# Animal Exploitation Fact Sheet

Non-human animals are exploited and abused in many ways, including:

- raising them for food and clothing;
- in entertainments such as rodeos and circuses;
- the killing of native and introduced animals;
- testing medicines, cosmetics and household products and in scientific experiments of many kinds;
- when companion animals are abused or neglected.

Animals are often regarded as commodities, and their well-being is considered important only insofar as it effects productivity and profit. But they are sentient beings, and they require greater consideration.

Not all issues can be addressed in this Fact Sheet, other Fact Sheets (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/) cover these issues more thoroughly.

## + Farm Animals

Animals kept in intensive farming systems endure restrictions in their movement, space allowance and social contact. Such intensive animal housing systems cause suffering and stress to animals by preventing the animals' natural behaviour, increasing the likelihood of disease and by causing physical injury and deformities.

Animals suffer from serious stress during transportation by road or train, as well as exposing them to a high possibility of dehydration, hunger, cold, heat, bruising, broken limbs, lacerations and suffocation. Particular problems occur with large animals in multi-deck or inadequately sized crates and with the transport of pregnant animals.

## + Chicken Production

IIn intensive production units, thousands of broiler chickens (chickens reared for meat) are kept in darkened sheds with a stocking density of up to 20 per square metre. They are bred to grow as fast as possible and killed when they are 6-7 weeks old. It is estimated that around 4% die before reaching slaughter weight. Causes of death and suffering include:

**Crippling**
Meat chickens have been selected for their very high growth rate, which, combined with the lack of exercise, results in leg bones unable to support the bird's weight, resulting in bent or twisted legs and toes, slipped tendons, deformed vertebrae and arthritis, all of which inflict extreme pain.

**Disease**

As with all intensive animal housing, the housing of chickens in a crowded and contaminated environment greatly increases the likelihood of spread of infectious diseases, such as salmonellosis and various respiratory diseases. The recent outbreaks of bird flu in Asia and elsewhere indicate the risks, both to humans and chickens, of keeping chickens in intensive conditions.

See also: Broiler Chicken Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/broiler_chickens.php)

## + Egg Production

In the intensive egg production system (battery system), hens are kept in small wire cages, 3 or 4 to a cage. Battery cages are stacked tier upon tier on long rows, in large sheds which can hold up to 50,000 birds.

Battery cages fail to provide for the physical and behavioural well-being of hens. The hens suffer poor bone development from lack of exercise, pecking from other hens, overcrowding, as well as foot, feather and skin damage caused by abrasion from the wire floor and walls.

They are also denied natural behaviours such as nesting, dust bathing and foraging, and are subjected to unnaturally long light cycles in order to increase their laying rates.

These conditions lead to frustration, aggressiveness, and cannibalism. To prevent cannibalism, hens are debeaked by having up to half of the upper beak and one third of the lower beak cut off. Such a cut through nerves causes immediate and often, permanent pain in the beak stump.

Because they have no use in the intensive egg production system, millions of male chicks are killed every year.

At the end of their 'productive' life (12-18 months) layer hens (then also called 'spent' hens, 'end of lay' hens or 'cull' hens) are taken from their cages and transported to slaughtering establishments.

Up to 55% of hens sustain at least one broken bone by the time they reach the stage of pre-slaughter stunning. Brittle and weak bones result from osteoporosis and inadequate exercise in battery cages increase the incidence of bone breakage and suffering caused by callous handling.

See also: Meet Betty the Battery Hen (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/freebetty/battery_hens.php)

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## + Intensive Pig Farming

Intensive piggeries fail to provide for the physical and behavioural well-being of pigs. Intensively housed pigs suffer from stress, increased susceptibility to disease, leg deformities and behavioural deprivation.

Female pigs for breeding are denied access to nesting material and are kept in single crates with insufficient room to move or turn around. When piglets are born, the design of the crate denies the sows appropriate and full physical contact with their mother. Piglets have their teeth clipped, ears notched and tails docked, all without anaesthetic.

Given the widespread suffering inherent in intensive pig farming, there is an urgent need to develop and implement more humane housing systems such as outdoor straw yards which include rooting areas, kennels, and enough space to meet the pigs' behavioural requirements.

See also: SaveBabe.com Campaign (http://www.savebabe.com/)

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## + Extensive Sheep Industry

Reared for wool and possibly also meat production, millions of sheep suffer and die annually in Australia as a result of inadequate management practices.

In southern climates, newly shorn sheep, new born lambs and pregnant and mothering ewes frequently die from exposure. In hot conditions, particularly in the arid and semi-arid areas, sheep often die of starvation, thirst or heat stroke.

Sheep are also routinely subjected to painful mutilations such as mulesing, tail docking and castration, all without anaesthetic. Mulesing, intended to prevent fly-strike in some sheep strains such as merinos, involves the cutting off of skin folds around the tail area , without anaesthetic. Scientific observations have shown it is an intensely painful procedure.

