

Eating Animals Study Guide

Eating Animals by Jonathan Safran Foer

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Summary

Eating Animals is a journalistic account by Jonathan Safran Foer of the eating of animals in America, and the good and bad consequences of the practice. Foer examines everything from the moral consideration of the eating of animals to the actual raising and slaughtering of animals. Foer, himself a vegetarian, notes quickly in his book that he is not writing an attempt to convince or force readers to go vegetarian, but is seeking to answer a question posed by his infant son as to why people eat animals.

Foer reflects on his own childhood, and how eating meat was something no one thought twice about. Foer himself only hesitated when a vegetarian babysitter would not eat chicken with him one evening. Foer recounts how he alternated between a regular omnivorous diet and vegetarianism through and after college. After Foer got married and had a son, he decided to adopt a puppy which quickly became a member of the family. Foer wondered at that time why it is that some animals are eaten while others, like dogs, are not. Countless theories exist as to why, but Foer believes it must have something to do with personal companionability and cultural differences, as dogs are eaten in other countries.

Foer committed to reading all the literature he could about animals, their raising, and their consumption, from government pamphlets to internet videos to books about food. Foer learned that up until 1923, the United States had long been a country dependent on family farming. Animals were lovingly raised and killed as needed for food. But in 1923, housewife Celia Steele accidentally received 500 chicks instead of the 50 she had purchased. Instead of killing them or getting rid of them, she raised them indoors through the winter with the help of feed supplements. By 1935, Steele had 250,000 chickens. By the 1930s, Arthur Perdue and John Tyson emerged on the scene to truly turn Steele's discovery into an industry.

The result was factory farming, which spread rapidly. Factory farming is dependent upon the mass growing and slaughtering of animals to sell to millions of customers. More often than not, animals are fed unnatural diets, must live in filthy conditions in small cages, have no access to the outdoors, are often diseased, ill, or violently treated by workers, and live for mere weeks before they are killed, often while conscious. The factory farms themselves are large polluters, and are considered horrible jobs because of the animal cruelty. While factory farmers agree there is room for improvement, they argue that the old model of family farms could not feed so many people and deprive starvation. Foer explains this is true, noting that the family farms currently in America would not even supply the population of Staten Island with food.

Foer explains typical factory farm conditions have committed him to vegetarianism, but notes that there are ethical alternatives to factory farming which could thrive if consumers cared enough and were willing to be inconvenienced. These are rare factory farms that treat their animals more humanely than others; and these are family and independently-owned animal farms such as the turkey farm of Frank Reese or the cattle ranch of Bill and Nicolette Niman who treat their animals lovingly and with respect. This

is especially important to Nicolette, because she is a vegetarian. It is important how people treat animals, Foer concludes, because it has everything to say about humanity and those things that matter.



Storytelling – All or Nothing or Something Else

Summary

Storytelling

The Fruits of Family Trees – Jonathan Safran Foer warmly recalls visiting his grandmother, and notes that during World War II, his grandmother survived in Europe by eating thrown-away scraps from others. Fifty years later, Foer notes, he and his family eat whatever they like in America – and throw away whatever they don't. Foer also recounts how his grandmother's wisdom was something no one questioned – such as fat being healthy and that no foods are bad – and that everyone loved her cooking. To his grandmother, food was not just food, but everything from terror and heartache to gratitude and love.

Possible Again – Foer is reminded of his own past when he learned he would be a father. Growing up, Foer's parents taught him to never be cruel to animals. Foer remembers on one occasion how he and his older brother were annoyed by a babysitter who refused to eat chicken with them, saying she did not want to hurt anything. While Foer's older brother, Frank, continued to eat chicken, Foer stopped eating meat for a few years. Even when Foer returned to eating meat, he still felt it was wrong to hurt animals. Studying philosophy in college, Foer returned to vegetarianism, alternating as time went on.

Foer later went out on a blind date with the woman, who would become his wife, who had similarly struggled with human impulses to eat meat and to be vegetarian. This was magnified by the Jewish tradition of marriage serving as a means to better a person from who they were in the past, so the struggle with eating meat became especially important. Foer did not know what animals actually were, and how they were farmed and killed.

When Foer becomes a father in the present, he writes to a friend about the experience. His friend responds that everything is possible again.

Eating Animals – When Foer becomes a father, he is amazed to see how his son instantly knows how to eat, just as the children of cavemen did thousands of years before. Foer is also amazed by how everything his baby son does revolves around eating. Foer realizes feeding his son has become a more important task than feeding himself. In the Jewish tradition, eating food is important not only for nourishment, but for storytelling. Foer explains that, for the sake of his family, he wants to explore and understand what meat is, where it comes from, how it is produced, how the animals are treated, and what the social, economic, and environmental consequences are. Foer has some idea about the answers he will find – such as that 99% of the ten billion animals



killed to be eaten in America each year are raised on factory farms – and at first thinks that his book will end up being a case for vegetarianism, though he explains this turns out not to be the case. This is because animal agriculture is a complicated topic, because the practice is so diverse. Likewise, questions about the practice – such as if animals can feel, or how animals should be killed – do not always have clear answers.

Listen to Me: - Foer remembers a story his grandmother told him about starving while running from the Germans. She explained that a good Russian farmer gave her a piece of pork to eat, but that she wouldn't eat it because it wasn't kosher. Foer was perplexed by this because his grandmother would not have even eaten the meat to save her life. She explained this was because if nothing matters, there is nothing to save.

All or Nothing or Something Else

1. George – Until Foer was 26, he disliked animals, finding them to be a nuisance. Upon seeing a female puppy up for adoption on Seventh Avenue in Brooklyn, Foer's opinion changed immediately, and he adopted the puppy even though he and his wife had never discussed getting a pet. Foer named the puppy George. Foer reports that 63% of American households have at least one pet, while Americans spend \$34-billion on their pets each year. The keeping of pets – a middle-class development – is a demonstration of the idea that animals have moral worth, character and personality, and are a benefit to families. Foer wondered why he would not eat a dog, but would eat other animals.

A Case for Eating Dogs – Foer points out the irony in meat eating that exists in this world: while the French love dogs and will eat horses, the Spanish love horses and will eat cows, while the Indians love cows but will eat dogs. In six states in America, eating dogs is illegal. Dogs can be just as healthy as other meat sources, have intelligence equal to other animals like pigs, were the primary food source of the Aztecs, are currently consumed by the Chinese, and those dogs euthanized in the United States often become the food for the animals who become food for Americans.

2. Friends and Enemies – While dogs are considered members of the family, share beds with their owners, and accompany their owners on errands and vacations, fish do not. Dogs are companionable and personally present, while fish are separated by water. Yet, Foer points out, while people have no problem with fishing, such as for tuna, there is a great moral concern about killing dogs. Foer wonders if this is because of the companionable closeness of dogs, and the distance of other food sources such as fish. Yet, eating animals polarizes people despite the long history it has had, from the Bible's Book of Genesis to the modern day farm legislation. Foer contends that it might perhaps be best to reframe the conversation.

War – Some scientists predict that within 50 years, there will be a total collapse of all fished species on the planet. To Foer, "war" is the best term to be used for fishing and practices like factory farming, since the use of technology is being employed to completely dominate another species. Factory farming is generally a practice where tens and hundreds of thousands of animals are housed, genetically engineered, restricted in mobility, and fed unnatural diets including things like drugs and



antimicrobials. This is done to increase production and cut costs. Today's fishers operate similarly, using radar to ensure the greatest and quickest catch. Factory farming is a relatively recent phenomenon that quickly took over nature-conscious family and small farms.

3. Shame – Shame is noted to be a unique moral sensibility, and noted as the “core experience of the ethical” in writer Franz Kafka’s diaries. Shame works against forgotten memories, so for Kafka becoming vegetarian, shame must have worked to remind him that the lives of fish are forgotten in the quest to catch, kill, and eat them. Despite man’s dominance over animals, it is very possible that animals could one day dominate people. While at the aquarium in Berlin in 2007, Foer is intrigued by seahorses, and how they can change color, eat constantly, can easily die of exhaustion, and that males give birth. Foer comes to feel a kind of shame at the aquarium, because 20 of the 25 classified species of seahorse are facing extinction due to being unintentionally and indiscriminately killed in seafood production.

Analysis

“Eating Animals” is a journalistic account by Jonathan Safran Foer of the eating of animals in America, and the good and bad consequences of the practice. Foer draws upon his own life experiences to talk about the eating of animals, as well as the importance of diet. Reflecting on his grandmother who would not eat pork while starving due to her strong Jewish faith, Foer notes that there must be limits to the things people do or tolerate. How people live their lives reflects wholly upon their humanity – and humanity becomes an important theme in Foer’s book there in.

Foer recounts his own diet was omnivorous growing up – he ate meat freely. This changed when a babysitter refused to eat chicken, saying that chicken comes from chickens. For the next several years through college, Foer alternated between eating meat and abstaining. Foer also explains that a large part of his decision to write “Eating Animals” came from his son questioning why people eat animals. Foer’s investigation into the question recommits him to vegetarianism, but he notes clearly that his book is not an argument against eating meat or for going vegetarianism.

The reader will notice that Foer frequently breaks from presenting information to provide personal asides, stories, and events which supplement the primary purpose of his work. Foer approaches the entire endeavor from a very personal standpoint, even beyond the attempt to satisfy his son's question about why people eat animals. For example, in the first section of the book, Foer recounts not only his grandmother's trials during the Holocaust, but also presents his personal reflections on purchasing a dog as a pet, and seeking to help his son understand why some animals, rather than others, are eaten - and why any animal is eaten at all.

