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Effects of field of study on university students' attitudes towards animal issues

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Abstract

The field of study of university students may influence their attitudes towards animals, which in turn may influence their behaviour. Attitudes to animals in university students in eleven countries were obtained by survey, and the influence of field of study was evaluated after correcting for other influential factors. Students of agriculture were most accepting of killing animals, unnatural practices on animals, animal experimentation and animal rights issues, whereas humanities and arts students were less accepting of unnatural practices on animals and animal experimentation than students of other disciplines. Nevertheless, agriculture students had one of the highest proportions involved in animal protection organisations. It is suggested that regular contact with animals inures agriculture students to animal issues, whereas students in the humanities and arts, that have less contact with farm animals, have greater concern.

Keywords: *animal rights, animals, animal welfare, students, study area, university*