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# Frontiersman

*Facing the truth, however great the cost.*  
April 2004

## Man vs. Animals

Sam Aurelius Milam III

I intended for the article [Medicur](#), last month, to address the conversion of people's rights into privileges for the sake of a cause. I used the animal's "rights" issue because it's a good example and because the issue annoys me. However, responses to the article have been more about animals "rights" than about people's rights. So, I'm writing a little more about the animals.

One reader suggested that, ideally, food animals should have a chance to make informed choices about their futures. I have a little experience at watching animals make choices, but I haven't seen anything to suggest that they're capable of such abstract consideration of their options. When I left the farm for the last time, I went out to the fence to scratch Honey, my favorite goat, under the chin. She didn't have the foggiest notion that I was leaving her forever, even though I told her so.<sup>1</sup> I didn't have that conversation with Honey for her benefit, but for mine. Offering an animal a choice about its fate is a silly idea. People who advocate that sort of thing have been watching too many Muppet movies.

Domesticated animals do make choices. However, their choices usually involve simple and immediate things, like food. When a goat escapes from its pasture, it isn't making a bid for freedom. It's usually trying to get at the grass on the other side of the fence. Normally, such a stray doesn't wander very far. If it doesn't get lost, it will probably come back into its own pasture without human intervention. More likely, it will wander down the fence line until it loses track of the broken place and then

<sup>1</sup> ... and my vision didn't blur at all, not even a little bit. I think there was just a heavy fog bank that blew suddenly across the pasture, making it hard to see.

"beller" to be rescued. Such strays are happy to get back into their familiar surroundings, especially at feeding or milking time. If a stray becomes permanently lost, it might not last long. It could die from hunger, thirst, eating something that it shouldn't have eaten, falling into a hole, getting hit by a car, getting killed by a predator, drowning in a river, or some other such misfortune. Occasionally a dog or a cat might survive long enough to become feral, but even then it will usually lurk near humans and live on scraps. Unsupervised free choice is a dangerous thing for a domesticated animal. To the extent that they can choose at all, domesticated animals generally prefer the fold.

I've never yet heard an animal "rights" activist provide a general and unambiguous definition of animal's rights. Opinions regarding such "rights" are based on subjective assumptions and not on laws of nature. Someone who believes that an animal is being abused has two legitimate choices. One is to negotiate the purchase of the animal. After that, he can feed it on a silver platter and bed it on satin pillows for all I care. Failing to negotiate a purchase, he has only one other legitimate choice — mind his own business.

Personally, I believe that animals should always be treated with as much care and respect as possible, but I never forget that they're only animals — a source of beef, a source of milk, a source of eggs, something to pet or cuddle, and so forth. Whether or not somebody loves an animal is irrelevant to its legal status. I loved my motorcycle, but that didn't make it human. People who claim animals as equals might be ignorant or delusional. Maybe they lack the self-esteem to deal with people and so prefer the company of animals. Maybe it's something else. I don't know what their problem is, but I certainly don't want them using animals as an excuse to destroy people's rights. 

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[Frontiersman](#), 1510 North 22nd Drive, Show Low, Arizona 85901

April 2004

## Large Methuselah Supreme, Please

Sam Aurelius Milam III

For years now I've been listening to various versions of the food police trying to tell people what to eat or what not to eat. I've usually been annoyed by their conviction that they know better than anybody else, and better than me, what I should eat. I've repeatedly objected to allegations that some study proves their point. If I wasn't in a study group, then the results don't apply to me. Not only that, reported results are merely an average of a normal distribution of results. As justification for a mandate, an average result is as phoney as can be. However, when I heard an NPR report<sup>2</sup> about Pizza in a Bucket, I think I might have gone beyond annoyance and into amusement. It's become so absurd that it pretty much has to be funny. According to the report, the management of some pizza restaurant has decided that the Atkins low-carbohydrate diet is a threat to pizza sales. So, they're offering a pizza with all of the normal ingredients, except no crust. They call it Pizza in a Bucket. Wow. I just had to laugh. OK, variety and choice are good things. I

<sup>2</sup> KNAU, Arizona Public Radio, Wednesday, February 4, 2004

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## Poppa's Tree Test

Sam Aurelius Milam III

I've been thinking about the growing fears regarding genetically modified (GM) food. Whether or not such fears are justified, we should at least be precise in our terminology. Our fears aren't based on the fact that the food is genetically modified. All food is genetically modified. Our fears are based on the fact that some food is **artificially** genetically modified (AGM). Precision in terminology is an important virtue.

There are certainly advantages to AGM food but I don't know if the food is more dangerous or safer than traditional food. However, I can think of one way to make that determination.

I must briefly digress. The part of the country where I spent most of my childhood was, at that time, undergoing a long drought. Not much would grow there except weeds. Once, when I observed a plant that I couldn't identify, I asked my father if it was a tree or a weed. With his

don't object to another choice at the pizza place, but the panic over what we eat is getting a little silly. Maybe the shape of a pizza, circular, triggered something in me but I think maybe I've come full circle. The report brought instantly to mind one of my father's many poems. Here it is, a fitting epitaph to the food police movement (one can hope), as accurately as I can remember it from when I was a kid. 🐦

### Methuselah

Author Unknown. Quoted to me by Poppa.

Methuselah ate what he found on his plate,  
And never as people do now,

Did he note the amount of the calorie count.  
He ate it because it was chow.

He wasn't disturbed when at dinner he sat,  
Devouring a roast or a pie,

To think it was lacking in granular fat,  
Or a couple of vitamins shy.

