



Faunalytics' Research Priorities

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Inclusions and Exclusions

This document is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all research questions important to the movement, but rather a reasonable starting point with an emphasis on areas and questions that match Faunalytics' mission of **maximizing movement effectiveness by empowering advocates**.

Topics With Impact On All Areas Of The Movement

Faunalytics is unique among EAA groups as an organization with a strong focus on capacity-building. These “meta” topics related to capacity-building typically have a more indirect or long-term effect on animals, but achieve their impact through their wide applicability.

They are the highest priority for Faunalytics for two reasons: First, because they build capacity and connections throughout all areas of the animal advocacy movement, in line with our mandate. And second, because Faunalytics may be the best-positioned EAA organization to research these topics. The depth and breadth of our audience give us the resources and connections to research these topics effectively, to the benefit of the whole community.

1. Advocate and Movement Capacity

a. Maintaining Progress/Avoiding Backsliding

- i. What factors increase or decrease the likelihood that animal advocates will stay active in the movement? (Including individual characteristics and factors related to advocacy itself) Note that this question may need to be asked separately for paid employees and volunteers.
- ii. Are some types of advocacy harming the cause by adding to the entrenchment of the people we are trying to sway? How can we minimize the cultivation of “bad” advocates?
- iii. When are advocates leaving? (i.e., what point in their career, after what precipitating reason?)
- iv. How much turnover is there in the movement? How often are members of an organization leaving one job for another, leaving one job to create another, or leaving the movement altogether? Each of these types of turnover results in a loss of institutional knowledge, though some are more harmful than others.

b. Creating New Advocates and Addressing Talent Gaps

- i. Why do advocates join in the first place? Where do they come from, in terms of their profession and previous advocacy?



- ii. How do we attract a larger number of skilled people (scientists, economists, etc.) on board for animal advocacy work? What are barriers to entry? (E.g., the stigma of “preachy vegans,” low pay, a perceived or actual requirement to be vegan?)
 - iii. How do we attract new advocates from underrepresented communities (e.g., communities of color)? What are barriers to entry? (E.g., low pay, current lack of representation?)
 - iv. Can non-veg*ns be converted into farmed animal advocates or is it a near-inevitability that people will stop eating animals first and then work on behalf of their rights? If they can, will it eventually result in their becoming veg*n?
 - v. What is the best way of “on-boarding” new advocates who will support the rights and welfare of all types of animals? (e.g., starting with companion animals, farmed animals, animals used in science?) Are there circumstances when different orders make sense?
 - vi. Are vegans, vegetarians, and donors to animal causes the “low-hanging fruit” to become advocates, or do the barriers that have prevented them from becoming advocates thus far mean that omnivores who suddenly have an eye-opening experience are more tractable?
 - vii. How can we effectively encourage cross-pollination across different animal causes? (e.g., turn companion animal advocates into farmed animal advocates)
 - viii. How can we effectively encourage cross-pollination across different justice movements? (e.g., turn animal advocates into human justice advocates; turn human justice advocates into animal advocates, environmental justice, etc.)
 - ix. Would matching advocacy tasks to personal preferences increase the number of active advocates? (i.e., not everyone is suited for aggressive protest or, on the other hand, writing letters) If yes, which approach is best to identify the matches?
 - x. What animal rights issues are already appealing to political conservatives? How can we use those issues to build support in that group?
- c. **Increasing Decision-Making Effectiveness**
- i. How can we increase knowledge and acceptance of the need for evidence-based decision-making across all areas of the movement?
 - ii. How can we increase advocates’ and organizations’ focus on effective causes or high-impact areas?
 - iii. Create and validate a scale to measure willingness to advocate for animals. If we can publish a standardized scale for use in future



intervention studies, it may focus efforts on this high-impact outcome and also make different interventions comparable.

d. Quantifying the Value of Movement-Building

- i. Can we quantify the impact of one new animal advocate, considering both direct action for animals and second-order action taken by others they influence?
- ii. Is a larger number of advocates more essential for some cause areas (e.g., vegan outreach) than others (e.g., animals used in science)?

2. Increasing Donations to Animal Causes

a. Expanding the Movement's Donor Base

- i. How can we appeal to a more diverse group of donors?
- ii. How can we appeal to donors who give larger amounts? Which issue areas, approaches (e.g., legal, grassroots), and organization characteristics (e.g., credibility, reliability) are most appealing to them?
- iii. Do different appeals work best for current supporters (e.g., veg*ns) versus others (e.g., meat-eaters)? More specifically, is it possible to remove/reduce the aspects of appeals that make people defensive, thereby increasing donations from non-veg*ns?
- iv. How are donations to animal cause charities trending, both overall and by issue area? How are donors' priorities and criteria changing?
- v. Can we segment animal advocacy donors into types? What are the characteristics of each type?

b. Maximizing Appeal Effectiveness

- i. Which specific animal within each category (farmed, used in science, companions, etc.) is best to use in advertising? E.g., should farmed animal charities use images of pigs or cows?
- ii. What imagery or emotion elicits the most donations, or the most donors? (e.g., happy animal vs. sad animal vs. graphic image; sympathy, disgust, anger, happiness)
- iii. What other features of an appeal are effective in soliciting donations?
- iv. How does the cost-effectiveness of different appeal media compare? (Email, social media, print, etc.)

