

Monkey Housing: Every Litter Bit Helps

Pleased as I am by the acknowledgement paid by Dr. Rowan to the University of Stirling's use of woodchip litter in monkey housing (2(3):113, 1981), I cannot take credit for it. A.S. Chamove introduced the innovation, and, with a postgraduate student, made a thorough study of its effects (Chamove and Anderson, 1979).

It is worthwhile elaborating on some of their findings, as several advantages of the system emerged:

Hygiene: The woodchip litter condition resulted in less contact with excreta than did the normal bare-floor condition. The monkeys on litter have cleaner coats and observation windows remain less soiled.

Behavior: Of the various effects, perhaps the most important is that aggression is reduced by a factor of 5 in the litter condition.

Cost: Counting the cost of the litter itself, the litter condition is twice as economical since cleaning time is cut by almost 60%.

Odor: The litter condition is less offensive, as judged by a smell-test, than the bare-floor condition, even after 6 weeks without changing the woodchips.

In summary, after 40 months of continuous use to date, no harmful effects have emerged. The benefits are obvious.

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Reference

- Chamove, A.S. and Anderson, J.R. (1979)
Woodchip litter in macaque groups,
J Inst Anim Technicians 30(2):69-74.

Livestock Abuse in Trucks and Sale Yards

In my opinion, the number one animal welfare problem in the U.S. is the abuse of livestock during transportation and while they are passing through mar-

keting facilities. The problem is greatest in the southeastern, south central and southwestern regions of the country. Most of the abuses which occur are already outlawed under existing federal, state, city and county anti-cruelty and humane laws. The problem is that the laws are not being enforced.

I have witnessed deliberate cruelty occurring on a regular basis in many livestock operations. Based on my extensive travels throughout the U.S., I estimate that 10 to 15% of livestock markets, feedlots, ranches and slaughter plants are allowing gross cruelty to occur. These are not isolated incidents. Specific examples of abuses include kicking mother cows in the face with spurs; hitting calves at a sale barn with boards with nails in them; trucks with broken floors; slamming heavy overhead gates on the backs of cattle; over-powered hydraulic squeeze chutes. This resulted in rupturing the animal internally. Hydraulic squeeze chutes are safe handling devices if used correctly (Grandin 1977, 1980a).

Physical abuse and poor husbandry practices cost the livestock industry money. Stopping these abuses would save the industry millions of dollars annually by reducing death losses, sickness, loss of weight gains and bruises. Why are these abuses allowed to continue? The cattle industry is segmented. The basic segments in the southern regions are rancher, local auction, trucker, order buyer barn, trucker, feedlot, trucker and finally the slaughter plants.

Each person along the marketing chain simply passes the death losses, bruises and sickness to the next person in the chain (Grandin 1980b). The cattle industry as a whole loses money. Each individual along the chain collects his money, but he does not see the losses come directly out of his pocket. Losses are also tolerated for tax and other financial reasons.

Here are some typical examples of passed-on losses: A small rancher in the Southeast is not going to vaccinate, dehorn, castrate and prewean his young