



# ***Agriculture: Fight, Flight or Respond?***

*Crystal Mackay*

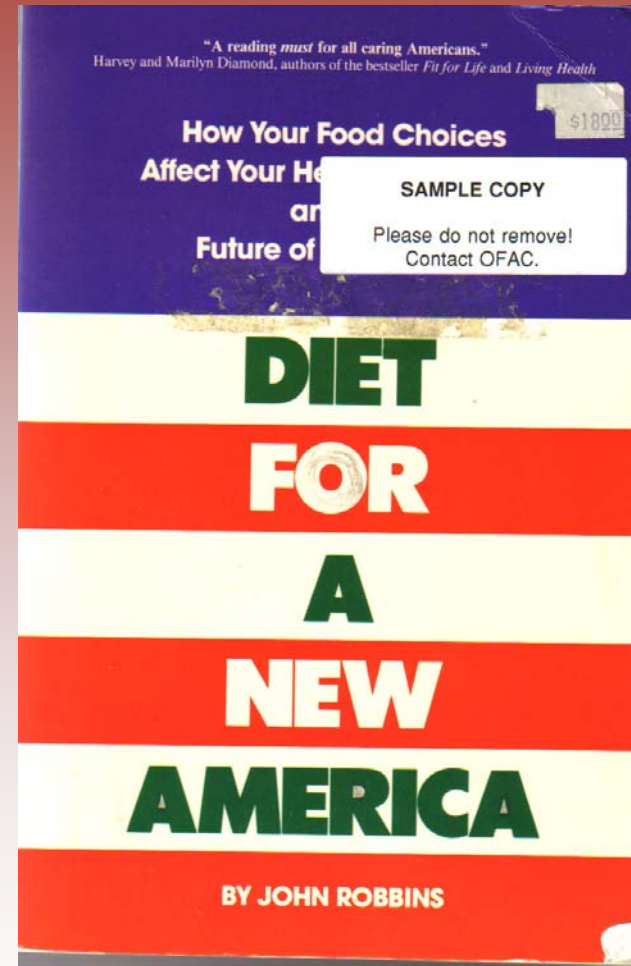


# *Animal rights, BSE, factory farming, pesticides, spinach kills...*

- About us
- About the rest of the population
- About the activists: Seek first to understand.
- So what? Who cares?
- Options

# Picture it: 1987-1988

- Farm leaders decided to work together.
- Five in Canada today:
- Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, National
- Animal Ag Alliance, US



# Talking to Canadians

- Less than 3% of Canadians farm.
  - They don't know us or what we do.
- They don't get science or studies.
- They love animals.
- Disney influence.
- Never been hungry.

# Don't know...don't care

- Food safety # 1.
- Animal Welfare # 2.
- Environment # 3.

• They don't care...or do they?

Less than 20% want to **learn more** about farming.

More than 2/3 want to **know more** about farming.

***What to do?***

***Bridge the  
GAPS...***

***Rural - urban***

***Rural - non-farm***

***Farm - farm***

# Bridging the Gap

Information from the media.  
What makes the news?

Information overload vs. void.  
The void will be filled.

# Animal Rights Issues, Campaigns & Tactics

- No animal use: for food, clothing, entertainment or medical research
- Anti-meat, milk & eggs
- Top 50 US groups: \$250 million
- From very moderate to very extreme
- From an organized machine to an angry individual



