

FARMED ANIMALS: THE PAST IS PROLOGUE, THE FUTURE IS (ALMOST) HERE

By
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The author describes her journey to animal law and the contributions she has made to the field, particularly in respect of ballot initiatives that have been used successfully to make specific improvements to the welfare of farmed animals. She provides an overview of the Florida ballot initiative prohibiting the confinement of pigs during pregnancy and the California ballot initiatives setting minimum cage size for laying hens and more, highlighting how the idea for each initiative was born, and the drafting and implementation challenges encountered along the way. The author also focusses on other legal and non-legal strategies that are being deployed in the ever-growing animal law movement, such as undercover investigations and the author's own podcasts, the Hen House and The Animal Law Podcast. Sadly, despite this work, farmed animals continue to suffer in large numbers. While the author considers that there is greater public awareness of farmed animal welfare issues, partly as a result of successful ballot initiatives, the future of farmed animal law remains to be seen.

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I. INTRODUCTION

It was Calhoun who first started me thinking about animals. He was a six-month-old pointer mix whom I adopted from an American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals van that happened to be parked near the law library I frequented in lower Manhattan—and he really changed everything. Although Calhoun became deathly ill

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the day after I adopted him, he not only recovered nicely, but became the great love of my life and an enormous influence on my future.

That was in the late 1980s, and it wasn't until a few years later that I branched out from my obsessions with Calhoun—and Finnegan, a feisty spaniel mix I picked up one day on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway—to a broader interest in animals. The thing that started me thinking about farmed animals in particular was a conversation with a bartender at the Ear Inn, where I regularly hung out, who mentioned that he had stopped eating meat because of the way the animals were treated. That brief conversation ended up having a profound effect on my life.

It is a bit embarrassing to admit, but it hit me like a ton of bricks. I did know that meat was made of animals—I wasn't an idiot—but, like so many people, I remained naïve about what that actually meant for the animals themselves. At that point, the internet was still in its infancy and it wasn't that simple to look into what was going on behind closed doors. It is so easy to forget how much harder information was to come by before we all went online. However, I became a subscriber to the now-defunct print magazine, *Animals' Agenda* (I later joined its board), and there I managed to find out enough to horrify me—from the extreme confinement of animals, to their slaughter as mere babies, and everything in-between. I felt as if I had awakened into a nightmare. And that was that; my life's course—at least what was left of it—was set.

There was already a vibrant, albeit small, community of lawyers who were interested in animal protection, and a very small number of those were interested in farmed animals. I got lucky and came across a conference in 1996 at Pace Law School on the topic of farmed animal law.¹ This was one of a series of truly pioneering conferences at Pace on various topics related to animals and the law organized by Suzan Porto²—who, at the time, was teaching animal law at Pace, one of the first schools to have such a course.³ Those conferences opened my eyes to the importance of advocating for animals through what I knew best: the law. They were a vital introduction to the issues for someone, like me, who had never come across anything serious to do with animals while in law school, or, really, anywhere else. As a result of that conference, I found out about the New York City Bar Association's Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals, the first bar association animal law committee in the country.⁴ As I said, I got lucky. Then, I got involved.

¹ E-mail from Suzan Porto to author (Feb. 8, 2019) (on file with author).

² Suzan Porto established the conferences in memory of Jolene Marion, a pioneer in animal law.

³ Joyce Tischler, *A Brief History of Animal Law, Part II (1985 – 2011)*, 5 *STAN. J. ANIMAL L. & POL'Y* 27, 29 n.6 (2012).

⁴ *Id.* at 29.

II. THE BALLOT INITIATIVE – THE BEGINNING OF REFORM

At that point, the animal agriculture industry didn't talk about animal welfare at all, at least in any way that was accessible to the public. It didn't have to, and it had very good reasons not to. Factory farming, which started to take hold in the 1960s,⁵ was, by then, thoroughly entrenched and not something the industry wanted people to know about. Also, legislators were not particularly interested in bills that would reform the industry on behalf of animals, and, if animal rights activists were fortunate enough to get someone to introduce a bill, it would go to the agriculture committee to die there. In fact, that's largely still true.