Foer begins his investigation through a person’s diet by wondering why some animals are consumed but others are not. Among the most notable examples are dogs. Dogs are considered members of the family in American and European households, and are



not eaten the way cows or chickens are even though dogs are nutritionally healthy. Other cultures have no qualms about eating dogs as a part of their diet. Foer ultimately comes to conclude that this is probably because animals like dogs are so personally companionable, and that cultural differences are at play.

The animals that people eat, and how those animals make it to the plate, form a moral and ethical question that needs to be explored as well. Foer provides the disturbing statistics relating to bycatch of wild fish and the pending collapse of entire species of fish, and the relentless, technologically-based efficiency of fishers to catch their prey. He also notes that ten billion land animals are killed each year in America to be eaten. While this may horrify some and not others, Foer notes that the entire animal agriculture field is far more diverse and complicated than most understand or wish to admit.

Foer concludes that somewhere in all of this, shame must play a role. Shame is unique to human beings, and is among the things that sets them apart from animals. Shame is something that works against forgetting and the desire to forget. Foer recounts the story of Kafka changing his diet to become a vegetarian after feeling shame at the slaughtering of animals for food. Foer relates that Kafka's shame reminded Kafka of the process of catching and killing animals, a thing which he did not previously consider.

Vocabulary

inedibles, vigilant, sustenance, impetus, vegetarianism, prevalence, pretentious, confounding, fallibility, conscientious, disproportionate, prejudice, monomaniacally, war, factory farming, discontinuities, paradoxes, experiential, quintessential, gratuitously



Words/Meaning – Hiding/Seeking

Summary

Words/Meaning

Animal – Before visiting any farms, Foer decides to read through literature and history about eating animals. For Foer, to ask what an animal is, is to ask what a human is. He provides a number of definitions. Anthropocentrism is the idea that human beings are the pinnacle of evolution, and hold dominion over all. Anthropodenial is the argument that animals do not feel things like humans do, such as loneliness. Anthropomorphism is the projecting of humanity and the human experience onto animals or inanimate objects. A battery cage for chickens allows space for a chicken which ranges from the size of a book page to the size of a regular sheet of paper, with cages stacked as many as eighteen high in Japan. Foer urges people to consider themselves in such a situation. Broiler chickens, primarily used for eating as opposed to laying chickens, primarily used for laying eggs, are given a square foot of space in their cages. Broiler chickens live an average of six weeks with their daily growth increased to 400% as opposed to their natural life expectancy of 15-20 years. Male chickens, not possible to use as meat or to lay eggs, are killed.

Bycatch involves sea creatures that are unintentionally caught and are thrown back dead or while they are dying. For example, shrimp, which accounts for 2% of global seafood weight, accounts for 33% of global bycatch – essentially 26 pounds of bycatch per single pound of shrimp. A CAFO is a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation or factory farm, as designated by the Environmental Protection Agency. CFEs are Common Farming Exemptions which make legal any method of farming animals so long as it is commonly practiced.

Comfort Food is delicious food eaten to remind one of home, of comfort, or eaten in times of trouble. Cruelty is the willful causing of suffering and/or indifference to it. Foer notes that food writer Michael Pollan has noted that food creates good feelings and social bonds, which can be described as “table fellowship.” The difference in such social situations, Foer notes – such as not wanting to eat factory-farmed meat but not wanting to create social disharmony – is a question of whether one values social comfort and social responsibility. This is traced through the term “Discomfort Food.” Such selectiveness may trouble the host even more, for the host will have to go through a process of finding the right kind of food to serve.

Downers are animals that collapse from poor health or tiredness, and are either left to die or tossed into dumpsters. Farm Sanctuary, founded in 1986 by Gene Baur and then-wife Lorri Houston in Watkins Glen, New York, is a place for rescued farm animals – such as downed animals – to live out their lives. Farm Sanctuary has also become an animal protection, education, and lobbying organization. Environmentalism is concern for the preservation and restoration of nature. Livestock is a greater polluter and



contributor to global warming than the entire transport sector (cars, planes, buses, trucks, etc.). A family farm is a farm owned by a family that owns the animals, manages things, and contributes labor on a daily basis. Feed conversion is concern for the amount of food produced by animals to the amount of food fed to animals.

Free-range means that animals have access to the outdoors, but is a misleading term since access means nothing if the door is always closed, for example. Fresh is another misleading term since frozen can be considered fresh, and since meat containing pathogens and splattered with excrement can also be considered fresh once the excrement is rinsed off. Habits are things done without really questioning them, while humans are distinct animals which choose to have children, have religion and laws, keep in touch, shave, etc. Instinct is natural behavior and a kind of intelligence. Intelligence comes in different varieties but is generally cognitive abilities and ability to reason, understand, and learn. KFC – Kentucky Fried Chicken – is the largest buyer of chickens in the world each year (buying nearly one billion) and says it only deals with humane farming operations, but still actually deals with inhumane operations.

Kosher, from the Jewish faith, means the humane and religiously proper treatment of animals for consumption. To ill-treat an animal, a creation of God, is to deny the moral law and cause the desecration of God's name. Organic is an over-credited term, Foer asserts, for to be organic, animals must be raised on pesticide-free and fertilizer-free food, can be traced through their life cycle, must not be fed antibiotics or growth hormones, and must have access to the outdoors. PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, go above and beyond to make the case against eating animals and the ill-treatment of animals. Processing is the slaughtering and butchering of animals. While most people believe animals have some form of rights, those who act on behalf of those rights are sometimes considered radical. Sentimentality is described as the valuing of emotions over reality. The species barriers is the eating of one animal and the effort to save another. Suffering is the feeling of pain physically, mentally, or emotionally, often sustained.

Hiding/Seeking - (This chapter's title page begins with a large box, demonstrating the 67-square-inch space a factory farm chicken has in a cage.)

1. I'm Not the Kind of Person Who Finds Himself on a Stranger's arm in the Middle of the Night – Foer heads out to a farm at night with animal activist "C", dressed in all-black clothing.

Your Continued Consideration – Foer writes a letter to Tyson Foods to learn more about the company's processes, from the farms on which their animals are grown to animal welfare and environmental issues.

The Whole Sad Business – No company to which Foer writes responds to him. Using satellite imagery to guide their movements, C and Foer head through the farm to the animal sheds, near which a massive granary stands. There are seven sheds, with each holding some 25,000 turkeys. The sheds are locked, which makes Foer wonder what is being hidden.



The Rescue – Men's voices are heard by the granary at 3:30 a.m., while Foer and C sneak into one of the sheds. The inside is regulated by machines. The turkeys are crowded. C moves about, giving water to some, while cutting the throats – and rescuing – those that are sick and deformed.

2. I Am the Kind of Person Who Finds Herself on a Stranger's Farm in the Middle of the Night – C explains euthanizing the turkey on the nighttime mission was difficult to do, but needed. C explains she is a centrist in politics, doesn't do drugs, doesn't have any weird piercings, and is very much normal. C explains she first snuck into factory farms to determine if leaked videos of cruelty on these farms was true, and continued to do so to see if all farms were the same. C finds it horrible that she could use a company's logo illegally and go to jail, but a company can abuse a billion birds and not face any judgement.

3. I Am A Factory Farmer – An unnamed factory farmer explains he grew up on a family cow farm in Wisconsin, then went to college for animal science, and began to design, manage, and service turkey farms. Now, the farmer is in agribusiness, specializing in chicken nutrition and health. Farming has had to change to meet growing demand, falling food prices, and in order to survive. Whereas the farmer's father had a herd of 50 cows, in the present, one needs at least 1,200 to survive and must employ four or five people at minimum to constantly work with the cows. Likewise, family farms and free-range chickens don't supply enough food to feed billions of people. High-yield farming, the farmer explains, has allowed everyone the chance to eat. Without factory farms, people would starve. The farmer explains that it is possible to love animals, and eat them, too. Animals in nature are not sedated before they are killed – they are ripped apart by other animals or starve to death. The farmer also notes that even factory farms that function well and humanely are made to look evil by those that oppose them. The farmer tells Foer to start at the beginning, to learn about animals, and the economics and history of food.

4. The First Chicken – Chickens have long been associated with love, care, and motherhood, and are reflected as such in the Bible. Yet even before the Bible was written down, such attributes were associated with chickens.

The First Human – Early humans only ate the food they were able to find for themselves. Early humans did not live in company with the animals they killed, but went out and hunted them. Early humans saw animals as their competitive equals in many ways, and so included them in their traditions and rites.

The First Problem – One of the traditional Darwinian views of the domestication of animals especially for use as food, was that opportunistic species discovered it was best for them to work with people –allowing themselves to be kept and/or harvested for food. Some consider this to be a myth while others believe it to be true.

The Myth of the Myth – Foer argues that the traditional Darwinian view is a myth because people, not species, make choices. While most people have always eaten



animals, many have expressed ambivalence about the violence and death as a part of eating animals.

The First Forgetting – With family farming nearly gone and factory farming done out of the public eye, questions about the treatment of animals are easier to ignore.

The First Animal Ethics – The traditional attitude toward animals – to eat with care – came not only as a question of morality but good business – providing clean, healthy, and good conditions for the animals one was dependent upon. But this mindset quickly disappeared.

