

# SO YOU SAY YOU LOVE ANIMALS... THEN WHY ARE YOU EATING THEM?

In Canada, misery is a way of life for the animals that we consume. Animals suffer a wide variety of abuses from the time that they are born to their final hours in the slaughterhouse. Here are just a few of the abuses that animals typically suffer for the pleasure of our taste buds.

**Psychological Stress:** Imagine being jailed with three friends in a tiny cage for one year. Your cage is so small you can never spread your arms. You and your friends go mad, you claw and kick each other brutally. This is reality for the vast majority of egg chickens in Canada. Cows, pigs, and other animals also suffer from a range of psychological stresses due to confining conditions.



**Physical Ailments:** Aside from the psychological misery, confinement causes a number of injuries and ailments in farm animals that often go untreated. According to a University of Guelph study, an estimated “30% of growing pigs suffer from ulcers, and between 10 and 40% may eventually die from the ailment.”

**Killer heat waves:** During heat waves, death and suffering has been widespread among animals in Canadian agricultural operations, because industry believes the cost of air conditioning exceeds the cost of animals’ deaths.



**Traumatic transport:** In Canada, en route to slaughter, federal regulations permit these animals to be transported without food or water for 36 to 72 hours, depending on the species. “There isn’t the staff to enforce transportation regulations and the penalties have not been stiff enough to discourage careless truckers,” says the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS).

**Inhumane slaughter:** In a survey of Canadian slaughterhouses, renowned farm-animal behaviourist Dr. Temple Grandin found widespread abuse and inhumane slaughter—including improper stunning leading to painful slaughter, dragging of crippled animals, and leaving crippled animals to die lingering deaths. A Government survey of Canadian slaughterhouses further documented: throat-cutting of conscious hens; ineffective throat cutting in ritual plants; and extreme pre-slaughter stress for animals.

**But why care about animals? A question of philosophy...**

The view that animals exist for human purposes dominates mainstream thought and is deeply ingrained in our culture. Many veg\*ns believe that because animals are sentient creatures capable of pain and pleasure it is illogical to exclude them from ‘moral consideration.’ To do so is a form of discrimination called “speciesism” which can be compared to sexism and racism. We will only see real progress towards improving the lives of animals as people shift their thinking away from seeing their existence for human purposes. As individuals we may not be able to change the world, but we can take that first step within ourselves.

Resources:

Dr. Ian Duncan, Professor of Poultry Ethology, University of Guelph

Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor of Animal Science, Colorado State University

Dr. David Fraser, farm-animal research scientist, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Animal Health Division

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

Taking the animal-free plunge has never been easier or more essential than it is today.

For more information, please see our Web site at [www.ncva.ca](http://www.ncva.ca).

“There’s a schizoid quality to our relationship with animals, in which sentiment and brutality exist side by side. Half the dogs in America will receive Christmas presents this year, yet few of us pause to consider the miserable life of the pig—an animal easily as intelligent as a dog—that becomes the Christmas ham.”  
The New York Times Magazine  
“An Animal’s Place,” by Michael Pollan, 11/10/02

