

## **The concept of animal rights**

What is it all about? First of all it's not about granting rights to animals, because the concept of animal rights is based on the assumption that all animals, including humans, have basic rights through their bare existence. The right to a life in freedom and in physical and psychical integrity. The concept of animal rights is not about granting rights to animals, but similar to the concept of human rights, about the acceptance and realization of these elementary rights.

We have these rights because of the elementary interests, which we have in common. These interests are for example the avoidance of pain, the will to live, to live in freedom and the realization of interests itself. The interest to avoid pain is based on the ability to feel pain. The prerequisite to feel physical and/or psychical pain is the conscious awareness. The conscious awareness makes the elementary interests ethically relevant.

This means that not the differences between species, gender, intelligence or race are ethically relevant, but the conscious awareness, which all animals have in common. Thus we don't want the equalisation of animals of different species, but instead we want them to be treated equally, because of their same elementary interests.

It is important to mention, that every being, which is capable of conscious awareness, should be ethically considered in the same meaning as mentioned above. This should be remembered to avoid new barriers, which exclude individuals from ethical relevance.

The concept of animal rights is directed against the attitude and point of view, which sees humans in the centre of ethical relevance (→ anthropocentrism). This point of view and attitude are the main reasons for the discrimination of non-human animals, which have the same elementary and ethically relevant interests as we do and are oppressed, tortured, murdered and have their freedom taken away from them, because of their species (→ speciesism).

Pigs, cows and humans, for example, are people in the same sense, which don't want to be imprisoned and/or exploited under great pain to finally be slaughtered.

Unlike animal welfare, which only calls for reform of animal exploitation, it is the goal of the animal rights movement to fully abolish the discrimination, oppression, exploitation, imprisonment, mistreatment and murdering of animals through humans (abolitionist approach). This goal does not only imply the abolishment of keeping animals, but also the abolishment of forms of oppression in human society, such as racism and sexism.

While vegetarianism does not mean a real improvement for the animals, veganism, which is a practical, healthy and herbal only way of nutrition and lifestyle, is a inevitable part of the solution.

Today nearly all groceries are available as vegan alternatives, more and more also in supermarkets, which makes a vegan nutrition very easy. But changing to a vegan nutrition or lifestyle is not an act of mercy, but a necessity. It's a fact that every purchase of a product, which was produced from or using animals, including usage for the production itself, is committing ethical injustice.

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Animal rights initiative Mülheim an der Ruhr  
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