

Sexist Oppression

A slap in the face to motherhood

With mother's day this weekend, why not recognize the bonds of motherhood in *all* animals – particularly mothers who most need our help, such as those stuck in factory farms. By exploiting billions of females for their reproductive qualities, modern agribusiness is a slap in the face to motherhood that should have caring Americans calling for dramatic changes through boycotts and reform.

To comprehend how this exploitation works, let's consider the three worst examples of female animal mistreatment: pigs, hens, and cows used for milk.

Pigs: Thousands of female pigs suffer their whole lives as "breeders" to continuously pump out the next generation of pork. These mothers-to-be spend their entire four-month pregnancies stuck in a "gestation crate" so confining they can't even turn around, without any comfortable bedding or positive stimulation. Once she gives birth, the industry only allows her to nurse for a few weeks before they remove her babies to fatten them up for eventual slaughter. Then the mother is again sexually violated through artificial insemination and put back in a gestation crate. This cycle of suffering typically continues for four or five years until her "breeding production" dies down and she is sent to slaughter.



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Cows used for milk: Despite California's fraudulent "happy cow" cheese campaign, dairy cows are increasingly being raised on dry lots instead of pastureland. Constantly impregnated to keep their unnaturally engorged udders lactating, cows are hooked up to milk machines several times daily for the majority of their nine-month pregnancies. When a mother delivers, she is only allowed to nurse her calf for a few days before the farmer separates them, despite their days of bellowing. Male calves become veal (notoriously inhumane), while female calves become the next enslaved generation of dairy cows, doomed to the same fate as their moms. After about five pregnancies, the mother's "reward" for a life of servitude is to become hamburger or dog food.

Egg-laying hens: Mother hens do not get to raise their babies on factory farms. Born at a sterile hatchery, male chicks are killed by suffocation or grinding because they're economically useless. The female chicks are painfully "de-beaked" with a hot blade to reduce pecking deaths when the industry crowds them into "battery" cages together. Their feathers often rub raw against the cages and bones may break due to osteoporosis from severe calcium loss due to unnaturally high egg production. In some cases, the industry shocks the hens' bodies into another egg-laying cycle by keeping them in darkness without food or water for up to 18 days, which typically kills 5 to 10 percent of them. After one year of life, they are typically considered "spent hens" and sent to slaughter. Since birds are not covered by the Humane Slaughter Act, stunning is optional at the slaughterhouse, or the farmer can grind them alive as animal feed on-site.

Let's trade places with theses animals and imagine if *your mother* were:

- Enslaved as a breeder in a tiny crate her whole life.
- Constantly impregnated as many times as physically possible but never allowed to raise or be with any of her children because her babies were considered "property" of others who are profiting off their bodies.
- Selectively bred with hormones to have profitable, gorging mammary glands, pumped by machine, not for her baby, but so adults of another species could needlessly drink her milk...
- Crowded in indoor cages with other women her whole life to have her menstrual products (eggs) harvested for consumption.
- Killed before middle-age because she was deemed "spent" when her reproduction rate slowed down and was less profitable.

Certainly, these egregious injustices against women would be considered a shocking act of sexist oppression that would be condemned and outlawed by all compassionate citizens. So in a civilized feminist society, why do we allow it to happen to *any* females? Luckily, this needless exploitation *can* be stopped – by you. Simply withdraw your financial support from animal agribusiness and put it into more humane proteins like nuts, soymilks, tofu, beans, peas and whole grains. This Mother's Day, make a pledge to help *all* mothers by ending their suffering. Feel good about choosing vegetable protein instead of buying someone else's stolen milk, eggs or flesh.

Carrie Packwood Freeman is a doctoral student, UO School of Journalism & Communication. For recipes and info on the many advantages of a vegan diet, see www.vegforlife.org and www.whyvegan.com

DON'T MOCK RELIGION

I am appalled that *EW* would run an advertisement like the ODOT ad that appeared in the April 21 issue on page 9 depicting a businessman meditating. I don't understand why it is acceptable to make a joke out of the Buddhist religion. The photo and words used were mocking and demeaning, and I would really think the *EW* should know better. Maybe not the *R-G*, but you guys?

