Animals & Society

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Objectives

- Discuss the role of animals in early American society
- Discuss the roles of animals in today’s society
- Discuss the factors that caused the change in peoples’ relationships with animals from early American society to today
- Discuss the range in viewpoints regarding animal rights and welfare
Animals in Early American Society

- Animals were essential to the survival of early settlers
  - Transportation
  - Farming
  - Protection
  - Clothing
  - Food
Animals in Today’s Society

- Animals are important in today’s society
  - Aiding handicapped people: animal-assisted therapy
  - Socialization for elderly and disabled
  - Security and law enforcement
  - Research
  - Clothing
  - Food
  - Companionship
Changing Relationships

- The industrial revolution
  - Gas-powered engines replace animals in farming
  - Textile plants produce synthetic materials
  - People move from rural areas into cities
  - Animals regarded as companions rather than tools
Changing Attitudes

- Growing interest in animal intelligence, awareness, and consciousness
- Exposing exploitation and offer legal arguments for animal protection
- Many groups form to protect the welfare and rights of animals
Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is based on science and is related to the well-being and productivity of animals

- Farmers and food animal producers are strong advocates for the ethical treatment of animals and take pride in the well-being of their livestock
- The nutrition, health, and management needs of animals have been significantly improved by scientific research and application
Animal Rights

The concept of animal rights is based on the philosophy that all animals (human and non-human) have equal rights.

- Animals have the right not to be used or exploited by humans.
- Oppose intensive animal production practices.
Animal Advocacy Groups

- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
  - Founded by Henry Burgh in 1866
  - Promotes the prevention of cruelty to animals

- The Humane Society for the Promotion of Animal Welfare (HSUS)
  - Established in 1883
  - Promotes efforts to care for homeless and abused animals
Changing Legislation

- Early animal welfare laws (dating back almost 200 years) were designed to protect animals.
  - Did not protect animals used for human benefit, necessity, or leisure events (like rodeos, riding, or racing).
- In the 1960s anti-cruelty legislation focused on companion animals (cats and dogs).