

**Title:** The Place of Animals in Ecological Economics: Have animal issues been overlooked?

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**Four key Words:** Animals, vivisection, factory farming

**Audio-visual Requirements:** Powerpoint slideshow

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**Abstract:** Ecological Economics has played an important role in providing both an alternative theoretical framework to neoclassical economics and in giving greater coverage to important issues regarding the environment, natural resource use, and poverty/inequality. Animals have received some consideration in terms of species extinction and in terms of ecosystem balance. Yet issues addressing the welfare of animals as *individuals* with the capacity to experience pain and suffering or utility and disutility have been largely overlooked. This is particularly surprising since Ecological Economics has often focused attention on human beings who are underrepresented in market-based resource allocation decisions (e.g. the poor and future generations).

This presentation will do the following:

-Discuss whether sentient non-humans should receive some form of consideration in resource allocation decisions, incorporate the philosophical literature, and how such consideration might be achieved.

-Discuss whether indirect consideration through the utility of sympathetic humans is sufficient to account for animal interests, how information costs may hinder indirect consideration, and some potentially perverse implications.

-Briefly summarize a few of the major areas in which economics has much to contribute and has been noticeably absent from the discussion regarding animal issues including:

- ◆ Animal experimentation involves trade-offs of animal versus human interests. Rarely if ever is a serious economic analysis of the costs and benefits undertaken, and market decisions do not provide such an analysis due to externalities.
- ◆ The market for animal food products raises many important issues. In this area in particular the evolution of cruelty-free markets may be hindered by institutional considerations.
- ◆ Companion animals is one of the few areas where the public clearly exhibits a high willingness to pay to improve animal welfare. This area raises many important economic issues such as financial incentives to spay/neuter animals and the substitutability of pure-bred versus adopted animals.