He cheerfully chewed each species of food,  
With never a worry, or fears

That his health might be hurt by some fancy  
dessert,

And he lived over nine hundred years.

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typical wry wit, he said, "I don't know, son. Cut it down. If it grows back, it was a weed." His amusing suggestion had obvious disadvantages, but it contained a grain of truth. Weeds grew back. Trees didn't. If I cut down something and it didn't grow back, then I knew to protect that kind of plant if I saw another one like it. Poppa's Tree Test was a restatement of the old saying, "Good decisions come from experience. Experience comes from bad decisions."

OK, back to AGM food. We can pass all kinds of legislation, based on ignorance by the way, empowering the government to further supervise our lives and regulate our food. However, we already know that such government involvement won't improve the food. It might even make the food worse. It will certainly further erode our liberty. We know the government is dangerous, but is the food safe? Let's get the known villain (government) out of the picture, eat the food, and just see what happens. 🐦

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## Stray Thoughts

Sam Aurelius Milam III

Cause and Repression — The more worthy and legitimate a cause, the more repression will be tolerated in its name. Thus, when I complain of repressive feminists, repressive Christians, repressive animal's "rights" activists, and so forth, I'm actually in a backhanded sort of way giving each group a compliment. If the cause wasn't so worthy, then the repression that it could sustain would be insignificant.

Options — When I make a conclusive argument that you cannot successfully rebut, then your only legitimate choices are to either accept my position and change your ways or to live thereafter knowingly in error.

Abolish Testing — Drug testing is a violation of the presumption of innocence. 🦅

### Letters to the Editor

I ... strongly disagree with your view of "owning animals". To the extent that the animal has the capability for independent thought (and action) it owns itself in the same way that a human does. I believe that the "owner" is really more of a custodian/caretaker. Also to be totally morally correct an animal that is being raised for slaughter should be given the choice early on to either be free and fend for itself or to accept the care and feeding from the farmer but with it the fate of being slaughtered. There is of course the question of how it could be given an informed choice. —Sir John the Generous

*If a man doesn't own his animals, then anybody else has as much right to them as he does. Then, it isn't a crime to steal a horse. A man can't sell the milk from his dairy herd. He has to give it away to anybody who wants it, because he doesn't own it. If he does sell the products of his animals, then he's obligated to give the money to the animals. Cash fed cows. What an idea. Of course a man can own animals. They're property.*

*I will accept the idea that a man is the custodian of land. Long after the man is dead the land will still be there. It will be used by countless future generations, for millennia to come. Not so with animals. The animals won't last long enough to be passed on to future generations. I think that your assumptions lead to some very undesirable conclusions. I suggest that you rethink the assumptions.* —editor

Dear Sam:

... In regard to the [article about animal rights](#): It would be helpful to have a sentence in the first paragraph explaining who "Bouvier" is. Of course, I know, but there may be readers who have never heard of him. In regard to the ideas of the animal rights activists, ... they are extremely confused and inconsistent, because if animals should have the same "rights" (privileges?) as people on the basis that they are sentient beings, then it is wrong to have pets. If slavery is wrong for people, how can it be right to enslave animals as pets? It's interesting to note that there is one religion, Jainism, which does teach that it is wrong to harm any living thing. Logically, this precludes killing anything for food. Jains are not expected to fully follow the precepts of the religion until they are elderly and ready to die.

In regard to the [article on biometrics](#): State power is becoming increasingly entrenched because of the power mania of the few, and the cowardice of the majority. These atrocities couldn't be happening if people weren't allowing themselves to be terrorized by media tales that truly effect only a tiny percentage of the population. It's like people are more afraid of a paper tiger than a real, armed policeman. Also, I'm surprised that you didn't have a reference to your essay on identity — the one where you talk about what constitutes proof of identity.

—Sir Donald the Elusive

*Bouvier refers to [Bouvier's Law Dictionary](#). Some people regard it as the authoritative source of legal definitions. I use an 1889 edition.*

*The essay on identity is "[The Number of a Man's Name](#)". I'll provide copies upon request.*

*Regarding biometrics, I hope that you're resisting them in your own life.* —editor

[your March 2004 issue](#).... "I'm sometimes gay but I'm never homosexual". How about when you masturbate? Those are the hands of a male that are stimulating your genitals!

—unsigned

*I think it's generally understood that a homosexual relationship is between different people of the same sex, not between a man and his hand. I don't know if you're trying to be funny, trying to be a smart-aleck, if you're ignorant, or if you're intentionally distorting the definition. Whatever the case, your point escapes me.* —editor

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Nation in Distress

Another Waco Anniversary  
—  
Janet Reno Still Not Punished  
—  
Eleven Years And Counting



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### Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: Sir James the Bold, [Sir John the Generous](#), SantaClara Bob, Lady Jan the Voluptuous, Eric, of Represa, California, and Sir Donald the Elusive. —editor

### Buck Hunter Shoots Off His Mouth

Dear Buck

Do you like Mozart? —Music Lover

Dear Music Lover

My wife has a whole mess of Cuisinart stuff, but I ain't never heard of Mozart. Is it fer cookin'?

### Goofs

Original source Unknown. Forwarded by BLA, of Schertz, Texas.

- Police in Los Angeles had good luck with a robbery suspect who just couldn't control himself during a lineup. When detectives asked each man in the lineup to repeat the words: "Give me all your money or I'll shoot," the man shouted, "that's not what I said!"

- A man walked into a Topeka, Kansas Kwik Stop, and asked for all the money in the cash drawer. Apparently, the take was too small, so he tied up the store clerk and worked the counter himself for three hours until police showed up and grabbed him. ∞

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### Frontiersman

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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