The First Line Worker – The Industrial Age brought about factories for butchery, called slaughterhouses. Men with specific tasks – such as kill men, tail-rippers, flank splitters, back splitters, and so on, worked with assembly-line precision to carve up animals, all beginning in the 1820s and 1830s in Chicago. While farmers still sold their animals to such slaughterhouses, the farmers themselves remained caring of their animals.

The First Factory Farmer – In 1923, Delmarva (Delaware-Maryland-Virginia peninsula) housewife Celia Steele accidentally received 500 chicks instead of the 50 she had purchased. Instead of killing them or getting rid of them, she raised them indoors through the winter with the help of feed supplements. By 1935, Steele had 250,000 chickens, whereas the average farm flock in America numbered only 23. Vitamin supplements and artificial incubators helped. Within ten years, Delmarva became known as the poultry capital of the world. (Today, Delaware's Sussex County alone produces 250-million broiler chickens a year.) By the 1930s, Arthur Perdue and John Tyson emerged on the scene to truly turn Steele's discovery into an industry, relying on hybrid corn, government subsidies, debeaking, and artificial lights and fans.

The First Chicken of Tomorrow – In 1946, responding to a USDA-poultry industry venture to produce a chicken with more breast meat with less feed, Charles Vantress of Marysville, California, offered up the red-feathered Cornish-New Hampshire cross. The 1940s also saw the introduction of antibiotics and sulfa drugs to keep down diseases. Feed and drug programs were developed specifically for the purposes of growing both laying or broiling chickens. By the 1950s and 1960s, companies began to vertically integrate, owning everything from raising, to killing, to selling chickens. Today, two companies own three-quarters of the genetics for broiler chickens in the world.

The First Factory Farm – As the Twentieth Century wore on, businesspeople looked to animals to be like machines that could be produced or used as needed. Within 50 years, factory farming spread from poultry to beef, dairy, and pork. Foer reveals that animal protein today (the 2010s) costs less than at any time in history. Of all the land animals slaughtered for food, 99% are birds.

5. I Am the Last Poultry Farmer – Frank Reese is a poultry farmer. Frank has always loved turkeys, and now raises them. He describes them as friendly, playful, and full of life. Frank truly knows his turkeys, and employs no artificial methods on them. Disturbingly, he explains, the turkeys raised in factory farms can no longer have sex



because of how they have been modified. Frank says his farm is always open to visitors, His birds may grow slower and cost more to feed, but they are healthy and in demand. Frank, who has no worries about eating animals, nevertheless cares for them because he knows animals suffer. Foer directly asks the reader how much suffering he or she will tolerate for their food.

Analysis

As Foer delves into the eating of animals, he wants to do his best to be informed, so he commits to researching as much as he can. Foer devotes a lengthy chapter (“Animal”) to discussing various definitions and explaining various practices, all of which will be utilized in later chapters as Foer actually begins to write about animal agriculture. And many of these themes are crucial, if not central, to animal agriculture. Of note are varying terms for chickens intended to lay eggs and chickens to be eaten; the kinds of cages these chickens are raised in; words like bycatch, downers, and suffering.

Foer’s first attempts to explore the nature of animal agriculture by way of factory farms comes through letters to the companies asking for access, but Foer is denied so he decides to sneak into such a farm with animal activist “C.” The farm sheds contain tens of thousands of chickens that live in squalid conditions, including a lack of space to freely move around. The reader should note that the beginning of the chapter “Hide/Seek” includes a large, bold box drawn around the pages to demonstrate 67 square inches – the legal minimum amount of space required to keep a chicken. The reader should also note that there are people like “C,” who are not politically extreme, but who care deeply about the animals being grown in factory farms. For people like C, this is a question of humanity and ethics as much as it is a question of the care of animals.

As Foer noted earlier in the novel, the animal agriculture business is far more complicated than most believe. He provides a written statement from one such factory farmer who notes that there is always room for improvement in factory farms, that some improvements are being made, and that factory farms are necessary not only to feed people, but to actually avoid starvation. Foer is amazed not only by how much the world is dependent on factory farms, but by the fact animal agriculture was transformed by a housewife who received a few too many chicks. Ironically, the woman, Celia Steele, decided to save the chicks rather than kill them or get rid of them –unwittingly beginning the process that would lead to such cruelty in the future. In other words, an act of humanity later led to much inhumanity. Foer contrasts the past with the present, in which he recounts his personal experience sneaking onto a chicken farm to understand what the process is like firsthand. Here again, the reader experiences Foer's alternating between factual information, and personal experience to further his research.

Foer goes back to the roots of keeping and killing animals, but he finds much of the prevailing wisdom, and many of the prevailing theories to fall short of what they try to explain. He explains that it is people, not animals, who make choices – a testament to the nature of humanity. Humanity was clear in nearly all American farms in the past as



animals were gently and lovingly treated and tended to as a question not only of humanity and morality, but of good business. Better animals commanded higher prices when they were sold to slaughter, with slaughterhouses originating in Chicago in the 1820s and 1830s.

Yet, the breeding and raising of better animals was soon replaced with artificial methods as factory farms overtook small farms. The result has been increased production and cheaper meat, more so than at any other time in history. This is especially true of birds. However, some farmers like Frank Reese still do things in the traditional way. Frank is very much concerned with animal welfare, knowing his animals will suffer briefly in death – and so much have a good life in exchange for what they are being raised for. Foer directly asks the reader just how much suffering the reader will tolerate for his or her food.

Vocabulary

anthropocentrism, anthropodenial, anthropomorphism, battery cage, broiler chicken, bycatch, CAFO, CFE, cruelty, infrastructure, menagerie, philosophy, adjacent, anonymous, undulations, progeny, sentient, multitiered, unprecedented



Influence/Speechlessness – Pieces of Shit

Summary

Influence/Speechlessness (This chapter begins with the phrase “Influence / Speechlessness” repeated over and over for five pages, with each letter symbolizing the 21,000 animals the average American eats in a lifetime.)

Lam Hoi-ka – 276 people live in the tiny Inuit village of Brevig Mission on the Bering Strait. Johan Hultin, a Swedish academic, excavates a mass grave of 1918 flu pandemic victims to study them, while only months before, Hong Kong reported that the H5N1-type chicken virus had been contracted by humans. A six-year-old child named Lam Hoi-ka is the first to die of the disease. It is worried the virus might mutate into something deadlier.

Influenza – The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, so named because Spain’s media devoted so much coverage to it, has been the world’s deadliest flu outbreak. Between 50 and 100 million are estimated to have died, with one out of every four Americans falling ill from the flu. As many as 20,000 Americans ultimately died each week. H5N1 harkens back to the flu, and many believe it is only a matter of time before a deadly H5N1 strain hits the public. The World Health Organization believes anywhere between two and 7.4-million people will die worldwide as a result of an H5N1 outbreak. Meanwhile, Hultin’s research helped reveal the source of the 1918 pandemic to be avian influenza, or bird flu.

All Flus – Robert Webster, a virologist, proved that pandemic flus all have their origins in avian flus. Evidence today suggests that migrating aquatic birds are the primary source of all flu strains. While these birds may carry the strains, they do not necessarily become sickened by them. Human beings are only susceptible to certain such strains, and not others. The same is true of animals like horses and pigs. Dangers occur when flu strains become compatible, mix, and spread between species.

The Life and Death of a Bird – Foer explains the second shed he entered with “C” contains 33,000 birds. He explains that a broiler chicken is fed relatively little, but grows fast due to its engineered nature. These chickens are prone to sudden death syndrome, deformities, diseases, excess fluids, walking impairment, and so on. The broilers are killed through processing within 39 to 42 days of being born. It is believed that 95% of these chickens become infected with E. Coli, and that 75% of chickens in retail stores still have the infection. Processing occurs by mostly non-English speaking immigrants who have a high turnover rate.

105 chickens are packed into a crate, with the crates then packed into trucks. At the factory, live chickens are put onto a conveyer system hanging by their ankles, then sent



through an electrified water bath which is meant to render them unconscious, but does not always work. The chickens are then killed by having their throats slit mechanically, with backup workers who finish the job if the machine isn't effective enough. The chickens are then scalded in boiling water, though it is estimated each year that four million chickens survive the slitting process long enough to be boiled alive. Birds are then debeaked and have their legs removed. Machines then gut the birds, often leaving feces all over their bodies. USDA official inspectors have only about two seconds to examine each bird. Much is often missed, with chickens leaking yellow pus, stained by feces, contaminated by bacteria, suffering from cancerous tumors, and so on, are shipped to be purchased by consumers. Each year globally, 50 billion birds live, die, and are sold in this fashion.

Influence – It is estimated that 76-million food-borne cases of illness occur each year in the United States, with most cases arguably being caused by factory farm meat. Pathogens are becoming stronger and more resistant to antimicrobials and antibiotics. In 2004, a gathering of world experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the World Organization for Animal Health, gathered together to discuss the relationship between sick and at-risk farm animals, and pandemics. The group noted that risk factors, such as increased demand for animal protein and resistant pathogens, mean that people have two choices – cheap chicken, or health. The H1N1 virus, or swine flu, is noted as having been traced to a North Carolina hog factory farm.

More Influences – Foer notes that according to leading nutritionists, a vegetarian diet is at least as healthy as a diet which includes meat. Foer also explains that many of those who argue against vegetarianism or veganism at all, or for meat are owned, supported, or benefitted by the animal industry. Other organizations, like the USDA, which provides federally endorsed information about food, is also charged with supporting the American food industry, which consists largely of factory farms. Foer worries about the growing demand for meat, and the growing industry of factory farms. He wonders where it will all end.