Topics With Impact On A Large Number of Animals

These topics, while applicable to only subsets of the animal advocacy movement, have the potential to affect a large number of animals, often more directly than the meta topics mentioned above. In terms of fit between the topics and the organization, Faunalytics is approximately as



well-positioned as other EAA organizations to research these topics. The exceptions to this are topics where another EAA organization is working directly on the type of campaign in question (e.g., corporate lobbying) and therefore probably has better insight and connections than we do.

3. Farmed Animals

a. Effectiveness of Current Major Initiatives

- i. How can campaigns build on one another effectively to create public support, while simultaneously avoiding any push-back due to perceptions of undue influence of interest groups?
- ii. Is there a difference between being exposed to graphic imagery with implied consent (e.g., choosing to watch a video) versus without consent (e.g., protesters with videos or signs)? I.e., is anger directed at factory farming or advocates; do people feel personally victimized?
- iii. How effective are major pledge campaigns (e.g., Challenge 22+, Veganuary)? Are there particular elements of those campaigns that increase or decrease their effectiveness?
- iv. Has the movement been interpreting a lack of evidence *for* individual advocacy as evidence *against* its effectiveness, despite the low quality of many past studies? Do we know whether individual dietary advocacy *can* work and be cost-effective?

b. Maintaining Progress/Avoiding Backsliding

- i. How can we effectively support new veg*ns in the crucial early months?
- ii. Can we match motivational tools to individuals' particular barriers in order to increase veg*n uptake and retention?
- iii. How can we effectively support and encourage reducers to continue toward veganism? How do we inadvertently lose them? (Overall and disaggregated by cultural and demographic criteria.)
- iv. Which reductarian asks produce the most maintenance and improvements over time than others (e.g., Meatless Mondays, an open-ended reduction goal)? (Overall and by cultural and demographic criteria.)

c. Maximizing Effectiveness of Corporate/Institutional Campaigns

- i. How ambitious can corporate campaigns be? (Public support vs. backlash for different asks)
- ii. Does welfare reform make people more complacent or more motivated?
- iii. What is the most impactful ask, taking into account any possible backfiring or substitution effects? (e.g., Meatless Mondays, promoting vegan dishes on menus)

- iv. How does telling people about different kinds of welfare reform affect their opposition to animal farming and their support for animal-free foods broadly?

d. New Campaign/Large-Scale Methods

- i. Can we show a link between first- or second-hand exposure to animal slaughter and PTSD or secondary traumatic stress? (E.g., in current/former slaughterhouse workers.) Social movements have previously seen a shift in public support once this connection is made.

e. Maximizing Individual Advocacy Requests

- i. What level/type of incremental ask produces the most change for which groups/profiles of people, taking into account both the number of converts *and* amount of reduction. E.g., “go vegan” vs. “be as vegan as possible” vs. “reduce consumption.”
- ii. How impactful are reducetarian messages that focus on small-bodied animals, taking into account possible lower uptake and/or resistance to them (e.g., conflict with health motivations)?
- iii. Apart from their perceived healthiness as foods, what are the biggest barriers to acceptance of messaging about not eating chicken and/or fish? (e.g., misinformation about sentience, perceived as very different from self)
- iv. Can health claims about eating chicken and fish be successfully countered? (E.g., with information about contamination or mercury levels)
- v. Are there specific ways of presenting fish and chicken suffering that are more successful with the general public than others?

f. Maximizing Effectiveness of Individual Appeal Characteristics

- i. How do consumption decisions emerge from the wider context of other social and cultural and global decisions (e.g. family values, environmentalism, peer pressure)? (Conjoint analysis of multiple factors)
- ii. What kind of normative information would be most helpful in encouraging dietary change? (e.g., info on the increasing number of veg*ns, increasing reducers, % of veg*ns whose diet is impure/attainable vs. pure/ideal?)
- iii. How is the number of vegans, vegetarians, and reducers changing over time in North America? (useful for creating norm-based messaging)
- iv. What imagery or emotion elicits the most behaviour change? (e.g., happy animal vs. sad animal vs. graphic image; sympathy, disgust, anger, happiness)
- v. Do documentaries build capacity for the movement by changing attitudes and behavior in impactful ways?
- vi. Does (farmed animal) humane education build capacity for the movement by changing attitudes and behavior in impactful ways?

