

## ANIMAL RIGHTS LOBBYING: ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOLICITATIONS, FUNDING AND EFFECTIVENESS

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### ABSTRACT

Some 7,000 animal interest organizations in the U.S. spend approximately \$50,000,000 in advocacy of animals' welfare and rights. Organizations seeking to establish beneficial programs or lobby for favorable policy rely heavily on mailing solicitations for adequate funding. Findings indicate that solicitations do not generally translate into higher budgets, holdings and overhead, yet seem to lead toward higher salaries. However, despite some rather high overheads for some associations, most budgets tend to be disbursed toward actual program endeavors.

### BACKGROUND: ANIMAL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Societies supporting animal interests fall into four categories, all, however, with the intent of creating enhanced conditions for animals by focusing on and eliminating those elements of society that benefit through the exploitation of non-human beings. The first type of association shall be defined as the *environmental* group, centering on habitat and species protection. The second category encompasses the *education* association, emphasizing the plight of animals and encouraging more humane treatment. Third, the *welfare* organization focuses on issues such as animal adoptions, veterinary care, shelter maintenance, and protective legislation. Finally, there is the *animal rights* organization, whose members support, based on philosophical underpinnings, the belief that animals are sentient beings deserving of basic liberties.

Groups that fall into the animal rights classification are the most diverse and complex. Jasper and Nelkin (1992) provide a typology of animal rights activists, with *pragmatists* arguing for the balance of the interests of humans and animals with an acceptance of the hierarchy in animal and human species, and the more contentious *fundamentalist* espousing full rights for animals with the elimination of distinctions between humans and animals. Groves (1995) indicates that the *fundamentalist* declares rights for animals from moral contention, not from sympathy or strong love for animals, emotions found frequently among the *welfarists*. Jasper and Nelkin underscore this rejection of speciesism by demonstrating that pets in fundamentalist households are referred to as "companion animals," implying a relationship based more on equality and friendship than on obedience and authority. Most types of animal groups, however, venture into more than one advocacy venue.

### A SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND ITS CONVICTIONS

The earliest activists formed animals rights associations centered mainly in Britain during the Nineteenth Century. These advocates were comprised primarily of the few women physicians in the medical profession, who startled their colleagues by calling for the elimination of vivisection. They often drew comparisons between the abolition movement and the animal rights crusade by supporting their position with relevant Biblical scripture and moral reasonings, such as Bentham's famous excerpt: "The question is not, can the animals reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they *suffer*?" (Singer 1975). Members eschewed the use of animals for labor or consumption.

Contemporary animal rights adherents, still consisting of women as the majority, compare the abuse and exploitation of women and minorities with that of animals. Objectification of animals through experimentation and consumption, as well as destruction of habitat (the latter notion particularly supported by environmentally centered animal support groups and their more focused advocates, *ecofeminists*), equates the abuse of women through violence and pornography. Activism informs the public, supporters emphasize, to disprove historical Christian *humocentric* theology, which fosters not only man/woman dominance, but human/animal dualism as well (Adams 1993). Consequently, advocates contend, sexism is behind critics' claims that animal rights activists tend to be too "emotional" or "nonrational" (Groves 1995).

Sperling (1988) indicates that early animal rights activism gained momentum as it expanded into the animal welfare arena. Legislation protecting against the abuse of livestock was adopted in 1822 in England. As the United States became more urbanized and industrialized, animal welfare organizations began to flourish. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was

chartered in 1866 by lawyers and philanthropists concerned over the abuse of horses, still the primary mode of transportation at the time, as well as inhumane methods of slaughter for farm animals. The Society was able to secure cruelty legislation for acts such as the plucking of live chickens, excessive beating of horses, and the inhumane treatment and slaughter of cattle (Adams 1996). It also established more humane shelters for abandoned urban animals (Stevens 1996).

