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Editorial: The Real Story of Milk

Welcome to this special edition of *Animal Studies Journal* in honour of animal studies scholar Deidre Wicks, who died before being able to complete her book on the dairy industry.



Deidre Wicks on the panel of 'Voiceless Rethinking: Dairy Cows', 2015
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5j6n2GqiYYI>

About a year after first meeting Deidre Wicks at an animal studies conference, where we heard each other's work and connected at a personal level, Deidre called to ask if I was interested in collaborating on a book about the dairy industry with her. Deidre's vision for the book was 'to uncover and elucidate key facts about dairy – facts which continue to hide in plain sight'. She followed up with an email outlining her ideas:

Hi Melissa,

I was happy to hear that you are open to the idea of the book. I would love to work with you – I totally trust your commitment and feel personally simpatico with you. I have been thinking about a wide-ranging publication that would have an overall theme of 'your milk: past and present'. People seem to think that because things used to be done

in a certain way that they continue to be done in that way: the production of 'our' milk being a case in point. People still think of milk as a non-harm product that is naturally there for us to drink and it is almost as though there is a wall between those of us who know the current reality and those who live in the past with an idealised view of dairy cows and their lives.

I see this project as one part of a many faceted array of interventions necessary to help create and then ride a wave of social change. The book could include work on historical dairying (i.e. insemination by a bull and sharing the milk with the calf); the transition to industrialised dairying; key welfare issues of both the cow and calf; land and water impacts of modern dairying; the importance or otherwise of dairy in the diet of humans and the possible role of dairy substitutes; the 'dairy economy'; the international interconnections, the marketing of dairy; legal issues. On transitions and alternatives for the future we could include interviews with dairy farmers. We could also include material on the sanctuary movement. It would be good to include artworks and photos.

I will be interested to hear your response. In the meantime, I remain, your faithful colleague.

Deidre x

At the time I was co-editor (with Fiona Probyn-Rapsey) of the *Animal Publics* book series published by Sydney University Press (now *Animal Politics*) and for various reasons we decided I'd work with her in that role on the book. We had numerous phone and email conversations about the book and often added in personal elements of our lives and our friendship deepened. On a number of occasions, I spoke to her while she was in hospital getting treatment; in the last few years before her passing Deidre was in and out of hospital. Ultimately, Deidre ran out of time to write and bring together the book she hoped could help make positive change for cows in the dairy industry.

After her death, with agreement and support from Deidre's husband, Emeritus Professor Roy Green, I decided to honour her vision for the book with a special edition of *ASJ*, inviting articles which align with the proposed themes she had outlined. I am very pleased to include work by a number of leading animal studies colleagues who knew Deidre and were keen to contribute articles which resonate with her research focus.

Special thanks to Ondine Sherman, co-founder and managing director of Voiceless, the animal protection institute, for allowing me to publish an updated edition of *The Life of the Dairy Cow: A Report on the Australian Dairy Industry*, an important report which Deidre worked on. Sincere thanks to leading animal lawyer Sarah Margo, and to Clive Phillips, the first professor of animal welfare in Australia, for the detailed work they have undertaken to bring the report, first published in 2015, up to date.

I would also like to thank Ruth Tapin, Editor of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Economics and Business Law (IJEBL)*. Ruth knew Deidre and Roy and was pleased to introduce me to Carys Bennett. Carys's article for this special edition builds on work she previously published in *IJEBL*. I invited reviews of two books that are not only relevant to this special edition but are also by writers/scholars whose work is outstanding. Hayley Singer's beautiful book *Abandon Every Hope: Essays for the Dead*, is a moving, confronting work which was shortlisted for the Stella Prize for Australian women's writing. Vasile Stănescu commences his review of Yamini Narayanan's book *Mother Cow, Mother India: A Multispecies Politics of Dairy in India* with the statement that the book is 'one of the single most significant texts written in the field of critical animal studies'. Both Hayley and Yamini's books are a must-read.

Finally, I have included work Deidre was able to complete on her book before her death; her Chapter Outline, Introduction and Chapter One. I also hope you will enjoy reading a previously unpublished short story by Deidre, 'Margot', about a calf she came to know when she and Roy lived in Ireland.

