

**Nationwide Views On The  
Treatment Of Farm Animals**

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## I. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Zogby International conducted interviews of 1,032 likely voters chosen at random nationwide. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from Wednesday, October 15 to Monday, October 20, 2003. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion, and gender to more accurately reflect the voting population. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample size	1,032	100
East	237	23
South	268	26
Central/Great Lakes	320	31
West	206	20
Very likely to vote	952	92
Somewhat likely to vote	80	8
Democrat	402	39
Republican	361	35
Independent/Minor party	263	26
Libertarian	5	1
18-29	122	12
30-49	408	40
50-64	286	28
65+	204	20
18-24	65	6
25-34	132	13
35-54	461	45
55-69	251	25
70+	110	11
Did not answer age	12	--
Less than high school	22	2
High school graduate	167	16
Some college	318	31
College graduate+	523	51
Did not answer education	1	--

### Sample Characteristics (continued)

White	795	78
Hispanic	82	8
African American	102	10
Asian	10	1
Other	31	3
Did not answer race	13	--
Live in large city	324	31
Small city	244	24
Suburbs	225	22
Rural	232	23
Progressive/very liberal	71	7
Liberal	193	19
Moderate	318	31
Conservative	336	33
Very conservative	62	6
Libertarian	24	2
Not sure of ideology	25	2
Did not answer ideology	3	--
Roman Catholic	286	28
Protestant	471	46
Jewish	31	3
Muslim	2	0
Other (religion)	233	23
Born-again	234	50
Not born-again	236	50
Did not answer religion	9	--
Union	217	21
Non-union	813	79
Married	604	59
Single	180	18
Divorced/widowed/separated	222	22
Living together	20	2
Less than \$15,000	59	6
\$15,000-\$24,999	86	9
\$25,000-\$34,999	131	14
\$35,000-\$49,999	199	21
\$50,000-\$74,999	205	22
\$75,000 or more	265	28
Did not answer income	86	--

**Sample Characteristics (continued)**

Male	495	48
Female	537	52
Works outside home for wages	324	61
Does not work for wages	212	40

**\*Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not equal 100.**

## II. Executive Summary

Like many of the attitudes surrounding animals and their treatment at the hands of humans in general, respondents to this survey had mixed feelings about the treatment of farm animals.

A narrow majority say they are very or somewhat concerned about the treatment of farm animals raised for food, yet an overwhelming majority say that there should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse and by more than three to one, respondents overall say it is unacceptable that farm animals are specifically excluded from the Animal Welfare Act.

The concern about the inclusion of farm animals in federal welfare legislation seems incongruous when just over seven in ten respondents agree that farm animals are treated fairly in this country. Perhaps enough information about the real treatment of most farmed animals seeps through the advertising pictures of smiling cows and dancing chickens to make Americans desirous of welfare legislation for the billions of animals who die each year to fill our plates.

As might be expected, knowledge about laws protecting farm animals is spotty at best. Just over half believe it is true that state anti-cruelty laws prohibit farm animals from unnecessary cruelty and abuse, while a plurality believe it is true that there are effective federal and state laws in the US that protect the welfare of farm animals.

On the other hand, a plurality either knew or guessed correctly that farms are not inspected by the government to ensure that laws protecting against cruelty are followed. In addition, a plurality are not sure if farm animals are protected under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Despite the apparent lack of knowledge about protections for farm animals, it is clear that the public wants some protection in place. By more than three to one, respondents say it is unacceptable for state laws to exempt “common” or “normal” farm practices from anti-cruelty laws even if animals suffer and alternative, more humane methods of husbandry exist. Also, as stated earlier, by a three to one margin respondents say it is unacceptable that farm animals are not protected under the Animal Welfare Act.

There appears to be a consistent demographic make-up of support for and opposition to welfare legislation. In general, throughout the survey, Democrats, women, singles, Easterners, and those who are middle-aged and at middle income levels, are more likely to support welfare or protectionist legislation than Republicans, those under thirty, rural respondents, Westerners, married people, those with higher incomes, and men. However, keep in mind, that even among this latter group, pluralities or majorities are in favor of offering protection to farm animals in state and federal legislation.

### III. Narrative Analysis

19. How would you describe your level of concern for the treatment of farm animals raised for food consumption?

Very concerned	16%	Concerned	52%
Somewhat concerned	36	Unconcerned	45
Somewhat unconcerned	16		
Not at all concerned	29		
Not sure	4		

Just over half of respondents (52%) are concerned about the treatment of farm animals raised for food consumption, with one in six (16%) very concerned. More than two in five (45%) are unconcerned.

Small majorities of adults 30 and older and people belonging to all races are very or somewhat *concerned*. The most likely to show concern include three-fifths of Democrats, those residing in the East region and large cities, divorced/widowed/separated adults, and women, as well as approximately two-thirds of Jews and people with annual household income of \$15,000-\$24,999.

Those who are *unconcerned* include half of Republicans, residents of the West, 18-29 year-olds, married adults, Protestants who do not consider themselves born-again, people with household income of \$75,000 or more, and men.

20 – 22. For the next few statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

**Table 1. Views on the Treatment of Farm Animals**

	Agree*	Disagree*	Not sure
In general, farm animals are fairly treated in the United States	71	20	9
There should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse	82	14	4
Farms should be inspected by government inspectors to ensure that laws to protect animals from cruelty are being followed	72	25	4

(\*Agree and disagree each combines strongly and somewhat.)

Seven in ten voters agree that, in general, farm animals are fairly treated in the United States. In addition, more than four in five agree there should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse. Furthermore, close to three-fourths agree that government inspectors should inspect farms to ensure laws to protect animals from cruelty are being followed.

