



Intensive Animal Farming

Ethical Theories Approach INDE410

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ABSTRACT

This report contains a brief introduction about Intensive Animal Farming and the advantages and disadvantages of such practice. Later in the report we will see a section relating ethical theories to this practice.

Introduction

Intensive animal farming is the process of raising huge amounts of farm animals (or livestock) in relatively small places in order to supply to the livestock market. The technique began in the 19th century with the inauguration of the industrial revolution.

Pros

A Good Business to Be In: Factory farming is a great business to be in from a profit standpoint. With low costs associated with general upkeep of animals in the factory, low costs associated with food, and relatively low wages compared to other professions.

Cons

Animals Suffer: They are often pinned and incapable of moving, in pain, fattened up, shot full of hormones and medicine, and sometimes forced to eat. The majority of meat in the United States directly comes from animals suffering.

Damages The Environment: Raising so many animals together requires having the resources to feed, shelter, and keep healthy the animals. Factory farming produces a lot of waste. While a small amount of animal waste can be worked into the soil as fertilizer, the waste created by factory farms is enormous that it has to be stored and treated.

Public health: Millions of people have died as a consequence of diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, and obesity and even type 2 diabetes. The leading cause of all these diseases is animal meat! Some may

argue that we need animal protein for the development of muscles and organs. However, renowned scholar E. Giovannucci demonstrated in his publication '*Risk factors for prostate cancer incidence and progression in the health professionals follow-up study. Int J Cancer, 2007*' that we can obtain proteins and amino acids vital for our body from various grains, fruits and vegetables.

Deontological approach

Kantian theory states that the ethical position judges the morality regarding the actions. If we recall the harshness of intensive animal farming, we will see the animal cruelty and the mistreatment Kantian mentioned once that "Animals are morally uninteresting" since they are irrational thinking creatures. On the other side, he states that people whom cause suffering to animals are likely to poses this behavior on other humans. "Immaneul Kant was all about Duty", as we can see there are two separate duties in intensive animal farming, the duty of the farmer in which he/she mistreats the animals and the duty of the manager that is to provide best products with more profit. The farmer's motives regarding animals are immoral despite the consequence, which makes their duties unethical. Moving forward to the last implications in deontology is the universality principle that defines in its first formulation the categorical imperative. The maxim arises to notice and in this case the maxim would be to universalize the slaughtering of animals randomly anywhere at anytime. Concluding the ethical theory, we can notice the unethical behavior towards animals that has been practiced in intensive animal farming.

Utilitarianism Approach

The utilitarian approach consists of judging actions while focusing only on the consequences of these actions, regardless of the intentions behind them. Balance sheets are most commonly used to find out whether an action is morally ethical. There are two kinds of people that benefit from intensive animal farming: meat eaters, who are happy because it provides affordable food, and the meat industry, since it is profitable. Approximately 10% of the human population eats meat out of the meat industry, which gives us approximately 730 million people benefiting from the consequences of the meat industry. It also employs around 6.2 million people/year that can be added on the people benefiting.

The people not benefitting from intensive animal farming are the people that are dying of hunger (7.6 Million), since food used to feed cattle and chicken can end world hunger. Other people unhappy with the consequences of intensive animal farming are people dying of diseases that it causes. 7.4 million people are dying of heart disease, which is mainly caused by processing meat. Those numbers give us the following balance sheet:

People dying of hunger	-7,665,000
People eating meat	730,000,000
People benefiting from meat industry	6,200,000
People dying of heart disease	-7,400,000
	+721,135,000

As we can see, we have a positive output from intensive animal farming, which makes it an ethical action, since 721 million people are happy with it.

When we need to include human in balance sheet, we go back to the words of Jeremy Bentham, creator of the utilitarian theory. He once said: "the question is not, can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But can they suffer?". Scientists in Cambridge came down to a conclusion and signed the animal conscience treaty, proving that animals have a conscience and can feel pain, hence, they can suffer. Since that answers Jeremy Bentham's question, we can now add the number of animals being killed per year by using a ratio of 10:1 because a human life is more valuable than animal's life:

People dying of hunger	-7,665,000
People dying of heart disease	-7,400,000
People eating meat	730,000,000
People benefiting from meat industry	6,200,000
Cattle:	-140,000,000
Pigs:	-110,400,000
Chickens:	-5,024,300,000
Layer hens:	-36,968,300
Turkeys:	-87,124,500
	-4,677,657,800

We can see that there are 4.6 billion lives unhappy of the consequences of intensive animal farming. This balance sheet shows that according to the utilitarian theory, intensive animal farming is highly unethical.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we have established that intensive animal farming is harmful for the environment, the animals' and humans' health. We have also proved by using the utilitarian and deontological approach that intensive animal farming is highly unethical. There are alternatives to intensive animal farming but they all require a great deal of funding. Human race should be aware of the consequence of Intensive Animal Farming and should take an action.

References

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en.wikipedia.org

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