Similar organizations, such as the American Humane Association (AHA) and the National Anti-Vivisection Society, were created during the industrial revolution, seeking to educate society about various animal abuse in farming and industry, and supporting more benevolent alternatives when handling animals. In 1888, Leonard Eaton, President of AHA, stated: "Animals are now regarded as having rights that humans are bound to respect" (Jasper, Nelkin 1992). A small but emerging group of activists in the U.S. seized upon this concept of rights for animals, but criticized the welfarist and education organizations for not fully living up to their ideals of animal protection.

Today, rights advocates still contend that welfare agendas cannot lead to animal liberty. Law Professor Gary Francione has appealed for the entire eradication of the property status of animals, constitutive of larger systematic changes sought. Arguing that modern "new welfarists" cannot bring about an abolition of animal exploitation, he states that animal welfare has strong property notions where animal interests never prevail. Welfarism, Francione adds, is merely a more humane form of exploitation (Swart 1997). Animal rights is a social movement, supporters contend, where people understand that non-animals possess personhood. It is a crusade about empathy, the quest for the elimination of animal pain and the transformation of societal attitudes (Groves 1995).

## THE GROWTH OF CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISM

Current activism on behalf of animals is nearly as diverse as the roughly 10 million members of some 7,000 different types of animal advocacy organizations in the U.S. (Williams 1991).

The stage was set for the animals rights movement to expand during the 1960's and 1970's when a generation of Americans came of age having never experienced severe economic hardship or domestic sacrifice during

war. Large portions of this generation, however, developed a dissatisfaction with the major societal institutions of the day. A concern was cultivated for environmental quality, workplace justice, and the accountability of governmental institutions.

As political activism increased, social observers labeled the movement the "New Left," which brought attention to the anthropomorphic qualities of nature and its inhabitants. Culture reflected these ideas. Movies of the time such as *Planet of the Apes*, and children's programs such as "Sesame Street," increasingly gave animals human-like qualities. Movements on campus and in major cities emphasized moral values rather than material gains. The New Left's environmentalists, feminists, as well as anti-nuclear and peace activists, attacked traditional political parties' views toward women, minorities and nature, and the notion of progress as the necessary destruction of the earth without regard for the corresponding social and moral consequences. Activists saw nature as a fragile web of interconnections that linked humans to the universe, calling for people to live in harmony with nature.

Within the environmentalist camp, there were further critiques of individual values. Lake (1995) denotes that *nonanthropocentric* proponents criticized environmentalists who advocated protection of the environment and animals simply because of their inherent value to humans, not out of respect for nature/animals' autonomous character. Analogous to the rights argument, nonanthropocentrics advocated protection of animals and nature as a moral consideration, extending from one's self to concern for society, humanity and the ecosystem (Zimmerman 1995). Further rifts occurred between normatives. As animal rightists rejected speciesists for being oblivious to the needs and pain of sentient beings, *nonindividualist* environmentalists promoted the protection of the entire system, castigating rights advocates for ignoring nonsentient elements of nature.

Reinforcing the critique of instrumentalism, which set humane against technocratic values, was the burgeoning rhetoric of rights. The civil rights movement inspired many groups as channels of participation were opening. Women, ethnic and racial groups, those mentally and physically challenged, all demanded rights to full economic and political participation. Special and public interest groups flourished, and animal rights advocates seized upon this popular rhetoric to further empower their own crusade.

New Age philosophy ensued, gaining momentum during the 1980's. It continued to support the notion of the interdependence between humans and the natural world. Curiously, in a period of increasing self-interest, many consumers would select products that did not harm the environment or animals (Jasper, Nelkin 1992).

### **MOVEMENT ACTIVITY**

In 1976, knowledge of abuse of animals in the scientific world was not widespread. That year, philosopher Peter Singer was teaching a course on "animal liberation" at New York University, inspiring a group of local advocates. The group soon focused its attention on painful experiments involving cats at the nearby American Museum of Natural History. Studying the neurological bases of the cats' sexual behavior, scientists removed parts of the live subjects' brains while severing several of their nerves. The activists found a popular cause, employing several devices to bring attention to the research. Demonstrations took place in front of the museum. A letter-writing campaign ensued. The museum and the project's funding agency, the National Institute of Health, was inundated with thousands of pieces of correspondence. Scientists and politicians entered the controversy, questioning the validity of the project and its cost. Through mounting bad publicity, officials terminated the program, dismantled the facility, and forfeited the grants (Jasper, Nelkin 1992).