Slices of Paradise/Pieces of Shit

1. Ha Ha, Weep Weep – Paradise Locker Meats, near Smithville Lake, Missouri, has a painting of a cow that escaped the slaughterhouse and attempted to run to freedom. While others have given Foer the run-around, Paradise's owner, Mario Fantasma is very friendly. Mondays and Tuesdays are kill days at Paradise; Wednesdays and Thursdays are cutting and packing days; and Fridays are when locals may bring in their animals for custom slaughtering or butchering. Paradise, Foer explains, is a rare independent operation and a huge hit with local farmers and hunters. Foer notes that Paradise is clean, traditional, and ideal. Animals are carefully slaughtered to ensure they are dead when they are butchered. Mario's son is among those who work on the kill floor. All of the workers admit to having difficulties sometimes with killing and butchering. The butchered pigs are inspected by USDA inspector "Doc," who says she has never had to remove something suspicious or stop things from Paradise's operations.



There is No Pig – Species are groups of animals that occur naturally in the wild, while breeds are the selective work of farmers. The demand for lean pork has increased, leading to intensive breeding through artificial insemination, leading to pigs with everything from leg and heart problems to anxiety and stress – with stress producing acid that eats away at pig meat. Likewise, factory farm pigs are being bred and raised to be wholly dependent on factory farm conditions, meaning they could never survive outside.

Nice, Troubling, Nonsensical – Mario shows Foer the hog holding area, where the hogs are given food and water. One hog is lying on its side, trembling, perhaps from a heart attack. Foer notes that hogs often suffer heart attacks due to stress from transport, handling, the smell of blood, and so on. Mario believes that the pigs are not aware they are facing death, but does believe they are scared from the change of environment. Mario admits to caring about the animals the company handles. As Foer prepares to leave, he is offered samples of meat. Foer admits to both being repelled and desirous of eating the meat. Foer declines, saying he is Jewish and the meat must be kosher so as not to offend Mario. Foer writes that Mario and his people are all nice, proud, and hospitable. They are part of the 2% of the American population still employed in agriculture, down from the 20-percent in 1930, even though the smaller percent now provides more food. In 1950, one farm worker supplied 15.5 consumers. Today, one worker supplies 140 consumers.

2. Nightmares – Factory farms produce 95% of America's pork. Foer explains he will now provide a contrast between the traditional hog farming practices of Paul Willis, a family farmer who is also the head of Niman Ranch's pork division, the only national supplier of nonfactory pork, and that of the factory-farming Smithfield Foods.

Our Old Sympathetic Attempts – Foer arrives at Paul Willis's farm in Thornton, Iowa. Paul explains he lives in the house he grew up in, and that he currently raises about a thousand pigs a year. Paul reveals he refused to expand and go the way of confinement buildings, and invented the term "free-range pigs" for the hogs he grows. His partnership with – and later working for – Bill Niman's Niman Ranch means that Paul, along with the 500 other small hog farmers Niman coordinates with, receive fair and above-market prices for their pigs. These pigs are raised and are allowed to roam in pastures, and their welfare is carefully looked after.

Traditionally-cared for pigs produce better tasting meat. Niman Ranch itself has strict standards for how the pigs it purchases must be raised – including that pregnant pigs must be raised with their social groups and have access to the outdoors. Everyone Niman Ranch employs must have humane program certificates, the animals must have clear paper trails, and so on. Niman employs independent auditors to make sure all their standards are met. As Foer's day at the Willis farm ends, it is learned that the dream retirement home of Paul and his wife, Phyllis – a small house on a hill overlooking beautiful land that Paul has been restoring to Midwestern prairie – will soon be a neighbor to a factory farm.



3. Pieces of Shit – Throughout the country, farmers like Paul and Phyllis, as well as small communities, face similar situations. Among the most dangerous aspects of factory farming is pollution. For example, while a pig factory farm will produce 7.2 million pounds of manure each year, a cattle feedlot will produce 344-million pounds. Smithfield slaughters 31-million hogs each year, and generates 281 pounds of feces for every American. This is the cost, Foer argues, of cheap meat – driving small farms out of business and generating so much manure.

The waste itself is stored in “lagoons,” which are health hazards for people as well as the animals. Foer recounts the story of a worker who was overcome by the smell of a lagoon, and fell in. Several more male members of his family dove in to save him, but all died. Smithfield has also been known to dump waste into rivers, has violated countless laws and regulations thousands of times, and the waste itself has severely damaged the environment. The people who must deal with waste at work and those who must live near factory farms suffer greatly in terms of health – including contracting a flesh-eating bacteria known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*).

4. Our New Sadism – Several states, including Florida, Arizona, California, and Colorado, have made some gains in combatting animal cruelty at factory farms, outlawing things like gestation crates (a very small cage in which a pregnant pig will spend her entire gestation unable to even turn around). Despite the serious and common suffering of so many factory farm animals, much more work needs to be done. For example, runt piglets are killed by swinging them and bashing their heads onto concrete floors.

5. Our Underwater Sadism (A Central Aside) – Foer explains that stories of animal abuse he has included in his book are not exceptions, but the rule as a whole for factory farming. Even aquafarming is industrialized now, with how-to books explaining that salmon, for example, face six key stressors which include foul water and overcrowding that leads to cannibalism. Other issues facing farmed fish include sea lice and being slaughtered while conscious. Fish caught in the wild are ill-treated, and the process of mass fishing – such as trawling – leads to massive bycatch, 98% of which is dead by the time it is returned to the water. Foer wonders if all this matters enough to change what people eat.

6. Eating Animals – Foer argues that it is wrong to eat factory-farmed animals, or to sit silently by while friends eat them. Foer instead argues for traditional farming methods, such as Willis and Paradise, but notes that even these methods have flaws – such as Paul Willis castrating piglets or Frank Reese finding it difficult to find an acceptable method of killing turkeys. Foer goes on to say that while he may not eat meat at the moment, he does not say this must be the case for everyone else. Rather, he hopes there can be a discussion about the entire topic.



Analysis

Suffering in terms of emotional and physical pain does not only affect animals, but actual physical suffering can affect humans as well by way of the species barrier breaking down through the jumping of animal viruses to humans. Foer discusses the emergence of the Spanish flu in 1918 having been directly linked to bird flu; and that the recent H5N1 has also been directly linked to bird flu. The amount of disease, sickness, and illnesses suffered by birds in factory farms only increase the potential for such maladies to make the leap from birds to people. The unsanitary conditions of factor farms, and the unnatural means by which animals are bred and raised in captivity only contribute to the potential for another deadly outbreak of such illness and suffering.

The present state of animal agriculture, Foer argues, denies humanity because it separates people from the personal raising of animals to the mass engineering and raising animals to meet profit margins. Animal agriculture and humanity go hand-in-hand. However, there are still bright spots in the world of animal agriculture as several states have issued laws and imposed new regulations for the more humane treatment of animals in factory farms; and farmers like Frank Reese, Paul Willis, and slaughterers like Paradise Locker Meats still do things as old-fashioned and traditional as possible.

The reader will recall the freedom that Frank Reese's turkeys enjoy, as well as their natural diet. Paul Willis's pigs likewise enjoy the freedom of pasturing and wide open spaces of living their lives in addition to a natural diet. Both Frank and Paul (with the exception, Foer notes, of castration) treat their animals incredibly well and with loving respect. It is through farmers like Frank and Paul that animal welfare becomes important, and a major theme in Foer's book. Even at the Paradise slaughterhouse, the animals are treated with loving care even up until they are killed. The owner of the company notes the animals are even given food and water. Foer once again contrasts factual information with personal experiences, noting that even his personal experiences are different. Consider, for example, how Frank Reese farms birds versus the chicken factory Foer visited in the dead of night in the previous section.

It is through conversations with people like Frank, Paul, and Paradise's Mario Fantasma, that Foer begins to explore conventional wisdom and beliefs about animals that persist among people who raise and slaughter them. Willis, and the company to which he sells – Niman Ranch – have strict standards about how pigs are raised. For example, Willis will not separate pregnant sows from their social groups, knowing that natural inclinations and hierarchies among animals exist. While animals are not human beings, they are not unfeeling creatures, either. They, too, have feelings and can suffer. The slaughterers at Paradise also take this into account through their humane treatment of animals brought in for slaughter. The reader should note that even though the killing is done humanely, those who do the actual slaughtering – including the owner's son – have second thoughts and struggle with their work. They deal with animals on a personal, individual level, and due to their moral and ethical struggles, treat the animals all the more kindly as a result. This speaks not only to animal rights and animal welfare, but to the humanity of the workers.

Vocabulary

pandemic, zoonotic, primordial, contagiousness, grotesque, hierarchies, ostensible, meticulously, paradigmatic, impugning, precarious, viscera, nonambulatory, apropos, nostalgic, methodologies, complicity, nullified, moratorium, congenital, lethargic

I Do

Summary

1. Bill and Nicolette – Bill and Nicolette Niman are happy to invite Foer into their home in the small town of Bolinas, California. Bill explains he first got into homesteading and farming after developing an interest in it years before, along with his first wife who died in a tragic farm accident. Bill and his second wife, Nicolette, were given some cattle born by mistake at a big ranch, which became the foundation for Niman Ranch, a \$100-million-and-growing annual business. Nicolette explains she is a vegetarian, and her first date with Bill revealed something which surprised her.