The laws that were on the books to protect farmed animals consisted of the limited and poorly enforced Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, the almost completely unenforced 28-Hour Law, and state anti-cruelty laws.⁶ Further, even though there was no effort anywhere to apply cruelty laws to farmed animals, the industry had already started to quietly introduce legislation around the country to protect factory farming by exempting "customary farming practices" from criminal prosecution.⁷

In contrast, Europe, and certain individual European countries, had started to make a few efforts to improve farmed animal welfare.⁸ I recall a conversation I had in the early 2000s with British animal activist Peter Stevenson, who was, at the time, with Compassion in World Farming, and David Wolfson, a corporate attorney who has had a very successful pro bono side career advocating for, teaching about, and writing about farmed animals. We spoke about the difficulties of legislative reform for animals in the American legislative system, as compared to what was possible in other countries. It was depressing, but when we discussed the idea of a ballot initiative, Stevenson was floored. While it may be easier to bypass subject matter committees in a parliamentary system, the potential for bringing legislative issues directly to the people to vote on did not seem in the realm of possibility

⁵ Doris Lin, *Why We Have Factory Farming*, THOUGHTCO. (Nov. 15, 2017), <https://www.thoughtco.com/why-do-we-have-factory-farming-127703> [<https://perma.cc/5EGD-Q4TW>] (accessed Feb. 19, 2019).

⁶ See, e.g., *Laws that Protect Animals*, ANIMAL LEGAL DEF. FUND, <https://aldf.org/article/laws-that-protect-animals/> [<https://perma.cc/32CS-L6SA>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019) (describing various animal laws); Anjali Sareen, *How the Law is Failing Our Animals*, HUFF. POST (Mar. 28, 2013, 10:20 AM), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/anjali-sareen/post_4538_b_2911723.html [<https://perma.cc/PU73-TVDC>] (accessed Jan. 15, 2019) (discussing minimal protections afforded to farmed animals under federal and state laws, and lack of enforcement).

⁷ *Customary Cruelty in the Farm Industry: When Animal Abuse is Legal*, ANIMAL LEGAL DEF. FUND (Apr. 3, 2015), <https://aldf.org/article/customary-cruelty-in-the-farm-industry-when-animal-abuse-is-legal/> [<https://perma.cc/G3RS-3QPG>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

⁸ Dorothy Sluszka, *Animal Farm: The E.U.'s Move towards Progress and the U.S.'s Slide towards Dystopia in Farm Animal Welfare*, 24 CARDOZO J. INT'L & COMP. L. 423, 431–32 (2016).

in such a system. But in approximately half of the states in the United States, it was and remains a very real possibility,⁹ and one that really started the modern farmed animal law movement.

One thing led to another, largely led by the Humane Society of the United States and Farm Sanctuary, as counseled by Wolfson, and, in 2002, the Florida ballot initiative was born. At the outset, it was obvious that if this were to be successful, the reform that would be sought would have to be limited and specific. After a meeting in New York City involving representatives of every major U.S. animal protection organization, the decision was made to focus on pigs, since people seem to have a softer place in their hearts for pigs than other farmed animals. Another reason was the truly horrific standard practice of keeping pigs, during their pregnancy, in crates so small that they were barely bigger than the pig herself. Even within the brutal world of intensive confinement animal agriculture, gestation crates were both terribly cruel and not amenable to much, if any, justification.¹⁰

III. DRAFTING CHALLENGES

Drafting the Florida ballot initiative presented numerous quandaries. Among them was an issue that continues to haunt animal lawyers, *i.e.*, how to *de facto* ban a practice such as the gestation crate while framing the proposition in such a way that it did not imply that this meant that factory farming, or at least housing for pregnant pigs, was now humane.

This question, or the fundamental quandary underlying it, lay at the root of much dissension within the animal protection movement, which continues to this day. Many animal activists are concerned that a small reform, which may be the best that one can achieve legislatively, will create the illusion that animals are being treated decently while really accomplishing very little.¹¹ Will it thereby put an end to

⁹ See Elizabeth R. Springsteen, *A Proposal to Regulate Farm Animal Confinement in the United States and an Overview of Current and Proposed Laws on the Subject*, 14 *DRAKE J. AGRIC. L.* 437, 439 (2009) (“[I]n addition to the typical legislative process, there are currently twenty-three states that allow initiatives to be placed on the ballot. An initiative is the proposal of a new law or constitutional amendment that is then placed on the ballot by petition, that is, by collecting signatures of a certain number of citizens.”).

