

The Impacts Of Factory Farming

On Human, Animal, and Environmental Health

Celine Cuddihy, HPPH6031.

Is FF *really* anthropocentric?

- It *does not* best serve human interests.
- Key word *factory*.
- 80% of antibiotics sold in the USA in 2013 were given to livestock, not humans¹.



By Daisy2375 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=93680098>

“The Great Plains and the Midwest, arching from Texas to Minnesota, has become what some locals call “the red meat capital of the world.” a series of corporations now birth, raise, and kill 7,000,000 hogs each year. One result of this concentrated animal life is hundreds of purple-hued open-air manure “lagoons” contain more semi-treated waste than is generated by 50 million people. This small region pools more excrement than is annually made by the human population of California²”

¹ Alex Blanchette, ‘Living Waste and the Labor of Toxic Health on American Factory Farms’, *MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY QUARTERLY*, Vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 80–100.

² IBID.

A Degradation of Human Beings

- Study at a slaughter house in Nebraska, USA. 137 workers; 126 (92%) were Hispanic, 10 (7.3%) were white.
- Results found that workers are more likely to suffer serious psychological affects than workers in other industries³.
- This is a degradation of human beings. But from what?

“a rule governed by justice, mercy and true concern for the welfare of all⁴.”

“those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor... But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ... that its parts should have equal concern for each other.” (1 Cor 12:21-26, emphasis added).

- We should treat animals with *more* honour, respect and concern, *because* of their difference. This is our duty.

³ Jessica H. Leibler, Patricia A. Janulewicz and Melissa J. Perry, 'Prevalence of serious psychological distress among slaughterhouse workers at a United States beef packing plant', *Department of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University*, Boston and Washington, (2016).

⁴ Rose Zuzworsky, 'From the Marketplace to the Dinner Plate: The Economy, Theology, and Factory Farming', *Journal of Business Ethics* , Vol. 29, No. 1/2, (2001), pp. 182.

Peter Singer and Speciesism

- Principle of equality should be based on whether the creature has the ability to suffer.

“The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?⁵”

- Principle of equality= equal concern for interests.

- Discrimination against women is sexist, against the black community is racist, therefore discrimination against animals is speciesist.