2. I Am A Vegetarian Rancher – After moving to the ranch in Bolinas, Nicolette explains she wanted to truly know how to run the place, and to be involved. Nicolette explains that raising animals for meat is an honorable profession, and can be very kind profession so long as the animals being butchered for meat in death are treated well and well-cared for in life. Nicolette explains there is an exchange between men and animals: humans are to provide a better life than animals would have in the wild, and a better death. Nicolette goes on to say that this has always been the case for nearly all farmers, whereas in factory farms, animals are incidental to the greater operation. It is natural for animals to eat animals in nature. Because humans are a part of nature, it is natural for humans to eat animals. Nicolette herself does not eat meat based on individual reasons such as feeling a connection to animals. She is horrified by farming factory processes, and says it makes no sense for a company developing an animal incapable of reproduction if the goal is to feed people, though it does make sense if the primary concern is money. Nicolette hopes to see a move back to pasture-based, grass-fed livestock and humane farming.

She Knows Better – An unidentified worker at PETA calls Nicolette a friend, and considers her an ally against factory farming, but still disapproves of anyone eating meat at all. This individual argues that more food is given to animals than feeding people, that Nicolette's love of animals is not noble because it leads to their deaths, and that Nicolette's arguments for the treatment of animals is like the arguments of slaveholders wanting to keep slaves. The PETA worker says that the choice is between a person's taste and an animal not having its throat slit open. The PETA worker goes on to say that Nicolette gives "cover" for meat eaters so they can forget the moral challenges of meat.

He Knows Better – Bill explains on his first date with Nicolette, he told her he respected her vegetarianism. Bill explains that most of his life has been dedicated to factory-farming alternatives, in which tradition and gentleness are prized. Bill was brought up to value food as precious, and not something to be wasted. As Bill went into farming, he recounts facing the moral challenge of killing for food the animals he personally raised and cared for – a situation he still faces. So long as the animal is well-cared for and happy, killing the animal for life-sustaining food is justifiable. This close connectedness



to the animals raised and killed for food is important for respect, and is something lost with industrial farming. Bill argues against the PETA slavery contention, noting that slavery was not necessary for the survival of human life the way meat has been and still is around the world. Bill also argues against the idea that animals consume more food than they produce, because the data points only to factory farming rather than pasture-fed livestock.

3. Do We Know Better? – Foer identifies the PETA worker as Bruce Friedrich, and notes that Bruce and the Nimans offer alternative strategies for animals. Bruce argues for animal rights while the Nimans argue for animal welfare. The strategies agree in some places – such as less animal violence – but disagree elsewhere, such as with actually eating animals. Foer notes that long after he made his decision to go vegetarian, it remained unclear if he could genuinely respect different decisions, and if these other decisions were wrong.

4. I Can't Go to the Word Wrong – Foer asks Bill and Nicolette about eating animals. Bill explains there is a difference between a pet and livestock, but that both must be treated with respect. While Bill and Nicolette both dislike branding, it is currently the only possible way to keep track of their cows, to prevent theft, and to help create a paper trail. Both note that alternative methods are being experimented with, and that they hope to use such an alternative. Others argue, however, that branding is only a tradition that ranchers do not want to give up. Foer argues branding is unnecessary violence. However, Foer also notes the beef industry is the most ethically impressive of animal husbandry. Bill reveals he still has difficulty putting down animals for food, no matter how necessary it may be. He must always take a deep breath before doing so.

5. Take a Deep Breath – Foer explains it was impossible for him to get into a slaughterhouse for cattle, but he has still learned about the process from others. Cows are rendered unconscious by a stunning, pneumatic gun (cows aren't always able to be rendered unconscious), after which they are bled, skinned, and dismembered. In some places, workers do not even knock out the cows, though often these workers complain about inhumane treatment.

6. Proposals – Frank Reese is Foer's favorite farmer because he doesn't do anything controversial with his animals, branding them or castrating them. Frank is likewise the only USDA-approved farmer to be able to call his birds "heritage poultry." While Frank raises his birds well, he still needs access to a slaughterhouse. Foer explains he recently learned that the only slaughterhouse Frank would use because it lived up to his standards was bought and closed by an industry company. Foer finds himself wondering what would happen if ethically-minded older generations like Frank teamed up with younger, ethically-minded groups like Farm Forward.

I Am A Vegan Who Builds Slaughterhouses – Although the writers of this section is a vegan, the writer says there is compassion possible with the raising of animals for meat. The writer praises Frank and the farmers like him and emulating him. The writer is revealed as the founder of Farm Forward, which brought in an investor to help Frank form a business plan and a self-owned slaughterhouse. The writer explains that caring



over the calculator is why Farm Forward goes through such great lengths to build humane slaughterhouses.

7. My Wager – Foer explains that his research into animal agriculture for three years has committed him to vegetarianism, and to supporting humane farmers like Frank. Yet, Foer wonders just how destructive a culinary preference must be before people decide to eat something else. Foer also says sadly that, just before his book went to print, Bill Niman was ousted from his own company for opposing greater profitability over ethics. Bill Niman has declared he will no longer eat Niman Ranch beef.

Analysis

The traditional practices of Reese, Willis, and Paradise are continued by Bill and Nicolette Niman, and their meat company, Niman Ranch. Bill and Nicolette not only own the company, but actually raise their own cattle for the company as well. They treat their cows with great kindness and respect, made all the more crucial due to Nicolette herself being a vegetarian. Nicolette understands that animals feed many people, and that people are free to eat meat, but she still believes that the animals raised for meat should be treated lovingly. Foer explains the treatment of animals being raised in such a fashion is known as animal welfare.

On the other hand is animal rights, a theme that here appears through a PETA worker. The PETA worker, Bruce Friedrich, compliments the Nimans for their humane treatment of animals and calls Nicolette a friend – but then condemns the Nimans for killing animals at all. Friedrich argues that animals have just as much a right to live without being killed as people do. Friedrich likens the raising of animals to be killed to slavery. Friedrich also says the choice is simple: it is either a person's tastes or an animal having its throat slit open and its rights to life denied.

Foer, however, refuses to go this far. He notes that the Nimans certainly treat their animals humanely, and that eating of meat is not something someone should be condemned for in and of itself. (He will speak more on this later in the book.) Rather, those like the Nimans, Willis, and Reese should be supported and applauded for what humanity they display toward the treatment of their animals. Foer goes a step further to speak about the partnership between older generations and younger generations that employ traditional methods, and cutting edge groups like Farm Forward which is dedicated to supporting and promoting an ethical farm food diet. Here, the reader can again note not only Foer's personal experiences playing into his opinion, but he allows Bill, Nicolette, and Friedrich to speak about the topic in their own words. This way, Foer does not act as a middle man for their views, but allows their views to be read unfiltered.

Bill Niman explains that there can indeed be such a thing as ethical meat. He notes that keeping animals cannot be compared to slavery especially for the reason that slavery was never critical to human survival the way that eating meat has been, and remains in some places around the world. The keeping and raising of animals for human survival means that humanity and ethical treatment are all the more important because the



animal must be able to provide sustenance. He notes that there is an exchange between the farmer and the animal. The farmer gives the animal a better life than the animal would have had in the wild, while the farmer slaughters the animal for consumption and survival.

Vocabulary

irrefutable, mutilated, reverently, familiarity, ubiquity, aberrant, inapplicable, objectionable, archaic, insipid, provocative, immobilizes, eviscerated



Storytelling

Summary

1. The Last Thanksgiving of My Childhood – Thanksgiving has always been a joyous time for Foer, for it brings together his family in love and celebration. It is a meal of thanksgiving that praises American ideals and brings people together. The primary part of the meal is turkey. Foer explains the present year is the first year he will host Thanksgiving, and so he wonders if he should serve turkey or not.

2. What Do Turkeys Have to Do with Thanksgiving? – Foer wonders why turkey is so central to Thanksgiving, and if Thanksgiving would be any less a holiday without turkey. Foer does not believe so, and that celebrating without turkey may be a way to educate those who dine with him.

3. The Truth About Eating Animals – Foer reveals that a massive book about slaughterhouse experiences compiled by Gail Eisnitz contains countless examples of cruelty toward animals, such as stabbing cows in the eyes with electric prods and beating up hogs, and how such work can dehumanize people. Foer wonders how many such examples and how much cruelty there must be for people to start really paying attention to them. He notes that while some slaughterhouses have made improvements, many have not, and have abjectly failed audits conducted by Eisnitz.

4. The American Table – Foer explains there is not enough ethical meat in America to even feed all of Staten Island or New York City, let alone the country. Widespread ethical meat is a promise of the future rather than a current reality. Steps in the right direction can be taken, such as doing business with less and less-troubling factory farms over time. Foer admits there will be inconveniences, and that it sounds like a crazy idea today. He notes that years ago, civil rights seemed like a crazy idea, and that even small choices can have big impacts, such as the Boston tea party paving the way for America.

5. The Global Trade – Factory farming does not cause all the problems in the world, but it is amazing to Foer how many such problems intersect in factory farming. He notes that he has yet to find a credible defense of factory farming. Foer believes the factory farm debacle is not just from ignorance, but caring as well. Foer has no doubt that one way or another, factory farming will someday come to an end. Foer argues that food matters, animals matter, and eating animals matters even more.

6. The First Thanksgiving of His Childhood – Foer considers the production of food to be very American, for it helped sustain the American colonies and helped keep them independent of relying on imports from Europe. By eating American foods on Thanksgiving, Foer considers Thanksgiving to be America's founding act of conscientious consumption which he hopes will translate to the world of meats in the present day. Factory farms are inhumane, and how people treat animals is a test of how



they respond to the powerless. Foer relates a story of Abraham Lincoln stopping his entire entourage to assist some baby birds in distress. Lincoln later said of the incident that he could not have slept that night if he had not done the morally right thing by helping a helpless creature. Foer says that his grandmother was right –if nothing matters, there is nothing to save.

