

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## Who decides?

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Recently, my wife and I went to Mexico with some friends who have a timeshare in Los Cabos, arriving the day the community started celebrating its annual Fiesta. It was much like our state fair, with carnival rides, food areas, and booths with items for sale. But, one "attraction" was decidedly different. Each evening they had cockfighting.

I have read about this "sport," but I have never witnessed it firsthand. So, one evening our wives headed back to the hotel and my friend and I headed to the cockfights. They were held in a large, circus style tent in an arena surrounded by elevated seating.

The atmosphere was like you might imagine at a boxing event in Las Vegas. The cock owners sat on the front row with tables holding their drinks and their locked "rooster box." This box contained various supplies, including a few dozen prized fighting knives, each about 2 cm long and resembling the surgical steel of a scalpel. At fight time, one of the knives was wrapped to the back of one leg of the rooster. Each team would then bring in a second rooster to agitate and excite the one preparing to fight. Following this, the roosters were set about twenty feet apart and released on cue from the referee.

The betting on the fight was like nothing I had ever seen. A young man sitting in front of us

spoke English, educating us to what was happening. To place a bet you raised one hand while pointing to one of the two roosters with the other hand. You caught the attention of another spectator who raised his hand with fingers showing how many thousands of pesos he would bet with you. Both parties nodded and the bet was set.

Following each fight, ring officials roamed the stands, collecting and paying the bets, I assume keeping a percentage for the "house." The owners bet on their own roosters, often as much as \$2000 on a single fight.

The fights were brutal, bloody, and most lasted less than 2 minutes. The knives were lethal and performed their intended purpose well. As small puddles of blood formed on the dirt floor of the arena, people quietly cheered for their choice. The winner was the rooster that could still stand and move. The fight was not allowed to end in a draw and both roosters were severely bloodied.

When a winner was declared, the roosters were picked up gently and were respectfully carried out of the arena. Although both were usually alive at the end of the match, I suspect neither survived the evening. We never heard the announcer say, "And now two-time champion ..."

Is this an inhumane sport? Are these callous, uncaring people? The people I met at the fights were

no different from our own friends and neighbors, ordinary people enjoying an evening at the Fiesta.

But, not according to PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. It claims it is inhumane to eat or wear animals, to use animals for entertainment or experimentation, or to abuse animals in any way.

My parents were farm kids from eastern Nebraska, routinely going to the hen house and "ringing the neck" of a chicken for dinner. They also slaughtered hogs and butchered sheep. Were they inhumane?

And what about growing up in central Nebraska, hunting pheasants every Saturday during the season? When we got to a downed bird if it was not dead we "rang its neck" and hung it on our belt. If "ringing its neck" did not work, then we stepped on its head and pulled it off. We also hunted quail, ducks, geese, deer, and elk? Were we inhumane? I still hunt and fish. Am I inhumane?

In America pornography is considered freedom of expression. In parts of America euthanizing a fellow human being is death with dignity. In America aborting a human fetus is a constitutional right. In America cockfighting is illegal because of its inhumanity.

Who decides?