More than three-fifths of people within almost every sub-group strongly or somewhat *agree* that **farm animals are fairly treated in the US**. This includes most Hispanics (87%), approximately four-fifths of Republicans, 18-29 year-olds, Catholics, and residents of rural areas, and three-fourths of people with household income less than \$15,000 and \$25,000-\$74,999, and men.

Those who *disagree* that **farm animals are fairly treated in the US** include one-fourth of Democrats, Independent voters, residents of the East and large cities, African Americans, and working women, and nearly one-third of single adults and people with household income of \$15,000-\$24,999.

More than three-fourths of people within practically every sub-group *agree* there **should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse**. Those who agree include all Hispanics and close to nine in ten women and people with household income of \$15,000-\$34,999.

One-fifth of born-again Christians, residents of rural areas, and men *disagree* there **should be effective laws that protect farm animals against cruelty and abuse**.

Three-fifths or more of respondents within just about every sub-group also *agree* that **farms should be inspected by government inspectors to ensure that animal protection laws are being followed**. Among the most likely to agree are four-fifths or more of Democrats, residents of the East, 18-29 year-olds (86%), Hispanics (86%), African Americans (87%), Jews, and people with household income less than \$35,000.

Those who *disagree* that **government inspectors should inspect farms to ensure that animal protection laws are being followed** include around one-third of Republicans, adults 50 and older, residents of the West and rural areas, married adults, Protestants, people with household income of \$75,000 or more, and men.

23 – 26. *I'm going to read you four statements. For each one, please tell me if it is true or false.*

**Table 2. Knowledge of Laws Protecting Farm Animals** (ranked by % true)

	True	False	Not sure
State laws against animal cruelty prohibit farm animals from suffering unnecessary cruelty and abuse	53	23	25
There are effective federal and state laws in the United States that protect the welfare of farm animals	44	31	26
On the federal level, The Animal Welfare Act is the primary piece of federal legislation relating to animal protection and which sets certain basic standards for their care. Farm animals are protected under the Animal Welfare Act	36	24	39
Farms are inspected by government inspectors to ensure that laws protecting animals against cruelty are being followed	31	45	25

Just over half of adults (53%) feel it is true that state laws against animal cruelty prohibit farm animals from suffering unnecessary cruelty and abuse. Fewer than half as many say this is false (23%).

People are also more likely to believe that there are effective federal and state laws in the United States that protect the welfare of farm animals (44%), and that farm animals are protected under the Animal Welfare Act (36%).

On the other hand, nearly half (45%) say it is false that farms are inspected by government inspectors to ensure that laws protecting animals against cruelty are being followed.

For each of the four statements, it is interesting to note that large percentages are not sure. In each instance, the most likely to not be sure include residents of the East, seniors 65 and older, and Jews.

A majority or plurality within every sub-group feels it is *true* that **state laws against animal cruelty prohibit farm animals from suffering unnecessary cruelty and abuse**. The most likely are Hispanics (78%) and Catholics (60%). One-third of single adults and African Americans, as well as three in ten Democrats, Southerners, 18-29 year-olds, and working women, say this statement is *false*.

Within most sub-groups, a small majority or plurality says **there are effective federal and state laws in the United States that protect the welfare of farm animals**. This includes half of Republicans, 30-49 year-olds, Hispanics, Catholics, residents of small cities, people with household income less than \$15,000, and men. Those who say this statement is *false* include two-fifths or more of 18-29 year-olds, African Americans, and people with household income of \$15,000-\$34,999, and more than one-third of Democrats, Independent voters, single adults, and residents of large cities.

Within practically every sub-group, more people say it is true rather than false that **farm animals are protected under the Animal Welfare Act**. Those who believe this to be *true* include half of Hispanics and just fewer than half of 18-29 year-olds, African Americans, Catholics, and respondents living in union-member households. Those who say this is *false* include three in ten Democrats, Southerners, and working women.

A plurality or small majority of people within just about every sub-group says it is *false* that **farms are inspected by government inspectors to ensure that laws protecting animals against cruelty are being followed**. This includes half of 18-29 year-olds, 50-64 year-olds, and residents of the Central/Great Lakes region and rural areas. Those who feel this statement is *true* include half of Hispanics, 45% of African Americans, and almost two in five Catholics and people with household income less than \$15,000.

27. *In many states, laws that prohibit cruelty to animals have been amended to exempt all “common” or “normal” farm practices regardless of whether such practices cause animals to suffer or whether alternatives exist. Do you think it is acceptable or unacceptable that farm animals are exempt from cruelty to animal laws?*

Acceptable	21%
Unacceptable	66
Not sure	13

People are three times more likely to find it unacceptable (66%) than acceptable (21%) that farm animals are exempt from cruelty to animal laws. One in eight is not sure.

A majority within virtually every sub-group says this is *unacceptable*. This includes up to three-fourths of Democrats, 30-49 year-olds, residents of the East, Hispanics, African Americans, Jews, and working women.

Just over one-fourth of Republicans, 18-29 year-olds, residents of the West, and men think this exemption is *acceptable*.

28. *In fact, farm animals on farms **are not** protected by any federal laws and are specifically excluded from the federal Animal Welfare Act. Do you think it is acceptable or unacceptable that farm animals while on farms **are not** protected by any federal laws?*

Acceptable	23%
Unacceptable	68
Not sure	9

With numbers closely mirroring the previous question, people are still three times more likely to say it is unacceptable that farm animals, while on farms, are not protected by any federal laws.

Here, a majority in every sub-group feels this is *unacceptable*. In addition to the same groups who previously felt this was unacceptable, 18-29 year-olds, Catholics, and single adults are among those more likely to now say it is unacceptable.

Three in ten Republicans, residents of the West and rural areas, born-again Christians, men, and people with household income less than \$15,000 and greater than \$75,000 say that this is acceptable.