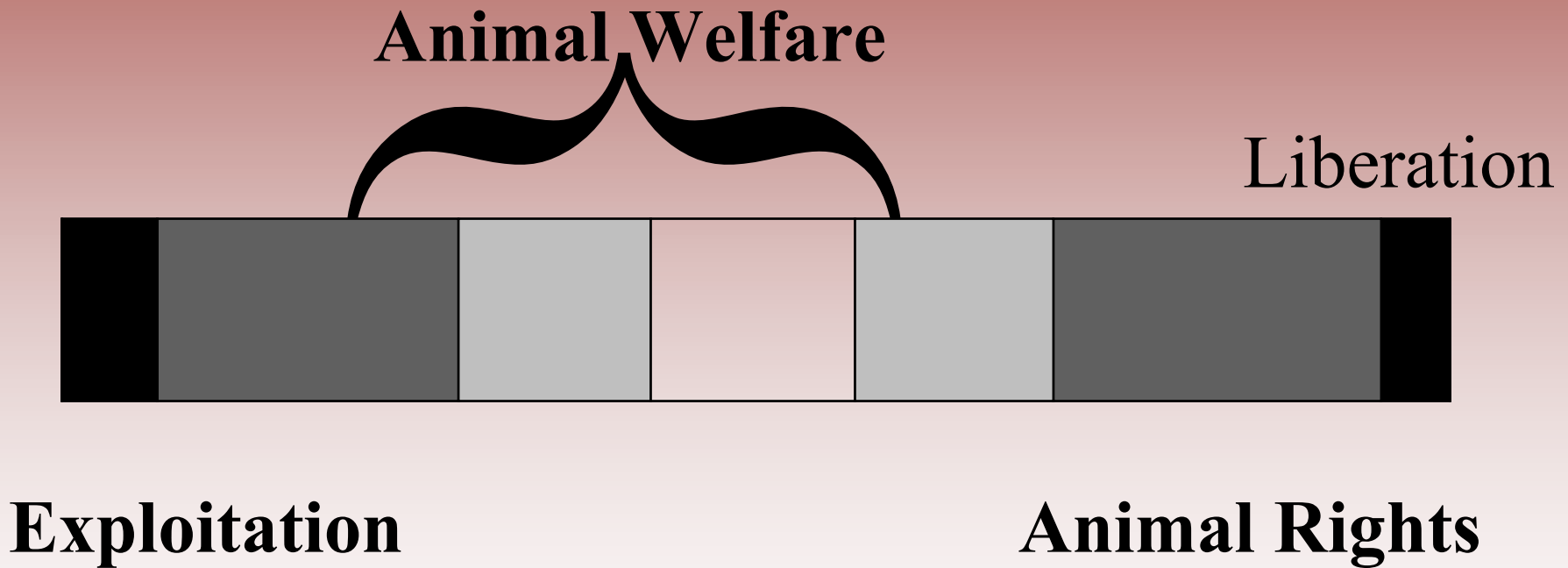
**THINK** before  
you eat



**Go vegan. For life.**

**PETA**

# Points of View Spectrum



# Activist Tactics & Targets

- Pick an issue & a target audience.
- Preferably emotional & guilt inducing.
- Find extreme examples.
- Make your point – individually, in groups, websites, letters, articles, billboards, ads, protests, etc...
- Repeat. New topic. Repeat. New target. Repeat...

# Activist Tactics: Depends on Purpose

- To get their message out
- To convince (and convert) people of their beliefs
- Fundraising
- Publicity
- Social damage: to people, reputations  
Economic damage: products, equipment

# So what?

- Put activists in perspective.
- Politicians and the media are in the gaps.

Focus on your customers.

They want safe, high quality food.

They don't want to feel guilty.

They should be able to make informed decisions, or not.

# So what?

- **To not respond is to lose by default.**

Options? Ignore.  
Options? Do Nothing.  
Options? Fight fire with fire.  
Options? Run.  
Options? Play defense.  
Options? Get in the game.

# Challenges...

- Who cares?
- What makes the news?
- Simple lies vs. complicated truth
- Science - \$ - facts... Boring
- Legitimate problems
- We are not the target audience
- Funding

# Opportunities...

- Everyone eats.
- Canadians trust their food is safe.
- People like farmers and veterinarians.
- Activists sometimes offend people.
- Internet is in our budget.
- Edutainment works.
- “Hmm...I didn’t know that”
- Take back the caring.

# *Get in the game...*

- Positive, proactive, professional approach.
- Tell your story. With pride.
- Build public confidence in agriculture and food.

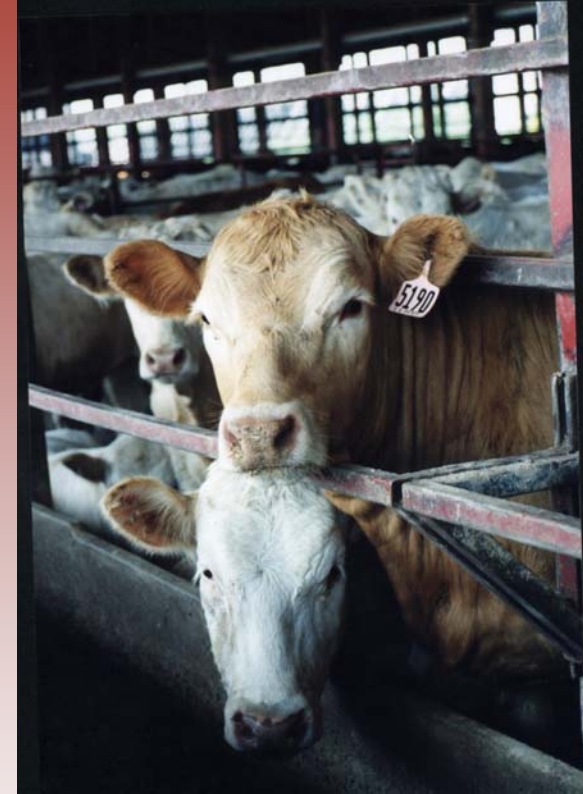


**2006** *FACES of* **FARMING**

Good Food *from* Good People

# What can you do?

- If there's a problem –
  - Know about it.
  - Do something.
  - Do the right thing.
  - Do your chores early.



**Don't accept anything you wouldn't want to see on the six o'clock news or on the front page.**

# What can you do? Speak Up

- Talk about what you know.
- Build understanding and appreciation.
- Know your strengths.
- Show you care.



# What can you do?

- Continue to be part of the solution.
  - Keep up to date on issues and media
  - Speak up for agriculture.
  - Build on existing efforts.
- 
- Work with your strengths...We're in this together.

Together We Can Do Great  
Things.

[www.farmissues.com](http://www.farmissues.com)

[www.ofac.org](http://www.ofac.org)

[www.livestockwelfare.com](http://www.livestockwelfare.com)

