

From: **Jonas Müller** <jonas.mueller@animalcharityevaluators.org>

Date: Fri, Jul 21, 2017 at 3:47 PM

Subject: Re: Continuing Concerns

To: Steve Hindi <shindishark@gmail.com>

Cc: Jon Bockman <jon.bockman@animalcharityevaluators.org>

Dear Mr. Hindi,

In the interest of the animals on whose behalf we all work diligently, we would like to address the core concerns listed in your last email and try to clarify what we believe is a misunderstanding. We hope we can continue to respect each other as allies in shared, compassionate aspirations going forward, and at the very least we hope you walk away from our correspondence knowing that we took your concerns seriously, regarded your intentions well, and have answered forthrightly. This is partly because of our respect for your work; moreover, it is because of our desire to work with other animal advocates to effect the most positive change possible.

Your criticism of our name seems to be about your assertion that we do nothing beyond review farm animal protection organizations, which is not the case. We not only review and recommend organizations beyond farmed animal advocacy, but we also study the effectiveness of advocacy strategies outside the scope of any individual cause. We may not recommend groups from *all* cause areas, but we do consider all work being done to help animals. Our goal is to help advocates and charities generally become more effective at helping all animals, not just farmed animals, and to help direct donations toward opportunities to help the most animals possible in the biggest way.

What we do is heavily informed by data-driven effectiveness research. Although it is not your intention, you are demanding that we compromise best practices and careful methodology for the sake of appearance, which we are unwilling to do. We are just as concerned about misleading people as you are, which is why we are completely transparent about our processes and go to such pains to explain everything that entails on our website and in discussions like this. Our site even features an [archive](#) where we explain the process for each individual round of evaluation in detail.

We do not doctrinally hold the belief that farmed animal advocacy is necessarily always more worthwhile than advocacy for animals in other situations; we recommend what the available information indicates to be the most effective use of funding. However, because of the state of agriculture, it tends to be the case that fighting factory farming, including aquaculture, is the most cost-effective way to help the maximum number of animals. You can find a detailed description of our thinking about cause prioritization on our site, a page which includes over 100 footnotes that detail the evidence we used to come to our conclusions.

We stand by our findings because, firstly and foremostly, we are confident they are the best indication of what helps to remedy the greatest systemic suffering of animals and, secondly, because we believe that the process of seeking and identifying high-performing charities is healthy for animal advocacy as a whole. It helps to instill donor confidence in giving to animal causes and helps advocacy organizations become more effective—all the better for the animals we want to help.

To your second complaint, we hope you will reevaluate the figures on which your grievance lies. As we explained on our call, we have conducted far more than the 21 reviews that you claim; in fact, the number is around 100, of which 48 are comprehensive and roughly 50 exploratory. Of those 48 comprehensive reviews, only 21 appear on our website because we have reviewed some organizations more than once (see our [review archive](#)) in order to remain current as organizations evolve. Some organizations have disbanded and others asked us not to publish our review, which we do because it is practical and because it is under those terms that organizations agree to be reviewed (if they ask us not to publish or to remove a review, of course they are not considered for recommendation). Each comprehensive review takes a great deal of time because our researchers, who match their expertise and training with tireless work, are meticulous and thorough. We publish our extensive [criteria](#) so that everyone can understand the many steps that we take when reviewing each organization. We create Monte Carlo quantitative estimates to examine the impact that a charity is able to have per dollar spent, which is a time consuming process not employed by most evaluative bodies. Our reviews are trustworthy, reliable, and meaningful for achieving change for animals in need—you can observe our level of detail in the footnotes that we provide in reviews of our Top Charities, which again often number greater than 100 for a single review. We are completely unwilling to sacrifice the quality and standard of our work for the sake of appearances, but as we grow we of course hope to produce more charity reviews.

Finally, we want to once again address your accusations about Nick Cooney and your concerns about a conflict of interest. We understand concerns about Mr. Cooney's association with some of our recommended charities—we realized some might suspect impropriety when we saw the results of our 2016 reviews—but the predetermination you accuse us of is simply false. We would not modify our findings for the sake of mere appearances, or for any other reason, given that doing so would itself constitute undue influence and void our mission.

ACE's mission entails finding maximally impactful ways to help animals on a per dollar basis. Currently, fighting factory farming is, on the whole, the most per-dollar cost-effective way to help animals who so desperately need so much help. The state of society and our agricultural system makes this the case, not us; you can find the reasons and explanations for this position prominently detailed on the [philosophy](#) and [process](#) pages of our website.

We search to find the charities that work to maximize their impact per dollar, and it is our understanding that Mr. Cooney also has a very similar goal when he chooses where to focus his efforts. We have independently come to a number of similar conclusions about the best way to achieve this goal. Mr.

Cooney is not alone in this regard. There are plenty of other similarly minded cost effectiveness focussed animal advocates who, starting with the same goals, have come to similar conclusions about what does the most good for the lowest cost.

We sincerely believe in our process, and compromising the integrity of our findings would mean compromising the animals, which we refuse to do. We stand by our work just as we stand by the animals, and that at least is a stance you must share.

Sincerely,

Jon Bockman and Jonas Müller