¹⁰ HUMANE SOC’Y OF THE U.S., *AN HSUS REPORT: WELFARE ISSUES WITH GESTATION CRATES FOR PREGNANT SOWS*, 1 (2013), <https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/hsus-report-gestation-crates-for-pregnant-sows.pdf> [https://perma.cc/EKX7-GEMP] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

¹¹ See, e.g., Gary Francione, *Animal Welfare Regulation, “Happy Exploitation,” and Speciesism*, *ANIMAL RIGHTS: THE ABOLITIONIST APPROACH* (Aug. 27, 2013), <https://www.abolitionistapproach.com/animal-welfare-regulation-happy-exploitation-and-speciesism/> [https://perma.cc/5GJZ-GJCT] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019) (“[W]hen animal organizations support welfare reforms, they cannot help but present the supposedly ‘higher welfare’ products as morally desirable and as resulting in more “compassionate” exploitation, and that has the effect of encouraging people who are concerned about the morality of consuming animals to continue to consume animals, rather than to focus

further reform? Will it lull people into feeling comfortable about their consumption of animal products? In this context, the question became whether setting a specific space limit would mean that that space limit would be defined as 'humane' and prevent, rather than initiate, further improvements.

The proponents of the initiative, including myself, thought that if the initiative were framed as simply prohibiting a type of behavior as inhumane, rather than setting an affirmative space limit, those who feared the creation of dead ends would trust that it would be easier to build on that in the future. Since gestation crates were so small that the pigs could barely move, and since it was believed, after gathering as much knowledge as possible regarding modern pig-keeping, that confining pigs to somewhat larger individual stalls was both impracticable and too expensive, the decision was made to simply prohibit confining them in a way that they could not turn around. This would have the effect not only of making individual stalls unworkable and thus necessitating group housing, it would also presumably sound shockingly reasonable to the average voter.

Another less complex drafting question was what to call the animals. Should the proponents strive to sound knowledgeable about the industry and refer to the subjects of this initiative as "gestating hogs," as the industry did? Or was it better to try to appeal to the ordinary person's perception and risk derision by calling them "pregnant pigs"? After polling, proponents went with "pigs during pregnancy." The industry did, indeed, laugh, and yet the ballot initiative passed, by a significant margin.¹²

Thus, the farmed animal reform movement was born. Similar language was used to *de facto* ban gestation and veal crates in Arizona, in spite of language from the industry such as this:

Make no mistake about it, out-of-state animal rights groups would like to bring animal agriculture in this country to a screeching halt. These activists simply can't stand the thought of an animal being raised for your dinner table, period. . . . The motivation behind Prop[osition] 204 is to ultimately end animal agriculture as we know it and eliminate meat/poultry products from our diets.¹³

IV. CALIFORNIA AND THE LAYING HENS

California, a much bigger and more expensive proposition, was next. And in California, the decision was made to include laying hens.

them on veganism as a moral baseline and as the clear answer—both as an individual matter and as a social matter—to the problem of animal exploitation.”).

¹² *Florida Animal Cruelty, Amendment 10 (2002)*, BALLOTPEDIA, [https://ballotpedia.org/-Florida_Animal_Cruelty,_Amendment_10_\(2002\)](https://ballotpedia.org/-Florida_Animal_Cruelty,_Amendment_10_(2002)) [https://perma.cc/P36A-ATUM] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

¹³ Mariann Sullivan & David J. Wolfson, *What's Good for the Goose . . . The Israeli Supreme Court, Foie Gras, And the Future of Farmed Animals in the United States*, 70 L. & CONTEMP. PROBS. 139, 142 (2007).

Though crucial from the point of view of saving animals from horrific cruelty, including these hens presented particular drafting difficulties. The language that had been crafted to frame the initiatives relating to pigs and calves (*i.e.*, preventing them from turning around) did not work as well for hens, who were caged in groups of six to ten hens. Even though the hens were held in hellishly crowded cages, it was arguably more difficult to ascertain whether one was permanently deprived of the ability to turn around or spread her wings since the number of hens in the cage might vary, or they might move around in a way to allow that sort of limited movement, at least once in a while. In spite of this ambiguity, it was still believed that giving each hen a specific amount of space, such as a square foot, was too easily seen as dead end and labeling as ‘humane’ conditions that were clearly anything but.