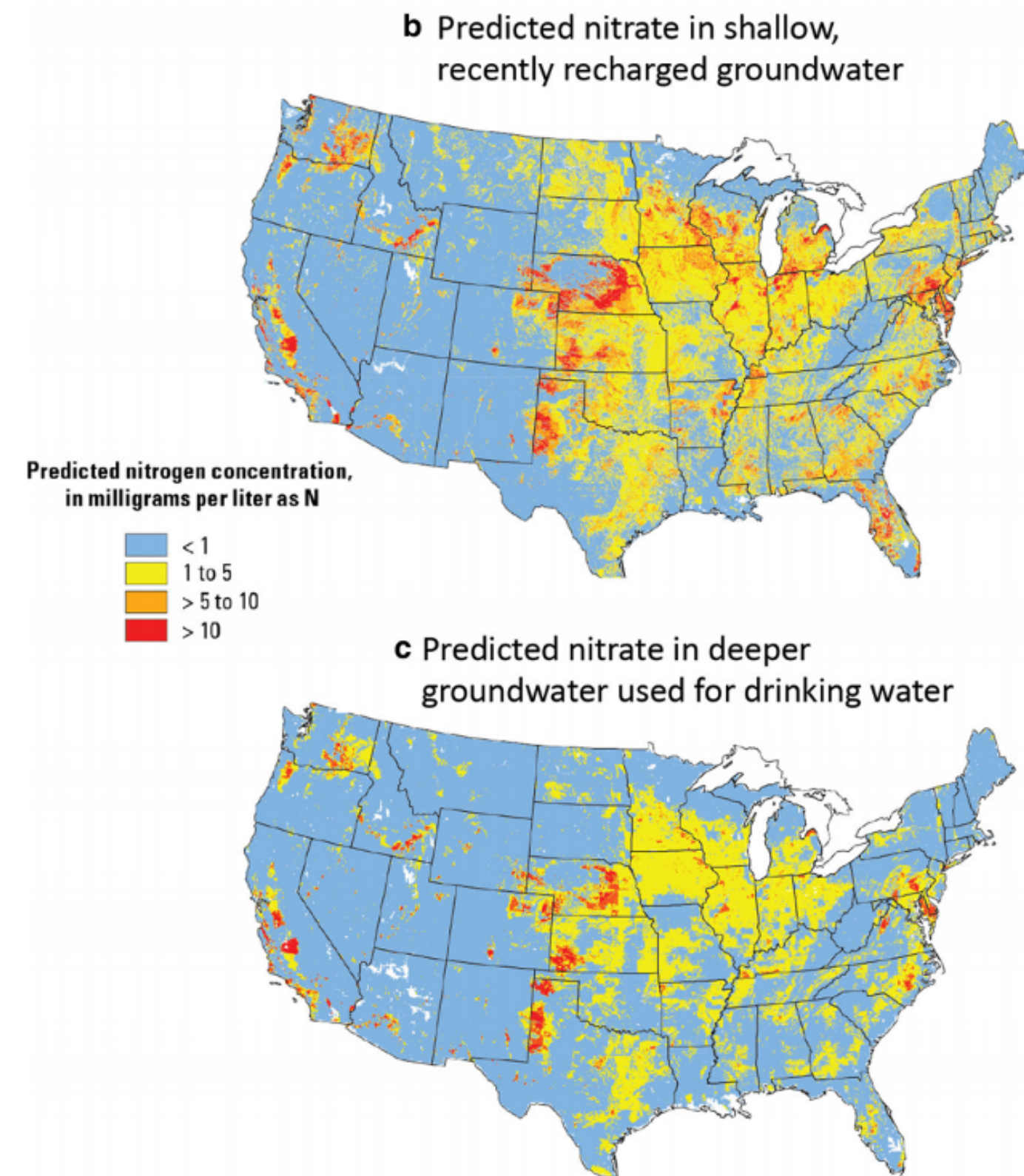


⁵ Peter Singer, 'All Animals Are Equal', in, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, TOM REGAN & PETER SINGER (eds.), New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1989, pp. 148- 162.

Environmental Effects

- Eutrophication.
- Externalised Costs.
- Animals are fed corn or other grains rather than grass- this leads to the over production of grain and the use of chemical fertilisers containing Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P).
- This fertiliser runs from the land into fresh water sources and leads to the over production of plant life in the water causing toxic algae to grow in the water, polluting drinking water and damaging other plant life.

“At the broad scale, the industrialisation of farming, driven by economics rather than a sustainability ethic, will only continue to exacerbate the eutrophication of fresh and coastal waters⁶.”



“The US now produces a total weight in corn that is, “remarkably close to the estimated weight of the global population⁷,”

Picture: Estimated Nitrogen in US waters because of fertiliser used for grain.

“Most of the grain grown in US is not used directly for food. It is fed to animals in feedlots (about 36%), used for biofuels (about 40%)... Of the total acreage in corn, about 5%, or 2 million ha, is needed just to support the supply of chicken and pork sold at McDonald’s and Walmart... Only * 1% of all corn grown is directly eaten by people as “sweet corn”... The mandate for ethanol production in the US... has resulted in 12.5 million ha of corn dedicated to ethanol corn... and likely has contributed to an increase in N fertilizer use in the past 2 decades... In the 1990s, the US produced about 10 million MT of corn for biofuels; in 2018 it was 140 million MT.⁸”

Conclusion

- FF has a profoundly negative impact on the physical and emotional health of animals and humans, and negatively impacts our environment.
- FF is Speciesist.
- FF is *not* anthropocentric.
- Since FF does not benefit anyone, therefore we need a new system based on equal consideration for the interests of animals, of humans (such as less meat consumption, less use of resources such as grain and water), and of our environment.
- We need an economic system that is not driven by profit at the expense of the health of others.

Bibliography

- Alex Blanchette, 'Living Waste and the Labor of Toxic Health on American Factory Farms', *MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY QUARTERLY*, Vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 80–100.
- Compassion In World Farming, "*Is the next pandemic on your plate?*" *Our food system through the lease of covid-19*, (2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1toMKQd1dQ0&t=2082s>, [accessed on 13.04.21].
- Jessica H. Leibler, Patricia A. Janulewicz and Melissa J. Perry, 'Prevalence of serious psychological distress among slaughterhouse workers at a United States beef packing plant', *Department of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University*, Boston and Washington, (2016).
- Patricia M. Glibert, 'Hogs to HABs: impacts of industrial farming in the US on nitrogen and phosphorus and greenhouse gas pollution', *biochemistry, springer*, (2020).
- Peter Singer, 'All Animals Are Equal', in, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, TOM REGAN & PETER SINGER (eds.), New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1989, pp. 148- 162.
- Rose Zuzworsky, 'From the Marketplace to the Dinner Plate: The Economy, Theology, and Factory Farming', *Journal of Business Ethics* , Vol. 29, No. 1/2, (2001), pp. 177-188.