

1. Do you think it should be illegal to use animals for sport and entertainment purposes?

Yes, ideally, however the legal justice system and many laws reflect the interests of the dominant class (such as the leaders of big companies) rather than social justice. This includes protecting the rights of companies that exploit animals. We have a lot of factors in society including social systems and the economic system that need to be addressed when working to end the exploitation of non-human and human animals.

2. What types of sport and entertainment practices are considered to be cruel treatment of animals?

[Please keep in mind the following answer below is my limited critic on practices in current post-colonialist Western society, particularly popular with people of mid to high socio-economic class.]

Any (outdated) practice that uses animals. This includes circuses, horse racing and selective breeding (for dog shows and pure breeds). Selectively breeding to attempt to maintain pure breeds is cruel because pure breeds form numerous disadvantages with genetic traits (health problems, behaviours, and physical complications). Other cruel practices involve keeping animals in captivity (zoos and marine parks such as SeaWorld), trophy hunting and wearing animals (leather, fur, snake skin etc). Wearing animals for fashion is entertainment, we are not wearing them to stay warm when we have non-animal based clothing options.

An unpopular opinion is that consuming animals can fall under a form of entertainment, we can absolutely sustain healthily on a plant based diet, many are merely consuming for the sake of taste/tradition/habit. We choose to consume parts of animals in ceremonies, in functions, festivals, gatherings, and celebrations. The food is part of the entertainment, we consume out of gluttony, pleasure, habit and familiarity. Animals are slaughtered for our entertainment and our palate pleasure, which is a form of unnecessary cruel treatment.

3. If using animals for sport and entertainment is considered unethical and cruel, why is it still legal and what can be done about it?

From my understanding, we live in a monetary system where companies engage in practices that prioritise profitability at the expense of human and non-human animals' lives. This includes unethical practices that harm animals for profit. Laws and legal systems are restricted in the interest of the select few exploitative companies. We know that just because something is legal does not constitute justice. What's legal is not centred on the common interest of all living beings.

I don't see one answer with the solution, but I think the right education and disrupting exploitative companies in power is a start. I think another problem is the attitudes of people who perpetuate the cruel practices – the idea that people believe animals are worth less than us, a discriminative attitude called speciesism where we place value and hierarchy upon living beings depending on what species an animal is, humans being the top.

I definitely believe it should be a collective effort to shift societal attitudes towards eliminating animal cruelty.

4. What animal welfare laws and acts exist to prevent animals from unethical treatment? Why aren't they imposed to sport and entertainment practices?

I think many laws in place are in writing and are just according to "the laws" flawed definition of what proper treatment towards animals is. There laws are also highly inconsistent (which I have justified back in my previous answers about power dynamics in control). For example; ONE person must not commit overtly cruel acts towards an animal but a business that involves harmful practices to many animals is accepted legally. Examples include the horse racing industry that involves death and injury to many horses and zoos that confine animals in captivity and cause neurotic behaviours.

Some laws that are in place permit the use of animals with certain licences. The animal welfare laws are designed to accommodate for business purposes, sport and entertainment industries are permitted by these laws as they are businesses. That being said, as you mention 'Animal welfare', I do not believe working around how to 'better' animals conditions while using them is humane or a solution, the use of animals should be abolished.

5. What types of sport and entertainment, which involve animals, are the most common and popular in Australia?

Horse racing for The Melbourne Cup, greyhound racing, dog shows and zoos are some examples.

6. What is your opinion about zoos? Do you think they help conservation and educate people about animals? Or are they just another form of entertainment for people?

No, the only thing kids seem learn in zoos are that a giraffe's neck is long and zebras have stripes, everyone can learn much more through educational resources. What is there to learn authentically when we are observing animals in captivity other than the fact that we as a society have normalised the use of captive animals for show?

I support that there are certain conservation projects, but a vast majority of the animals in zoos are not related to conservation projects. There are many non-profit conservation organisations that do just that, but that is not the focus of zoos, which are businesses. Some animals in Australia have shown to exhibit neurotic behaviours due to the stress of captivity, that includes pacing, head-bobbing, rocking, walking in circles, compulsive licking, bar biting, and even self-mutilation (Best 1999 – see the end for full references).

7. Are greyhound and horse races unethical? Why? Why not?

Yes, none of it is worth the consequences. 10,000 retire each year from the greyhound racing industry (not including the puppies who never made it on the track). About 2000 dogs are homed, the rest kept if lucky, sold abroad or euthanised (The Guardian). With these facts in mind, it is clear that the greyhound racing industry pays no ethical long term regard for the dogs but only views that as commodities they can churn out. The horse racing industry has many similar problems.

8. Are circuses cruel? Why? Why not?

Yes, it is abnormal for animals to perform tricks that are not part of their natural behaviours.

9. Can the unethical treatment of animals for sport and entertainment purposes ever be banned or made illegal?

I think there are many animal rights and welfare organisations that are calling for the end of animal use specifically for sports and entertainment. It is a less controversial argument than calling for an end to animal agriculture. Some uses attract more opposition than other. I think there needs to be persistent exposure and education to expose the problems of all animal use.

I think that animal welfarism is not the optimal route to achieving justice for animals. we should not be negotiating how we can use animals "humanely" for that still perpetuates the idea that it is normal and that it is acceptable to use animals. I think the use of animals should be banned completely.

10. What can people do to support the banning of cruel sport and entertainment practices?

I think there are different levels of progressing towards phasing out cruel practices, I can't speak for all but a few are:

- People should not support and attend these shows, activities, or give money to the profiting businesses, as they rely on people's monetary support and consumption.
- Spread information to inform others – including people in your personal networks such as friends and family, as well as through getting involved in campaigns and supporting organisations focusing on these issues.
- Political action and direct action – protests have been proven to create political change.

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