The museum victory set the foundation for further activism. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, animal rights as well as traditional welfare societies began to appear everywhere, using many of the museum protest techniques to bring attention to abuse at such diverse places as corporate and university laboratories, school dissection facilities, factory farms, organized hunts, fishing fleets, fur outlets, and animal exhibits (Fox 1990).

The groups quickly began to realize the importance of publicity. Vivisection was a perfect target, and widespread support for its elimination came swiftly. An association, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), became the vanguard of the movement, elevating promotion to a creative enterprise. They focused on the high taxpayer costs of animal testing, cruel procedures, the frivolous nature of some experiments, and unreliable findings evidenced by FDA approvals of drugs such as Thalidomide and Merital (Sapontzis 1987). Through films depicting animal abuse at the

University of Pennsylvania and the Silver Springs (MD) Primate facilities, the group utilized commercial media to display images of severely mutilated living subjects amid appalling conditions and indifferent staff. Testimony given by PETA's founder, Alex Pacheco, led to prosecution of Silver Springs Director, Edward Taub, the first scientist to be convicted of animal cruelty (Guillermo 1993).

Other groups joined the conflict. Laboratories around the nation, from UCLA's Brain Institute to LSU's cat research facility, were targets of protest. The public became increasingly aware of painful and questionable procedures (Sharpe 1995). Subsequently, Pennsylvania-based Trans-Species Unlimited challenged the utilization of cats at Cornell University's substance abuse laboratory by presenting photographs of subjects convulsing, trembling and salivating after having been force-fed barbiturates. A local newspaper editorial compared the once respected facility to a concentration camp laboratory. After receiving an enormous amount of letters, Cornell discontinued the research and forfeited an additional \$530,000 three-year National Institute on Drug Abuse grant (Williams 1991).

By the late 1980's, membership in all animal support groups doubled, leaning strongly toward the middle class. Participants tended to be in urban or university areas, comprised of over 70 percent women, with over 50 percent possessing college degrees (Jasper, Nelkin 1992).

Membership in more controversial rights organizations also increased. Vandalisms at animal research and dissection facilities, as well as fur outlets, became rather commonplace. In 1992, one of the largest laboratories researching fur-bearing animals was destroyed by a group called the Animal Liberation Front. Vivisection facilities began to experience difficulties hiring researchers and securing subjects. Security and repair costs soared. Laboratory raids were fairly common in the 1980's, with about 52 incidents per year; however, the ensuing decade experienced about eight episodes annually (Holden 1993).

### **FUNDING SOLICITATIONS**

Participation in animal interest groups continues to grow in the U.S., and membership dues are the primary base of operations revenue. Organizations seeking to inform the public and influence lawmakers rely mainly on mailing requests to attain members. Dues paying constitutes the majority of activity for most

