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Friday, January 7, 2011

## Pacelle praises Ohio care board for its work, says ag is 'noble'

by Chris Kick



**Note:** Our report from the business portion of the meeting can be [found here](#).

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — The leader of the nation's largest animal rights organization shared with the [Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board](#) the same message he brought in August: more praise and respect.

Wayne Pacelle, CEO of Washington, D.C.-based [Humane Society of the United States](#), spoke during the public comment session of the Jan. 4 meeting, saying he sees "more than ever, the value of this body to seriously examine these questions (of animal welfare) ... You're all taking your charge very seriously."

Pacelle didn't always support the board, particularly when Ohio's agriculture leaders were stressing the importance of passing State Issue 2, the ballot initiative of 2009 that led to the board's formation.

He and HSUS launched a signature drive in the first part of 2010, hoping for their own ballot initiative, which would have potentially mandated to the board, and for all of Ohio, what livestock care standards would be.

### Change of mind

But his mindset changed after the state's agriculture leaders made a compromise deal with HSUS in late June, incorporating a version of the major reforms HSUS had hoped to get passed.

At the August care board meeting, Pacelle told members "we (HSUS) recognize the vote of the citizens of Ohio on Issue 2, and we recognize the authority of the livestock board."

On Jan. 4, he said no one was perfectly satisfied with the agreement — but the decision "moved the ball forward for everybody."

Still, producers who have followed HSUS and other animal rights organizations, are concerned where the ball is rolling, and where it may land.

Charles Wildman, a swine producer from South Charleston, and a member of the swine subcommittee, said he stands behind the subcommittee's decision to uphold the part of the agreement that does away with total stall confinement after 2025.

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But he's not sure the battle will end.

## Acceptable housing?

The board is considering allowing swine crates for certain periods of a swine's life, which its members say is in the swine's best interest. Currently, a producer can build a new swine facility after 2025, as long as its with "alternative sow housing, not gestation crates."

But "alternative housing" is too broad, Wildman said, and the board could easily find itself in the same battle again, if the activists later attack the "alternative" method.

## Another video?

He assumes alternative housing means sows are made to be penned together. If they are, then they eventually will fight each other, he said, to establish social order. And when it happens, he predicts someone will film it and use it against the care board.

"When that (fight) happens, someone is going to be there to take a picture and post it on the Internet with the following statement: 'OLCSB thinks this is the humane way to treat animals. Do you?' And there we go again," Wildman said.

Activists have used similar tactics in the past, calling for more humane standards and better practices, but later condemning the farm or farm business for not being humane enough.

## More defensible?

Pacelle said the terms the board is adopting will make Ohio agriculture "more honorable, defensible and pertinent to the consumer."

Wildman wasn't convinced.

"The day Mr. Pacelle stands in front of a large production (facility) and defends it is the day I will owe somebody a very good meal," he said.

Pacelle said he can understand why there are mixed views, because people have different values and judge things differently.

## Values matter

His own values led him to be a vegan, and leader of an organization that encourages consumers to "eat humanely." According to the HSUS website, that means "reducing, refining and replacing" meat, dairy and eggs from diets.

But Pacelle left the board with an optimistic look at Ohio's agriculture, and how the new standards will approve its industry.

"I do believe that agriculture is a deeply noble tradition," he said. "There are so many great aspects to it, but we also must put animal welfare into the equation."

## Related Coverage:

[Swine subcommittee recommends stall-free by 2025 \(Dec. 30\)](#)

[ICARR to review Ohio's first livestock care standards \(Dec. 21\)](#)

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Chris Kick lives in Wooster, Ohio. An American FFA Degree recipient, he holds a bachelor's in creative writing from Ashland University. He spends his free time on his grandparents' farms in Wayne and Holmes counties.

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#### 2 Comments



##### Farmer says:

January 7, 2011 at 6:17 pm

What Mr. Pacelle may not tell you is is vegan because he was involved in the animal rights movement years ago, while in college. It is very interesting in this social movement in becoming vegan to save animals which represents 10 percent of the population, hardly a majority but indeed it seems like 90 percent. It amazes anyone how a "chairty" can oversee government and state regulations and they decide what is in the best interest of the farmer and the animal they raise for food or animals period. (Does anyone who works for HSUS have a working farm? It would behoove people to learn the difference between animal rights and animal welfare. For a start you may want to have a look at <http://www.negoationisover.org> along you will see how very close Dr. Steve Best and Wayne Pacelle are alike in thinking.



REPLY



##### Sick of Farmer's Attitudes says:

January 7, 2011 at 7:03 pm

Oh yes farms will be filmed and blamed when pigs are engaged in natural behaviors such as establishing dominance. Do you guys say these things with a straight face? Just checked YouTube for any such videos from the many farms that use group housing. Can't find any video of pigs fighting. This quote from Kregel Farms "the biggest fear was stepping outside our comfort zone...there is no negative to running this pen gestation system...the sows are in better physical condition..."

FDR: "You have nothing to fear but fear itself"



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