See also: Surgical Mutilations Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/surcical_mutilations.php)

## + Dairy Farming

In intensive dairy farms, cows are usually artificially inseminated to increase their breeding rates. Unnaturally frequent pregnancies, along with insemination with semen from large breeds (for the veal industry) cause difficult and painful calving and may cause internal organ damage. As a result, a dairy cow's life expectancy is significantly shortened.

Calves are generally separated from their mothers shortly after birth and killed for 'baby veal', or raised artificially for the veal industry or herd replacement. Separation causes both mother and offspring to suffer emotionally and physically.

See also: Dairy Cows Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/dairy_cows.php)

## + Live Exports

Many millions of animals, mostly sheep and cattle, are exported live by sea to countries in the Middle East and South East Asia.

Live export is generally justified by claiming that importing countries require animals to be slaughtered according to religious requirements, principally Halal. There is little basis for this claimed justification, as a number of Australian abattoirs perform slaughter of animals in a manner acceptable to Moslem consumers.

In the live sheep export industry, in an average year about fifty thousand sheep die during the sea journey. Those that survive have a high chance of suffering injuries, illnesses such as salmonellosis and pneumonia, constant stress, climatic extremes, inability to eat pellet feed and poor and crowded housing conditions. Other welfare concerns include unloading at multiple ports; inadequate feedlot facilities in the importing countries; and lack of control by Australian authorities over the treatment of the sheep in the country of destination.

See also: LiveExport-Indefensible.com (http://www.liveexport-indefensible.com/)

## + Companion Animals

Animals kept commonly as companion animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, horses and guinea pigs are often kept in inadequate conditions. Tens of thousands of unwanted animals are surrendered to animal shelters each year, and many of these are killed when new homes cannot be found for them. Many more are abandoned in areas where their likely fate is death by accident, starvation, disease or predators.

Companion animals should be identified (permanently and painlessly) to ensure their safe return if lost or stolen, and to encourage owners to take responsibility towards the animals in

their care.

See also: Companion Animals Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/companion_animals.php)

## + Native Wildlife

Increasing numbers of native Australian animals are being exploited because they are seen to have some commercial value. Often, the exploitation is justified by the relevant industry when the species is considered a 'pest'.

Methods of killing wild animals are often inhumane while capture, farming, as well as trade practices, frequently put the welfare of the animals at risk. Transportation of live native animals for trade often results in high mortality.

Confinement of wild animals, whether captive bred or not, causes suffering due to stress, behavioural deprivation and increased susceptibility to disease and the possibility of physical injury. Native animals kept as companion animals need specialised attention but often suffer from poor care and inadequate housing.

## + Wildlife Population Control

Control of native animal populations is commonly undertaken in Australia when the animals are regarded as 'pests' because they are perceived to destroy crops or to compete with, or predate on, farm animals.

Traditional control methods, including shooting, poisoning and trapping, are generally ineffective in the long-term, indiscriminate, and are responsible for causing pain and suffering to both target and non-target animals.

Despite being banned in many countries, the steel-jaw trap, one of the most brutal and indiscriminate population control methods, is still being used, particularly in Australia for the control of dingoes.

Once trapped, an animal will often gnaw at its trapped limb in an effort to release it. As well as experiencing severe pain from the injury sustained from the trap, trapped animals also suffer from fear, dehydration, weather conditions or predation or attacks from other animals.

## + Duck Shooting

Each year, during the open shooting season, countless native ducks are killed or injured for recreation.

Shooting causes pain, suffering, fear, stress and death to the ducks, but also to non-game birds, and other animals. The frequent killing and wounding of protected or endangered birds is of particular concern.

It is established thatduck shooters wound at least as many birds as they kill outright, simply because of the inaccuracy of shotguns, which are used in duck shooting.

In addition, duck shooting contributes to environmental contamination by lead from shotgun pellets, tonnes of which remain in the environment. Birds and other species can suffer lead poisoning as a result of ingesting these pellets.

See also: Duck Shooting Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/duck_shooting.php)

## + Hunting

It is a curious thing that hunting and killing animals for fun is tolerated in Australian society. Hunters often seek to justify this by claiming that hunting is necessary to control the populations of animals. However, it is surely more accurate to say that they are just satisfying their bloodlust.

Hunted animals are likely to suffer stress, pain and injury before being killed in a hunt. Young animals whose mothers have been killed will usually starve to death.
The most common hunting weapons are guns, but knives and bows and arrows are also used by hunters. Inexperienced hunters and those who are not very skilled are likely to injure a large proportion of their prey.

In duck, fox, pig and deer hunting, dogs are used to track, attack and/or retrieve the preys. Dogs may cause, and in some cases (pig hunting), suffer, extensive injuries.

## + Kangaroos, Euros & Wallabies

Commercial and non-commercial shooting and poisoning are cruel and wasteful methods of solving the alleged 'pest' problem caused by some kangaroos, euros and wallabies.

