

The roles of animals in human society

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



This article explores the use of animals in human society. In an aim to highlight why animals are so widely used today in comparison to in the past. The use of commercial animals and their products is looked into along with working animals and those used in human culture. Taking into account the welfare of these animals and how different industries using animals are affected by certain pieces of legislation which aim to protect animal rights.

Animals are used for so much today, everything from companionship and safety to food produce and entertainment. In today's society animals are obviously mainly used for their meat. The number of ewes and rams being slaughtered in the UK has increased by 13% since last year (2017) and the amount of calves being slaughtered has increased by nearly 40%! However there is also a rapid increase in the amount of exotic and rare animals being killed so they can be used in 'gourmet delicacies' and 'herbal elixirs'.

A perfect example is a casino located in Laos which offers expensive plates of bear paw, pangolin (an endangered scaly mammal) and sautéed tiger meat. Furthermore, on the flip side, this is the most advanced we have ever been in the use of animals in aid. For example some people live their lives relying on their hearing dogs to keep them safe. As well as in public services like the fire brigade, many people owe their lives to these animals. Not only this; but there are more and more people in the world gaining an interest in animals and so we are learning even more about them everyday. This is great for humans because as we are learning from nature's beautiful creatures, they help us to create new technology and solve more of our problems (biomimetics). There are so many pros and cons to how animals are used in the world today, but can anything positive outweigh the amount

of suffering some animals are forced to go through? Or is the way we treat them justifiable?

Commercial Animals and their Product

Working Animals

Working animals help humans in many ways. Some of the most common animals used for work are dogs, horses and donkeys. Humans use working animals mainly for use in the public sector; police force, army, fire brigade ect. Take dogs for example they have enhanced senses of smell in comparison to humans and so humans use this to their advantage, hence the use of sniffer dogs. Also dogs are companion animals, they are fairly easy to train if they're still a puppy so they make perfect service animals for people who are deaf, diabetic, mentally unwell and much more. Animals are highly valuable to humans as they are able to be used to bring in a lot of money to the economy without taking any back for themselves individually! For example a farmer may rather use a dog who he needs to buy food for, pay for vaccinations and home rather than employ a person to do the same job who he has to pay thousands of pounds a year, can't work as quickly, and is much more likely to take ' days off'! However in today's day and age, as more and more animal laws are so rightfully being passed, using animals for certain jobs is becoming a thing of the past. An example of this is working dogs. In the past farmers would take out a whole pack of dogs to hunt for foxes and other wild animals. However it was only fourteen years ago when the ' Hunting act of 2004' was passed and this became illegal in England.

Another reason the use of animals in work has decreased is because of the technological advances. As previously mentioned, although a dog may be easier to keep than a human worker, dogs do need some care and won't last forever. This is where technology comes in to play, robotics and machinery is as advanced today as it ever has been. For example one of the biggest decreases in the working animal industry is cart pulling horses. For centuries humans relied on horsepower for almost everything but now with better cars, lorries, boats and everything in between, using a horse and cart to transport goods would just be pointless. The welfare in most professions legally using animals for work today, the animals are treated well, or at least they should be because they are protected by law to be. There have been allegations in the past of mistreated working animals. In March of this year (2018) many reports came to light accusing the US military to have been mistreating dogs that had been used to help detect bombs. Most of which had saved human lives. Reports say the dogs were left in kennels for nearly a year and some even got put down, they weren't given the proper care and attention and some even had to be rescued by the soldiers they had previously served with.

The main argument against using animals for certain jobs is that they don't get a say in it. Sniffing out explosives is a very dangerous job, and there's always the risk of a bomb going off. The counter argument is that the handler is also put at risk to this. However, the difference is that the human handler chose to do that job. They have every knowledge of what they are going into and thereby know the risks and consequences associated to their job. Their animal companion however did not chose to do the job they're

being made to do. So is this in breach of their rights or should it be accepted because an animal couldn't give consent even if it wanted to?

Animals in Human Cultures

Animals are used in many different ways in human cultures. They can be used as symbols, in the media and in sport and leisure. These are the animals that do not necessarily have to do a certain job like working animals; they rather represent something. For example a lion is seen to be an animal of great power so in sports teams it may be used as their mascot to represent strength. Or in the media a business may use a lion symbol on their products to emphasize it being the best compared to others.

Media

Animals can be used in the media in a variety of different ways; for marketing purposes, in the tv and film industry as well as to inform people in the news. A lot of adverts will use animals to try to convince people to donate to a charity or help out with the organization. Often animals will make it in advertisements even if the product isn't animal related. For example a supermarket advert aimed at families may feature a dog in their tv advert to catch the eye of other families with pets because without saying it directly, that advert is insinuating that they offer pet supplies. Also real life news can be shared through the media very quickly. This can be a positive or a negative because obviously if the right person posts about the right thing it can spread very quickly and public opinion is becoming more valuable in the world today. Hence, if a bad review of an animal based workplace was to go viral, the owners would highly likely seek to change the problem as soon as

possible. In movies and tv shows animals are increasingly being used. More and more people are beginning to care for animals and so movies and films which are based on animals have a big audience. Animal actors will often be requested for by directors and anyone can audition their pet. If the animal has the right look they will go through training until filming begins and the owner will often be paid well.

Sport and leisure

There are many human sports which require animal participants for example, hunting, horse racing, and bull fighting are some of the most popular. Using animals in sport has remained a controversial subject as their welfare is often compromised. The main reason people still use animals in sport is because of the traditions. Bullfighting in Spain is seen as a massive event. Matador's hope their sons will also become matadors passing on the tradition through the family. The circus is another big event that often uses animals. This links in with symbolism because a lot of people will associate certain animals with the circus like elephants and bears for example. These animals are mainly used to perform tricks and get the crowd excited to bring in as much money for the circus owners. Before animal welfare acts were passed many people would love going to see the circus as wasn't often you could see animals perform in shows. However now we as a species understand more about animals and it's come to light how they are often trained for shows, many people prefer not to go to the circus as they don't agree the animals are treated well.

The grand national is the biggest sporting event using animals. 600 million people watch from all over the globe and it has become a very popular topic of the media. Like bullfighting, the grand national is tradition. People train their whole lives and jockeys will hope their future children will also be jockeys so it can run in the family. The horse race shows how animals are used in human society because we have trained them to be able to be ridden and bred them for all the desirable features.