We’re all Michael Vick

By GARY L. FRANCIONE

MICHAEL Vick has, according to his lawyer, agreed to plead guilty to federal dogfighting charges against him. Over past weeks, there’s been an enormous amount of coverage of the dog-fighting operation sponsored by Vick, as others have been caught and charged in other states. Michael Vick’s lawyers have said that all other men, has been indicted on federal felony charges.

The details of the charges claim that Vick sponsored illegal dog fighting, gambled on dog fights and permitted acts of cruelty against animals on his property. The talk shows have been filled with talking heads from the "human community" condemning dog fighting and calling for Vick to be punished.

Let me be very clear from the outset. I think that dog fighting is a terrible thing. But I must say that the Vick case arena dramatically demonstrates what I call our "monstrous schizophrenias" about animals. That is, if one thing is clear, it is that we do not think clearly about our moral obligations to animals.

In this country alone, we kill more than 10 billion land animals annually for food. The animals we eat suffer as much as the dogs used in dog fighting.

There is no "need" for us to eat meat, dairy or eggs. Indeed, these foods are increasingly linked to various human diseases and animal agriculture is an environmental disaster for the planet. We impose pain, suffering and death on these billions of sentient nonhumans because we enjoy eating their flesh and the products that we make from them.

There is something bizarre about Reebok and Nike, which use leather in their shoes, suspending products endorsed by Vick. There is something bizarre about FedEx and Amazon, which ship and sell dog fighting merchandise here including: Buy

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