



COUNCIL ON  
ANIMAL AFFAIRS

# Can sport, relaxation, tradition and entertainment involving animals be enjoyable for both humans and animals?

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# Introduction

- Humans engage in many activities involving animals
- Sports, relaxation, local traditions, entertainment
- Positive, neutral or negative for animal welfare
- Increasing societal debate



[Pixabay](#)



Hollandse Hoogte/Reyer Boxem



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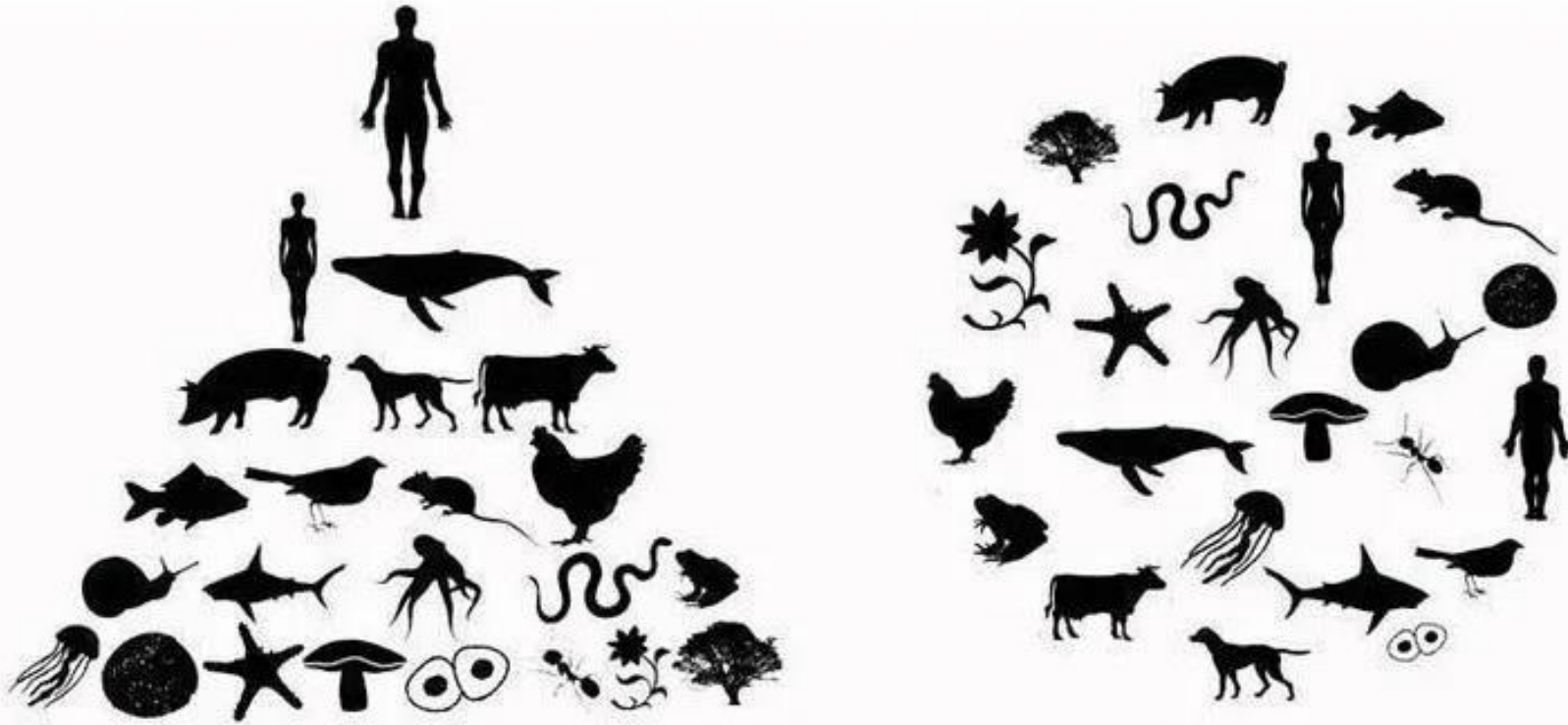
AB Photographie/Shutterstock



[Beleef het lage Noorden](#)

# Our views on animals change

From anthropocentric to ecocentric





# Council on Animal Affairs

- Dutch Advisory Council for the Minister of Agriculture
- Own initiative to focus on animal welfare during activities with animals
- Main question: Can activities involving animals be enjoyable for both humans and animals?



# What is the dilemma?



[Andrea Lightfoot/Unsplash, 2020](#)

What are the  
effects on the  
animal?