Deidre's research focus on 'silence and denial' and the concept of 'the passive bystander' in relation to the suffering of animals in general and in particular those used for food, including dairy cows, has made a valuable contribution to the field of animal studies; here is one of her key articles:

- 'Silence and Denial in Everyday Life – The Case of Animal Suffering':
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4552202/>

Deidre's contributions in animal studies also included innovative activism, conference papers, blogs and short media essays including:

- **Voiceless, the animal protection institute:**
 - <https://voiceless.org.au/a-life-of-quiet-suffering-the-dairy-cow/>
 - <https://voiceless.org.au/cute-baby-seals-and-kangaroo-pests/>
- ***The Guardian:***
 - 'My father loved racing greyhounds. He stopped because of the "dirty business".' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/15/my-father-loved-racing-greyhounds-he-stopped-because-of-the-dirty-business>
- ***The Conversation:***
 - 'With animals, like humans, we can hurt the ones we love.'
<https://theconversation.com/with-animals-like-humans-we-can-hurt-the-ones-we-love-31843>

From the moment I first heard her give a paper on the dairy industry I knew Deidre was an outstanding individual who was bringing her intelligence, passion, empathy, eloquence and charm to the field of animal studies. In the face of research which uncovers the immense and potentially overwhelming scale of the suffering, killing and extinction of other animals, brought about by humans, Deidre Wicks stands as a beacon of kindness and the urgent need for change, no matter how incremental.

Melissa Boyde
Editor

Contributor Biographies

Liza B. Bauer is the Scientific Manager of the Panel on Planetary Thinking at Justus Liebig University Giessen and coordinates the university's interdisciplinary research section 'Human-Animal Studies'. Her doctoral thesis engages with the potential of speculative narratives to foster cultural imaginaries for living well on an endangered planet and has received two dissertation awards; a revised version was published in 2024 under the title *Livestock and Literature: Reimagining Postanimal Companion Species* by Palgrave.

Carys E. Bennett is a plant-based food advocate and Earth scientist, with a PhD in palaeontology from the University of Leicester, England. At People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, she supports businesses to add more vegan options to their menus, and champion the sustainability benefits of plant-based food and drink. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation, Cannon Place, 78 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6AF.

Melissa Boyde is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Wollongong. Her research and curatorial work is in the fields of animal studies, modernist art and literature. Melissa is the chief editor and founder of *Animal Studies Journal*. For ten years, from inception, she was series editor with Fiona Probyn-Rapsey of the *Animal Publics* book series published by Sydney University Press, now *Animal Politics*. Melissa has been Chair of the Australasian Animal Studies Association (AASA) twice (2011-15 and 2019-20).

Nicola Evans is Senior Lecturer and Discipline Leader in Media and Communications at the University of Wollongong, Australia. She is co-editor with Guy Davidson of *The Literary Career in the Modern Era* and has published widely on cultural identity in film and literature for journals such as *Screen*, *Textual Practice*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Culture Theory and Critique*,

Discourse, and *Continuum*. Her current research focuses on nonhuman animals in literature and public discourse. She is the author (with Alison Rotha Moore) of 'Is there a Turtle in this Text? Animals in the Internet of Robots and Things' which appeared in *Animal Studies Journal* in 2019.

Heather Fraser is an academic social worker, and more recently an art student. Fifteen years ago, after an expose on live export, Heather's social work expanded to include animals and she now writes regularly on human-animal relationship issues.

Sarah Margo is an animal lawyer focussed on extending protections for all animals through legal practice and law reform. She currently teaches Animal Law at the University of New South Wales, serves as Principal Lawyer at the Animal Law Institute and as a Policy Advisor to the Honourable Emma Hurst MLC of the Animal Justice Party in NSW Parliament. Sarah previously served as Legal Counsel for Voiceless, the Animal Protection Institute, and as the first paid community animal lawyer in NSW with the Animal Defenders Office. She continues to work on law and policy reform projects as an animal law consultant.

Alison Rotha Moore seeks to build pathways for positive social change for humans (especially in health contexts) and other animals (especially those on farms) through linguistic inquiry. An edited volume (with Daniel Lees Fryer) on *Social Semiotics and the Animal Other* is due out in 2026.

Clive Phillips was Australia's first Professor of Animal Welfare, at the University of Queensland, and foundation director of the Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics. He received a BSc in agriculture from the university of Reading, UK, a PhD in dairy cow nutrition from the University of Glasgow, and a Master's degree from the University of Cambridge. He was a senior lecturer in animal production at the University of Wales, Bangor, and in Farm Animal Production Medicine at the University of Cambridge, UK. After retiring in 2020, he now holds

adjunct professorial positions at Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute in Australia and the Estonian University of Life Sciences. Clive has authored over 400 scientific journal articles, has led government reviews of scientific policy on animal diseases and animal nutrition, and chairs the Queensland government's Animal Welfare Advisory Board. His books include *Principles of Cattle Production*, *The Animal Trade*, *The Encyclopaedia of Animal Nutrition* and *The Welfare of Animals - the Silent Majority*. Clive is editor-in-chief of the world's leading animal science journal, *Animals*, and the new journal *Animal Behaviour and Welfare Cases*, as well as Springer Nature's Animal Welfare book series.

