

**Some thoughts about cattle restraint**

Sir, I was pleased to see so much attention given in the first two issues of *Animal Welfare* to the subject of head-restraint for stunning cattle who have been condemned to slaughter. Concern about individuals who are to be stunned and killed for food must be given serious attention, not only by those who do the stunning and killing either directly or indirectly at the places where this activity is carried out, but also by those who use the killed cattle but who do not work at slaughterhouses and by those who are interested in non-human animal (hereafter animal) welfare.

Of course, one could easily argue that anyone who uses the animals who are stunned and slaughtered contributes directly to their death, but this will not be pursued here. Professor Grandin's conclusion (*Animal Welfare* 1992, 1: 85-90) that 'The modified ASPCA pen' that she described in her paper 'was seemingly humane (my emphasis) when operated by people concerned about animal welfare' (p 85) intrigued me. I found myself asking just what does 'seemingly humane' mean? Professor Grandin also notes that 'the described modified pen is relatively (my emphasis) humane when it is operated and supervised by people who are concerned about animal welfare' (p 85). I find myself at a loss to assess precisely Professor Grandin's claims. All I know is that the method that she describes seems to be humane and may be more humane than other methods. It would be nice to know if the method really was humane and perhaps more humane than other methods that are still used. Perhaps measures similar to those suggested by Ewbank, Parker and Mason (*Animal Welfare* 1992, 1: 55-63) could be used in some sort of comparative study. Among the major problems here, of course, is how could any such study be done in a humane way? I would like to know more

but I am at a loss as to how to go about humanely assessing the relative humaneness of methods used to kill cattle (or any other animal), not that I advocate this practice in the first place. This is not a trivial matter and the Catch-22 that it presents needs to be considered seriously.

With respect to the many problems involved in assessing stunning and slaughtering practices, I note that neither article considers an obvious alternative to the supposed necessity of stunning cattle, that is, calling for a restraint on meat eating altogether. In a journal concerned with animal welfare, this possibility could have been mentioned without trespassing into areas that fall outside of the territory that encompasses possible topics appropriate for inclusion in the publication. Perhaps Jeremy Rifkin's book *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture* (1992, New York: Dutton) should be called to the attention of those who are not aware of its existence. My prediction is that most who read this book, including those who are only slightly ambivalent about eating meat, will assess and change their eating patterns to the favour of the cattle. Total abstinence may not always immediately follow, but moderation in consuming cattle who have been stunned and slaughtered using techniques that may cause physical pain and suffering, including mental anguish, should be forthcoming.

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**Author's response**

Sir, Professor Bekoff has concerns about the relative humaneness of the modified ASPCA pen and other restraint methods for kosher slaughter. In the USA, Israel, South Africa and other countries outside the European Community very cruel restraint methods are used. Fully conscious cattle are hung upside