[Pixabay](#)

# A passion for animals

- Positive for human welfare
- More than a hobby or a profession
- Part of their identity



[Balkster Courant, 2023](#)



[Bit magazine](#)



# Example Utrecht

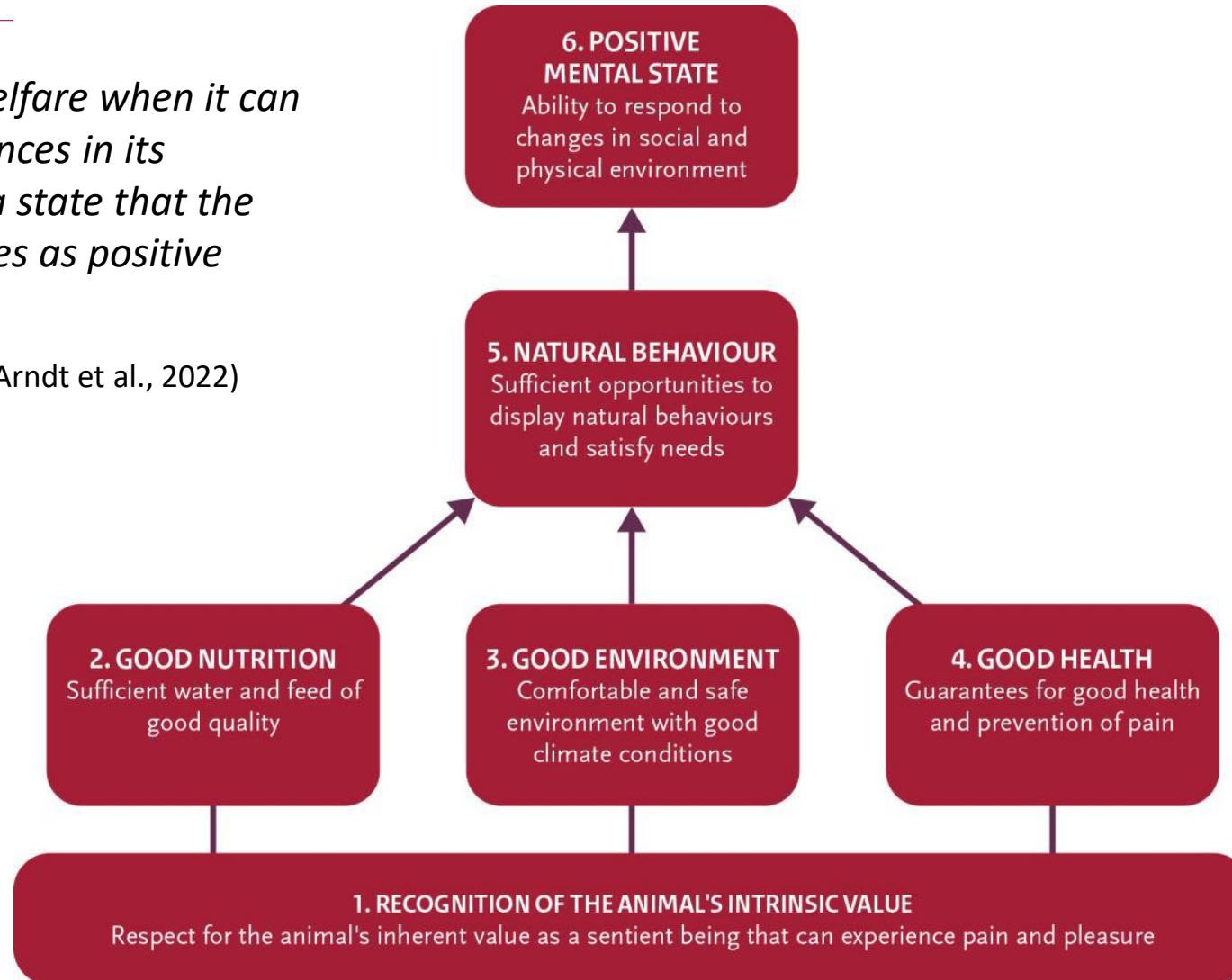
- Short horse race (300 m)
- City centre
- Long tradition
- Adjustements: no whips
- Acceptable?



# Six Principles Humane Livestock Farming

*An animal has good welfare when it can adapt to the circumstances in its environment to reach a state that the animal itself experiences as positive*

(Ohl en van der Staaij, 2012; Arndt et al., 2022)





# 1. Recognition of the animal's intrinsic value

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- Treatment with respect
- Activity should fit with the animal's nature
- Animal integrity should not be violated



[Speurhonden Instructie School](#)

## 2. Good feeding

- Adequate amount feed and water
- In line with animal's nature
- Does activity lead to disturbance of normal patterns?



[Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Welzijn Duiven](#)

## 3. Good environment

- Suitable environmental conditions
- Minimize exposure to negative stimuli
- Opportunity to adapt to situation



[Jumping Amsterdam](#)



## 4. Good health

- Fitness of the animal
- Activity should not result in a reduced lifespan
- Professional supervision and care



[van Erik Rietman/Noordholland Dagblad](#)

## 5. Natural behaviour

- Freedom not to participate
- Possibility to withdraw from human contact
- Appropriate training methods (positive reinforcement)
- Knowledge and attitude of participants



[Pixabay](#)

## 6. Positive emotional state

- Meeting principles 1-5 allows animals to adapt
- Reach a situation that they experience as positive
- 'A life worth living'



[Raad van Beheer](#)



# Main recommendations

- Strive for activities that indeed are enjoyable for both humans and animals
- Look at activities from the animal's perspective
- Develop animal welfare plans
  - Meeting the six guiding principles



# Way forward

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- Develop animal welfare plans
- Consider animal welfare in local permits for activities
- Engage with organisations to develop guidance
- Activity does not meet the six guiding principles?
  - End activity in the future
  - 3Rs can be used during the transition (replace, reduce, refine)

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Thank you for your attention!

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