Analysis

Foer notes that there is not enough ethical meat in the United States to feed just Staten Island (population approximately half-a-million), let alone the rest of the country. As Foer noted earlier, the Nimans treat their animals humanely, and people should not be condemned for eating meat. Rather, the argument should be against unethical methods used to produce the meat that people eat. Companies like Smithfield produce unethical meat, while farmers like Frank Reese, Paul Willis, the Nimans, and Niman Ranch, produce ethical meat. Additionally, the choices of diet – to include or exclude meat – must be respected all around.

Yet, Foer argues, there should be a dialogue opened about the sorts of things that matter to people, and the things which define humanity. How a person treats an animal, pet or otherwise, says a lot about the character and humanity of a person. Likewise, if there is the possibility to make an ethical choice about purchasing and consuming meat, the more ethical option must always be undertaken. Foer, however, is unequivocal in his condemnation of factory farming, urging not only reform, but a return to humane farming. In effect, Foer calls for the reformation of the entire field of animal agriculture.

These things do matter, Foer argues. He recounts the story of Abraham Lincoln stopping his entourage to return some baby birds to a nest – a moral compulsion, as Lincoln recounted. Foer also brings up the example of his grandmother once more, who refused pork because it was not kosher. If such small things did not matter, how could anything large matter, his grandmother wondered? If the treatment of animals on such a large scale does not matter, Foer wonders what that says about humanity as a whole. To evince his position, Foer ends his book just as he began, with personal experiences. This adds a human touch to the numbers, facts, and figures that Foer has presented, which in turn helps readers to consider the eating of animals to be a moral issue.

Vocabulary

savageries, promissory, pragmatic, profoundly, mitigate, obfuscate



Important People

Jonathan Safran Foer

Jonathan Safran Foer is the author of the book “Eating Animals.” A novelist by trade, Foer has entered into the field of nonfiction to answer his son’s question of why people eat animals. Foer conducts three years of research, from reading and study to speaking with farmers, factory farm workers, and activists, to learn about the entire process of eating animals. Foer is disturbed by the horrific conditions and effects of factory farms, but delighted to learn there are still small and family farms that operate in the traditional, humane way. Foer, himself a vegetarian, does not condemn those who eat meat, but urges them to consider where their meat comes from, and urges them to purchase ethical meat.

Foer's grandmother

Foer’s grandmother, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust and World War II, considered food precious because during the war, she often had none. On the run from Germans, Foer’s grandmother received pork from a kind Russian farmer, but did not eat it because it was not kosher. When asked why by Foer, his grandmother explained that if nothing matters, there is nothing to save. This comes to matter greatly to Foer in his pursuit of arguing for ethical meat, noting that everything truly does matter.

C

“C” is the cover name for a female animal activist that Foer sneaks into a chicken factory farm with in the middle of the night. C is politically moderate, has no tattoos or piercings, and does not hate people who farm. Rather, she concerns herself with the conditions animals face on factory farms, and wants to help bring about better lives for the animals raised to feed people.

Celia Steele

Celia Steele is a housewife who lived on the Delmarva Peninsula who unwittingly ushered in the era of factory farming. In 1923, she received more chicks than she ordered, so rather than kill them, she decided to save them. By the 1930s, Celia had more than 250,000 chickens, a level of farming which soon attracted others. Ironically, Celia’s attempt to do the humane thing – by saving chicks – inadvertently led to the suffering of billions of other animals.



Frank Reese

Frank Reese is a family turkey farmer located in Kansas. Reese employs traditional and natural methods of raising the turkeys that he sells, and lovingly cares for and gently treats his animals. He has high standards for raising turkeys and for slaughtering them. During the course of the book, Frank comes to build his own slaughterhouse, and to work with Farm Forward to continue to promote and sell ethical meats.

Bill and Nicolette Niman

Bill and Nicolette Niman are a husband-and-wife team of cattle ranchers who founded Niman Ranch. Bill, a meat-eater, and Nicolette, a vegetarian, are immensely concerned with the welfare and care of their animals. Foer contends the Nimans are exemplary farmers who should be praised for their humane work. The same is originally true of the company Bill founded, but it is revealed the company later sought profits over ethics, leading Bill to be removed for favoring ethics. Bill no longer buys meat from Niman Ranch.

Paul Willis

Paul Willis is a hog farmer in Iowa who practices traditional methods of hog-raising. He lovingly and carefully tends to his animals, ensuring they have plenty of room to run around and relax. Paul maintains high standards of humane treatment for his hogs, and Foer applauds such efforts.

Bruce Friedrich

Bruce Friedrich is a PETA worker and founding member. Bruce argues against the eating of animals at all, and condemns the act itself. Although Bruce claims to call Nicolette Niman a friend, he is quick to judge her for supporting the meat industry. Bruce likens the keeping of animals to human slavery, and likens Nicolette's defense of animals to a defense of human slavery.

Foer's son

When Foer's son is born (his son is not named in the book), Foer is both excited to be a father, and is able to reflect on his own childhood. Foer, who is very careful about the foods he feeds to his son, is asked by his son why people eat animals. It is this question that launches Foer into writing the book "Eating Animals."

Mario Fantasma

Mario Fantasma is the owner of Paradise Locker Meats, a slaughterhouse that practices traditional and human methods of slaughtering. These include giving animals awaiting slaughter water and food, and hiding the actual killing of animals from the others. Foer visits Paradise during the course of writing his book, and is vastly impressed with the kindness and humanity of the workers employed at Paradise.

Objects/Places

Meat

Meat is the flesh of an animal used for food. Meat is a staple of the human diet which some people, such as Foer, refrain from eating. There are two kinds of meat considered by Foer in his account – ethical meat, and unethical meat. Unethical meat is culled from animals raised in the cruel conditions of factory farms where they have unnervingly short lives, no freedom, and are fed unnatural diets, leading to unhealthy and sick animals. Ethical meat comes from animals raised traditionally and lovingly out of doors with natural, safe diets.

Vegeterianism and Veganism

Vegetarianism and veganism are alternatives to meat-based or meat-inclusive diets. Vegetarianism is the eating of non-meat foods and animal byproducts, such as milk and cheese. Veganism is the eating of non-meat foods and the rejection of even animal byproducts. Foer and Nicolette Niman are vegetarians, while one of the owners of Farm Forward is revealed to be a vegan.

Traditional farms

Traditional farms are family, small, and independent farms owned and operated by people who both manage and have a hand in running the day-to-day operations of the farm. These farms practice humane animal-raising, in which the animals are given natural diets, plenty of room to run around and live peacefully, and are treated with kindness and respect. Frank Reese, the Nimans, and Paul Willis are representative of traditional farms in America, and are the sorts of farmers that Foer applauds.

Factory farms

Factory farms, inadvertently begun by housewife Celia Steele in 1923, are massive, industrial animal-raising ventures in which tens of thousands of animals are grown in confinement sheds and cages, given diets full of antimicrobials and drugs to force the animals to grow more quickly, and in which the animals are brutally treated and viciously killed. Some factory farms are much more humane than others, but even these leave a lot to be desired. Despite this, Foer says that there is currently no other way to feed so many people, and that changing the factory farm food system, although difficult, will not be impossible.



USDA regulations

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspections and regulations are emplaced upon farmers by the USDA to ensure safe food. Foer notes that these regulations often are not extensive or strong enough, since the USDA has the difficult job of regulation but promoting and supporting the agricultural industry. Nevertheless, USDA inspectors must be present at slaughterhouses, examining the meats that will be sold to consumers in retail stores.

Farm Forward

Farm Forward is an organization of young and ethically-minded Americans who promote and support ethically-sound farm foods, including meats. Farm Forward partners with Frank Reese to ensure the survival of his turkey farm, and provides an investor to allow Frank to construct his own slaughterhouse when the slaughterhouse he uses is bought and closed by an industry giant. To this day, Farm Forward also helps direct consumers to where they may purchase safe and ethically-cultivated foods and meats.

Chicago

Chicago is a major city in Illinois where the slaughterhouse was first developed. Slaughterhouses are essentially a factory-like production in which animals are killed, skinned, processed, and carved up for sale. Slaughterhouses revolutionized the meat industry, allowing farmers to directly sell their livestock to buyers and slaughterhouses. However, many slaughterhouses are unethical in their work, and this results in animal cruelty. Some slaughterhouses, such as Paradise Locker Meats, however, still practice humane and traditional methods of slaughter.

Delmarva

Delmarva – standing for Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia – is a major peninsula of land that comprises parts of those three states, and is bordered by the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, and Delaware Bay, is the home of factory farming. There, housewife Celia Steele unwittingly began the factory farming method when she opted to humanely save, rather than kill, the baby chicks she had received too many of. Today, Delmarva is known as the poultry capital of the world, as millions of chickens are raised and slaughtered there in factory farms.

California

California is among those states that have enacted laws ensuring the improvement of the factory farm industry and the welfare of animals. California is also home to Bill and

Nicolette Niman and their cattle farm, as well as the factory farm that Foer sneaks into with C early on in the book.

