

Let's talk about mutilation

From [There's an Elephant in the Room](#)

November 2021



A piglet with notched ears which is a standard and permanent way that individuals are catalogued in the animal exploitation industry.

A recent post on Facebook was illustrated by the image below which is the work of the highly acclaimed animal rights artist and advocate, Jo Frederiks.



Image by [Jo Frederiks, Animal Rights Artist](#)

The text read:

The distinctions we make between the species that we love as family and those we persecute as resources are completely artificial. 'Farm animal', 'food animal' and 'pet' are all made-up terms, invented by humans, just like the laws that we invent to let us do what we want to them. Our victims get no say in the matter, yet they all share with us the quality of sentience, experiencing the world with minds and memories, through their environment, their senses and their interactions with others.

It is vital to understand that individuals whose lives and bodies are 'farmed' are not regarded as feeling beings; if they were, they would NOT be 'farmed' in the first place. To use any individual as a commercial resource automatically denies any and all rights that each has as an autonomous, feeling

individual. They are kept alive as economically as possible and used to make as much money as possible until the ideal time for the sale of their corpses. Profit is everything.

We would never dream, even for a moment, of doing to humans or the cats and dogs who share our homes, the things that we readily accept being done to the victims of our demands as humans who refuse to be vegan. What we accept and condone without conscience when we are not vegan, is the essence of the ugly prejudice known as speciesism.

All it takes is for us to say 'Enough. Not in my name'. Why not stop refusing to be vegan today?

Jo Frederiks' image of a cat reflects standard procedures in the animal agriculture industry and was intended to illustrate how shocking it seems to us for some species to have this inflicted on them, while when the exact same things are done to the victims of nonvegan consumer demand, the majority turn a blind eye. Judging by the reactions, it seems that many have either no idea that it happens, or else fall for the official line that it 'doesn't hurt' and it's 'for their own good'. It's rarely pointed out that the atrocity that is *all* animal agriculture has evolved conditions where the unnaturally close confinement of vast numbers of victims causes them severe distress and can result in their hurting each other. But it is not their *distress* that the industry is concerned about, rather that by hurting each other, damaged bodies hurt profits. The industry sees the solution as 'cutting off body parts' where an animal rights advocate will point out that the solution is to stop farming victims as it's [completely unnecessary](#).



Image by [Andrew Skowron](#) is of a bowl of piglet tails.

The post drew a vast amount of attention with about 12K reactions and 1.2K shares in a matter of days. The most remarkable thing, however, was the number of trolls it attracted. It's a long time since I've witnessed so much hate and derision, or indeed such a display of ignorance about the both the logistics of animal agriculture, and human nutritional requirements. In addition, if I had not previously known about the diversionary tactic known as '[whataboutism](#)', this would have taught me all I needed to know. Even more disturbing was the number of people who declared themselves prepared to eat any individual with a pulse and thought the whole idea of objecting to needless brutality towards innocent creatures was hilarious. It was as if COP26, with the [dire warnings](#) about the end of fossil fuels and a vital shift to plant

cultivation and consumption had never happened! Nevertheless, provoking strong reactions is definitely better than the apathy that greets many animal rights posts and articles. Clearly it touched several nerves and since the post was simple truth, that can only be seen as a positive thing.

Mutilation as standard practice

It occurred to me that perhaps for many, particularly those who had never considered the subject before, the references to standard practice shown in Jo Frederiks' image might not be clear, so I decided to do this blog just to clarify. In her image of a cat, we see ear tagging and notching, branding and tail docking, and shocking as most people may find this, it's mild compared to what is inflicted on many of our species' victims.

On these hapless innocents, a vast number of mutilations take place and if those who inflict the procedures are to be believed, they all are [for the 'benefit' of the victims \(!\)](#) Not all mutilations are inflicted in every case or in every country; some occur in large-scale establishments, some in so-called 'backyard' or 'hobby' environments, but in the vast majority of cases, the mutilations listed are *not* conducted by vets, are inflicted *without* anaesthetic and include;

- **Pigs:** tooth clipping, castration, tail docking, ear clipping, ear notching, ear tagging, micro chipping, tattooing, nose ringing;
- **Calves/ cows/ bulls:** de-horning or [dis-budding](#), castration, ear clipping, ear notching, ear tagging, micro chipping, tattooing, teat removal, udder flaming, nose ringing, [tongue reshaping](#) (yes, without anaesthetic), tail docking;
- **Sheep:** tail docking, ear clipping, ear notching, ear tagging, micro chipping, tattooing, castration, [mulesing](#);
- **Chickens:** Debeaking aka 'beak trimming', de-spurring, dubbing, toe clipping, pinioning;
- **Ducks:** pinioning;
- **Goats:** castration, de-horning or [dis-budding](#), ear clipping, ear notching, ear tagging, micro chipping, tattooing;
- **Turkeys:** Debeaking aka 'beak trimming, de-snooding, de-toeing;
- **Rabbits:** tattooing;
- **Deer:** ear clipping, ear notching, ear tagging, micro chipping, tattooing; antler removal.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive, either in terms of species or procedures.

In particular, it does not include the [catalogue of horrors](#) that is permitted under the regulations that govern animal testing and vivisection. The link here is an excellent one by Go Vegan World who in the face of a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority, successfully defended the assertion that it is appropriate to use the word 'torture' to describe all animal testing.

Not does it include [artificial insemination procedures](#) that are routinely conducted on most species. This procedure is generally NOT carried out by a vet, and in fact in the case of cows, insemination trainees frequently 'practice' on live individuals who are about to be killed in a slaughterhouse, such is the risk of agonising internal damage by unskilled humans. Again, for any who is unaware, the customary method of inseminating a cow is to tether the victim. An arm is thrust into her rectum to hold her uterus steady so that the other hand inserting the insemination rod in her vagina may be targeted accurately with a shot of semen that has been masturbated from a bull.

Are we really so easy to fool?

I am 100% certain that *no one* who shares their home and their life with a dog, cat or other nonhuman family member would believe the ‘doesn’t hurt/for their own good’ line for even a second. Like all who advocate on our victims’ behalf, I always hope that the honesty and sincerity of my words will allow the truth of the message to shine. But no one has to take my word for it. We have Google at our fingertips. Provided we are discriminating in our investigations and always question whether the author of any article has a vested financial interest in deception – which is sadly very common particularly in matters relating to the use and consumption of our fellow earthlings (as in, ‘doesn’t hurt/for their own good’) – it’s a treasure trove of information that no other generation has ever had at their fingertips.

So, when you look up the terms used here and read about the reality of animal agriculture, please be outraged. Be very outraged. Be outraged *enough* to stop paying for it, and stop refusing to be vegan.

Miscellaneous links:

- [Mutilations in poultry European poultry production systems](#)
- [Tongue reshaping: a new surgical method to prevent self-sucking in dairy cows](#)
- [The Mutilations \(Permitted Procedures\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#)