



RPA COVID-19 Actions Link Pandemic to Animal Abuse

Pandemic highlights delusions linking animal abuse and human misery through the millennia. There are ways to break the cycle.

By David Cantor

With so many human beings suffering, how can you worry about other animals? Animal advocates are often asked questions like that. No one would question serious animal advocacy if our institutions such as news, universities, schools, medicine, youth groups, civic organizations, and religions were truthful in the first place about animal abuse as a major factor in human misery. Instead, they indoctrinate people into animal-abuse culture by obscuring the reality that animal abuse – all that human beings do to and with other animals and their natural homes – is the root cause of the big human problems that plague us generation after generation. Not only diseases like the COVID-19 pandemic, AIDS, influenza, Ebola, and others, but police executing black people without a trial (lynching), election of a racist science-rejecting president, and gross economic inequality exacerbating disease, poverty, and injustice.

Far-reaching impacts of animal-abuse culture are outlined in RPA's free brochure *Human Misery: The Animal-Abuse Factor*.

It is natural for human beings to care about other human beings more than other animals. It is *not* natural to undermine the natural human affinity for other beings and the living world – biophilia – or to invent ideologies that only human beings matter, that human beings are entitled to other animals and everything in the natural world, or that animal abuse is

legitimate as long as it provides perceived short-term benefits or safety to human beings.

The COVID-19 pandemic, far from narrowly focusing public attention on human suffering, death, and loss, perfectly illustrates the need to inform the public that we, the animals who presume to determine the experience of all other animals on Earth, are suffering *due to animal abuse* and the delusions that initiated it in prehistoric times and perpetuate and intensify it today.

The COVID-Animal Abuse Connection

While the coronavirus causing COVID-19 kills hundreds of thousands of human beings, sickens hundreds of thousands more, and devastates the global consumer-capitalist economic system – itself based on atrocities against nonhuman animals like killing them, capturing and breeding them, destroying and poisoning their natural homes, food, and water, and factory-farming them – news only presents authorities on human victims. News omits, and excludes from consideration, non-human victims of abuse that caused COVID to spill over to human beings from other animals.

Scientifically established connections between animal abuse and COVID-19 (and most other infectious diseases) are so little known to the public – and news so effectively suppresses them, rejecting RPA's op-ed articles explaining them and

stonewalling RPA's press releases on campaign actions addressing them – that RPA long ago made its main strategy the effort to hold our institutions responsible for teaching them.

Not knowing root causes of their biggest self-generated problems, human beings can have no idea of policy change needed to solve problems or prevent their reemergence in constantly shifting form. Long-term ignorance of root causes, largely due to systemic suppression of them on behalf of special interests, is a major factor in the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The COVID-19 pandemic ... perfectly illustrates that we are suffering due to animal abuse”

RPA COVID Actions

The pandemic could have been avoided if our institutions had told the truth in prior situations. Future disease outbreaks can be avoided if our institutions will start to tell the truth now. Following are some of the ways RPA works to make that happen.

► Meat-Promoting Universities

For many years, through its 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign, RPA has urged our massive network of land-grant universities (LGUs – colleges of agriculture) to stop providing billions of dollars' worth of public relations, propaganda, sales, lobbying, experimentation, and training to the meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries through their science-undermining "animal science" programs. We have also urged them to explain to the public *why* they are eliminating "animal science" – it has become clear that universities should stop promoting false and harmful beliefs like the *meat delusion*: obsolete, unscientific beliefs that it is natural, healthful, and ecologically sound for human beings to eat from animals and to operate meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries.

Here is part of an email RPA sent to the presidents of all fifty states' main LGUs this April:

Had your universities followed the facts presented to you by RPA in hundreds of letters, books, videos, and items of literature, they might have prevented the COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc throughout the human world today. Recent Ebola outbreaks, too – your voices could have been heard around the world, preventing abuse of bats to which that horrible disease is traced.

It was already too late, when RPA started writing to your universities, to prevent the butchering of a chimpanzee that caused the ongoing AIDS pandemic. But countless people suffer and die from heart disease, stroke, and cancers linked to the meat delusion. Our species would not have experienced influenza, smallpox, chicken pox/shingles, bubonic plague, anthrax, or many other infectious diseases ... if not for thousands of years of unnatural contact with other animals. Raising animals for food is the main source of gases breaking down Earth's climate. It pollutes

groundwater and oceans and devastates entire ecosystems.

