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Know about the dangers of heatstroke for your pet

Don't just walk past a dog left shut up in a car, even if the windows are slightly open, because its life will be in danger. Try to contact the owner immediately. If this is not possible, call the police and ask them to come without delay.

Cars heat up rapidly on even relatively mild days. A temperature of only 20 degrees will place a dog shut up in a car in danger. The internal temperature will rapidly increase, and when it reaches about 40 degrees, a dog's organs become damaged and begin to shut down. This can happen in a mere six minutes. Recent heat-waves in the United Kingdom and Canada have led to several incidents involving dogs enclosed in cars. Children should never be left alone enclosed in cars.

I recall when a lecturer colleague, who was a breeder of Boxer dogs, was called home urgently to a sick family member and left two Boxers in his car for just a few minutes. The car was specially aerated for transporting dogs, but the mechanism worked when the engine was on. He rushed out of the car, leaving windows slightly open. When he returned within a short time, both precious dogs were dead.

People often don't realise that dogs can be in danger of heat-stroke even when exercising. *The Conversation* reported recently that a five-year-old healthy dog had died after a 9 a.m. walk in north-western England when the temperature was only 21 degrees.

Short-nosed dogs of brachycephalic breeds are particularly at risk. Their nostrils and wind-pipe are narrowed, and extra tissue restricts air flow around the throat. Dogs need to pant in order to keep cool, but access to air is needed for panting. Dogs wearing muzzles are at huge risk. Dehydration and obesity are other dangerous factors. Records indicate that over sixty per cent of dogs who get heat stroke die.

Dogs who have been moved to warmer areas take about sixty days to acclimatise. Male dogs and dark-coloured dogs are at greater risk as they tend to become hot more quickly. Some airlines refuse to transport brachycephalic breeds.

People need to be aware of the danger of leaving animals or children enclosed in vehicles. Since one sees this quite frequently, teachers should also warn children about this danger. The education authorities need to realise that schools are ideally placed to pass on a great deal of vital information to children. This should be part of teacher training. Children should be taught how to inform on cruelty to people and animals and how seek help in a range of critical situations.

Farm animals need our protection

We keep saying this, but how many people are listening? To most of us, animal flesh ends up on our plates, and we tend to see meat as merely a product purchased in a plastic wrapping in a neat parcel in the supermarket or butcher. Yet free range meat can be purchased for a little extra, and we could keep the amount we pay unchanged by simply making our portions a little smaller. But we all know that is not going to happen.

We simply avoid thinking about what might disturb us. Yet if we viewed the entire lifespan of a battery chicken, we might be rather more concerned. It is disturbing that free-range chicken seems to become increasingly less available.

Yuval Noah Harari's book, *Homo deus,* which has become a global best-seller, makes the chilling statement that our treatment of farm animals in the factory farming system might well be the cruellest and most criminal of human actions. We can push

our qualms out of conscious thought by claiming that animals have limited consciousness or perhaps none at all. This is self-delusion almost without parallel since there is massive evidence proving the complexity of animal consciousness and revealing that animals in fact have many abilities that humans lack.

So what do we have to do? The attitude of the SPCA movement is lucidly made clear by the National Council of SPCAs: "The NSPCA is committed to improving the quality of life of these animals and ensuring that those that are farmed, transported and slaughtered are handled humanely and compassionately". By and large, humaneness and compassion are not primary or even major concerns of the factory farming system.

The NSPCA points out that it "covers areas where there is no individual SPCA" and that this relates to "approximately 70 per cent of South Africa". With individual SPCAs being mainly in urban areas, the 70 per cent covered by the NSPCA involves great deal of travelling, often to remote areas, and travelling involves heavy costs.

An inspector in the NSPCA's Farm Animal Protection Unit travels an average of 4,000km a month. They deal with farm animals hurt in traffic accidents while being transported, or left unnourished and waterless; they endeavour to stop the cruel conditions under which some farm animals are conveyed; they help animals suffering from veld fire burns; and they endeavour to keep an eye on farms where animals are bred for food or for their skins

The growing demands for the export of donkey skins to the East is a nightmare area for concern and is the result of a horrible superstitious belief that causes unbelievable cruelty. It we simply turn our faces away and refuse to think about it, we make ourselves complicit in what should be viewed as fiendish and unacceptable practices.

If you want to become an active participant in trying to reduce animal cruelty, support the work of your local SPCA, and if you want particularly to help animals in remote areas, go to https://nspca.co.za/donate/ for a secure payment method and use the reference "FUEL".

Charles Darwin said: "The love for all living creatures is the most notable attribute of man." When it is there, that is true, but it is often lacking. Educate your children. Demand support from schools. Talk about it.

This is something the SPCA movement strives to fulfil. The more generously members of the public donate to our resources, the more we are able to do for animals, whose love and trust so far exceed the treatment that is so widely meted out to them.

Can a moth remember what it learned as a caterpillar?

Anyone who is interested in speculations about evolution will be interested in Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic resonance, especially as Sheldrake is such an exceptional scientist, writer and speaker and explains so lucidly. Many interviews and talks are available on the Internet. Have a look, because they are truly important. They offer excellent material for school projects and enrich one's way of looking at the world.

In his book, *The Science Delusion,* Sheldrake looks at insects that undergo complete metamorphosis not only in changing the entire construction of their bodies, but also of their nervous systems. When a caterpillar morphs into a pupa, almost all its caterpillar tissues are dissolved before the structure of its new form begins to take shape.

I was watching a caterpillar chomping away at a leaf one day and asked an unanswerable question: "Do you know that you're going to be a moth or a butterfly one day?" And that sent me back to re-read exactly what Sheldrake had said.

Martha Weiss and a team at Georgetown University in Washington experimented to establish whether moths could remember what they had learned as caterpillars. They collected caterpillars of the Carolina Sphinx moth, *Manduca sexta,* and trained them to avoid the odour of ethyl acetate by linking exposure to this odour with a mild electric shock.

"After two larva moults and metamorphosis within the pupae", the adult moths were found to avoid ethyl acetate, even though their nervous systems had undergone such complete transformation.

The experiments were very strongly controlled to make sure that a real transfer of learning had taken place, and that the adult moths were indeed remembering what they had experienced as caterpillars.

This is an important experiment because it could add something important to the theory of evolution. "If the plants that moths have experienced as caterpillars influence the behaviour of adults, then the female moths will tend to avoid laying their eggs on harmful plants and will favour nutritious plants, even if members have never encountered these plants before." A species could be induced to develop new feeding habits in this way. The effects of habits form the basis of the theory of morphic resonance.

What is of particular interest is that extensive exploration, even with humans, has indicated that memories do not appear to be stored in material traces. Memories are often shown to continue to exist in cases where there has been substantial brain damage and where one would expect memory loss.

If you're interested, look up Rupert Sheldrake and morphic resonance and see how it could play a role in the transfer of learning in all species because of morphic fields formed by habits. We should always explore theories for which there is substantial evidence and that are produced by good minds. Read carefully. Keep an open mind and weigh the evidence for yourself.

One thing that is increasingly evident is that animal consciousness is much more complex than most of us realise. Instead of becoming addicted to social media, explore the worlds of creatures other than our human world and be filled with a sense of wonder.

All living species have consciousness and therefore an emotional field. Don't be put off by scathing mechanistic attitudes. Begin to observe all species in your environment and prepare to be amazed.