Abstract - Sandøe

How much do people really care about animal welfare?

In this talk I’ll present two answers to this question. The first is that it depends a lot on who you ask. Empirical studies on animal ethics orientations undertaken in Denmark and other countries in Western Europe show that people’s views on what is owed to animals range from being 100% anthropocentric, according to which only human interests matter, to an animal rights view according to which animals deserve treatment similar to that of humans. The first part of the talk will present these studies, the distribution of views across different groups of people, and how the views found match with positions found in academic animal ethics. The second answer is that in most cases, people display a gap between what, asked in the abstract, they think is owed to animals, and what, in practice, they express through their behaviour as consumers or animal owners. The second part of the talk will discuss this gap between saying and doing when it comes to animal welfare, centred around two cases: consumption of welfare friendly animal products, and the breeding and buying of dogs with extreme conformations.

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