

Liberating the Language of Animal Abuse: Choosing Our Words Carefully to Get People to Care About and Help Animals



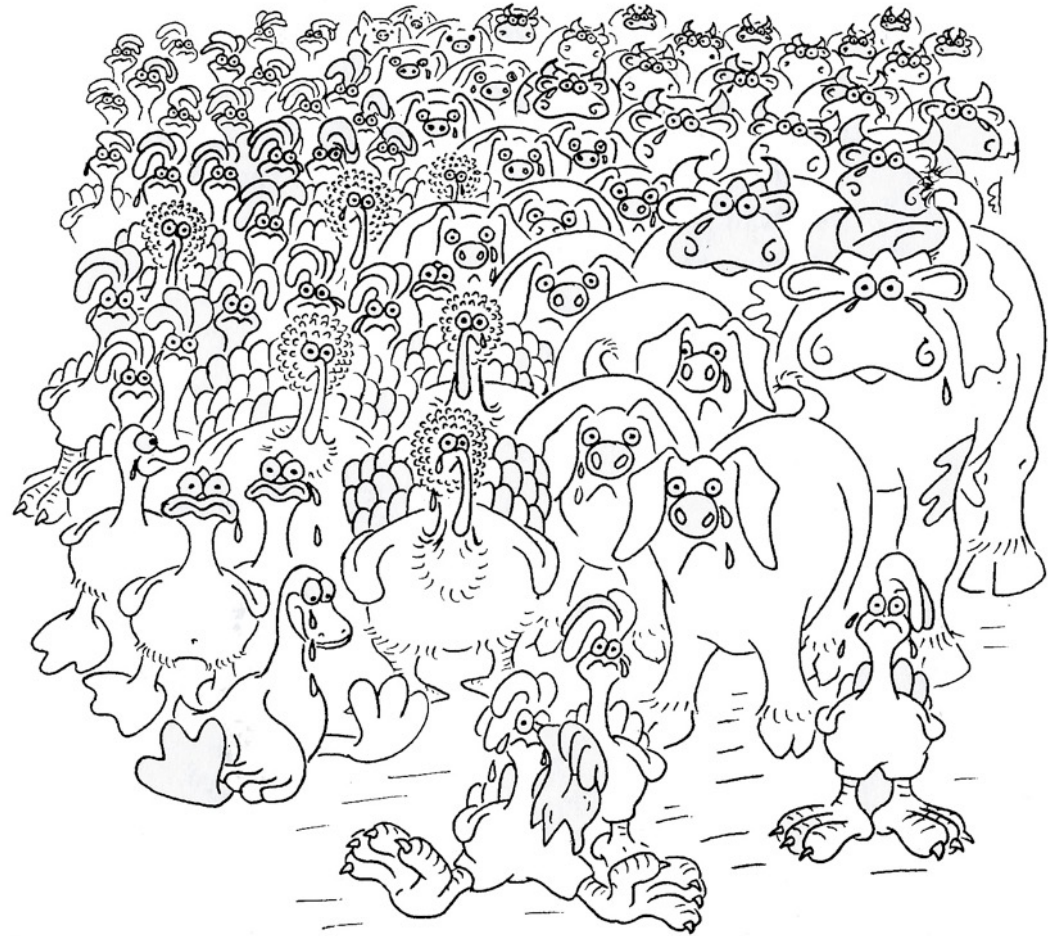
**A Presentation by Karen Davis, PhD,
President of United Poultry Concerns**

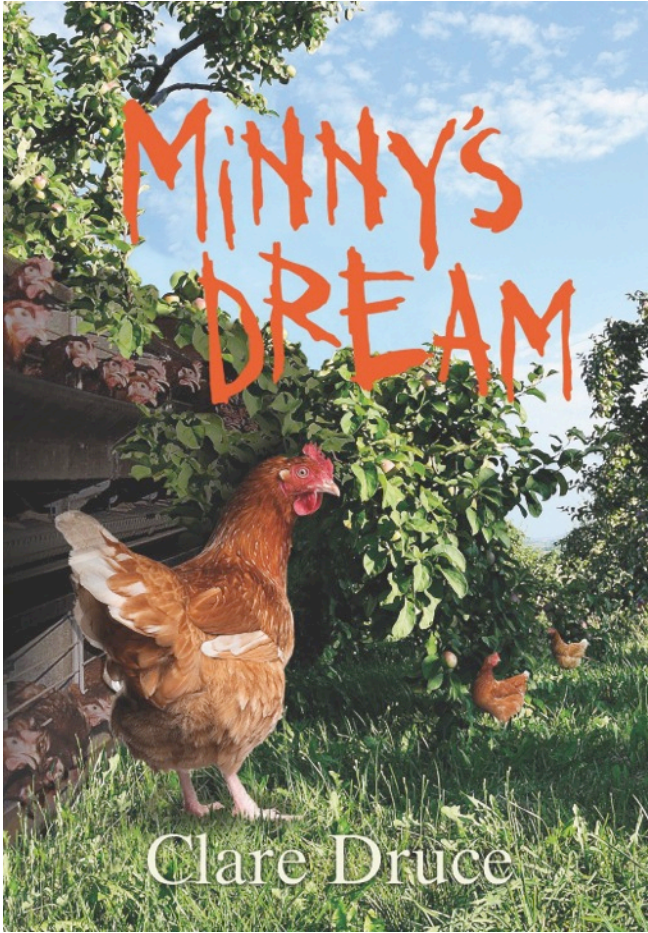


UNPARALLELED
SUFFERING

*Cattle, sheep, swine, asses,
mules, and goats, along with
chickens, geese, and turkeys all
agreed enthusiastically to give
their names back to the people
to whom – as they put it – they
belonged. – Ursula Le Guin,
“She Unnames Them,” *The New
Yorker**

*Illustration from Nature’s Chicken
by Nigel Burroughs*





“Please, never, ever, call me a battery hen. A hen in a battery cage is not a battery hen. I, Minny, am a proud descendant of the Red Jungle Fowl.” – Clare Druce, Minny’s Dream



“We cannot presume that animals react to stress and fear in the same manner as humans.”

“They’re only animals.”

A problem for animal advocates is the terminology of animal usage. Speaking for animals involves negotiating a terrain of verbal conventions that devalue animals, starting with separating “animals” from “humans.”

“Animal rights people know animals mainly as pets, and having been taught that humans ‘really are like animals,’ these people have a sentimentalized view of animals.” Agribusiness professor quoted in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* in 2004

Farmed animal advocates, especially, are beset by the language of agribusiness. Animals are depersonalized, degraded, de-animalized, in farm-speak as “broilers,” “layers,” “livestock,” “cattle,” “steers,” “veal,” “swine,” “poultry,” “meat birds,” and the like.

Putting these terms in quotation marks is one way to signal that a cow, for example, is not just a “dairy” cow. How She is Used is NOT . . .

Photo by Hope Bohanec, California Dairy Farm 2014



**Who She IS:
a Loving
Mother Whose
Milk is For Her
Own Babies.**



**“We Are NOT
‘Thanksgiving’
Turkeys!”**



**Sugar:
“I am
NOT a ‘Meat’
Chicken!”**

*Sugar photo by
United Poultry Concerns*



“And I am NOT a ‘broiler,’ despite what the chicken industry has done to destroy me.”

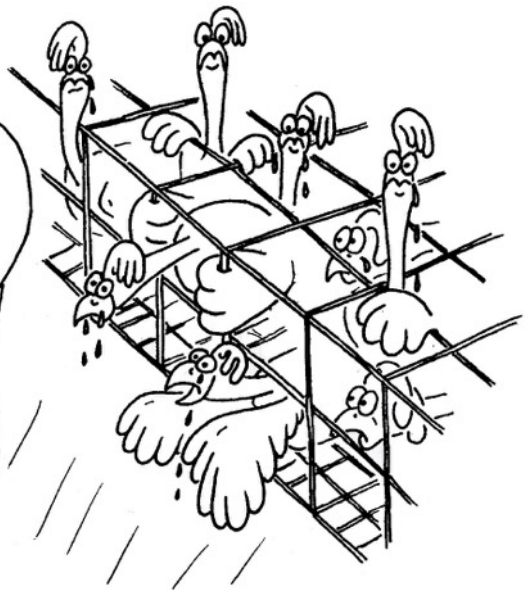
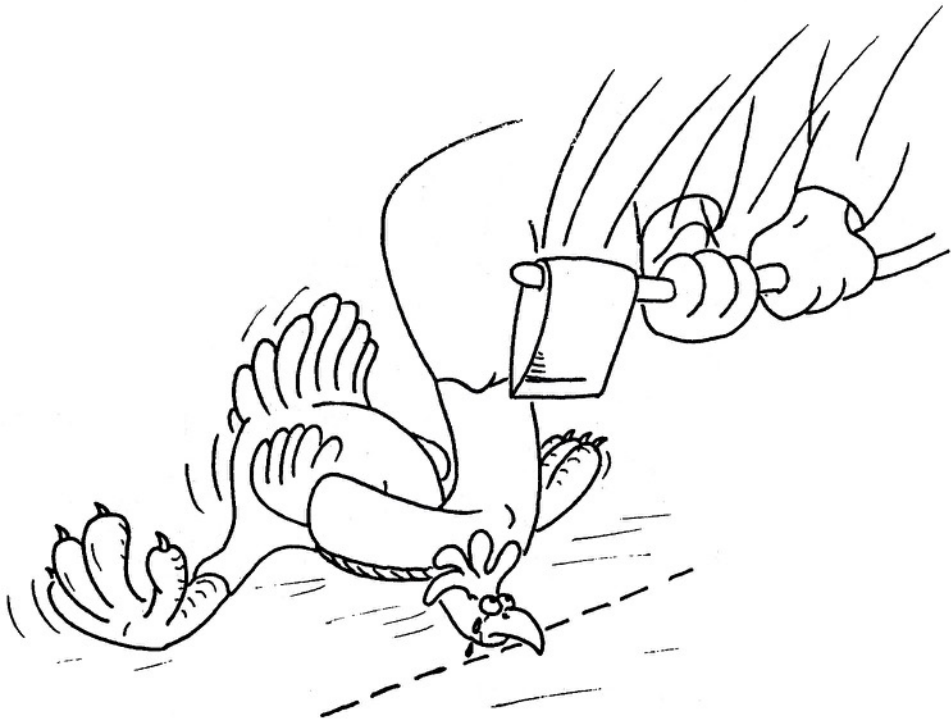


Delaware chicken house chickens. Photo by David Harp

If in certain circumstances we feel compelled to use the term “broiler” to distinguish chickens bred for meat, this term should never be used as a noun but only as an adjective: Do not say “broilers.” Say broiler *chickens*. Don’t call hens used for egg-production “layers” or “egg-layers” but rather laying *hens*. Don’t talk about raising “veal” or refer to a veal calf’s prison as a “veal crate.” Instead say veal *calves* and veal *calf* crates. Make the animals *visible*.

As much as possible, simply say chickens, hens, cows, calves and pigs, and always avoid terms like “grass-fed beef,” “pasture-raised eggs” and “pasture-raised chicken.” *Only a live animal can be raised*, not body parts and corpses. There’s a big difference between “pasture-raised chicken” versus “pasture-raised *chickens*.” Likewise, a “chicken leg” is one thing, a “*chicken’s leg*” is another.

AGRIBUSINESS: Owners or Guardians?



IT TAKES A CRUEL MAN TO KILL A
DEFENSELESS CHICKEN...

THIS ISN'T
A BIRD...
IT'S A
BUSINESS!



CHAPPEL
©1992

Responding to a United Poultry Concerns campaign alert urging the National Fire Protection Association to require the owners of farmed animals to install smoke control systems in animal housing facilities, a reader sent me a “friendly reminder” that saying “owners of these animals” reaffirms the animals’ status as property, not individuals with rights. Isn’t guardian the right word to use? I would say Yes in most cases, but not in this one.

Given that victimization and violence are the essence of the relationship between agribusiness corporations and the animals they own, calling them “guardians” would be a mockery of the animals and a mockery of the word guardian in the sense of responsible caregiver for a dependent fellow creature or companion.

“Euthanasia”: What does it mean, and when should we use it?

“It is horrible what is happening with the creeps and Newcastle disease. Even if the birds have no symptoms, the brutes come in and euthanize them right in front of the owners.” - *Animal rights advocate to UPC, July 15, 2019*

“Kevin Sullivan of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services confirmed his team humanely euthanized 362 resident Canada geese two weeks ago, brought in by request of the city of Salisbury to manage ‘an excessive population.’” - “Hundreds of geese euthanized in Salisbury, meat goes to local shelters,” *Delmarva Now, July 8, 2019*



Death squads hired by the California Department of Food and Agriculture round up birds for gas chambers in 2003 to stamp out Exotic Newcastle Disease virus.

Euthanasia (from Greek: εὐθανασία; "good death": εὖ, eu; "well" or "good" + θάνατος, thanatos; "death") is the practice of intentionally ending a life to relieve pain and suffering. In English, *euthanasia* has been used in the sense of a “good” or “easy” death since the early seventeenth century, when the philosopher Francis Bacon described the phenomenon as “after the fashion and semblance of a kindly & pleasant sleepe.”

There are two primary components of the term “euthanasia”:

- 1) The death is experienced by the dying individual as peaceful and painless.**
- 2) The death is conferred on an individual for the sake of that individual, not to get rid of an animal “nuisance” or to benefit someone other than the one who is being deliberately killed.**

When human beings have been brutally rounded up, shipped to death camps and murdered, we do not say these people are, or were, being “euthanized” or “humanely euthanized.” The reason is that to say they were being “euthanized” is false, illogical, and unethical. The same standards of truthfulness, logic, and ethics must apply to the language we use to describe the manner of death we confer or inflict on the members of other animal species.

Conclusion

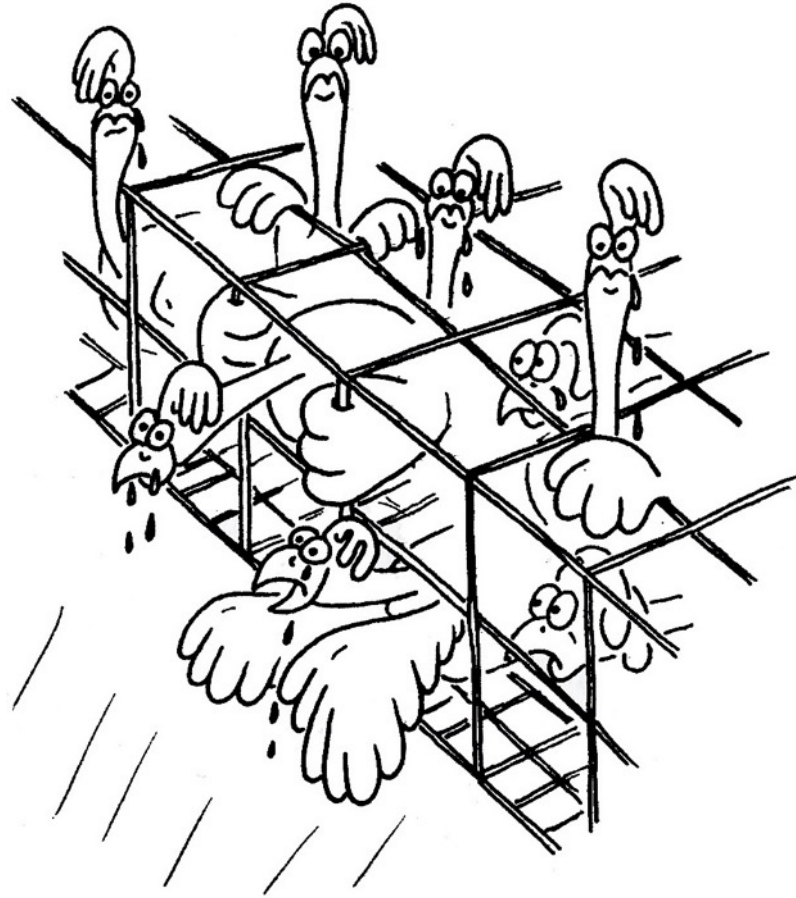
“This is how we have been made to suffer. It is not who we are or were meant to be. Please do not speak or think of us as ‘egg-layers’ or ‘egg machines,’ but as fellow citizens of the Earth that we share with you. We are individuals with feelings, vitality, societies, families and a sense of ourselves and others. We have a capacity for happiness, the same as you. Please use language that will help to liberate us not only from our cages and living hell, but from the belittling language that seeks to define us as Nothing.”

Sound of a Battery Hen

*You can tell me: if you come by the
North door, I am in the twelfth cage
On the left-hand side of the third row
From the floor; and in that cage
I am usually the middle one of eight or
six or three.*

*But even without directions, you'd
Discover me. We have the same pale
Comb, clipped yellow beak and white or
auburn*

*Feathers, but as the door opens and you
Hear above the electric fan a kind of
One-word wail, I am the one
Who sounds loudest in my head.*





Help Us, Please. We Belong
in A Green World.
Not These Metal Cages.



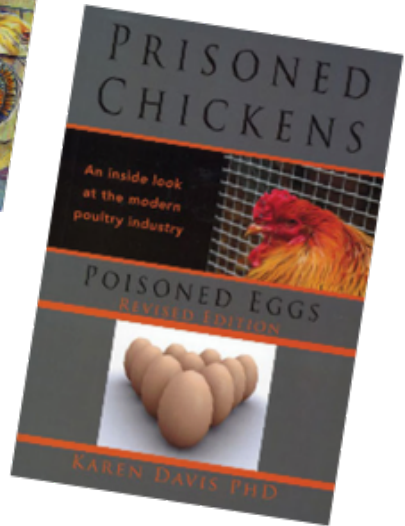
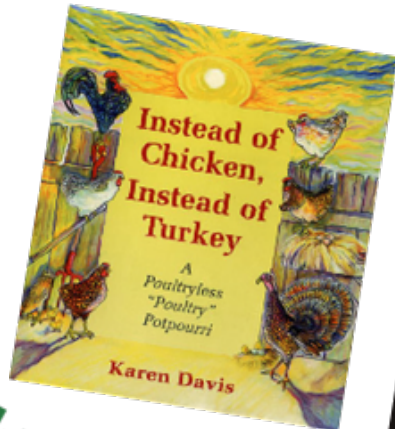
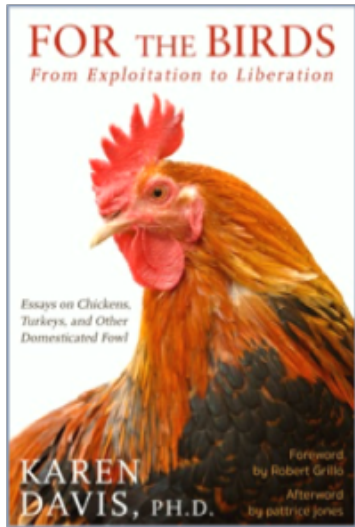
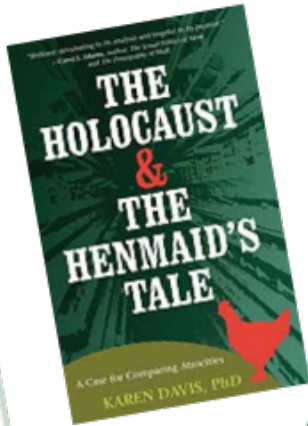
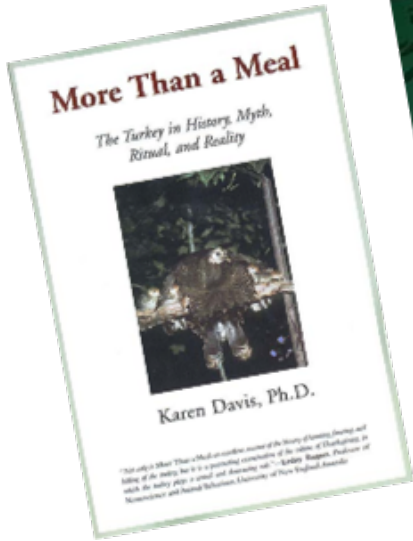
***"Don't Gobble Me!"
-- Boris the Turkey***



***Turkeys are friends, not food
- go vegan!***



Illustration from Nature's Chicken by Nigel Burroughs



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