The American Midwest

The American Midwest is one of the places in America where a number of traditional farms still operate. Foer travels to the American Midwest to visit the farms of Paul Willis in Iowa, and Frank Reese in Kansas. Here, people remain rooted to the land on which they grew up as children, with some living on the same land that has been in their families for generations. These small, traditional, independent, and often family-owned and operated farms practice traditional animal raising, where the animals are given large, open pastures, and where they are treated respectfully and kindly.

Themes

Diet

Although Foer began his book research assuming it would ultimately be an argument for vegetarianism, he surprised even himself by ultimately concluding he is not against people consuming meat for nutrition - so long as that meat is ethical meat.

The topic of diet appears all through Foer's "Eating Animals." Even the very title of Foer's book – "Eating Animals" – is indicative of diet. Foer himself is a vegetarian – one who abstains from eating meat and fish. Nicolette Niman is another notable vegetarian in the book, while the founder of Farm Forward is a vegan – one who abstains not only from meat but animal byproducts as well. Foer notes in his book that science regards non-meat diets at least as healthy as meat diets; and Foer also argues that no one should be condemned for what they do or do not eat. Diet is a social, cultural, and traditional practice which transcends arguments, generalizations, and politics.

Foer does argue, however, that the consumption of certain meats is something to be advocated for or against. Foer explains that there are two kinds of meat in the world – ethical meat, and unethical meat. Ethical meat is meat from animals who have been humanely raised and slaughtered, while unethical meat comes from sources such as factory farms which do not humanely treat their animals. Foer urges people to make conscious and conscientious choices about where they purchase their meat, and what sort of meat they purchase. His hope is to support traditional, humane farmers, and to support the human treatment of animals.

Foer argues that the diet the animals themselves are fed also determines whether meat is ethical or unethical. Traditional farmers feed their animals all-natural diets of grass and grains, while factory farms give their animals foods loaded with things like antimicrobials and drugs to stimulate accelerated growth. Factory farm diets are intended to grow animals as quickly as possible so that they can be killed and sold, whereas traditional farm diets are devoted specifically to the well-being and health of the animals. Diet is among the reasons why traditionally-raised meat always wins taste tests against factory-farmed meat.

Animal Agriculture

Within his book "Eating Animals," Foer presents multiple sides of animal agriculture in an effort to educate, rather than influence, readers' opinions, encouraging the reader to determine on their own what they do and do not agree with morally. Illustrations of both traditional and modern animal agriculture, and presents the viewpoints of those who work in both situations, as well as those who oppose animal agriculture altogether. Animal agriculture includes the raising, keeping, slaughtering, and butchering of animals for use as food.



In the United States, traditional animal agriculture was practiced by family and small farms, where animals were tenderly, respectfully, and lovingly raised. This was for moral reasons – the animal providing sustenance for the family or a community should in turn be treated well for what it would be doing after death – as well as good business reasons – in that healthier, weightier animals commanded better prices. However, in 1923, Delmarva housewife Celia Steel inadvertently ushered in the farm factory era when she decided to humanely keep, rather than kill, the extra chicks she received in an order. Her methods were copied and expanded by others to the extent that now tens of thousands of animals are kept in cages in confinement sheds, with millions slaughtered every single year for commercial markets. Shorter lifespans, growth drug laced foods, and cruel treatment are typical of factory farm animal life.

Not all animals now come from factory farms, however. Foer explores the farms of Paul Willis, Frank Reese, and Bill and Nicolette Niman, who raise animals in the traditional way. These individuals not only raise their animals in the traditional way, but they sell them to humane-conscious slaughterhouses and companies, such as Paradise Locker Meats and Niman Ranch. These are the sorts of ethical animal agricultural practices which Foer supports and applauds, and urges readers to do the same.

Despite the traditional, humane methods of Reese, Willis, the Nimans, and others, there are still those who oppose the killing and eating of animals at all. Bruce Friedrich, of PETA, opposes the killing and consumption of animals for any reason. He argues that an animal has a right to live, has no choice in whether it is killed, and likens the keeping of animals for eating to be just like human slavery. Although Friedrich says he considers people like Nicolette to be friends, he still condemns them for their raising of animals to use as meat.

Animal Rights

Foer contends that he will not personally condemn anyone for eating meat, but he does seem to lean in that direction by providing a hefty amount of space to the extreme viewpoint of Bruce Friedrich of the organization PETA.

Friedrich and PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) contend that animals should not be consumed as food or killed for any commercial reason, that killing animals is on par with killing human beings, that animals should not be viewed as property, should not be experimented on, etc. Friedrich argues that animals are sentient beings almost indistinguishable from human beings, and must be treated as such.

Friedrich argues in the book that more food is given to animals than what the animals provide to people, that people like Nicolette Niman's love of animals is not noble because it leads to their deaths, and that Nicolette's arguments for the treatment of animals is like the arguments of slaveholders wanting to keep human slaves.

Friedrich argues that the choice around eating meat is not a question of ethical meat and unethical meat, but is between a person's taste and an animal not having its throat



slit open. Friedrich argues that vegetarians like Nicolette give “cover” for meat eaters so they can forget the moral challenges of meat. Foer notes that Friedrich’s response is one of two general, institutional responses to the eating of meat, and himself will not condemn anyone for eating meat.

Animal Welfare

Foer acknowledges that animal welfare is the second of the two main views of eating meat. Foer refuses to condemn those who eat meat, saying that respect must be afforded to all those who do and who do not eat meat. Foer explains that the conversation is misplaced, and should not be directed at the question of eating meat, but the question of eating ethical meat.

Foer finds it important to distinguish between animal rights and animal welfare for his readers. Animal welfare is similar to, but not identical to animal rights. While animal welfare takes into account animal rights – such as living outside of confinement houses and treating animals with respect – animal welfare advocates for the ethical treatment of all animals, regardless as to whether or not they will be used as food.

Bill and Nicolette Niman present the position of those concerned with animal welfare, recognizing a need for animals as food – but also recognizing the moral and human importance of humane treatment of those animals being raised for food. This is especially important for Nicolette because she is a vegetarian. Neither Nicolette nor Bill can stand to see animals suffering, and do believe that animals suffer. They believe this must be avoided.

Bill and Nicolette explains that the animals they raise are given better lives than they would otherwise have in the wild, even though they will end up being slaughtered for food. Bill and Nicolette, as well as others like Frank Reese and Paul Willis, not only makes moral sense, but good business sense as well. Healthy, well-treated, well-cared for animals produce a better kind of meat. To them, the sustenance the animal will provide in terms both of food and money is all the more reason to treat the animal so well while the animal is alive.

Humanity

Humanity, Foer argues, is absolutely critical to how people both treat and respond to the animals who become food, and how people go about the meat they consume. Humanity, thematically, include the morals, ethics, fairness, justness, reason, and right behavior associated with human beings.

Early in the book, Foer recounts the story of his starving grandmother on the run from the Germans who refused to eat the pork a kind Russian farmer offered her because the pork was not kosher. Foer’s grandmother explained that if nothing matters, then nothing is left to defend. Foer later presents an account of Abraham Lincoln stopping his entourage so he could replace fallen baby birds in a nest, noting that it was the right,



moral thing to do. Foer points out that how the most powerful creatures in the world – humans – treat those with far less power – animals – says much about the humanity and character of human beings.

Traditional family farms were, and are, testaments to humanity. There, animals are raised tenderly and with respect because the farmers depend on the animals to survive. Healthier animals provide better meat both for selling and for eating, and ensure the survival of the farmers. How Frank Reese, Paul Willis, and Bill and Nicolette Niman treat their animals on their traditional farms is a testament to their humanity and the welfare of the animals on which their lives depend.

Humanity is lacking in factory farms, where production and profit outweigh moral concerns about animals. Higher yields of meat mean more money – and higher yields of meat require faster and more efficient production. Stories of animal abuse in factory farms abound, and the methods used to kill animals that are sick, deformed, or considered unnecessary are hideous – such as the slamming of baby pigs onto the cement floor to kill them. Because animal production occurs out of the public eye, the public is able to either ignore or simply be unaware of the true extent of the inhumanity of what goes on in factory farms. Foer argues that returning to ethical meat and ethical farm practices will help to restore humanity by way of right treatment of animals.

Styles

Structure

Jonathan Safran Foer writes his book “Eating Animals” in the first-person omniscient perspective. Jonathan directly references himself in his writing, and recounts personal experiences that both led to the writing of the book – his son asking why people eat animals – and his actual writing of the book – such as his sneaking into a chicken factory farm and visiting Paradise Locker Meats. Foer uses the first-person narrative mode as a way to directly appeal to readers, often breaking the fourth wall to personally address readers. For example, in the chapter “Storytelling,” Foer directly asks the reader how much animal suffering and savagery it would take for the reader to no longer overlook such things. Foer also includes chapters that are wholly composed of brief essays penned by people like a factory farm worker, a PETA founder, and farmers like Bill and Nicolette Niman, so that they may personally and fully explain their beliefs and practices without a middle-man between them and the reader. This exposes the reader directly to these stances and individuals, without Foer standing in the way. This very personal style of writing allows Foer to appeal directly to the reader, and to allow the reader to make up his or her own mind.

Perspective

Jonathan Safran Foer writes his book “Eating Animals” in language that is personal, casual, and direct. Foer, who writes in the first-person, uses that narrative mode as a way to directly appeal to the common reader. The language he uses is easily understood and consumed. His language is simple and straightforward so that he might also easily make his points – such as that people should not be condemned for eating meat, but should pay attention to where their meat comes from. Foer is not writing for an intellectual elite, but for all average Americans who he believes are moral at heart, and who can change the nature of the farming and animal agriculture landscape. Foer comes across as a neighbor relating important information rather than an activist condemning anyone, and the casualness of his language to the point of crudity (adding profanity here and there, even to the titles of chapters –such as “Slices of Paradise/Pieces of Shit”) is seemingly intending to jolt the reader into thinking and action.

