

Does modern agriculture and its indifference corrupt our minds?

The Industrial Revolution of approximately the 1850's was in effect also the Second Agricultural Revolution, following on the First that started about 12 000 years ago when we domesticated animals for our benefit. The Second Revolution is characterised by the mechanisation of agricultural processes for mass production.

Modern agriculture apply intelligent design and genetically engineer farm animals to breed them to feed 8 billion people that need protein to grow and develop. Such production is for the sole benefit of us and not in any way in the interest of our domesticated animals. The Second Revolution was the beginning of the cramping in of farm animals in small areas in which they are being fed to produce as fast as possible at maximum rate for slaughter and consumption. For example, in developed and even some developing countries, four hens are confined in coops of 25 by 25 centimetres to lay eggs day and night (Harari). They are being fed in very small confined areas and do not see the sun, cannot groom and peck around. "Male chicks and imperfect female chicks are picked off the conveyor belt and are then asphyxiated in



JOHAN COETZEE

gas chambers, dropped into automatic shredders, or simply thrown into the rubbish, where they are crushed to death. Hundreds of millions of chicks die each year in such hatcheries." (Harari).

We can pose a number of questions based on the discussion. However, we can only raise a few in this article. Is animal happiness our concern in modern agricultural production? Does the happiness of animals during mass production influence our happiness? To what extend does it influence our disconnection from our fellow human beings? To what extend does it influence our happiness and general wellbeing? Why are we mainly concerned about animals we keep as pets and less about animals we breed to eat?

• References

Harari, Y. N. 2011. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*.

jcoetzee@nust.na

Die Republiek 29 July