

Concentrated animal farms harm environment



Phil Jarrett

Environmentalists. Gag me. What a bunch of granola-eating, dreadlock-sporting, non-bathing hypocrites waiting for an opportunity to chain themselves to deforestation equipment, cause my car to swing into oncoming traffic with their bicycle or throw red paint on my leather shoes! There is something about these people that is so terrifying, be it their demand for an organic food section at Hy-Vee or constant moaning about global warming — they want me to care about the consequences of my actions. Jerks. There was a time when ignorance

was bliss. I am not sure when that time was, and I would rather not remember. It might have been when I started thinking about where my food came from after getting food poisoning twice from bad meat. A few mouse clicks on the Internet and those hemp-wearing tree-huggers had me in their icy grip. Even if you are reluctant to take the title of environmentalist, chances are you care to some degree about where your food comes from. On a lower level of concern, you care that it did not come from a dirty floor. You like your food nice and clean. On a medium level, you like to know that your food is good for you. On a high level of concern, you like to know that your consumption of this food is not contributing to the suffering of others. At any of these levels, you should be concerned about CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) and attend the discussion panel at 7 p.m. in Pershing 325. But first, let me give you some background information. A concentrated animal feeding

operation is basically a livestock facility where anywhere from hundreds to thousands of animals such as chickens, turkeys, cows and pigs are tightly confined together and solely raised for the production of food. They are raised in appalling conditions with little room for natural movement, fresh air or access to sunlight. In 1997 alone, the USDA estimated that animals in the U.S. meat industry produced 1.4 billion tons of waste. That is nearly five tons of feces for every American citizen. As one can imagine, the smell in the surrounding area is very unpleasant, with the stench sometimes drifting for miles. This waste produces incredible amounts of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. Holes in the earth, called lagoons, often store this raw manure, ruining the surrounding soil. Water sources near the CAFOs occasionally are contaminated, posing a major health risk to the neighboring communities. The health of the animals compromised by the close confines must

be compensated for by the overuse of medication. An estimated 70 percent of all antibiotics in the U.S. are fed to animals in our meat industry. This negligent use of antibiotics has resulted in the appearance of resistant strains of bacteria that can affect both animals and humans. This move toward CAFOs is a relatively new development, born partly out of government subsidies that reward large industry rather than family farms. Large industry creates low prices, and we certainly love getting our value-meal cheeseburgers. However, it only is able to supply such low prices by micromanaging all aspects of production with any given item, speeding up processes that maybe should not be sped up and skirting around the traditional and ethical elements of American industry. Such is the story of business in this country. However, we as citizens should feel entitled to gripe about this issue because we literally are eating its byproducts.

If we raise animals in sickly conditions, is it any surprise that we are getting sick? If we speed up sanitation processes, were we expecting anything more than an increase of E. coli outbreaks due to the presence of feces in our meat? Did we think for one moment that installing a poop factory in our rural communities was going to help our property values? The problem is we often don't think at all unless it is a decision to get the 6-piece or 8-piece chicken nugget combo. We like our meat cheap, and we like it for all three meals, despite the fact that it is terrible for the human body. We eat vegetarian critters and still think that we are being nurtured by second-hand nutrients. My advice is as follows: scale back the meat, kick it if you can, be OK with higher prices as they come with higher standards, save the world.

Phil Jarrett is a senior philosophy and religion and communication major from Chesterfield, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

Have you ever or do you plan to go home early for Thanksgiving Break?



"I have before, but I'm not going to this year."

Susan Cheung
Sophomore



"No, but I want to."

Melissa Luebke
Junior



"No, I'm not going home early this year."

Allison Coffelt
Freshman



"I've never done that, and I can't this year."