I doubt I will ever see a taxpayer-funded ad making light of Christianity. How about a photo of someone taking communion and a few jokes about being bathed in the blood of the lamb? Perhaps Jesus on the crucifix with some cute caption advertising sunscreen? ODOT would never touch it, nor I'm sure would you. America's lack of respect for any religion that is not Christian is horrific. I am saddened that you are also buying into it.

Kelly Hinrichs
Eugene

FIRE DATE GIRL

I find the "Date Girl" section of your paper to be patently offensive. Yes, I can, and do, often choose to ignore it. It just seems so out of place to me in a paper that seems to pride itself on "consciousness raising," not "consciousness lowering." Obviously Date Girl is written by a woman that doesn't think too highly of herself, or of men. It seems to be written by someone who has an unhealthy preoccupation with the sexual side of dating. She's also arrogant and demeaning. Please fire Date Girl and put in its place a new dating section written by that *awesome* writer who writes your astrology section. He is thoughtful, positive, and mood lifting. Just what Eugene is all about.

Ken Moss
Yachats

NUCLEAR TAILSPIN

In grade school I learned that the stability of our government is based on the balance of power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Passage of the "nuclear option" (eliminating filibuster on judicial appointments) will send us into a destabilized tailspin.

Upton Sinclair warned us in his novel *It Can't Happen Here* that fascists CAN take over. The "nuclear option" is a huge step in that direction.

Eldon Haines
Eugene

FIX MEASURE 37

Property owners and the general public of Oregon would benefit from a temporary moratorium on all Measure 37 claims until the Oregon Legislature has an opportunity to fix the law. Whether or not you like Measure

37, it has serious problems that are costing Oregonians money, treating property owners inconsistently, and destroying prime agricultural lands.

Measure 37 is applied by local governments, and it is being applied inconsistently to property owners depending upon where they live. Claims in one county receive blanket waivers of land use regulations, while similarly situated claimants in another county face fees and unreceptive local officials.

Taxpayers also bear the brunt of Measure 37. The Measure stands to hit us with the double whammy of extraordinary administrative costs and payouts to rich developers — not small landowners.

Oregon shouldn't just waive land use laws and pave the way for erecting McMansions on Oregon's finest agricultural lands. Just because crop prices are down doesn't mean we pave over the soil. Our grandchildren should have the right to grow food for America.

There's a fix for these problems. It's called Senate Bill 350, and it places a moratorium on all Measure 37 claims for one year. That's enough time for the Legislature to address some of the measure's most glaring inadequacies, and it doesn't thwart the people's intent. Contact your legislators and tell them to do their job and fix Measure 37. Currently, opportunists stand to gain by the law, while taxpayers and earnest property owners stand to lose.

Jason Busch
UO Law student

AFTER WE'RE GONE

Earth Day isn't just about protecting our planet, it's also about sustaining humanity. Earth will be fine. It's been here about 4.56 billion years. As for modern humans, who have existed around 150,000 years, the future is dicey. Should we continue to destroy the conditions that support nature, we will eliminate ourselves. And after we're gone, the environment, ecological systems, and biosphere of Earth will regenerate.

There are approximately 6.5 billion humans. In 2050, it's projected to be 9.1 billion. This growth will exacerbate the interrelated web of life-threatening environmental problems already upon us. As we haphazardly and greedily continue to deplete resources on land and in the ocean we destroy biological diversity on which evolution thrives and which is integral to our survival.

Human life is fragile and not guaranteed. While much depends on our personal choices, the decisions of enlightened leaders are most crucial. And from what I see in the White House and in Congress today, we're in deep trouble.

Steven Kunert
Corvallis

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