

Food Working Group Fall Speaker Series Session

November 3rd, 2014 @3:00pm

Speaker: Gabriel Rosenberg

Topic: “Political Economy of Meat”

Spoon University – Chapter of a National Online Food Publication at Duke

-currently there are satellite branches at 60 universities

-launched website just a few days ago

-will have events – launch event will be later this month

A: The animal rights movement in some sense has been a failure –there is more meat consumption than ever before, even though there are more vegetarians, the meat industry is more successful than ever (profitable)

Larger ethical question: the governance of non-human reproduction – should we be impregnating animals?

Q: But in really looking for a solution, could a Joel Salatin type of spectrum of practices (free-ranging, etc) be acceptable in this context?

A: Likely there are better models than the industrial reproduction of animals (free reproduction better than forced reproduction)?

Q: I had never thought of artificial insemination as a “sexual” act- I had viewed animal husbandry as “asexual”....

A: I’m not trying to de-criminalize bestiality here – but it is interesting to see how we have constructed this elaborate distinctions/fantasies in our animal law. These don’t really seem to hold up well when you really examine them. For example, do many people really know that a cow needs to have been recently pregnant or currently pregnant in order to provide milk? Most people don’t know about this and have a romantic notion that animals just eat grass and make milk. Cows can be given hormones to produce milk, but you get less and you don’t get a calf. Or: most cows must give birth via Cesarean section bc the calves are bred to be huge...without humans many cow sub-species would not be able to survive.

Q: This is another example of our distancing/disconnection from our food system....this is another example making me realize how distant I am from our food system. If you grow up on a farm, you probably have a much better understanding of how these little things work.

A: people who are most ok with this material from this talk on bestiality law and animal husbandry are farmers.

A: it can be important to study speciation as a “process” and understand it for political purposes – the way in which reproduction functions across species is a part of this

Gabe is involved in a collaboration in the Big Data initiatives in the mathematics department

They are taking undergrads and throwing very messy data sets at them, and they are having a 6-8 week summer project where they receive a stipend to engage in data reconstruction and address some empirical questions about relationships in pig meat and pig breeds

Gabe looking for students who might be interested

Q: Have you spoken to any Law professors? Like Jed Purdy? This is such an intersection between animals and the Law. Also: if you are trying to make an argument for a law reform or better law, it wasn't clear whether it was for companion animals to outlaw the spaying and neutering as a violation of the animal, or if it was that we should outlaw the agricultural uses of animal husbandry and other coercive treatment of farm animals. If presenting to a law audience – they will ask what your proposal is for change.

A: Gabe has been in touch with several law professors and will continue to talk with a few more. His article is still a draft at the moment.