**Table 1: Mailing Appeals by Organization 1995-1996**

| <b>Organization</b>                     | <b>Type</b> | <b>Amount</b> |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| African Wildlife Foundation             | v           | 2             |
| Alley Cat Allies                        | w           | 2             |
| American Anti-Vivisection Society       | e, r        | 10            |
| American Human Association              | e, w        | 10            |
| American Rivers                         | v           | 10            |
| ASPCA                                   | e, w        | 22            |
| Animal Legal Defense Fund               | e, r        | 8             |
| Animal People                           | e, r, w     | 2             |
| Best Friends (NE Animal Shelter)        | w           | 2             |
| Defenders of Animal Rights              | r, e        | 8             |
| Defenders of Wildlife                   | v, e        | 12            |
| Doris Day Animal League                 | e, w, r     | 8             |
| Environmental Defense Fund              | v, e        | 12            |
| Farm Sanctuary                          | e, r        | 2             |
| Friends of Animals                      | e, w, r     | 10            |
| Fund for Animals                        | e, r        | 8             |
| Greenpeace                              | v, e        | 12            |
| Humane Farming Association              | r, w        | 12            |
| Humane Society, U.S.                    | e, w        | 24            |
| In Defense of Animals                   | r           | 10            |
| International Fund For Animal Welfare   | r, e        | 24            |
| International Primate Protection League | v, w        | 10            |
| Last Chance for Animals                 | e, w, r     | 10            |
| National Audubon Society                | v           | 12            |
| National Humane Education Society       | e, r, w     | 30            |
| National Wildlife Federation            | v           | 22            |
| Natural Resources Defense Council       | v           | 18            |
| Nature Conservancy                      | v           | 18            |
| North Shore Animal League               | w           | 14            |
| People for Ethical Treatment of Animals | r, e, w     | 16            |
| Physicians Comm., Responsible Medicine  | r, e        | 8             |
| Sea Shepherd Conservation Society       | v           | 2             |
| Sierra Club                             | v           | 16            |
| Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund          | v           | 14            |
| United Animal Nations                   | w           | 2             |
| Wilderness Society                      | v           | 14            |
| Wildlife Conservation Society           | v, e        | 18            |
| World Wildlife Fund                     | v           | 24            |
| <b>Total</b>                            |             | <b>682</b>    |

Mean requests= 17.7; mode= 2 & 10 solicitations (7).

Note: w-animal welfare organization; v-environmental, species, habitat protection; e-education; r-animal rights (organization's primary focus listed first).

Note: Joseph Connelly of Animal People has compiled an exhaustive record of organizational solicitations that covers a five-year period beginning in 1991.

members. Envelopes adorned with "teasers" displaying some form of abuse are a device to evoke interest and support.

Much of the approximately \$50 million total budget of animal support societies in this country is utilized for mail solicitations (Williams 1991). Various societies point to achievements on behalf of animals to justify these types of expenditures, emphasizing that donations lead to more than just calendars, greeting cards, and return mailing labels for supporters.

Environmental organizations, for example, indicate that they purchased thousands of acres of habitat and had several more areas declared sanctuaries, saving scores of endangered species in the last two years. In 1995 and 1996, rights and welfare organizations helped legislators establish numerous animal advocacy laws, including increased protections for laboratory, zoo and performance animals. Their investigations led to animal abuse citations at research facilities, farms and animal attractions, while education societies informed the public of issues ranging from shelter care to humane treatment of animals, vegetarianism, and alternatives to fur and vivisection (Farinato 1996; Geatz 1995; McCaffrey 1995).

Is the practice of mail solicitation fruitful? Do increased solicitations generally lead to larger budgets and advocacy programs, or merely expanded organizational overhead, holdings or CEO salaries? Furthermore, do larger organizational budgets usually transcend to program advocacy accomplishments, or only larger overhead, holdings or salaries?

#### OPERATIONALIZATION AND FINDINGS

In a two-year study tracking mailing solicitations by national animal interest organizations, 12 active members of local groups in five demographically differing states (Georgia, Florida, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania) received correspondence from 38 societies. Each member made an initial contribution to a particular organization prior to 1995. Additional requests and solicitations from other groups followed.

On average, the National Humane Education Society sent the most requests, 30. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Humane Society of the U.S. (HSUS) had 24 solicitations, while the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) solicited 22 times. The Natural Resources Defense Council, Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Sierra Club and PETA were also among the top 10 solici-

tors. Additionally, the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), the Nature Conservancy, and WWF each mailed over 12 "final notices" for membership renewal. Seven organizations mailed two requests (African Wildlife Foundation, Alley Cat Allies (ACA), Animal People, United Animal Nations (UAN), Farm Sanctuary, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS), Best Friends) (Table 1).

The Nature Conservancy had the highest organizational budget (\$312,462,000), followed by NWF (\$100,653,000) and WCS (\$66,299,000). The North Shore Animal League (NSAL) and HSUS held the largest budgets of non-environmentally oriented animal interest organizations, (\$31,757,000 and \$31,697,000, respectively). On the other end of the scale, two non-environmental groups had the smallest budgets. ACA had \$44,000, ensued by UAN (\$192,000) and the International Primate Protection League (IPPL) (\$324,000).