Yet still, at this late date, your universities' "animal science" programs continue to mislead students, families, entire university communities, and the public to believe the long bloodbath called meat, dairy, fish, and eggs – and other uses of nonhuman animals – is natural and beneficial.

Linked to the end of that email: the most recent letter to all fifty LGU presidents in RPA's 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign and RPA's white paper sent with the letter, "The Case for Ending 'Animal Science' Documented."

RPA emailed the student-newspaper editors of the same fifty univer-

sities, providing them with the email quoted above and urging them to tell their university communities about it.

Our LGUs belong to the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU), which RPA first wrote to at the start of the 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign (when APLU had a different name). RPA has many times urged APLU to address the "animal science" disaster. On one occasion, we displayed a protest banner and leafletted at the APLU annual meeting in Washington, D.C. (The *Chronicle of Higher Education* refused to cover RPA's action even though its office was in walking distance of the hotel where it took place.)

Here is part of our COVID-19 letter to the president of APLU:

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Nothing more clearly highlights the enormity of the “animal science” problem at our land-grant universities than the current COVID-19 pandemic causing so much suffering, premature death, well-founded fear, and economic upheaval. Like almost every other infectious disease we can name, the COVID-19 virus spilled over from a nonhuman animal to a human being. The most likely source of spillover in this case: a meat market. Yet animal products are completely unnecessary to the human diet and detrimental to human health.

There is no underestimating the power, wealth, and popularity of our LGUs or the difficulty of eliminating long-established LGU programs funded by huge profit industries and government.

In an early response to an RPA mailing in the 10,000 Years Is Enough campaign, the president of Cornell University, the only Ivy League LGU,

“News omits, and excludes from consideration, non-human victims of abuse that caused COVID”

wrote that Cornell not only was not moving in the right direction but was constructing a new \$12 million “animal science” building. But without changing LGU policy, there is no chance of reducing animal abuse, improving human nutrition and health, or getting a grip on human-caused climate breakdown, or the poisoning of Earth’s water and soil. These are all linked to the meat delusion at the core of “animal science.”

► **Government**

Members of the White House Coro-

navirus Task Force have spoken to the public many times during the pandemic. The physicians on the Task Force have significant public trust. Although there has been some vague acknowledgement that the virus causing the COVID-19 pandemic most likely spilled over to human beings due to a particularly hazardous type of meat market in China, our species’ long-entrenched meat delusion, originating and sustaining meat markets worldwide, has not been mentioned as the root cause.

Here is part of the letter that I sent on behalf of RPA this April individually to National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, MD; Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy Deborah Birx, MD; Surgeon General Jerome Adams, MD, MPH, VADM; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield, MD; and Task Force Chairman Vice President Mike Pence:

All of us at Responsible Policies for Animals appreciate your endeavor to minimize impacts of COVID-19. I am writing to respectfully request that you begin to emphasize publicly the disease’s root cause: our species’ millennia-long *meat delusion*. As long as people believe eating from animals is natural and healthful, there will always be a next disease outbreak, a next public-health crisis, a next agonizing pandemic. Over many generations, non-communicable diseases linked to eating from animals have also killed countless millions.

In progress is an RPA mailing to the governors of all fifty states. In addition to directing their individual states’ public-health policies and management of their states’ COVID-19 responses, each governor is a trustee of their state’s land-grant university (LGU, college of agriculture – see “Meat-Promoting Universities,” above). Because of this nexus between our governors and our LGUs, RPA has written to the

governors about the “animal science” disaster multiple times through the years.

RPA continues to write to officials in multiple areas of government to address the incalculable harm done to human beings by animal-abuse policy, culture, and practice. RPA’s very brief white paper “Governing for Life: How Officials Can End Animal-Abuse Policy, Annihilation of Nature, and Resulting Human Misery by Upholding the Constitution of the United States” is based on the reality that the Constitution is interpreted only as serving human needs of liberty, justice, equal protection of the laws, defense, and other values stated in the document – not other animals’ needs of same. Showing officials how animal-abuse policy sickens and otherwise harms human beings can lead to desperately needed reductions in animal abuse; fighting cruelty and urging people to change their diet on an individual basis cannot.

