

October 24, 2007

Today I had to kill a half-hour of time. I also happened to be in the CAW centre.

As per usual, there was a bunch of message merchants in the foyer: An army recruiter, another lady with a local group, and another woman peddling papers about being a [vegetarian/vegan](#).

Originally, the one thing that drew me to the woman, without recognizing her cause, was the free food on her table, which to her credit was a great idea. After approaching her, I noticed loads of propaganda that were scattered about the table, including biased pamphlets surrounding “factory farming” and animal cruelty in Canada.

I respectfully questioned her about her cause, and she kindly responded with the following answers.

Me: What is your message?

Vegan Woman: We are trying to get people to *become* vegetarians or vegans, and stop the cruel practices producers use in this country.

Me: Why did you become a vegan?

Vegan Woman: When I was 16, I had two cats and I thought — if I can’t eat these cats, why can I eat other animals?

Her story didn’t exactly sell me on her message, but I kept my manners and remained cordial.

Me: What is factory farming?

Vegan Woman: Factory farming is when animals are kept in cages or pens. They are treated like machines, and never see the light of day, and are only fed to be slaughtered.

The ignorance of this woman’s group made me quite angry at that point.

My response to her is:

Your message that cattle are factory farmed is a fallacy, which should be re-examined.

Cattle sent to feedlots are offered an adequately proportional amount of space to live, and if anything are over-fed and kept on [self-feed](#). Beyond that, in feed lots and ranch operations alike, animals are kept in corrals during the winter months in order to provide them food, shelter, bedding, and access to fresh water instead of snow. Additionally, when calving takes place it is necessary to keep cows in an enclosed area, such as corral (not a pen or cage), so they can be quickly ushered into a warm barn for proper monitoring of any calving troubles. This protocol prevents harsh, sub-zero temperatures from harming calves at birth, ultimately giving them a much better chance of survival. If a cow is *not* near her expected calving date, she is free to roam amongst the herd in a sufficiently open area. Ranchers and beef producers treat their livestock with love, respect, and the utmost care because cattle are not only their livelihood, but their defining passion.

I take this issue seriously and personally. As a registered cattle owner on our farm, I/we would never sell an animal to another breeder with inadequate facilities or management practices; in fact, this objection has taken place before. In response to creating animal waste, we have conglomerated with governments, volunteering our time, to create a dike that effectively

diminishes run-off produced our farm. This run-off is collected and spread on fields as a natural fertilizer. Health-wise, any bovine vaccinations given are for the safety and protection of not only the animal itself, but also for the consumer. It would be a much crueler practice to permit an animal to suffer with an easily preventable disease by allowing that disease to grow and be passed other animals/humans by not taking precautions. Our cattle are seen regularly by different veterinarians who are beef producers themselves, each having purchased breeding stock from us in times past to use in their own herds.

I find the notion that practices such as these are cruel and inhumane. It is in good conscience that ranchers and beef producers *do* protect and care for their herds, no matter what the cost.

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