

Dear sir, madam

I would like to thank you for giving this matter a careful consideration. Equally, I am thankful for the ability to express my view on this important matter.

Animal abuse deserves to be assessed properly and deserves to be given a considerate thought and attention. No innocent animal should be allowed to be abused (whether it's a dog, cat or pig) and those that do abuse them should be made accountable and brought to justice. However, without some sort of protection to whistle blowers, animal abuse becomes normal and in fact unreported.

Some recent footage provided by the animal activists has showed the most horrendous practices that animals have been subjected on animal farms in Australia. These footages can be found online, collected and/or exposed by animal activists. This can be further seen in the movie Dominion. The evidence of abuse exists and instead of focusing on dealing with the perpetrators of the horrific abuse, the focus has shifted on the people that are exposing the cruel practices. Can you imagine what the world would be like if we are unable to expose crimes, bullying, sexual and violent acts committed by perpetrators, due to fear of imprisonments? Is this the world that we are encouraging, by imposing penalties on those who bring the truth?

Farmers have recently claimed that the animal activists:

- Are invading their property
- Threatening their families
- Are posing biosecurity risk

To date, there has been no evidence to substantiate any of the allegations by farmers. There is no evidence to show animal activists entering the farmer's home. There is no evidence to show that farmers are being threatened by the activists. On the contrary, there are many counts of threats directed at the activists on social media, threatening their lives and their families. This in particular relates to some female activists.

There is also no evidence to substantiate allegations of biosecurity threat. These terms have been thrown around as a scare tactic without a single evidence being provided to support the unjustified allegation against the activist.

The farms in UK, France and some of the other countries have CCTV cameras installed, which monitors the treatments of animals in slaughter houses. We don't have anything similar here in Australia. Activists are not welcomed on the farms, nor is anybody else. Currently there is no body or organisation that oversees or investigates animal abuse on farms (if the animals are bred for meat consumption). That means that animals can lay injured for days or months without proper treatments, that workers can take out their frustration on the innocent animals and there is a footage of this occurring on our own Aussie farms (live chicken being put in boiling water, live chicken having their heads pulled off by workers and sheep being slaughtered alive and then their heads being kicked by a worker for fun). This is appalling and no human being in this country would support this practice and if it wasn't for the courageous work by animals activists, none of this would

be known to public. Australian public deserve to know this information as there isn't a single person in this country that would support the harming and abusing of animals.

Also, let's not forget the health and wellbeing of the workers on these farms. They are paid to slaughter animals day after day and work in conditions that are unsafe and unpredictable. Their mental and physical health has been impacted on and working in the farming industry is one of the most dangerous industries in which to work, according to Safe Work Australia. For your reference, I have attached a document 'Work-related injuries and fatalities on Australian farms, March 2013' showing concerning statistics of worker injuries and fatalities on Aussie farms. These are not unsubstantiated claims; these are real facts from the reported and investigated incidents. If not for the animals, then better protection ought to be offered to those workers. The farmers need to be accountable and held responsible for unsafe practices and unsafe workplace. CCTV cameras would minimise the risk of farmers cutting corners and making them accountable for providing safer workplace for its workers.

I have seen outcry about the closure of Gippy Goat Café whereby the owners of the café have pleaded to public for compassion about the closure of the business. The media also supported this story, empathising with the café owners. However, they failed to report the other side of the story. While the café was operating under the pretence that animals are being cared for, there is a very different footage, taken by some of the animal activists that show injured and neglected animals on this same farm, although not in view of public. It is not acceptable to be seen to be looking after some animals while abusing the rest. Unfortunately, Channel 7 did not report on the injured animals, however made headlines about the closure of the business and the blame of animal activist, which is incorrect.

Channel 7, like all media outlets run their own undercover investigations and expose the murderers, abusers and the likes. Animal activists exposing and reporting on animal abuse should not be any different and should not be treated as a criminal activity. If there was a vigilance and body/organisation overseeing and policing the farm industry, the animal activist would not need to place their life at risk by trying to expose harmful practices on Aussie farms.

Similarly, if farmers were penalised for abusing animals and not providing treatments when needed, the public could be assured that those animals are looked after, to an extent. At the moment, this protection to animals is non-existent. Basically, farmers can do as they please (docking their tails and castrating animals without the anaesthetic, grounding up male chickens or killing male baby cows at only 10 days old) for the sake of making a profit.

By all means, I appreciate that farmers are of the belief that they are 'entitled' to do what they like with the purchased animals, but if I or my VET subjected my dog to the same cruelty (cutting his tail off or castrating him with the use of anaesthetic and pain killers), I would have RSPCA, local Council and possible media knocking on my door. I would be named and shamed, prosecuted and my dog would be taken away from me. The same would apply to my VET. What difference does it make if it's a dog or sheep – I ask you? They both feel the pain.

I appreciate your task in having to decide on such difficult and humane subject. I ask that you please consider the evidence put before you, not just unsupported claims by farmers and unsubstantiated allegations.

I ask that you please don't differentiate between farm animals and domestic animals when considering animal abuse and cruelty. No animal should be harmed when there is no necessity for it. No worker should risk their life and health when attending their workplace.

In 21 century, there has to be a better system for exposing animal cruelty and we should not be going backwards by persecuting whistle blowers rather than the perpetrators.

Thank you for your time.

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