



**ANIMAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

GENERAL ANIMAL WELL-BEING

Q. What is animal well-being?

A. *Animal well-being*, or *animal welfare*, refers to an animal's condition or the treatment it receives. When a person protects an animal's well-being, he or she makes sure to meet both its physical and mental needs. *Animal care*, *animal husbandry* and *humane treatment* are other terms used when people discuss the condition and treatment of animals.

Q. Why is protecting an animal's well-being important?

A. It's the right thing to do. Animals that have good welfare are healthier. It also makes good business sense because farmers who take good care of their animals produce a better quality product.

Q. Should I wash my hands after I touch an animal?

A. Absolutely! Many animals carry germs that can be spread to people. Washing your hands is the best way to keep those germs from spreading to keep both animals and people healthy.

Q. Can animals be happy or sad?

A. Animals have the basic emotions of seeking, rage, fear, panic, lust, care and play. Animals react when their needs are met or not met. When they react, they can seem happy or sad to us. For example, when an animal's play emotion is met, it looks happy to us (Grandin & Johnson, 2010).

Q. How do you know if an animal is comfortable?

A. Animal caretakers can tell based on what they know about how that species normally acts. Caretakers must meet not only the animal's physical needs but its mental needs as well. For example as with most animals, cats want a soft, comfortable space to rest to meet their physical needs. That spot must also meet their mental needs. It should be a raised surface so the cat can have a higher point to watch its surroundings or be partially covered to allow for a hiding space. When animals begin to behave in a way that is not normal for their species, animal caretakers make changes to the animals' surroundings so that their behavior becomes normal.

Q. Do all animal need the same things?

A. Yes and no. All animals require Brambell's Five Freedoms: 1) freedom from hunger and thirst; 2) freedom from discomfort; 3) freedom from pain, injury or disease; 4) freedom to express natural behaviors and 5) freedom from fear and distress. The way those freedoms are met for each species can differ. For example, although ducks and chickens are both poultry, ducks need a pool of water to express their natural behavior, but chickens don't (Brambell, 1965).



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Q. How do you know how to take care of an animal?

A. 4-H members learn how to take proper care of their animals through 4-H. Bringing an animal to the fair is part of the learning experience. 4-H'ers learn to show animals and present them to the judge, who will ask questions regarding the animals' care.

Q. How do you decide what is good animal well-being?

A. A person can assess the animal's situation by using Brambell's Five Freedoms to ask the following questions: 1) Does the animal have food and water? 2) Is the animal free from discomfort? 3) Is the animal free from pain, injury or disease? 4) Is the animal free to express its natural behavior? and 5) Is the animal free from fear and distress? Animal well-being is a continuum, meaning it can range



from very good to very poor and be anywhere along the imaginary line.

Q. Do these animals at the fair have good well-being?

A. Yes, in fact, fairs are a way to show animals with good well-being. However, fairs can be stressful environments for the animals. They are not used to the noises and number of people that come through the barns to learn about them. When you as a fair goer treat them with respect, it helps us with their good well-being and gives us a chance to teach you about them.

Q. Whom do I talk to if I'm concerned about an animal's care or well-being?

A. If you are concerned about an animal here at the fair, find the barn manager and speak to him or her about your concerns. If you are concerned about the well-being of an animal outside of the fair, try speaking with the animal owner or caretaker first. There might be a good reason why an animal is housed or cared for in a certain way. People house and care for animals in many ways, some that may be different from what you might do. There are many methods to properly care for an animal. If after speaking with the owner or caretaker you still have concerns, speak with another adult you trust to assess the situation to see if other authorities should be contacted.

REFERENCES

Brambell, J. R. (Chairman). (1965). *Report of the technical committee to enquire into the welfare of animals kept under intensive livestock systems*. (Command Paper 2896). London: HMSO.

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