After a hard-fought and expensive campaign, the initiative passed by a substantial margin.¹⁴ More followed, and a few state legislatures joined in—often, though not always, because a ballot initiative was threatened. Back in California, the language relating to hens did indeed lead to uncertainty. After wrangling with the industry and litigation, recently, California went even further and passed an updated initiative with a specific space limit for laying hens and a commitment to move to cage-free housing.¹⁵ Another important innovation, implemented in both Massachusetts and California, has been the creation of bans on the sale of any product derived from animals in violation of the standards, regardless of their origin.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, certain folks within the animal protection movement, perhaps even more convinced that the small reforms imposed by the initiatives were standing in the way of awareness and progress, opposed the recent California initiative.¹⁷

V. THE MOVEMENT GROWS

In the meantime, numerous nonlegal strategies that helped spread public awareness and were often intertwined with legal efforts were being implemented by the burgeoning farmed animal protection

¹⁴ *California Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals (2008)*, BALLOTPEdia, [https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_2_Standards_for_Confining_Farm_Animals_\(2008\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_2_Standards_for_Confining_Farm_Animals_(2008)) [<https://perma.cc/F6M5-9MJY>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

¹⁵ Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals Act, 2018 Cal. Legis. Serv. Prop. 12 (2018).

¹⁶ Gabrielle Canon, ‘A Loud and Clear Message’: California Passes Historic Farm Animal Protections, *GUARDIAN* (Nov. 8, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/nov/08-california-animal-welfare-cage-free-eggs-prop-12-passes> [<https://perma.cc/KQP3-8SYY>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019); Phil Demers, *13 States Sue Massachusetts Over Egg Law, Claim Constitutional Right to Confine Animals in Tight Spaces*, *MASSLIVE* (Dec. 12, 2017), https://www.masslive.com/news/boston/index.ssf/2017/12/13_states_claim_constitutional.html [<https://perma.cc/NL5N-QZW5>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

¹⁷ *Why We Oppose California’s Farmed-Animal Initiative and You Should, Too*, PETA (Nov. 21, 2017), <https://www.peta.org/blog/why-we-oppose-californias-farmed-animal-initiative-and-you-should-too/> [<https://perma.cc/Q3TX-A2YK>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2018).

movement. Undercover investigations became more common and far more sophisticated.¹⁸ More recently, there has been a strong push toward negotiated agreements¹⁹ with retailers, such as food service companies and supermarket chains, to extend reforms to places where no ballot initiatives have been passed and none are legally possible. Aiding all of this activism is the fact that farmed animals have come to the attention of much larger donors, particularly those involved in the effective altruism movement, which has helped increase the reach of these reforms. The reforms implemented by these agreements are generally just as limited as the ones put into law by the ballot initiatives, but their reach is much greater, extending internationally, as international food corporations are brought on board.

VI. LEGAL STRATEGIES EXPAND

For myself, spreading the word took the form of teaching animal law, first at Brooklyn Law School, then Cardozo, NYU, Lewis & Clark, and currently at Columbia—as well as through podcasting. Jasmin Singer and I started the Our Hen House podcast in 2010.²⁰ The podcast primarily focuses on highlighting the work done by animal activists of all different skills and efforts—from grassroots protesters, to major organizational leaders, artists, authors, etc. Although the podcast does not focus specifically on farmed animals, they are inevitably the central focus because, after all, at least 98% of the animals we interact with are farmed animals, and this does not even include fish and other sea life.²¹ While there are occasionally opportunities to delve into legal issues on Our Hen House, I eventually felt that we were never able to get as far into the legal weeds as I liked. So, in 2015, I started the Animal Law Podcast.²² There, I am able to interview attorneys who actually litigate animal law cases. In the few years of doing the podcast, the level of sophistication, the number of successes, and the scope of legal issues has increased dramatically. It is truly inspiring.

One reason for the increase in legal approaches is that strategies have been implemented to address the many harms brought to the

¹⁸ See, e.g., Lewis Bollard, *Food Fight*, ENVTL. L. REP. 46, 47–48 (2013) (discussing the “increasingly effective and numerous undercover investigations on farms by animal activists”).

¹⁹ See *About the 88% Campaign*, 88% CAMPAIGN, <https://88percentcampaign.com> [<https://perma.cc/83Y4-773K>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019) (stating a campaign initiative to have companies adopt progressive welfare standards for chickens).