- vii. Do farm sanctuaries build capacity for the movement by changing attitudes and behavior in impactful ways?
- viii. How can fish and chickens be portrayed in a way that elicits more concern or behavior change?

g. Plant-Based and Cultivated Meat Alternatives

NB. *These questions are adapted from the Good Food Institute's prioritization list (Szejda, K., Bushnell, C., & Asher, K., 2019) -- for more info, please contact [Keri Szejda](#). We generally defer to their expertise for identifying the areas of highest priority.*

- i. What are the consumer profiles that represent the best opportunity for targeted marketing of plant-based meat, egg, and dairy products?
- ii. How do consumers initially come into the plant-based products category, and how do they progress in category engagement?
- iii. In both retail and restaurant settings, what are the most important product features (by consumer segment) in a plant-based meat product? (e.g., dish, plant protein type, blended product vs. 100% plant-based)
- iv. What are the most effective communication strategies to use to accelerate consumer acceptance of plant-based meat? (focus on social norms, health, sensory appeal, a combination, etc.)
- v. How do free samples of plant-based foods impact purchases? (E.g., in-store sampling, offering a voucher for a plant-based option to someone who was not about to purchase it)
- vi. Early adopters segment for cultivated meat: Who are the innovators, early adopters, and early majority?
- vii. Which cultivated meat products do early adopters find most desirable?
- viii. What are the most effective communication strategies for leading the formation of public opinion about cultivated meat?
- ix. How can we encourage the purchase of plant-based options in stores and restaurants? (e.g., signage, placement, menu design, packaging, labeling)

h. Measuring Diet Change

- i. What are existing measures of effectiveness for individual advocacy, how accurate are they, and do we need to develop better outcome-based effectiveness measures? E.g., individual advocacy may create the pool of veg*ns of which a fraction later become effective advocates in animal organizations or successful entrepreneurs in alt-meat companies, with a large multiplicative impact.
- ii. Create and validate a scale to measure attitudes toward farmed animals. If we can publish a standardized scale for use in future intervention studies, it will make the effects of different interventions far more comparable.

- iii. Considering the impact of a range of intervention types on a single outcome (e.g., perhaps the scale noted in i above), which is most effective? Interventions should include videos, online ads, investigations in news, and more.
- iv. Across different programs, what are the dietary changes of people who sign and don't sign dietary pledges? (If we can produce a strong and reliable estimate using purchase data over time, signing pledges could be used as a proxy for diet measures in future research)

4. Wild Animals

- i. Are there specific domains of anthropogenic wild animal suffering that are more "sympathetic" to the general public than others?
- ii. Are there specific ways of presenting anthropogenic wild animal suffering that are more successful with the general public than others?
- iii. What are the motivations of people who currently support wild animals through species conservation action/donation? Can we appeal to them?
- iv. Are there any domains of wild animal advocacy that could cause a backlash against the broader movement if pursued too soon? E.g., insect suffering, natural predation?

5. Advocacy in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

Note: Any work in this area would be conducted in partnership with researchers from the countries being studied.

- i. What are the cultural associations and traditions of meat, dairy, and egg consumption in X country?
- ii. What are the culture-specific barriers to reducing animal product consumption? What are the supports?
- iii. How much of an understanding of the wide range of animal welfare issues is there in X country? I.e., should efforts start with education?
- iv. What (if any) plant-based meat alternatives are available in X country? How accessible are they? What are people's perceptions of them?
- v. What are meat consumption and reducetarian trends in X country?
- vi. How does intervention X translate from the US or UK or Canada to LMICs?



Topics With Clear And Immediate Impact

Because Faunalytics' original research is not tied to a particular client, stakeholder, or campaign, we are agile and able to address urgent movement needs when they arise. We will leave room in our research program for a few projects with quick turnaround and direct impact on high-level decision-makers. The best example of this type of project would be collecting data to support or refute an imminent debate on proposed legislation.

This section does not contain any specific topics for prioritization because they are, by definition, research questions that arise quickly and need to be addressed quickly (e.g., plant-based labeling laws, particular ballot measures).

Topics With Very High Impact Within A Limited Scope

This category is based on the principle that small amounts of research have high marginal utility in previously unstudied areas. That is, there is a qualitative difference between having zero empirical data on a topic and a small amount of data. Although we do not actively seek out projects that impact only a small group of animals, we allow a small amount of space (< 3%) in our program for basic research on topics that meet this criteria. In areas where advocates have no data at all, even small-scale, low-cost research can have a long-term impact for animals if it changes how advocates in that area approach a problem.

This section does not contain any specific topics for prioritization because we do not actively seek them out but will prioritize them on an ad hoc basis.

For example, a general population survey that provides advocates with social norms data about a wide range of specific issues, or research on community reaction to the opening of a new animal testing laboratory that could be used as a model in other communities.