

American Greyhound Council



FACT SHEET: ANIMAL RIGHTS VS. ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal welfare and animal rights may sound similar, but they are very different philosophies.

The animal welfare philosophy says that it's perfectly natural and acceptable to use animals for food, clothing, research, sport, companionship and other lawful purposes, as long as we do it responsibly and humanely. Such interaction strengthens the powerful bonds that have existed between humans and animals since the beginning of time. (For information from The Delta Society on the benefits of human-animal interaction, [click here.](#))

This coincides with the view of the American Veterinary Medical Association, which defines animal welfare as "...a human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling and, when necessary, humane euthanasia."

In contrast, the animal rights philosophy rejects all animal use, no matter how humane, in the belief that animals are the same as humans in all important respects, and therefore have the same rights. When the interests of humans and animals conflict, the animal rights view holds that those conflicts should be resolved in favor of the animals.

In the animal rights view, all interaction between humans and animals should be at a distance, with animals free to pursue their own lives as part of the ecological scheme, free of human "interference." As animal rights advocates say, "Animals are not ours to eat, wear or experiment on."

Here's how the animal welfare vs. animal rights debate affects efforts to promote greyhound adoption:

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCATES	ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATES
Take a neutral position on greyhound racing	Oppose greyhound racing and demand complete abolition of the sport

Promote positive information about retired greyhounds to encourage adoption	Promote misinformation about greyhounds to harm industry image
Cooperate with industry to promote adoption and address legitimate issues	Confront industry, attack mainstream adoption groups, undermine adoption efforts
Use donated funds to benefit animals	Use donated funds for protests and political action against industry

American Greyhound Council c/o The National Greyhound Association

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