

How to lose the argument on animal welfare...Top 10 reasons
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1. Assuming science will give us all the answers; it only gives us some of the answers. I believe strongly in science but science doesn't solve ethical questions. Also, the public does not trust scientists and assumes they can be bought! Watch the news and it is easy to find "scientists" on both sides of almost every issue. It has become a contest of "my science is better than your science".
2. Using economics as the justification for all of our practices. Although it makes sense to those of us who raise animals for a living, saying "well of course we treat them well or we won't make money" really hurts our efforts with the public. In other words, if this is all about making money rather than working with animals we would probably be in another line of work! We need to convince the public that we truly care about animals not just about dollars. Besides that, it is not always true. You can have extreme conditions that are not good for animals that can be profitable.
3. Assuming that you have to defend all agricultural practices, regardless of what they are. Why? I believe you defend those that are defensible. Period. Defending all practices makes no sense and causes you to lose credibility with the public.
4. Assuming we can't do better at animal welfare. Agriculture is about evolving practices. Why can't we continue to improve a system that is already good but will continue to change?
5. Attacking everyone who disagrees with you in a negative, critical manner. We get angry very easily and that generally means we aren't comfortable with what we are doing, so we have to defend at the top of our lungs.
6. Not being willing to listen because we are so busy responding.
7. Assuming that the lunatic fringe is the general public. We spend way too much time focusing on lunatics and not working with the public.
8. Being reactive rather than proactive.
9. Assuming that because someone disagrees with you they are stupid, evil or both. Good people can look at the same issue differently.
10. Not working hard enough to build coalitions that include the public (consumers), Most of our coalition efforts are focused on bringing agricultural groups together. There aren't enough of us, and we don't represent enough votes.
- 11. Bonus** – Criticizing/mocking any animal production system that is not "conventional". There is room in agriculture for lots of different methods of production. Let the market determine their success rather than hoping for them to fail.
12. **Bonus** -Trying to lead a parade without seeing if anyone is following.....Have you asked producers about the issue? I have surveyed over 200 cattlemen in three locations and 90%+ of them say "animals have the RIGHT to be treated humanely and ethically"!