Fiona Probyn Rapsey is Adjunct Research Professor at Monash University, working on the ARC SRI 200200383 project 'Cultural Politics of Introduced Animals' with Lynette Russell. Fiona.Probyn-Rapsey@monash.edu

Ondine Sherman is an Australian author, animal protection advocate, and social entrepreneur. She co-founded Voiceless, the animal protection institute, in 2004 with her late father, Brian Sherman AM and continues as Managing Director. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney, specialising in sociology and Critical Animal Studies and holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies from Macquarie University. Ondine is the author of *Vegan Living*, the Animal Allies fiction series (*Sky*, *Snow* and *Star*), and a memoir, *The Miracle of Love*, that chronicles her journey raising twin sons with severe disabilities. She is Editor of *Animail* (Australasian Animal Studies Association), a Director at Thrive Philanthropy, and has served on the boards of various conservation and non-profit organisations.

Vasile Stănescu is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Mercer University (the United States). Stănescu holds a PhD in Modern Thought and Literature, with a focus on environmental rhetoric, from Stanford University. Dr. Stănescu is the co-founder and former co-senior editor of the Critical Animal Studies Book Series published by Brill/Rodopi Press, co-founder of the North American Association for Critical Animal Studies (NAACAS),

fellow of the European Association for Critical Animal Studies (EACAS), and former co-organizer for the Stanford Environmental Humanities Project. Stănescu's areas of expertise are in animal studies, food studies, media studies, and environmental communication. Dr. Stănescu has conducted research on locavorism, humane meat, lab-grown meat, the effectiveness of plant-based meat substitutes, and the ethics of the removal of invasive species. His current focus is on greenwashing, particularly in terms of climate change, by animal agriculture. Stănescu's research has been recognized by The Woods Institute for the Environment, Minding Animals International, The Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Culture and Animals Foundation, the Institute for Critical Animal Studies, and Institutul Cultural Român. Stănescu is currently a research scholar at the Climate Social Science Network (CSSN) housed at Brown University.

Nik Taylor is a sociologist working at the University of Canterbury in Aotearoa New Zealand where she is also co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies. Her primary research interest is in violence to animals, in all its forms.

Lynley Kim Tulloch is a Lecturer at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in the School of Education | Te Kura Mātauranga. With a background in educational and political theory, Lynley's teaching and research is focused on a commitment to relational, holistic and place-based ethics. Lynley's research spans a range of interconnected areas including critical animal studies, sustainability, education and animal rights activism.

Dinesh Wadiwel is Associate Professor in human rights and socio-legal studies at University of Sydney. He is author of *Animals and Capital* (Edinburgh UP, 2023), *The War against Animals* (Brill, 2015) and is co-editor, with Matthew Chrulew of *Foucault and Animals* (Brill 2016). Dinesh is also a disability rights researcher and was part of a team of researchers who have produced two reports for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Yvette Watt's artwork and academic research is heavily informed by her background as an activist, and reflects an interest in the relationship between how nonhuman animals are used and depicted in the visual arts and what this might have to say about how these animals are thought about and treated. Related to this is an interest in the role that art can play in engaging the viewer with social and/or political issues. Yvette has curated a number of exhibitions including *OktoLab19*, and *Reconstructing the Animal* for the 2011 Ten Days on the Island arts festival. Her work is held in numerous public and private collections including Parliament House, Canberra; Artbank; The Art Gallery of WA amongst others. Yvette is a co-editor of and contributor to *Considering Animals* (Ashgate, 2011). Other publications include 'Duck Lake: art meets activism in an anti-hide, anti-bloke, antidote to duck shooting,' in *Animaladies* (2018); 'Down on the Farm: Why do Artists Avoid Farm Animals as Subject Matter?', in *Meat Cultures* (2016); and 'Animal Factories: Exposing Sites of Capture', in *Captured: Animals Within Culture* (2014). Yvette has retired as Head of Painting at the UTAS School of Creative Arts & Media in 2022 and is enjoying focussing on reinvigorating her studio practice.

Deidre Wicks was an academic, activist and author who wrote on food, animal protection and health care. Her published works in the field of animal studies include: 'Silence and Denial in Everyday Life: The Case of Animal Suffering' (*Animal*); 'Humans, Food and Other Animals' (*A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite*. 4th ed. Edited by J. Germov and L. Williams, Oxford University Press, 2017), and co-author of *The Life of the Dairy Cow. A Report on the Australian Dairy Industry*. Deidre was an Honorary Fellow at the University of Wollongong, Honorary Research Associate at Newcastle University and an Honorary Research Fellow at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She was a Director and Council member of Voiceless, the animal protection institute.

Wendy Woodward is Professor Emerita in English Literature at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. She is the author of *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives*, Wits University Press 2008, and the co-editor, with Erika Lemmer, of a Special Issue of the *Journal of Literary Studies* on *Figuring the Animal in Post-apartheid South Africa* (2014). She is also co-editor, with Susan McHugh, of *Indigenous Creatures, Native Knowledges and the Arts: Animal Studies in Modern Worlds* (Palgrave 2017).