WCS had the most assets (\$103,586,000), with NSAL next (\$50,067,000), and then WWF (\$44,838,000). Greenpeace's assets ledger showed a negative balance of \$7,168, followed by ACA, possessing \$8,000, and American Rivers (\$10,000).

The Nature Conservancy spent the most on advocacy programs (\$261,600,000), with NWF second, spending \$62,283,000, and WCS ensuing with an outlay of \$55,677,000. NSAL allocated \$22,834,000. ACA had the lowest program budget (\$36,000), followed by Animal People (\$101,000) and IPPL (\$200,000).

The Nature Conservancy had the highest overhead (\$28,641,000), followed by WCS (\$10,622,000) and NWF (\$10,573,000). NSAL had an overhead of \$8,923,000. ACA had the lowest overhead, spending less than \$1,000, followed by Animal People (\$18,000) and SSCS (\$36,000).

Jay Hair, President of NWF, received the highest annual salary (\$336,377). John Stevenson, President of NSAL, earned \$287,299. Fred Krupp, Director of EDF, was next, with \$254,879. Eight societies did not compensate their chief operating officers. They were American Rivers, ACA, the Doris Day Animal League, the Fund for Animals, IPPL, Last Chance for Animals, Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine, and SSCS. American Rivers was the only environmental organization not to compensate its chief executive officer (Table 2).

Bivariate analysis examined strength of correlations between organizational solicitations, assets, program advocacy output, society

Table 2: Assets and Expenditures

| Organization                            | Budget  | Assets  | Program | Overhead | CEO Salary* |
|---|---------|---------|---------|----------|-------------|
| African Wildlife Foundation             | 4,536   | 3,338   | 3,526   | 1,010    | 138+        |
| Alley Cat Allies                        | 44      | 8       | 36      | >1       | 0           |
| American Anti-Vivisection Society       | 1,045   | 8,017   | 853     | 192      | 31          |
| American Human Association              | 6,589   | 3,022   | 4,860   | 1,729    | 77+         |
| American Rivers                         | 2,868   | 10      | 2,339   | 530      | 0           |
| ASPCA                                   | 18,112  | 36,371  | 12,211  | 5,901    | 206+        |
| Animal Legal Defense Fund               | 1,315   | 656     | 924     | 391      | 52          |
| Animal People                           | 192     | 33      | 101     | 18       | 14+         |
| Best Friends (NE Animal Shelter)        | 2,621   | 3,346   | 1,633   | 988      | 22+         |
| Defenders of Animal Rights              | 615     | 1,164   | 488     | 127      | 44          |
| Defenders of Wildlife                   | 6,819   | 5,401   | 5,231   | 1,588    | 140+        |
| Doris Day Animal League                 | 1,841   | 592     | 1,175   | 667      | 0           |
| Environmental Defense Fund              | 24,600  | 20      | 19,660  | 3,504    | 255+        |
| Farm Sanctuary                          | 853     | 1,128   | 710     | 143      | 17+         |
| Friends of Animals                      | 4,407   | 2,929   | 3,875   | 532      | 74+         |
| Fund for Animals                        | 3,390   | 13,054  | 2,531   | 819      | 0           |
| Greenpeace                              | 24,157  | -7,168  | 16,804  | 7,353    | 65+         |
| Humane Farming Association              | 1,212   | 1,542   | 974     | 243      | 29+         |
| Humane Society, U.S.                    | 31,697  | 44,726  | 20,285  | 5,163    | 250+        |
| In Defense of Animals                   | 1,378   | 374     | 1,034   | 345      | 53          |
| International Fund For Animal Welfare   | 7,386   | 2,009   | 4,488   | 2,899    | 202+        |
| International Primate Protection League | 324     | 502     | 200     | 123      | 0           |
| Last Chance for Animals                 | 467     | 26      | 278     | 188      | 0           |
| National Audubon Society                | 42,433  | 39,992  | 27,213  | 3,566    | 206         |
| National Humane Education Society       | 6,338   | 1,320   | 5,056   | 1,282    | 70+         |
| National Wildlife Federation            | 100,635 | 2,620   | 62,283  | 10,573   | 336+        |
| Natural Resources Defense Council       | 23,071  | 19,410  | 18,699  | 4,372    | 187+        |
| Nature Conservancy                      | 312,462 | 25      | 261,600 | 28,641   | 204         |
| North Shore Animal League               | 31,757  | 50,067  | 22,834  | 8,923    | 287+        |
| People for Ethical Treatment of Animals | 13,438  | 4,289   | 10,937  | 2,501    | 62+#        |
| Physicians Comm., Responsible Medicine  | 1,378   | 20      | 1,218   | 160      | 0           |
| Sea Shepherd Conservation Society       | 598     | 446     | 562     | 36       | 0           |
| Sierra Club                             | 43,996  | 15,345  | 36,314  | 6,356    | 126+        |
| Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund          | 11,550  | 6,829   | 8,780   | 2,770    | 143+~       |
| United Animal Nations                   | 437     | 44      | 337     | 101      | 36+         |
| Wilderness Society                      | 20,000  |         |         |          | unknown     |
| Wildlife Conservation Society           | 66,299  | 103,586 | 55,677  | 10,622   | 251+@       |
| World Wildlife Fund                     | 63,597  | 44,838  | 54,962  | 8,635    | 228+        |

