

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales  
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate  
Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee  
Bil Anifeiliaid Gwyllt a Syrcasau (Cymru) | Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales)  
Bill  
WA 25

Ymateb gan : Dr Corsini, Doctor Meddygaeth Filfeddygol a chynrychiolydd o  
Ente Nazionale Circhi

Evidence from : Dr Corsini, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and representative  
of Ente Nazionale Circhi

As a vet with the passion of taking a sceptical approach to analysing animal arguments and ethics and providing a scientific basis for debunking them and passionate of animal ethics I wish for this attachment to serve as my written evidence as part of the proposed ban on the above activity in Wales on ethical grounds.

My work in this field has been published numerous times in various Italian newspapers and I contacted scientists who had previously published their studies on circus animals to make them aware that their work have been misinterpreted by Prof. Stephen Harris, whose literature has been used to push for a ban on the use of circus animals in Italy and other Countries or to propose an Euthanasia of animals that cannot be relocated. A review article should survey and summarizes previously published studies. To read a review in a critical way, has to be read the studies quoted in it, this is how I discovered that field studies have been misinterpreted. This hasn't been done by other organisations such like Eurogroup4Animals, BVA, and Federation fo Veterinary Europe, who used his work for policy making.

Stephen Harris has provided a lot of scientific reviews in support of animal rights groups and funded by them tunes of hundreds of thousands of pounds as shown by a freedom of information request to the University of Bristol, where he has been working. In recent years The Telegraph and other publications have reported on his mistrepresentation of existing scientific studies and his losing his position as an expert witness in the prosecution of persons accused of illegally hunting foxes with hounds.

Ethical arguments are complex issues that need to be studied, and on the animal topic there are philosophies that claim to value nature and/or living organisms over at least some economic considerations, and view the role of humanity as preserver and supporter, rather than mere exploiter. In spite of their seemingly similar goals, animal rights organisations, welfare organisation and biological conservationists (the main animal philosophies) have often found themselves on opposite sides of policy debates.

Animal rights supporters believe that it is morally wrong to use animals in any way and that human beings should not do so, Animal welfare supporters believe that human animal relationship can exist but humans has to guarantee their wellbeing, conservation biology is concerned with species, populations, ecosystems or even global phenomena.

Animal welfare science is the scientific study of the welfare of animals as pets, in zoos, laboratories, on farms and in the wild. Although animal welfare has been an ethical issue, the investigation system of animal welfare is done using rigorous scientific methods, it is a point of view that I, as a vet, consider crucial.

Someone could assume that something is not natural therefore animal is suffering, but reality is more complex. On the scientific paper 'Naturalness and Animal Welfare' (2018, published

on 'Animals by Yates') the Author points out Naturalness it is a vague and ambiguous term, which needs definition and assessments suitable for scientific and ethical questions, furthermore there is a lack of an agreed definition or operational approach to assess how natural an animal's behaviour 'attempts to cope with its environment', The vague assumptions that naturalness is reliably associated with better wellbeing are unfounded. Consequently, those concerned with naturalness and those concerned with feelings may often find themselves in disagreement. The problem related on circuses is that studies on welfare on circuses are few, and the authors of this field studies agree that it is not the circus itself that is causing sufferance, but how is managed, and that there is a great variability on management types. The exercise instead has been recognised as environmental enrichment.

One of the last studies on circuses, Welfare of sea lions in travelling circuses, published by the Wageningen Livestock Research on 2014, the experts that scored the overall welfare state of sea lions have strongly divergent opinions on the welfare state of sea lions kept in travelling circuses, that was related by different frame of reference and variability of situations.

If we are addressing our policy making on animal welfare we should definely set a standard evaluation system and a welfare scale, with a mark point, and ban the practices that do not reach this point. If we are addressing our policy making on animal rights side, we should ban zoos, pets, animal research, meat and animal derivatives consumption as well.