► **News Industry**

RPA issued a press release about its mailing to members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, available at www.pr.com/press-release/810319. I have not been able to learn that any of the news, environment, food, medicine, or other venues that received RPA’s press release published anything about RPA’s COVID-19 endeavor. But the release assured that a large number of newspapers saw “meat delusion” linked to “COVID-19” and “Task Force.”

RPA also sent a letter to about one hundred managing editors at major news venues – print, radio, television, and Internet – urging them to inform the public that the meat delusion gave us the COVID-19 pandemic, consistent with the rest of the very long list of diseases linked to the meat delusion and animal-abuse culture. Our letter to news editors reads in part,

Masterful public-relations campaigns since the 1930s by the meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries – and “animal science” programs in our massive network

of agriculture colleges – have even most physicians, nutritionists, and dietitians convinced that those industries’ products are good or even necessary for optimal human health. However, human beings are natural herbivores with no need of anything in their diet from animals. Our preeminent nutrition scientist, Cornell University Professor Emeritus T. Colin Campbell, with over 300 peer-reviewed journal articles before his best-selling *The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted*, warns that the scant nutrients in animal products are better obtained from plants.

Man and Microbes by Arno Karlen (1995) and *Spillover* by David Quammen (2012), as well as many books on zoonotic diseases for medical practitioners, predict outbreaks like Ebola and pandemics like COVID-19. But neither they nor news coverage of them ensure that the public will recognize – as another book title puts it – that *You Don’t Need Meat*. The meat delusion is responsible for AIDS, smallpox, anthrax, influenza, and many other lethal and nonlethal human miseries.

As long as news speaks of our species’ deliberate contact with other animals and our disruption of their ecosystems as if it were biologically and morally legitimate, and doesn’t discuss it as abuse, delusions invented to rationalize animal-abuse culture will occupy the human mind, ensuring ever more disease. That includes future outbreaks of many

more coronaviruses confined to other animals until human beings cause them to spill over to human beings. It includes ever-mutating strains of influenza. And many not yet identified, following the pattern of AIDS, MERS, SARS, Zica, and so many more.

“The meat delusion is responsible for AIDS, smallpox, anthrax, influenza,”

Big, Long Picture

RPA’s strategy for achieving needed policy change to begin to reduce animal abuse (there has never been a reduction in more than 75,000 years) is based on a sizeable body of literature on political and moral revolutions and long observation of what doesn’t work in popular animal advocacy.

We must be persistent with our communications over long periods: The most influential people, no matter how well educated or well intentioned, have been indoctrinated from birth into all of the same false and harmful beliefs as everyone else. The big profit industries with the most powerful lobbies and public-relations campaigns rely on animal-abuse policy for their operations and profits. The need to end the cycle of mis-education sustaining destructive policy

is why RPA communicates with officials who influence K-12 education as well as university administrators, news editors, and officials.

A great many terrible things have happened since our species’ big innovators and killers, a tiny minority, gained ascendance in prehistoric times, establishing tyranny over the majority for many thousands of years. Terrible things that would not have happened had human beings forever adhered to their natural life-way in their natural habitat, foraging for berries, leaves, seeds, legumes, flowers, nuts, and roots to eat on the African savanna, taking care of each other, free of invidious distinctions and insidious ideologies.

Inculcating delusions aided the minority in managing the majority. It still does. Comprehensive delusions like the Great Chain of Being, the belief that human beings are entitled to other animals and their natural homes, and supernatural-creation tales mask evil perpetrated by the most aggressively dominant and frame it as good for all. The COVID-19 pandemic is just one result, but it is so far reaching and egregious in its impacts and will occupy the public mind for such a long time that animal advocacy must do its best to see that the public will learn the truth about its causes.

Together, we can lead the “leaders” toward the long-term trajectory we as a species must adopt, replacing many thousands of years of delusion and destruction with reason and revival. ★

Thank you for supporting RPA. Keep safe and well! Together we can compel our institutions to tell the truth, using our personal knowledge and RPA literature.