

 Activity 2.1.2 Understanding My Beliefs**Purpose**

You may have seen some of the slogans at right in the media. You may have agreed or disagreed with the statements, but have you ever thought about your beliefs and values pertaining to animals or animal production? Are animals just creatures living near you that you can use at will? Alternatively, do you believe animals are feeling and caring beings like yourself?

"Pigs are friends, not food."

"Beef; it's what's for dinner."

Think about how you believe humans should care for animals. Two main philosophies exist describing human feelings and beliefs towards the care of animals. An animal welfarist believes animals should be treated in a kind and caring manner, yet still, be used for the benefit of humans. An animal rightist believes animals have the same rights as humans and animals should not be used for human consumption. Which philosophy best reflects your opinions and beliefs about the care and use of animals?

Materials**Per student:**

- Pencil
- Agriscience Notebook

Procedure

In this activity, you will complete a survey to help you define your beliefs and opinions about the use of animals for human benefit. After you have identified your beliefs and opinions, you will share with your classmates to develop a collaborative understanding of each opinion.

Part One – Determining My Beliefs

1. Read the statements in Table 1 on the student observations sheet carefully and think about your beliefs for each one. The statements listed in the table are designed to help you understand and evaluate your beliefs regarding the use, care, and raising of animals.
2. In Table 1, determine if you agree or disagree with the statements about animal use. Mark your belief as strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) for each statement.
3. Evaluate your overall attitudes about ways in which humans use animals by completing the statements in Table 2 based on your beliefs and attitudes about animal use. Each category generalizes a group of statements from Table 1. Use your responses from Table 1 to guide you in developing your opinions.

Example: I believe placing human needs over animal's needs is wrong because all creatures have rights and it is wrong of humans to assume authority over another being.

Part Two – Sharing My Beliefs

1. Your teacher will divide you into groups of four.
2. Find a partner within your group and share your attitudes and beliefs relating to animal use and the ideas that have led you to those beliefs and attitudes.

3. Record your observations on the student observations sheet during the discussion. What do you and your partner agree on and where do you have differences in opinion about animal use.
4. Join the other pair to discuss your opinions. Share your thoughts, but also take care to listen to others' thoughts. Respectfully discuss differing beliefs to understand others' points of view.
5. When instructed by your teacher, rotate groups. In this final grouping, share your beliefs and opinions. Summarize the differing belief systems of your previous group for your new group.
6. Answer the analysis questions on the student observations sheet.

Conclusion

1. How does the type of animal determine acceptable use and humane treatment of animals?

2. How does your background influence your beliefs and opinions about animals?

Activity 2.1.2 Student Observations

Table 1. Determining My Beliefs

#	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Humans have “dominion” over every living thing that moves on the Earth.					
2.	The responsible, compassionate use of animals for the betterment of society should guide our use of animals.					
3.	Animals are created for the use of humans.					
4.	Stray or seriously ill dogs should never be put to sleep.					
5.	I do not like it when my parents set mousetraps.					
6.	I would not think twice about killing a roach or mosquito.					
7.	Keeping animals in cages is wrong.					
8.	Keeping animals in small apartments is wrong.					
9.	Pets are more important to me than other animals.					
10.	Pets need to be free to roam.					
11.	Animals feel pain.					
12.	Humans can withstand less pain than most dogs, cats, hogs, and cattle.					
13.	Producers of cruelty-free, animal-friendly products do not use data from animal research.					
14.	Cowboys riding bulls in rodeos are hurting those bulls.					
15.	It is wrong to shear a sheep.					
16.	If I were a sheep producer, I would kill a rabid fox or hungry coyote rather than allow it in my herd.					
17.	It is wrong to show a steer or pet cat at a county fair.					
18.	Farmers treat their pets differently from animals used for food.					
19.	Allowing animals used for food to run free would drive up the cost of meat at grocery stores.					
20.	People who build homes near farms should expect noise and odor concerns.					
21.	Farmers do not really care about the welfare of their animals for sale.					
22.	It is all right to euthanize animals if it is necessary for research.					
23.	We could do without research that involved sacrificing animals.					
24.	All forms of human medication or surgery should be tested on animals before being used on humans.					
25.	Genetically modified animals will become an important tool for feeding the world.					
26.	Dissections are an important way for me to learn about how living things are structured and function.					
27.	It is all right to hunt for food, but not for pleasure.					
28.	Hunting is done primarily to control populations of animals.					
29.	If beavers dammed up a creek near my home causing flooding, I would remove the beavers.					
30.	People who build homes in rural areas should expect problems and encounters with wildlife.					

The statements above are based on work developed by *Animal Welfare Instructional Materials* produced by the National Council for Agricultural Education and the National FFA Foundation.

Table 2. *Belief and Attitude Statements*

I believe placing human needs over animals' needs (refer to 1-7)....
I believe keeping animals as pets (refer to 8-10)...
I believe that animals (do/do not) feel pain. (refer to 11-15)...
I believe using animals in agriculture (refer to 16-21)...
I believe conducting research with animals (refer to 22-26)...
I believe human interference with animals in their environment (refer to 27-30)...

Discussion Observations

Analysis Questions

- Currently, do you think you are an animal rightist or animal welfarist? What values and beliefs lead you to this conclusion? Why?
- What are the different beliefs held by your classmates?