Understanding Animal Welfare: Different philosophies, different scientific approaches
1. A dilemma
“Some serious welfare problems for sows persist even in the best stall-housing system.”

Scientific Veterinary Committee, 1997
“Both individual and group housing can meet the welfare requirements of pigs.”

Barnett et al. 2001
2. Different views of animal welfare
Have we the right to rob [animals] of all pleasure in life simply to make more money more quickly out of their carcasses?

Ruth Harrison, 1964
ANIMAL LIBERATION

A most important book that will change the way many of us look at animals—and, ultimately, at ourselves.” Chicago Tribune

PETER SINGER
... there can be no moral justification for regarding the pain (or pleasure) that animals feel as less important than the same amount of pain (or pleasure) felt by humans.

Peter Singer, 1990
Pleasure
Pain
Suffering
Happiness
Pleasure
Pain
Suffering
Happiness

Affective states
In principle we disapprove of a degree of confinement of an animal which necessarily frustrates most of the major activities which make up its natural behaviour...

F.W.R. Brambell et al., 1965
Let [farm animals] see the sun just once, get away from the murderous roar of the fans. Let them get to breathe fresh air for once, instead of manure gas.

Astrid Lindgren, 1985
... a much increased concept of welfare. Not only will welfare mean control of pain and suffering, it will also entail nurturing and fulfilment of the animals' natures...

Bernard Rollin, 1993
- Natural behavior
- Natural environment
- The nature of the animals
- Natural behavior
- Natural environment
- The nature of the animals

Reasonably “natural” lives
- Natural behavior
- Natural environment
- The nature of the animals

Lives that suit the animals’ natural adaptations
... the standard of welfare among animals kept in the so called "intensive" systems is higher. On balance I feel that the animal is better cared for; it is certainly much freer from disease and attack by its mates; it receives much better attention from the attendants, is sure of shelter and bedding and a reasonable amount of good food and water.

G.B. Taylor, 1972
Good health is the birthright of every animal that we rear, whether intensively or otherwise.

David Sainsbury, 1986
- Freedom from disease and injury
- Food, water, necessities
- Freedom from disease and injury
- Food, water, necessities

Basic health and functioning
Affective states

Health/functioning

Natural living
The laboratory-born monkeys sit in their cages and stare fixedly into space, circle their cages in a repetitive stereotyped manner and clasp their heads in their hands or arms and rock for long periods of time.

Harlow and Harlow, 1962
Affective states

Health/functioning

Natural living
Conclusions

- 3 somewhat different concerns
- sometimes coincide, but not always
- the single-minded pursuit of any one does not guarantee a high level of welfare by the other criteria.
Affective states

Health/functioning

Natural living
Affective states

Health/functioning

Natural living
Scientific approaches:

- basic health and functioning
• foot lesions
• neck lesions
• feather damage
• overgrown claws
Scientific approaches:
- basic health and functioning
- natural living
Suck + Frequent Meals
Suck + Frequent Meals
- digestive hormones
Suck + Frequent Meals

- digestive hormones
- greater intake
Suck + Frequent Meals

- digestive hormones
- greater intake
- group housing
Scientific approaches:

- basic health and functioning
- natural living
- affective states
Affective states

Health/functioning  Natural living
4. Back to ...
“widely accepted criteria of poor welfare such as health, immunology, injuries, growth rate, and nitrogen balance”.

Barnett et al. 2001
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“Both individual and group housing can meet the welfare requirements of pigs.”

Barnett et al. 2001
“Suffering is one of the most important aspects of poor welfare...”

Scientific Veterinary Committee, 1997
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“... exploration of a complex environment, rooting in a soft substratum and manipulation of materials such as straw”

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5. Two Roles for Animal Welfare Science
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- Dispute-resolution role
6. Two Roles for Animal Welfare Science

- Dispute-resolution role
- Practical role
Animal Husbandry

- Feeding
- Breeding
- Health care
- Handling
- Management
- Housing
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Animal/Vet Science
- Nutrition
- Genetics/reproduction
- Microbiology etc.
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Animal Welfare Science
6. Conclusions
• different conceptions
• often coincide, but not always
• the single-minded pursuit of any one does not guarantee a high level of welfare by the other criteria.
Dispute-resolution role
▪ provides valuable information about how different systems affect different aspects of animal welfare
▪ does not arbitrate among the different value-based conceptions of animal welfare.
Practical role
• important contributions to animal husbandry by providing scientific approaches to the housing, handling and management of animals.