\*All figures rounded in thousands.

+ - Other top officials in the organization earn similar salaries.

# - Additional living expenses also included for some personnel.

~ - As of August 1, 1997, officially known as Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund.

@ - WCS, formerly known as the New York Zoological Society, also does business as Wildlife Conservation International.

Sources: Data compiled from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, fiscal 1996, the Animal People (Clinton, WA) "watchdog" report, Dec. 1996, and organizational annual reports.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

|               | Budget | Assets | Program | Overhead | CEO Salary |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|----------|------------|
| Assets        | 0.169  |        |         |          |            |
| Programs      | 0.996  | 0.163  |         |          |            |
| Overhead      | 0.995  | 0.337  | 0.948   |          |            |
| CEO Salary    | 0.486  | 0.574  | 0.445   | .625     |            |
| Solicitations | 0.367  | 0.408  | 0.345   | 0.489    | 0.667      |

Bivariate analysis. Scores indicate Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients.

overhead and CEO salaries. More frequent solicitations did *not* tend to correlate with higher budgets, overall assets, overhead or program outlay. A disproportionate distribution for salaries, however, was indicated by somewhat strong associations between solicitations and CEO wages (Pearson's  $r = .667$ ).

Organizations with larger budgets did not commonly have grand asset holdings, nor did their CEO's earn greater wages. They did spend more on programs (a sound correlation of .996), and also spent abundantly on overhead (another powerful relationship,  $r = .995$ ). There were also robust associations among organizations with large program distributions and higher overhead ( $r = .948$ ). Societies with large amounts of assets generally allocated less for programs and overhead, yet they moderately tended to pay higher CEO salaries (a correlation to  $r = .574$ ).

Organizations with large program distributions were generally not inclined to spend more on CEO salaries, yet higher overhead tended to correlate toward higher salaries ( $r = .625$ ) (Table 3).

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The animal defense movement has taken many forms since its more formalized foundation during the Nineteenth Century. While advocating humane treatment, habitat protection, sheltering or fundamental rights for animals, the crusade has been championed by a decidedly female, middle-class core in the last three decades, yet membership in animal advocacy organizations continues to expand to other elements of society.

Organizations employ mail solicitations for their primary base of support. These requests, however, generally did not lead to higher budgets, holdings, program outlay, or overhead. More solicitations did relate to higher CEO salaries. Probably, organizations possessing an established thriving financial base had the means to solicit more often, and expend elevated wages. The substantial and more renowned organizations continued to thrive. The

good news is that supporters' financial support for most organizations appeared to be employed in a judicious manner. Societies with larger budgets customarily did not seem to amass grand assets or disburse exorbitant salaries, while expending more on actual programs. Overheads were higher, however, possibly justified by ambitious advocacy projects.

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