Drew Forrester
Junior

Missouri Hall fire alarm fix need not have taken so long



Kelsey Landhuis

We didn't start the fire — but with the number of fire evacuations that have taken place in Missouri Hall this year, you never would know that. Since the beginning of the semester, Missouri Hall has had no fewer than 10 fire evacuations, culminating in a 4 a.m. wake-up call that left many residents weighing our options: leave our warm, cozy beds to go stand out in the cold, or take our chances with a blazing inferno? If I had known when the alarm sounded that I would not be able to return to the building for nearly an hour, I probably would have risked the fire. After the 10th evacuation, Missouri Hall residents received an e-mail informing them that the continual alarm sounding was in fact caused by mistakes made during the system's installation. Someone neglected to switch the alarms from the super-sensitive default setting to a more reasonable level, which was the source of all the problems. According to the e-mail, the situation would be corrected right away, and apart from a brief check-up Tuesday morning, the alarm's sweet tones have not been heard in Missouri Hall for more than two weeks. However, it should not have taken 10 alarms to spur the residence hall staff into action regarding this problem. Granted, the cause of several of these evacuations can be traced to carelessness or neglect, but the fourth or fifth evacuation should have been enough to make hall staff members realize that the root of the problem was something more than people forgetting to watch their microwave popcorn. If hall staff had pursued the issue when it first became evident, residents would have been spared from sleep deprivation on several occasions. The hall staff's most important

job is to ensure residents' safety and comfort, and by neglecting to address the situation sooner, it has failed to fulfill this duty. Having fire alarms interrupt your sleeping, studying or showering at least once a week falls short of even the most minimal expectations of residence hall life, and the frequency of alarms in past months increases students' indifference toward future alarms, putting them in danger if there is an actual fire. In addition to the hall staff's slow reaction time, there also was a lack of action among the students whom the alarms affected. Missouri Hall residents were upset, and understandably so, but the ways in which they chose to express their discontent were not productive. Instead of whining to your friends or joining passive-aggressive Facebook groups like "I'd like to make some popcorn ... but then MO Hall might catch on fire," wouldn't it have been more productive to make your feelings known to a student adviser or hall director, start a petition or contact Student Senate? Recognizing the problem is only the first step. Trying to fix the problem requires a lot more effort, which students are unwilling to give because they are too lazy or too busy — take your pick, but it doesn't really matter because the results are the same. If students had held hall staff accountable for getting to the bottom of the fire alarm situation, the problem likely would have been resolved much sooner than it was. As miserable as this experience was, students can learn from it. The next time you see a problem, do not just complain about it or assume that it will fix itself. Students have the right and the obligation to make it known when they are unhappy with a situation. If you want change, you have to do something to promote it. It might take some work, but in the end, everyone will sleep better at night.

Kelsey Landhuis is a sophomore English and French major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Registration woes create tears for freshmen without initiative



Brenna McDermott

When I see a fellow freshman friend crying, I tend to assume the worst. I assume they've lost a loved one, or I assume they've been diagnosed with some chronic illness. I assume something catastrophic has happened that has catapulted them into a fit of hysterics. My first instinct is never that my friend can't decide what class to register for or that the class they did want is full. I assume death, pain or terror. I guess that is what I get for assuming. For most of you upperclassmen, registration for that first spring semester was a long time ago, so you might be wondering why I'm writing about it. Well, for us bottom-of-the-food-chain first-years, it was just last week. And oh, what a week it was. What a week for tears, fears and jeers (that is, me laughing at all the people tearing up). And to be totally honest, I didn't get into all the classes I wanted. Not even half. And yeah, I was pretty bummed out. But I didn't cry about it, and I didn't wait for someone else to tell me what to do. The fact is that there are way too many viable options for solving the registration problem to be sitting around whining about it.

And none of them have anything to do with tissues. For the student who doesn't know what classes to take, figure it out! There are many resources available to help you decide what classes to take and when. Consulting the General Catalog will give a description of every available class and all the necessary prerequisites. Then there is the option of seeing your academic adviser. Now some might be wary of this option, but it still is a better solution than crying all alone in your room about whether to take calculus or statistics. For those like me who don't get into the classes they want for the second semester of college, go straight to the source. Find your professor, butter him or her up, and ask for an override. Go around the system and use the most effective strategy to get what you want: Suck up. Tell your professors how much you would enjoy their classes, how much you enjoy their lectures, how much you enjoy their god-like presences in the room with you. Whatever you can do to get what you want. Because the truth is, this is not high school anymore. No one is going to do anything for us

any more. We have to fight for what we really want. And the fight over registration probably will never stop. Being an upperclassman won't guarantee anything, and neither will my usually fool-proof method of brown-nosing. Nothing will ever go exactly as planned, so the best thing to do sometimes is to make the best of the situation at hand. Maybe getting your least favorite prerequisites out of the way will make the next three years more enjoyable. Or maybe not getting into a class will open the doors to new opportunities and new interests. Or maybe next semester will just really suck. I don't know. It's like my mom says, "You're a big girl now!" She won't be driving up to Kirksville any time soon to convince my professors to put me in their classes. If I asked her to, she would laugh. We are big boys and girls now. The time for crying or indecisiveness is gone. You got screwed this semester. So what? Life isn't fair. Life will never give us exactly what we want or exactly what we think we need. So we can all whine about things we can't control, or we can take responsibility and go after what we want. And hey, if we are disappointed (which we will be), then we just have to deal with our problems. But until life sends a real problem my way, I'll pass on the Kleenex.

