

'Out of Sight, Out Of Mind' Prevails To Farmed Animal Su

How many animals are killed every year for food in the U.S., and wor
alone: people are still finding these numbers

 FULL TEXT

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SUMMARY BY: ELENA NALON | PUBLISHED: SEPTEMBE



Let's start with the answers: every year approximately 10 billion terrestrial
(data from 2011). For comparison, 7.5 billion are killed in the European Uni
worldwide. This is, of course, if we exclude fish, who are killed by the trillio

The numbers are staggering, which is probably one of the reasons why the However, according to this study, there are other, more complex explanations. Advocacy and veg*n movements, must take these explanations into account effectiveness in driving positive change for animals.

According to the study, there is institutionalized pressure on consumers – from governments – not to reflect too much on how food is produced. Farmed animals under public scrutiny, and the final products no longer resemble in shape or name the animals obtained. The author of the study contends that the other negative effects of factory farming, such as environmental degradation or climate change, also appear to be a result of the degree of awareness of U.S. citizens.

According to the authors, previous studies have reported that most people are unaware of the consequences of industrial livestock production. Apparently, the same author reports the results of an experiment carried out at one private New Jersey university. First-year sociology students were given a lecture on speciesism that included the number of animals slaughtered for food annually in the U.S. and worldwide. The students were given academic credits by answering one exam question on the speciesism lecture.

Of the 155 students that answered the question in the final test, 66% under-estimated the number of animals slaughtered. The response was 65 million, which represents a tiny 0.006% of the real number of animals slaughtered in the U.S. in 2011 (10 billion). Even more surprisingly, the bottom 10% of the students gave the most realistic responses. There were no differences in the responses based on gender. The students who gave the exam overall gave the most realistic responses.

The scope of the experiment was limited, but one conclusion was that even in a population of university students there is a high resistance to acquiring new information about factory farming. In this case the author did not use graphic images to illustrate the consequences of factory farming. The credit did not motivate the students enough to retain information on slaughter. The study gives an indication of the difficulty of, in the words of the author, “putting a price tag on the lives of animals” for citizens and consumers.

The study suggests that a continuous effort to educate the general public (evidence, advocacy) could have strong results in the long run. Even concern for the way farmed animals are treated may eventually become an “enlightenment fatigue”, being tired of too much (harsh) truth. This fatigue with animal suffering and continue in their habits without further questioning require constant work on the part of educators and advocates.

**External Link:**

http://www.coreyleewrenn.com/Pubs/Wrenn_2018_College_Li...

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Elena Nalon is a veterinarian and a passionate advocate for farmed animals, a specialist of the European College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Farm Animals at Eurogroup for Animals, the pan-European animal advocacy organization. Her collaboration with Faunalytics stems from her strong belief in driver education.

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Wrenn, C.L. (2018). College Student Literacy Of Food Animal Slaughter In *Sociology Of Agriculture And Food*. 24(2), 215–228.

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Syd Baume • 2 years ago

The students' underestimates are so shocking, I clicked through to the paper to double-check. What I found is that the author describes the question the students were asked as (under "Methodology"):

"Approximately how many land mammals are killed for food in the United States each year?"

Nowhere else in the paper is "mammals" used. It's always "land animals," as in:

"Students were told the estimated number of land animals killed in the United States each year as of 2011 (approximately 10 billion) ..."

So either there's a typo ("mammals") in the published paper or the students were not so far off, because they excluded 9 billion or so birds from their estimates. This could also explain the low answer rate. Students may have been confused by the word "mammals" if they were lectured about the number of "animals" killed annually.

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