

Bioethical Symposium

234 Introduction. R. D. Reynnells*, *USDA/CSREES/PAS*.

WCC-204, Animal Bioethics, is a multi-state research committee that seeks to increase understanding of complex issues, minimize conflicts, yet provide opportunities for honest dialogue to improve food animal well-being during production and processing. There should be recognition that: farmers are good stewards of their land and animals given the various constraints under which they operate; activists are correct in some of their concerns; bad actors exist in agriculture and all other endeavors; education is preferred to regulations because a commitment to change brings lasting change, and oversight costs are lower; and, all costs of food animal production should be considered in these discussions. Progress in well-being and ethical issues has been hampered by inconsistencies between consumer demands and purchase patterns, and negative situations evidenced by numerous charges and counter-charges by participants in these debates. Many situations create a backdrop of mutual mistrust amid attempts to force changes on food animal industries. Corporatism occurs in agriculture, activist groups, and all retail outlets yet negative campaigns focus on agriculture and ignore the impact of these other corporate structures on animal well-being and rural society. Honest discussion and education of decision makers, students, and society in general is essential to arrive at a logical and defensible position on ethical issues related to food animal well-being during production and processing.

Key Words: Bioethics, Well-being, Corporatism, Education, Regulation

235 Development of contemporary world issues courses: Opportunities and pitfalls. J. F. Stephens* and G. H. Schmidt, *The Ohio State University, Columbus OH*.

The development and teaching of contemporary issues courses provide unique opportunities for expanding influence, service to the university, and professional development. During the last decade there has been a proliferation of such courses centered on the issue of human exploitation of other animals. The Ohio State University's general education curriculum initiated in 1990 includes a requirement that senior students complete a five-credit course in the category Issues of the Contemporary World. Currently, 27 courses are offered in this category - five by members of the College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences faculty. Our course, entitled Issues Concerning the Use of Animals by Humans, was the first from the college included in this category. The course has been offered each year since 1990 - four quarters per year since 1992. Challenges included gaining course approval through a special oversight committee, enhancing visibility of the course outside the college, instructor education, and control of personal biases. The development of this type of course is, necessarily, a continuous process. Instruction of the course has been challenging, enlightening, and extremely rewarding.

Key Words: Contemporary issues, Instruction, Animal rights