²⁰ *Welcome to Our Hen House!*, OUR HEN HOUSE, <https://www.ourhenhouse.org/about/inside-the-coop/> [<https://perma.cc/P72E-Y7AC>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

²¹ *On the Farm*, ANIMAL WELFARE INST., <https://awionline.org/content/farm> [<https://perma.cc/L2MU-V4FQ>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

²² *Professor Mariann Sullivan Squawks About Our Hen House’s New Animal Law Podcast*, OUR HEN HOUSE (July 29, 2015), <https://www.ourhenhouse.org/2015/07/professor-mariann-sullivan-squawks-about-our-hen-houses-new-animal-law-podcast/> [<https://perma.cc/J9M8-39UM>] (accessed Apr. 30, 2019).

world by factory farming, in addition to the suffering of animals. Since these harms are so intertwined, animal law is always intimately connected to other areas of law.

For example, environmental lawyers, who for too long failed to take on factory farming as the enormous environmental hazard it represents, have started to achieve some significant gains. Interestingly, one of the major areas of success has been through the use of time-honored nuisance torts, which protect real property from degradation by bad neighbors. Additionally, an obvious upcoming focus of environmental litigation will be the enormous climate change implications of factory farming.

Another potentially fruitful area for litigation is animal agriculture's effect on human health, ranging from food poisoning, to the health implications of the widespread administration of antibiotics to farmed animals, to influenza, and perhaps even to heart disease and diabetes.²³ Many of these issues are likely to become more amenable to litigation as causation becomes more readily apparent through scientific advances. If that happens, this would potentially devastate animal agriculture, and make some plaintiffs' lawyers very rich.

Ok, I admit it: Now I am getting out of the past into the highly speculative future, where I much prefer to dwell. One legal area that has most definitely been part of the past, however, and which is likely to grow even more, is consumer protection litigation. With more pressure placed on the industry, such as through undercover investigations revealing horrific cruelty, there are more temptations to prevaricate regarding how animals are treated. This has given rise to a significant body of litigation.

One unwelcome, but inevitable, sign of success is that animal lawyers must now often play defense in order to fight changes sought by the industry. Other than instituting the minimal reforms won by activists, the industry has not initiated serious changes in the way animals are raised for food. Instead, industry's primary strategy is to fight transparency, such as through "ag gag" laws.²⁴ This has led to litigation on the part of animal lawyers seeking, often successfully, to invalidate such laws.²⁵

²³ See, e.g., Vanessa Caceres, *Will Eating Meat Raise My Diabetes Risk?*, US NEWS (Nov. 14, 2017), <https://health.usnews.com/health-care/patient-advice/articles/2017-11-14/will-eating-meat-raise-my-diabetes-risk> (accessed Apr. 30, 2019) (discussing the link between Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and meat consumption); Michael J. Martin et al., *Antibiotics Overuse in Animal Agriculture: A Call to Action for Health Care Providers*, 105 AM. J. PUB. HEALTH 2409, 2409 (2015) (discussing the risks of overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture to human health).

²⁴ See, e.g., Lewis Bollard, *Ag-Gag: The Unconstitutionality of Laws Restricting Undercover Investigations on Farms*, 42 ENVTL. L. REP. 10960, 10960 (2012) (highlighting how ag-gag laws were enacted "to stop animal activists exposing the treatment of animals on industrial-scale farms").

²⁵ See, e.g., *Animal Legal Def. Fund v. Wasden*, 878 F.3d 1184 (9th Cir. 2018) (showing a challenge in Idaho to "Ag-gag" legislation).

VII. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

So, what have we achieved in the past twenty-five years? Farmed animals still live in hell—albeit in some cases perhaps a bit less dreadful a hell than before.

Do people feel more comfortable about eating animals than if there had been no reforms? There seems to be no reason to believe this, though, sadly, it appears that many, many people, regardless of whether there have been reforms in their state or not, have felt and continue to feel entirely comfortable eating animals and are, by and large, willfully ignorant of the conditions in which they live.

For the few who do seem to worry, the ‘humane farming’ movement has created the illusion of choice and the comfort that at least the food that *they* are eating is not derived from cruelty. Personally, I think this is a naive and distracting side issue. Raising animals on a large scale in those conditions would require too much land, too much labor, and, bottom line, too much money. While this may be an imaginary solution for the wealthy few who are willing and able to pay close attention to their eating habits, it is hardly a solution that will change the way the vast majority of humans eat. And, in any case, one’s definition of ‘humane’ has to be remarkably loose in order to accept that the treatment of animals raised for food, even in the most benign situations, fits within it.

