it expanded abroad. I read at one point that McDonald's planned to open a new restaurant in China every day for the next three years. The government, the mass media, and even universities were dominated by Big Meat, the biomedical industry's animal-experimentation apparatus, the fossil-fuel industries, forest-razing, and other animal-abuse industries.

I despaired every day, thinking of the suffering, including so much human suffering, caused by so many practices and policies; not being able

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to do anything about them personally despite being vegan; and not being able to locate any organized effort with a strategy capable of eventually creating the kind of basic change that is needed.

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**“Beings deemed harmful, inferior, subordinate, ... can never be protected against atrocities ....”**

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At times, I actually wished I could be a member of some other species not responsible for so much avoidable and preventable suffering.

Then I came upon [www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org) – Responsible Policies for Animals' website. I had a great awakening. I couldn't believe that I hadn't seen this anywhere before: *Policies!* That's the answer, I thought. We need fundamental policy change to save ourselves, the other animals, and Earth. The piecemeal, half-baked, fragmented, rarely-enforced laws and campaigns with no discernible overarching purpose, guiding principle, or coherence *could never make a meaningful difference.*

From reading RPA's website, I came to believe that only the fundamental policy change RPA promotes can lead to the countless smaller remedies the animals need. Other animals' lack of rights – *a major policy deficiency* – is the reason anticruelty laws are ineffectual. They don't acknowledge nonhuman animals' *personhood* – their being bodies like humans, as RPA explains it – a requirement not only for rights but also for respectful treatment overall. I also appreciate RPA's articulating that its *new-wave* animal-rights strategy reflects the way rights have always come to exist for new groups of persons, whereas what

RPA calls the *first wave* of the “animal rights movement” (not a true rights movement) relies on limited human traits like compassion and caring about animals – positive, but not significant factors in the concept and implementation of equal rights.

So, *what can we do* to create the needed 180-degree shift? Every human being has a contribution to make. Each of us can do our utmost to communicate to others that only supplanting millennia-old *irresponsible* policies with *responsible* policies toward all animals can save us from ourselves and direct us to a more balanced, equitable, and just world.

Since becoming an RPA member, I have written letters to *the presidents and head trustees of every land-grant university on RPA's list* on the Campaigns page of [www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org), demanding a long-overdue policy change: eliminating false and harmful teachings about animals in their agriculture colleges. I have introduced *more than 500 university scholars* to RPA by email. In a perpetual project, I provide RPA Executive Director David Cantor with addresses of *authors whose books are in the RPA Library* – David tells them how their knowledge and concerns link to equal rights of all animals. And I am steadily supplying RPA's color brochure *Animal Abuse: The Whole Story* to *three public libraries* in my area.

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**“Other animals' lack of rights ... is the reason anticruelty laws are ineffectual.”**

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Spreading the word is central to all RPA activities, because few people today, no matter how well educated, know what kind of animal we are, the

misery in animal abuse, or the roots of human misery in animal abuse, or the concepts that lead to rights of new groups of persons. In a nutshell, here is what I recommend:

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**“We must create a *new* agenda .... Don't be discouraged or intimidated.”**

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- ▶ Read RPA's website – [www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org). It not only recommends many activities – some easy, some difficult – but frames them in the understanding of rights that we need to promote equal rights of all animals.
- ▶ Distribute *Animal Abuse: The Whole Story* in libraries and among friends and family members.
- ▶ Organize an RPA presentation in your area or at your home.
- ▶ Explain the needed *policy* change to your officials and university executives as outlined at RPA's website. Write again whether you receive a reply or not. *We must create a new agenda* – current ones grossly miss the mark. Don't be discouraged or intimidated.
- ▶ Avoid wasting time with social media. There is a reason they are called *social* and not *political*. No matter how many “facebook friends” we have, interacting online doesn't educate or lead in the necessary way.
- ▶ In short, dedicate yourself, for the long term, to the Animal-Rights Conversation Corps that RPA is working to build. Step up, speak out, and write, write, write! ★

*Beverly Foster works full-time as an attorney and resides in Wayne, Pennsylvania. She can be reached at [hwlyfstr@aol.com](mailto:hwlyfstr@aol.com).*

# Debunking False and Harmful Beliefs

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*all of their direct contact with other animals is unnatural and ecologically disruptive. The meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries account for most global-heating gases and are major factors in every human-caused ecological assault on nonhuman animals, including massive waste of rapidly dwindling fresh water. It takes many times more resources to keep meat, dairy, fish, and eggs in the human diet than for humans to live on a less-unnatural plants-only diet.*

**“Animal science” bunkum:** “Meat was an essential part of our evolution because it aided in higher encephalization and better development of bipedalism and language, so our brains evolved to desire meat – meat provides greater satiety.”

**Reality:** *The notion that our species' brain grew larger due to meat-eating relies on the long-rejected acquired-characteristics principle, long since superseded by Darwin's natural-selection principle as the mechanism of evolution. Which foods or pseudo-foods (stuff from animals isn't really food for humans since humans are natural herbivores) provide “greater satiety” is irrelevant to evolution or brain size.*

**“Animal science” bunkum:** “Meat became, until the very modern rise of vegetarianism, an almost essential part of the human diet.”

**Reality:** *Since humans are natural herbivores, it is not possible for anything from animals to be “essential” to human health and wellbeing (apart from what “almost essential” might*

*mean). People whose livelihoods, careers, status, and other values depend on people believing meat “essential” flout the abundant scientific evidence to the contrary.*

As appalling as it is to see any animal in a zoo, we would be dumfounded to see a carnivore fed a diet of fruit and leaves. Yet more than 100 universities perversely push meat, dairy, fish, and eggs as legitimate food for humans, who are natural herbivores. Thus, “animal science” and promotion of animal products are animal abuse in their treatment of humans as well as of animals used for food and of carnivores and “pests” destroyed to protect meat, dairy, fish, egg, and feed industry profits.

President Lincoln and Congress established our CAs in 1862 to promote *agriculture* (cultivation of fields) in the public interest, not meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries which undermine agriculture and the public interest, perpetuating prehistoric atrocities

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**“There is no possible way ... to make a meat, dairy, fish, or egg industry ecologically sound or 'efficient.'”**

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against nonhuman animals while adding ever-more-inhumane high-tech ones.

Implicit in the *existence* of “animal science” are false beliefs that nonhuman animals are not *persons*, that human beings are innately superior and entitled to

other animals, that other species came into existence to be used by humans – and other humanist-extremist teachings. Established in the Enlightenment tradition, our universities should teach what science reveals, not ancient bunkum cloaked in pseudo-science.

## What We Must Do

Subverting large components of the industry-government-university-media complex, which places nonliving values over living ones, is a longterm endeavor requiring persistence and dedication. “Animal science” and the animal abuse it perpetuates on an ever-larger scale will only cease if we will work together to eradicate it.

► See the *explanatory bibliography* provided at the 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign page at [www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org). Highly detailed, it is great for you to show to your state governor and your U.S. representative and senators, explaining to them why eliminating “animal science” should be our nation's top policy priority. The bibliography refutes all of the “animal science” bunkum outlined above, and much more.

► Write to the presidents and head trustees of our land-grant universities demanding an end to “animal science.”

Many addresses needed for these activities in RPA's 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign to end false and harmful meat, dairy, fish, and egg university programs are provided at the Campaigns page of [www.RPAforAll.org](http://www.RPAforAll.org). Have RPA assist you with any additional information you might need or any other aspect of your participation. Thank you! ★