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The costs of a trade that benefits the rich to animal welfare and world resources

A review of *The Animal Trade* by Clive J.C. Phillips, 2015, Wallingford: CABI ISBN 978-1-78064-313-7.

Clive Phillips' starts his book by pointing out that, although some long-distance animal trade has occurred for thousands of years, large scale international trade in food animals is very recent and exponentially expanding. He also finds somewhat obscure parallels between animal migration, human migration and long-distance trade. However, his comparison between the arguments used to justify the Australian live export trade and those used in the 18th and 19th centuries to defend slavery is particularly telling. Although the author does not say that he finds these trades morally equivalent, he does emphasise the extent to which people will seek to justify their own financial benefit without always considering the moral costs of the enterprise. The biggest cost of the live animal trade is the poor welfare of the animals that would not occur if carcasses were exported.

Figures are presented to explain that some international animal trade is the result of what we already know to be, in the long term, a very inefficient agricultural practice. Chicken production in Brazil is enormously greater than the demand for chicken in Brazil because millions of tonnes of chicken meat are exported. Almost all of this export is to rich countries so it is not doing much to alleviate food shortages. Growing maize and soya for chicken production is 2.5 to 5 times less efficient in energy terms than for humans to consume the plant material directly. Of course, the fault here is with the consumers in Europe, North America and South-East Asia as much as with the producers in Brazil. Reference in the book to environmental consequences of Amazonian production is somewhat misleading nowadays, as Brazil now enforces one of the most advanced conservation laws in the world. In most of Amazonas, all land-owners (over 50 ha) have to keep 50-80% of their land with natural vegetation and in already developed areas of Brazil it is at least 20%.

Examples of trade restrictions of various kinds, and their impact on international animal trade, are presented in an interesting way in a chapter of this book. In addition, the real costs of animal production and animal transport are addressed. One of the costs that is mentioned, but which has major animal welfare consequences and merits more extensive coverage, is disease transfer. This is of rapidly increasing importance in relation to plant and animal export.

The author's recent work on the welfare of livestock during long-distance live animal transport by sea contributes significantly to an interesting chapter on this subject. One key aspect of this is the lack of welfare checking systems, especially

in the countries to which animals are exported. A problem for researchers on the welfare of animals during loading onto ships, during the many weeks of travel, and during the unloading in destination countries, is that the members of staff know that the study is being carried out and the worst practices are likely to be avoided. As the author mentions, filming of what happens by undercover investigators has given some more honest information and has resulted in the production of videos that have later been shown on television in the exporting country. Such videos increase the pressure on politicians to regulate or ban the trade.

Most of the book concerns long-distance animal export and international trade in meat products. However, there are also short sections on trade in horses, cats, dogs, exotic animals, marine animals, kangaroos and bush-meat. Whilst these sections are interesting, they are different from the rest of the book. They look a little out of place because the book does not comprehensively cover trade in animals and animal products. Despite such minor points, overall the book is readable and informative. It challenges the views of many people in ways that could lead to changes resulting in better welfare of animals and more efficient use of world resources.

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