Tone

Jonathan Safran Foer divides his book “Eating Animals” into eight primary parts, with each part divided into chapters both numbered and titled, and unnumbered and titled. Each part of the book deals with a general topic, idea, or set of circumstances. For example, “Words/Meaning” is a lengthy part devoted to the definition of important words relating to eating animals that range from bycatch and broiler chickens to factory farms

and suffering. Each part of the book is further divided into chapters, with each chapter focusing on specific information relating to that part's particular topic or idea. For example, the part "I Do" deals with the Niman cattle farm, while the chapter "I Am A Vegetarian Rancher" deals with Nicolette's account, beliefs, and philosophy concerning her raising of animals for food while she herself is a vegetarian.



Quotes

Her history with meat was remarkably similar to mine... There was a gnawing (if only occasional and short-lived) dread that she was participating in something deeply wrong, and there was the acceptance of both the confounding complexity of the issue and the forgivable fallibility of being human.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Possible Again paragraph 15)

Importance: Foer explains that his wife struggled with eating meat and committing to vegetarianism, just like he did. Foer explains that their bouts with meat and vegetarianism were difficult because on the one hand, they had a human impulse to eat meat, but then on the other hand, felt guilty about the animal that would have to be killed to feed them. This confusion would only later serve as a foundation from which Foer would rise to seek answers –especially when his son is born.

Animal agriculture is a hugely complicated topic. No two animals, breeds of animals, farms, farmers, or eaters are the same.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Possible Again paragraph 10)

Importance: As Foer begins to address the true topic of his book, he explains that he originally had some assumptions when writing – such as that the vast majority of animals eaten in America are raised on factory farms – but that others – such as the idea the book may turn out to be an argument for vegetarianism – turn out not to be the case. Foer notes that this is because animal agriculture is a complicated topic because the practice is so diverse among those who carry it out and those who benefit from it.

Meat is bound up with the story of who we are who we want to be, from the book of Genesis to the latest farm bill.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (2. Friends and Enemies paragraph 9)

Importance: As Foer begins his discussion about the eating of animals, he notes interestingly that, despite their healthiness, dogs are not consumed by Americans, and that in six states, eating dogs is illegal. He wonders what separates the eating of fish, which can also be pets, from the eating of dogs, and thinks it must have to do with the closeness and companionability of dogs. However, even the eating of fish is a topic of discussion, as the eating of animals in general is a polarizing issue. Foer finds this interesting because the eating of meat stretches back to the beginning of human history, yet remains a relevant and controversial issue in the present day.

How much do I value creating a socially comfortable situation, and how much do I value acting socially responsible?

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Words/Meaning, Discomfort Food paragraph 2)

Importance: Foer explains that food writer Michael Pollan has noted that food creates good feelings and social bonds, which can be described as “table fellowship.” The difference in such social situations, Foer notes – such as not wanting to eat factory-



farmed meat but not wanting to create social disharmony – is a question of whether one values social comfort or social responsibility. Finding a balance is exceedingly difficult, and may sometimes prove more problematic because extra steps must be taken to accommodate such balance.

You simply can't feed billions of people free-range eggs... High-yield farming has allowed everyone to eat.

-- Unidentified Factory Farmer (I Am A Factory Farmer paragraph 5)

Importance: While the Factory Farmer admits that there are problems with the factory farm system, and that no system is ever perfect, he explains it is simply unrealistic to expect small family farms to support billions of people. It simply isn't possible. Growing up, the farmer explains his father owned 50 cows. Now, to be viable, a cow farmer must own at least 1,200 –in large part to meet demand, but also because the price of food continues to fall. Without factory farms, people would starve.

We can also be sure that any talk of pandemic influenza today cannot ignore the fact that the most devastating disease event the world has ever known, and one of the greatest health threats before us today, has everything to do with the health of the world's farmed animals, birds most of all.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Influenza paragraph 9)

Importance: Foer speaks succinctly about the source of the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic which killed tens of millions of people around the world in this chapter. He relates the efforts of Swedish academic Hultin who uncovered that the Spanish flu was caused by bird flu. Given the recent transmission of a chicken virus to human beings, and given the dangers of factory farming, Foer notes that it is only a matter of time before another outbreak occurs and millions die.

The conflict of interest is not subtle: our nation gets its federally-endorsed nutritional information from an agency that must support the food industry, which today means supporting factory farms.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (More Influences paragraph 11)

Importance: Foer worries about the growing demand for meat, and the growing industry of factory farms. He wonders where it will all end especially when organizations like the USDA, which provides federally endorsed information about food, is also charged with supporting the American food industry. The industry today consists largely of factory farms, meaning the USDA struggles between regulating health and safety, while ensuring the factory farms remain viable.

Traditional farms always beat factory farms in taste tests.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Our Old Sympathetic Attempts paragraph 8)

Importance: Taste tests have demonstrated that animals raised on traditional farms always beat animals grown in factory farms. Foer interviews Paul Willis, an Iowa family farmer, who argues that letting his pigs be pigs is essential to his work. This includes



allowing his pigs to roam freely in their pastures, giving them good food and good water, and not confining them in buildings.

Does all this matter – matter enough so that we should change what we eat? Maybe all we need is better labels so we can make wiser decisions about the fish and fish products we buy?

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Our Underwater Sadism (A Central Aside) paragraph 13)

Importance: The evidence that Foer brings to bear against fishing – both wild and aquafarmed - speaks of great cruelty to the fish and sea creatures involved. Foer hopes it is enough to change the minds of people about the seafood they eat in terms of making better decisions. Yet, he recognizes that simple awareness in general might do the trick, using labels to demonstrate

Whether we're talking about fish species, pigs, or some other eaten animal, is such suffering the most important thing in the world? Obviously not. But that's not the question. Is it more important than sushi, bacon, or chicken nuggets? That's the question.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Our Underwater Sadism (A Central Aside) paragraph 15)

Importance: Foer breaks down the question of eating animals into one of suffering and of food. He wonders if the suffering animals go through is worth more than eating them. This is the question he poses to the reader.

It seems to me that it's plainly wrong to eat factory-farmed pork or to feed it to one's family. It's probably also even wrong to sit silently with friends eating factory-farmed pork, however difficult it can be to say something.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (Eating Animals paragraph 7)

Importance: Foer argues that it is wrong to eat factory-farmed pork (or any factory-farmed meat), or to be silent while others do, especially given the information Foer has researched and presented so far. This includes everything from animal suffering to the conditions in which they are raised and which affect them in terms of health and quality of the product passed on to the consumer. While Foer does not argue that vegetarianism is the only way to go, he does argue for a humane source of meat, such as the Willis farm and those using traditional farming methods.

However much we obfuscate or ignore it, we know that the factory farm is inhumane in the deepest sense of the world. And we know that there is something that matters in a deep way about the lives we create for the living beings most within our power.

-- Jonathan Safran Foer (The First Thanksgiving of His Childhood paragraph 17)

Importance: Foer concludes his book not by condemning meat-eaters, but by condemning the factory farm system. It is not eating meat that is problematic, he states, but how meat is produced – and how people treat the animals that produce them. How people treat animals – and those without power – matters tremendously because

people have such power at all. How people treat animals may indeed be a reflection of how people treat one another as well.



Topics for Discussion

Diet

What is a diet? What sorts of diets are presented in the book? Describe the diets of some of the people that Foer writes about (including himself). Why do these individuals eat the diets that they do? What is your own personal diet like? Why?

Diet

What primary forms of human diet are presented in "Eating Animals"? Which of these diets seems to be the best for humans in terms of both health and ethics? Why?

Diet

Compare and contrast the diets of animals on traditional farms and in factory farms. Why do these diets differ? Which is healthier for the animals? Why? What does this mean for consumers and for the animals themselves?

Animal Agriculture

What is animal agriculture? What kinds of animal agriculture are presented in the novel? Which does Foer advocate? Why? Do you agree or disagree with his opinion? Why or why not?

Animal Agriculture

Why does Foer take a less condemning stance toward factory farms as a whole in relation to providing food, even though he condemns their practices? Why does he believe that traditional farms are the future? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

Animal Agriculture

Compare and contrast the farms of Frank Reese, Paul Willis, and Bill and Nicolette Niman. Which is Foer's favorite? Why? Do you believe Foer is justified in his critique of any of these farmers? Why or why not?



Animal Rights

What are animal rights? Why does Paul Friedrich believe animals have rights? Do you believe that animals have rights? Why or why not?

Animal Rights

Although Paul Friedrich calls Nicolette a friend and applauds her humane treatment of animals, he still condemns it as being hypocritical since the animals will be killed. Do you agree or disagree with his judgment of Nicolette? Why or why not?

Animal Welfare

What is animal welfare? How is animal welfare similar to - but different from - animal rights? With which position do you agree? Why?

Animal Welfare

Foer argues for animal welfare at the end of his book. Why? Do you agree or disagree with his stance on the eating of animals? Why or why not?

Humanity

What is humanity? Why does humanity matter when it comes to how animals are treated? Which individuals that Foer writes about demonstrates humanity? Why?

Humanity

Why is humanity so lacking in factory farms? What could bring about changes of humanity to these farms?

Humanity

Is the reformation of the factory farm system - including both humanity and better practices - possible? Why or why not?