

# Harmony in Husbandry: Balancing Ethics and Efficiency in Agriculture

Angela Langstaff\*

Department of Veterinary Sciences, University of Milan, Milano MI, Italy

## Commentary

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**\*For Correspondence:**

Angela Langstaff, Department of Veterinary Sciences, University of Milan, Milano MI, Italy.

**E-mail:** [angela.l@gmail.com](mailto:angela.l@gmail.com)

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

In the complexity of modern agriculture, where efficiency often reigns supreme, the ethical treatment of animals can easily become a footnote rather than a focal point. Animal husbandry, the branch of agriculture concerned with the care and breeding of livestock, occupies a major space in this discourse. It encompasses not only the practicalities of raising animals for various purposes but also the moral responsibilities that come with it.

Animal husbandry is about the relationship between humans and animals a relationship built on direction, not domination. However, in the pursuit of maximizing yields and minimizing costs, this fundamental principle can sometimes be overshadowed. Factory farming, with its focus on mass production and efficiency, has come under scrutiny for its treatment of animals as mere commodities rather than sentient beings with hereditary value. Confined to cramped spaces, subjected to unnatural diets, and deprived of basic freedoms, animals in such systems suffer both physically and psychologically.

The industrialization of animal husbandry has led to environmental degradation, public health risks, and ethical problems. From the excessive use of antibiotics to the pollution of waterways with animal waste, the negative externalities of intensive farming practices are manifold. Furthermore, the disconnect between consumers and the sources of their food has maintained a culture of ignorance regarding the conditions in which animals are raised. As a result, many consumers remain unaware of the ethical implications of their dietary choices.

There is a growing movement towards more ethical and sustainable approaches to animal husbandry. The rise of organic farming, pasture-based systems, and regenerative agriculture reflects a shift towards practices that prioritize animal welfare, environmental safekeeping, and consumer transparency. By allowing animals to express their natural behaviors, providing them with adequate space and access to pasture, and minimizing the use of chemicals and antibiotics,

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these alternative models offer a more global approach to animal husbandry.

Ethical standards in animal husbandry encompass not only the physical well-being of animals but also their mental and emotional needs.

This means moving away from a purely utilitarian view of animals as mere resources towards a more empathetic understanding of their essential value. It means acknowledging the complexity of their lives, the depth of their emotions, and the importance of their welfare in our moral calculus.

Ethical animal husbandry is not just a matter of individual choice but also a collective responsibility. It requires collaboration between farmers, consumers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to create a food system that is not only efficient and profitable but also ethical and sustainable. This necessitates investment in research, education, and infrastructure to support practices that prioritize animal welfare and environmental conservation. It also requires transparency and accountability throughout the supply chain, from farm to fork, to ensure that ethical standards are upheld at every stage of production.

Ultimately, the question of ethics in animal husbandry is a question of values a reflection of our society's priorities and priorities. It forces us to confront uncomfortable truths about our treatment of animals and the consequences of our actions on the planet. Yet, it also offers an opportunity to reimagine our relationship with animals and the natural world, to cultivate a more compassionate and sustainable future for all beings.

## CONCLUSION

Animal husbandry is not just about raising animals for food, fiber, or labor it is about administration, compassion, and responsibility. Ethical standards in animal husbandry are essential not only for the well-being of animals but also for the health of our planet and the integrity of our food system. By embracing practices that prioritize animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and consumer transparency, we can cultivate a more ethical and sustainable future for agriculture one that honors the inherent dignity of all living beings.