However, while the benefits to animals to date have been small, they are not nothing. Presumably, it is better to live in a higher circle of hell than a lower one, if those are the only choices. Moreover, another benefit of achieving these minimal reforms is that they are requiring the industry to spend at least a small percentage of its profits on bringing the industry into compliance with minimal standards of animal care. Raising animals for food costs money. In fact, caring for animals with any kind of decency is expensive. If you have your own Calhoun at home, you know what I mean. The more the industry is forced to come into even minimal compliance with even minimal standards of care, the easier it is for plant-based foods to compete. In the current system, the costs of raising animals for food is externalized onto the animals themselves, in the form of misery. Requiring the industry to foot some of those costs would be extremely onerous for it.

Another benefit of the ballot initiative process has been that public awareness has increased. People are far more aware of the realities of factory farming than they were when I started out trying to do research, sans internet. But what has been the behavior change from this increase in information?

Have they gone vegan? Some, but not enough to put a serious dent into factory farming, though there are certainly signs that the number is growing.

Have they adopted ‘humane’ meat? A few, but it’s expensive, elitist, hardly without cruelty, and, ultimately, unscalable.

Have they cut down and looked for alternatives? Yes. This is where the real change has started to occur. Indeed, the growth of vegan foods has far outstripped the increase in the number of vegans, and vegan food has become acceptable on a mainstream level. The healthfulness has started to resonate, the climate change implications are rapidly gaining traction, the food is getting better and better, and people—while perhaps not willing to go the whole nine yards—are more and more upset about how animals are treated in agriculture. As a result, they are perhaps willing to go six, seven, or even eight yards toward cutting animals out of their diets.

VIII. THE FUTURE OF FOOD

Perhaps the most telling result of the increased information available to the public about factory farming is that the industry has begun to deal with the treatment of animals as a serious issue. Visit any agribusiness website and you will inevitably find a number of articles on animal welfare and animal activism. The industry is a bit stuck though. It is impossible for one producer to reform without the others reforming because, given the public's disinterest in buying 'humane,' they would not be able to compete on price. And it is impossible for one sector to reform, since they are in competition with each other—if pork is too expensive, people will simply buy chicken for dinner. But—and this is crucial—it is increasingly impossible for the entire industry to reform because each sector is, and will continue to be, not just in competition with each other. They are now in competition with plants, not to mention plants that taste like meat. And, soon, they will be in competition with meat itself that is not derived from slaughtering an animal.

Indeed, we are poised for a monumental shift in the use of animals for food. Just look in the dairy aisle of any supermarket. Milk has been the first product to diversify aggressively into plant-based alternatives, and this is only the beginning. Among the legal battles already being fought by animal advocates is opposition to animal agriculture's attempts to stymie the growth of these products through battles over the use of terms such as "meat" and "milk" and the erection of other legal and regulatory hurdles. The legal issues of the future benefiting farmed animals will involve making those businesses compliant and successful. The fight is on.

IX. THE END OF THE BEGINNING

Of course, not all animals are farmed animals. But once people have the meat out of their ears, they may well be able to hear the arguments for why so many other types of animal exploitation are hideous and completely unnecessary. Aided by the burgeoning science demonstrating that animals are much smarter, more thoughtful, more vulnerable, more alive, more important in every way than we ever knew, those who seek reform of the cruelties we inflict on animals will be able

to build quickly on the progress that has been made in the past twenty-five years.

In so many ways, it is unlikely that the next twenty-five years will be rosy. The future will be challenged by climate change, income disparity, population growth and migrancy, and some exciting—but very frightening—new technologies from artificial intelligence to gene-splicing. But, if trends are to be believed, the next twenty-five years also include the potential to put to rest the enormous crime that we have been committing against our fellow earthlings since the dawn of agriculture. There is no telling in what ways that gestalt shift could change the trajectory of the future. Perhaps it could even make it a bit rosier. Just as, on a micro level, Calhoun completely changed my future by helping me to understand that he mattered, humanity is poised for changes on a macro level in the way that we co-exist with all the animals on this planet, as we come to understand that each of them matters. I envy those who will be at the forefront of that fight.