Brenna McDermott is a freshman undeclared major from St. Louis, Mo.

Greek system's benefits outweigh problems



Nathan Atkinson

The Greek system is not perfect, just like every other organization and person at college. People make mistakes, make bad decisions and sometimes do some pretty reprehensible things, but it does not mean the overall system is not a good one. Stereotypes exist in our society, and although few would say they are a good thing, most people are guilty of applying them. Stereotypes about the Greek system exist because some organizations and individuals within the Greek community reinforce them. It is easy to say, for example, that the DePauw University (Ind.) chapter of Delta Zeta sorority was discriminatory because it is true. It kicked out members for reasons such as race and physical appearance, and as a result, reinforced an image the Greek community has been trying to get rid of in the past few decades. It would be very difficult to find a member of the Greek community who would condone such actions. The problem does not rest simply

with people who stereotype the Greek community — it is also the fault of some members of the Greek system who stereotype other fraternities and sororities. Fraternities and sororities often have set ideas of what their fellow Greek organizations are like. Whether any specific chapters are labeled by other organizations as sluts, nerds, drunks, partiers, studiers or stoners, this inter-Greek stereotyping only serves to suggest to everyone outside the Greek community that these stereotypes have some truth. The examples leading to these stereotypes, however, tend to be the exceptions and rarely the rule for every member of the organization, so why does the Greek community perpetuate these stereotypes within itself? The situation at DePauw does portray how some Greek organizations act, but it should not be taken as an example of what happens in the Greek system as a whole. There sometimes are flaws in the system, and it is the job of the Greek community to make sure that incidents like the one at DePauw do not happen again. DePauw is one of the exceptions, but the Greek system overall is a great one. Another reason that the Greek system sometimes is labeled as discriminatory is that it has a selective and limited membership. In some sense, it does have some discriminatory qualities — much like nearly every other

organization and selective institution (including Truman). I do not believe that this discrimination is necessarily a negative thing. There are many factors that come into play when people seek to join a Greek organization, just like any organization. Among these factors are recruits' attitudes, academic standings and agreeability among members. These factors do limit membership, but it is not discriminatory in a negative sense. After all, it wouldn't make sense to want someone to be a part of your group if you don't get along with that person or if they are not willing to fulfill the obligations associated with membership. People do not tend to hang around with those they do not get along with, so why when membership is restricted in this sense is it labeled negatively as discriminatory? I myself am Greek and believe the system is beneficial. My brothers have helped me to keep my sanity here at Truman during the past four years, and I have grown as an individual while obtaining valuable skills that will help me later in life as a result of my affiliation. It is for these reasons that I disagree with Robert Topping's letter to the editor in the Nov. 8 issue of the Index, which stated that the Greek system is antithetical to the university model. This is an absurd notion, and citing an extreme example of discrimination at another institution to justify how the

Truman Greek system is incompatible with the university ideal is simply misleading. Granted, the DePauw example does reveal some flaws in the Greek system that can be exploited by those with malicious intent, but it has nothing to do with how the system relates to the University itself. For example, our University is selective with regard to whom it admits and it teaches valuable skills for the future. This is exactly how I see the Greek system. My association has taught me a great deal, and I feel much more prepared for society as a result — in my case and for many others, the Greek system and the University are complementary. Being Greek is one of the many paths that people can take while they are in college. It is a choice, and although it was my choice, I am not saying that it is the only one. I felt the need to address the issues that Topping brought up last week not merely because they attacked a system of which I am a part, but because they illustrate common misconceptions about the Greek system, which, as with everything, should be examined with an open mind and not simply based on what others claim.

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WEB POLL

Is Truman's campus wheelchair- and stroller-accessible enough?

No.

(47% — 15 votes)

Yes.

(19% — 6 votes)

Usually, but construction makes things a bit difficult.
(34% — 11 votes)

This week's question:

Do Kirksville police need cameras in their cruisers?

Vote online at
www.trumanindex.com