Although macropods are 'protected' wildlife in all Australian States and Territories, the kangaroo industry is responsible for the world's largest land-based commercial slaughter. The primary motivation in commercial kangaroo shooting is maximum profit, not pest control, animal welfare or wildlife conservation.

As the shooting is highly dispersed and done at night, it is almost impossible to supervise for the detection of cruel and illegal practices. An RSPCA Australia study in 1985 showed that 15% of kangaroos shot by commercial shooters died inhumanely. The proportion is even higher for non-commercial shooting.

Joeys whose mothers have been killed may be left to starve.

See also: Kangaroos Shooting (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/issues/kangaroo_shooting.php)

## + Fishing

Fishing in all forms means pain and stress for millions of fish every year. Unfortunately, due to widespread public misinformation and ignorance, fish are generally not effectively protected by animal welfare legislation and are therefore subject to inhumane fishing practices.

In line fishing, suffering occurs when the hook pierces the fish's flesh; when the animal is being pulled out of the water whereupon it slowly suffocates; and when the hook is removed while the fish is still alive. Pain is further increased for large fish when gaff hooks are used to pull them out of the water.

In drag-netting, fish are subject to drastic changes in ambient pressures resulting in damage to internal organs and gills. They also suffer from compression under the weight of other fish in nets, and from suffocation.

Livebaiting involves additionally the suffering of the bait, a small live fish threaded onto a hook, often through both eye sockets. Live baits may be dragged in the water for long periods of time, until a predator attacks them.

In big game fishing, 'playing on the line', sometimes for hours, causes intense suffering and panic to the fish. In fish farms, fish can suffer from stress and diseases when they are kept in overstocked and unnatural conditions.

See also: Fish & Crustaceans Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/fish_crustaceans.php)

## + Circuses

Circus living conditions almost inevitably do not meet the welfare and behavioural needs of performing circus animals.

Animals in circuses endure suffering due to caging , inadequate social and environmental stimulation, the rigours of transportation and training and performing regimes.

Keeping animals to perform in circuses is particularly problematical where it involves wild exotic animal species as it denies their most basic behavioural needs. Animals such as elephants and camels are usually tethered, chained or kept in small enclosures. Tigers, lions bears or monkeys spend most of their lives in small bare cages, with little exercise. Often they only leave their cages when they are performing in the ring.

Animals such as elephants and primates, who in their native habitat live within rich and complex social structures, are mostly alone or in the company of only a few members of their species.

Instead of covering large distances to catch prey, circus lions and tigers can only pace up and down their small cages. Instead of foraging for food in family groups, lonely circus elephants are often seen rocking from side to side - a stereotyped behaviour acknowledged by animal scientists as a sign of chronic stress.

## + Whaling

There is no humane way to kill whales. Their death is slow and inhumane, brought about by explosive devices and harpoons.

There are cruelty-free alternatives for all products derived from whales, and even indigenous peoples are no longer dependent on whaling for their survival.

## + Horse Racing

Commercial horse racing, by its nature, often places financial considerations ahead of the welfare of the animals involved.

During racing and training horses endure high physical and psychological stress.

Racing is particularly dangerous for young horses whose physical development is not complete. When ill health or age prevents them from winning races and providing a financial advantage to their owners, racing horses are often sold and transported for hundreds of kilometres to knackeries.

The most dangerous form of racing is jump racing, including hurdling and steeplechasing, whereby the combination of fatigue, pre-existing injury, speed, stress and potential errors of judgement by both horse and rider, contribute to a high risk of injury and death.

See also: Horse racing: the glitz, the glamour, the grim reality (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/issues/horse_racing.php)

## + Animals in Research

The majority of animals used in research are subjected to some degree of pain or stress during the experimental procedure or as a result of the environment in which they are kept prior to or after the procedures.

The public perception that animal-based research primarily takes place in the field of medicine is false. Animal-based research is widely used in agriculture and basic scientific research.

The use of animals in teaching at all levels of secondary and tertiary education is still widespread. The majority of such teaching is not directed towards veterinary practice nor training in clinical procedures in humans.

**Change is overdue. Animals should not be viewed as mere tools for research and education. Meaningful reform measures are needed immediately to:**

- Place the onus on the researcher to prove that no non-animal alternatives exist and that the experiment has not already been conducted.
- Eliminate pain and suffering caused by the research process;
- Effect a significant annual reduction in the number of animals used in research and teaching; and
- Develop, validate and adopt non-animal techniques in research and teaching.

**Alternatives to Animal Testing**
There are already many alternatives to animals which have been developed, particularly in the areas of toxicity testing and teaching.

Cell culture is a particular example of a rapidly-developing technique which has the potential to replace many tests which currently involve the use of animals.

The failure to use alternatives is too often caused by inertia, lack of funding, and reluctance to change from established methods.

See also: Animal Experimentation Fact Sheet (http://www.AnimalsAustralia.org/factsheets/animal_experimentation.php)

Animals Australia
the voice for animals

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