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Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture Lee Hawkins

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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The aim of animal rights activism is to bring awareness of the cruelty involved in businesses which exploit animals for profit, be they agricultural, entertainment, clothing or testing facilities. Only by raising awareness will the public learn the truth of the horrors inflicted on sentient beings in the name of profit. While animal ag might like to claim transparency, they deliberately choose to keep so many of their "standard industry practices" secret simply because they know consumers wouldn't support them with their dollars if they were aware of the truth. The marketing lies - such as "free range" and "humane" - also need to be exposed so that consumers realize they are being misled when they choose to purchase these products of animal abuse.

When footage from farms is released as a result of these actions, the industry is keen to claim the abuses that are always documented as being "isolated incidents" and they don't represent the care and high welfare farmers show to their animals. Every such action at a farm results in documented abuses of animals, whether those abuses fall within the "legal" or "illegal" category surely doesn't matter (e.g. it is legal and RSPCA approved to mince up day old male chicks in the poultry business). The industry will always claim that the images are misrepresenting their operations, yet these are just records of the reality seen on these farms. These are businesses driven to profit from the animals in their "care", all of which are ultimately killed at a fraction of their natural lifespan. There is no morally-justifiable reason for a human living in Australia in 2019 to consume any products from animals, so these industries are not only cruel but also completely unnecessary in the 21st century.

The claims of bio security issues caused by activists entering farms, of violence inflicted by activists, and farmers being frightened for their lives are all distractions - and unfounded. The animal rights and vegan movements are peaceful ones, promoting compassion to all beings and there are no substantiated cases of farmers or their families being victims of violence by such activists (the contrary is certainly not true, however).

We have a moral obligation to end the completely unnecessary suffering of animals and animal rights activists are seeking to achieve this by bringing light to the darkness of animal agriculture. We should

always look at issues of injustice through the eyes of the victims - the farmers are not the victims here but much of their narrative against the work of animal rights activists seeks to make them look like the victims (job security, financial concerns, etc.) It is as though animal agriculture is the only type of farming, when increasing demand for more sustainable, less cruel and healthier plant-based products opens up huge opportunities for those willing to be more open to a life lived differently, a business not based on exploiting and ultimately killing every animal in its care.

Legality always lags behind reaching higher levels of morality and we only need look to history to see this - the end of human slavery wasn't achieved by improvements to slave welfare and recommendations by slave owners, it was only achieved by dedicated activism seeking to end a practice that was against the moral compass of humans in the 20th century. Maybe in the 21st century, we can finally extend our compassion to non-human animals and end the slavery, exploitation, cruelty and abuse that exists only to further the profits of the animal agriculture industry (and meanwhile also causes such damage to our environment and the "products" of which contribute significantly to all of our major human health problems) - we will only achieve this based on the passionate work of animal rights activists seeking to expose the truth, it can't be right for these efforts to become criminalized.

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File1:

File2:

File3: