To The World Bank

Public consultation in regards to "Safeguard Policies: Review and Update of Proposals"

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to the third phase of consultations for the second draft of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), I hereby present my opinions and my suggestions to contribute to the reflections and discussions related to The World Bank’s policies mentioned above.

First, I would like to clarify that all views presented in this document are strictly my own, not reflecting – necessarily – the opinion of the institutions to which I am formally linked. Specifically, the School of Veterinary and Animal Science at the University of São Paulo, and the Institut des Sciences et Industries du Vivant et de l'Environnement of Université Paris-Saclay.

The intentions of the set of World Bank safeguard policies are quite clear and laudable.

I understand that the World Bank and our global society, who is benefited from the Bank's actions, are facing a unique opportunity. It is known that development of policies linked to financing initiatives present an essential role in guiding human actions. This affirmation can be exemplified by the advances we have had in Brazil when a significant part of financial institutions started to regulate its lending operations to environmental standards. When that happened, we observed a significant improvement in environmental conservation starting in the new millennium, which was greatly attributed to these mandatory standards.

That said, I understand we are facing a new opportunity to advance to higher levels in terms of economic, environmental, ethical, and, above all, social development.

My statement is especially directed at the way human beings treat and make use of animals, whether for subsistence needs, or for commercial or economic activity. The role that animals play as a source of wealth for human beings is undeniable. However, a significant number of scientists and a very substantial share of the society on all continents of the planet are calling for new standards of raising, reproducing, handling and slaughtering these animals.

When the World Bank demonstrates its willingness to “protect the environment”, there is no doubt that it is referring to all creatures that make up environment, including animals. When it addresses its goal to “protect people”, it is, in the same way, also signaling that those people who care about how we treat animals should also be taken into consideration. On an ethical level, for thousands of people around the world, guaranteeing a minimum level of quality of life for animals is a matter of extreme relevance, which can no longer be associated to isolated movements.

Therefore, due to these reasons, I believe the World Bank could provide an immeasurable contribution to social and environmental value if it includes animal welfare in its guidelines, policies and philosophy.
It is crucial to highlight that this does not suggest that animals should not be used as a resource for human beings. It only suggests that minimal standards should exist to avoid the unnecessary suffering of trillions of creatures – whose science has proven to be intelligent and with feelings equivalent to ours. In addition, these standards should be motivated, implemented, prioritized and, preferably, made formally mandatory.

From another angle, the absence of minimal standards of animal welfare in the policies of very relevant institutions such as the World Bank contradicts the global trend towards environmental protection and ethical evolution of the human beings.

Animal production standards, from a general perspective, need to go through a profound review on all continents. Such movement can already be clearly seen in science. Keeping the status quo for a significant part of animal production systems can be considered an explicit violence to creatures and the environment, as well as an offense to the ethics and conscience of thousands of citizens. Furthermore, it also presents a major risk to the maintenance of these systems and people who depend on them to survive.

Denying the need to review technological standards in global animal production is the biggest mistake people can make. If they do so, they will not be realizing – if the status quo is kept unchanged – that day after day they will lose access to their markets, because the ethical evolution of human beings is a natural anthropogenic process, which happens voluntarily and will keep happening, whether we like it or not. Keeping such standards will result in a growing resistance from consumers as they become increasingly aware of the modus operandi of these systems.

Keeping cruel and outdated animal production systems is a fragility that is not realized by many, especially those who depend on these very same activities to survive. In this way, all initiatives that promote awareness, modernization and technological evolution to incentive more rational systems are not only important, but I would risk saying they are essential to keep income and employment for innumerous people today and in the near future.

It is, somehow, understandable that there is resistance coming from the production sector. There is no doubt that such technological changes may involve certain sacrifices for some of them. Nevertheless, there is absolutely no evidence that such sacrifices are insuperable. Science is full of experiences that show that changes are technologically viable. Humankind has a stock of knowledge that is more than sufficient for that.

Beyond technical challenges, it is also known that economic challenges exist, given that there is a certain understanding, almost generalized, that investments in higher welfare standards increase production costs. Although we cannot affirm this is the ultimate truth, such challenges

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1 I am a professional who works with animal production. I am associated to the Department of Animal Production at USP. I have been guiding dozens of scientific efforts and extension projects dedicated to animal production using various species. For those who might be interested, my curriculum and life history are publically available at: http://lattes.cnpq.br/3226189302451639.

2 In production systems which are said to be under the so called “technical production possibility frontier”, investments in animal welfare imply gains for both animals and producers (economic gains). This is the case, for example, of the extensive (pasture-based) beef cattle industry in Brazil, as well as sheep farming and innumerous
should be acknowledged and in some cases, it is known that such investments will imply higher costs, especially those of investments in fixed capital. If this hypothesis is confirmed, it presents itself as an even clearer opportunity to foment policies, given that the lending will represent an expressive part of the solution and viability of investments needed.

Furthermore, there are views that requiring higher animal welfare standards can favor big farms in detriment to small farms; or favor developed countries in detriment to developing ones; or vice-versa for both. There is no absolute evidence to conclude any of these claims. There will be cases where small producers will find an opportunity for growth, and there will be cases in which big businesses will become even bigger; or developed countries can benefit and the developing countries can be winners too. With the technological change, there will be some producers who will be able to use this to their advantage; and some who will not, the latter meaning that they might need to migrate to other activities. In any case, this concern cannot be used to justify not moving forward when it comes to the way farm animals are treated by our specie.

Animal Science, Veterinary and Agronomy – amongst other agrarian sciences – have enough knowledge to provide producers with solutions that guarantee a minimally acceptable level of quality of life to animals, and by doing so also contributing to wealth growth and quality of life for people who need animals to meet their subsistence needs or to carry out their economic activities. Policies that contemplate rural extension projects, technical assistance and are effectively committed to development are, consequently, needed and complimentary to all these efforts.

I aimed, modestly and briefly, to present my personal views for the Bank World to consider, with appropriate relevance, animal welfare in its Safeguard Policies. I did not present references because I wanted to be brief. Nevertheless, I am available to do so, if that is considered necessary for the debate.

I hope the institution reflects deeply on all views received during the public consultation. Your decisions can lead the way to a more developed world, for people, animals and the environment, in all its dimensions.

Thank you for your attention,

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Born in Canguçu, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, on the 31st of October of 1972. PhD and Master’s degree in Applied Economics by the Department of Agriculture Luiz de Queiroz, from University of Sao Paulo (USP). Graduation in Agronomy by the University of Pelotas (UFPel). Associate Professor of the School of Veterinary and Animal Science of the University of Sao Paulo, responsible for the disciplines of ‘Applied Economics’ and ‘Sociology and Extension’ in graduation courses; and ‘Agro-industrial Production Systems’, ‘Economics of Animal Production’ and ‘Logistics Management in Animal Production’ in post-graduation courses. Registered in the Post-Grad Program in Nutrition and Animal Production (FMVZ/USP), in the Post-Grad Program in Management and Innovation and Animal Production properties that raise poultry, pigs and dairy cows, which are clearly characterized by low efficiency. Only in a few cases in which the frontier has been reached, the likelihood of finding a trade-off between animal welfare and profitability is relevant. It is possible that highly technified poultry farming fits this scenario.
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