

The ethics of killing animals for food essay sample

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



Picture a summertime barbecue; children playing in the grass, friends and family gathered to share a meal, hot dogs and hamburgers cooking over the grill.... For most people this is a classic image of American culture. What most don't consider is that there is something sinister lurking in the details of this scene. While it might not be apparent at first, the problem here is what is cooking on the grill, hot dogs and hamburgers. On average, each person consumes about 271 pounds of meat a year in America. If you don't see the problem with this then you must not be thinking about the way that most of the meat in America is produced. Not many people like to think about where their food comes from, however once serious thought is put into it, it becomes apparent that killing animals for food is morally wrong.

The argument people will often make about why eating meat is acceptable is that humans are designed to do it. If you look at the structure of human teeth; there are molars which are great for grinding but there are also canines which are without a doubt meant for tearing through flesh. Because of this, people can justify eating meat. The piece of information that is often not considered is that while we evolved to eat meat, we did not stop evolving at that point. Our mouths still bare the tools for the consumption of flesh, however morality is a newer development that requires further investigation. Eating has moved beyond the basic physical restrictions of the body and now psychological ones must also be considered.

What do we, as people, use as rationale for deciding which creatures are worthy of love and compassion while others are sent to slaughter? What makes a pig less lovable than a dog? On a Sunday morning, if someone made bacon using meat from a cat, there would be outrage and disgust. Any

pet owner can attest to finding emotion and feeling in their animal. A pig is just as intelligent as a dog, so why is it that the emotion and feelings of the pig are disregarded? There are instances when an animal's intelligence can even surpass those of a human. If we were to discriminate based on intelligence alone, an ape would be valued above a human with a mental handicap. Using this comparison, what makes humans more worthy of life than animals that are sent to slaughter? How, in good conscience, can we dictate which creatures get to live and which die?

The thing that makes the issue of animals being grown for food even harder to swallow is the way that the creatures are raised. For example, when cows are raised for slaughter, their lives are reduced to a single year in which they aren't allowed to roam, graze, or do any other cow things. The creatures are forced into a pen which is designed to keep the animals as close together as possible to prevent fat from being burned. The cattle are fed a diet of corn which the animals can't digest and it causes constant discomfort for the animals. Ulcers form in the animals' stomach and are left untreated. Dust from the corn irritates the eyes of the creatures and leads to infection. The cattle are unhealthy, too fat for the little muscle they have managed to put on. Once the poor creatures are deemed big enough, they are killed and packaged for the consumer. It is an awful truth that if the animals were able to live a little while longer, they would die from poor health caused by the way they were raised. When we think of the life of a cow, the mind conjures up images of open pastures, cows happily chewing cud in the sunshine. The truth of the matter is, there are very few farms left which allow cattle to be raised in this way, instead there are factories where the animals suffer

physical ailments and aren't able to act on the basic instinct of eating grass and moving more than a few steps at a time. The way that creatures are raised for consumption is horrible and no living thing should be forced to live that way.

When shopping the deli of the local supermarket, or going to the meat aisle, it is easy to look at the neatly packaged pink blobs and forget that whatever is in that package used to be a living breathing creature. Meat is packaged to make it look as little like the living thing it used to be as possible. Producers don't want to remind you that what your planning to serve for dinner was a living breathing feeling animal. Don't let the packaging deceive you.

Remember what that pink blob used to look like, think of the inhumane conditions it grew up in, think of all the ways that poor animals life could have been improved. It might not happen overnight, but if more people cared about what they were going to eat, animals intended for market might not be brought up in such harsh conditions, and maybe if those creatures are lucky, eventually people might not eat meat at all.