Factory Farming: Consumer's Point Of View

I came about this topic because I am both a meat consumer and animal lover. Lately, it seems like there are many documentaries, articles, and just overall awareness about the conditions animals have to endure in factory farms before they make it to our bellies. It saddened me to know the deplorable conditions that animals suffer to make it to our bellies. Factory farms are gargantuan operations that produce very large quantities of the animals we consumer This issue matters to me a great deal because even though I have not adopted the vegan or vegetarian life style, I still happen to care a great deal about animals. It also matters to our society because food is a necessity for all human beings. The way farms treat animals is not just a problem for vegans/vegetarians it is a problem for everyone who eats meat, it is everyone’s issue. The debate surrounding my topic has absolutely no middle ground. The people involved with this issue pretty much believe either A. Animals are stupid, we need to eat for survival, and they will die anyway because they are here for our own personal consumption, or B. everyone needs to become a vegan or vegetarian. When it comes to a topic this debatable, it usually ends up being the type of situation where no middle ground is found because everyone is so stuck in their ways.

Upon further research, I’ve found that animals living in stressful and over crowded conditions need antibiotics. These antibiotics they give the animals are then consumed by us, making our immune systems weaker for when we need antibiotics for infections. Cages are so small that the animals have virtually no room at all to turn around or lie down. Because of the hormones used to accelerate the growing process, some chickens get so over weight that their legs can not even support their bodies! This leaves the chickens unable to get to food or water, so they just sit in their own filth if they survive long enough before being slaughtered. Normally it was found that they produce an egg almost every day, when their ancestors only lay about 20 eggs a year. Female chickens aren’t the only ones suffering; forty million new born male chicks are crushed to death at factory farms every year because they are are not “plump” enough for meat and incapable of laying eggs like their female counterparts. For the same reason, four million baby sheep are killed every year, and this is only one-fifth of all new born lambs. This evidence very clearly shows that in order to produce the amount of food we consume, there were cruel and merciless methods behind how the food is produced in factory farms. Millions of lives are killed for no reason at all, even if the rest happen to survive, they were purely used as commercial goods strictly here for human consumption, instead of live beings. It does not seem likely that this type of meat consumption is healthy. Another reason this issue should matter to everyone is because according to foodandwaterwatch.org, factory farms produced 13 times more waste than human population of the US! These facts alone make it everyone’s problem collectively. According to peta.org, when animals are slaughtered, they are transported in extreme weather conditions, and no thought given to temperatures. Sometimes when animals throats are slit they are not fully dead. The animals are then skinned and plunged into hot water. If this is not animal abuse, I am not sure what is. Lets take a look at what the opposition has to say. Those who support factory farming may argue that traditional farming could also possibly also produce the same amount of waste for the same number of animals raised. This is not a new problem; factory farms have provoked much controversy about animal rights and overall morality. Supporters of factory farming may try and point out that those methods are essential to meet production effectiveness and meat quality. They may also defend themselves about

torturing animals by stating that humans do not have the same moral background with animals, animals are not as morally conscious as we are, therefore it is not against any moral grounds to have animals in the conditions I have listed above. However, traditional farms are more separated, which means that they are less centralized or even located no where near each other. Of course they might also create wastes, but the wastes created by traditional farms are not even close to being as concentrated than the waste of factory farms, it is also more likely that it not be immediate pollution to the nearby environment like there are in factory farms. Sadly, factory farms are rapidly taking over, due to how quicly they can produce meat for consumers. In recent years, the vast majority of food was supplied by factory farms, about 95% to be exact. Since factory farming has become very merged in the farming sector, the market for traditional farming products are rapidly waning. Factory farms offer a much greater amount of food and cheaper prices with little operational costs, traditional farmers are out-competed as they can never have a big scale of business with the way that numbers that factory forms can produce. Thus, traditional farmers cannot sustain their business or even earn a living. Again, supporters of factory farming may argue the situation to natural selection, that only the fittest survive. Factory farming succeeds in inhabiting over half of the food market, because its business scale and efficiency have out-competed everyone else. Although it may be inevitable that ancient business practices will ultimately diminish, traditional farming has its unique value, such as the old-style knowledge of natural farming. Factory farms may be relishing gain on market occupation, but traditional farming should also be conserved for its exclusivity and the choice of consumers who support natural farm products. Some people may wish for cheap and abundant food from factory farms, but we should not turn a blind eye to the exploitation of traditional farmers.