

# VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

*Animal protection around the world  
- who ranks best and worst?*

COMPARING

CRUELTY



## SUMMARY

The Voiceless Animal Cruelty Index (VACI), ranks 50 of the world's largest livestock producing countries based on the nature, extent and severity of farmed animal cruelty, whilst also considering the quality of animal protection laws within each jurisdiction. In addition to countries receiving an overall cruelty ranking, the VACI also ranks countries for three separate categories: **Producing**, **Consuming** and **Sanctioning** cruelty.

In this 6-minute video, we explore how the VACI evaluates three countries with varying rankings: Australia – the worst performer, alongside Belarus of all 50 countries, France – a moderate performer, and India – the top performer overall.

This video is part of the Voiceless *Comparing Cruelty* Animal Protection Education (APE) toolkit, providing teachers with a suite of classroom ready resources to introduce how animal cruelty can be measured and compared between countries. The *Comparing Cruelty* APE gives students the opportunity to think critically about what constitutes animal cruelty. By comparing animal welfare laws in addition to the production and consumption of animal products, students are able to critically evaluate the ways in which individual countries may contribute to farmed animal cruelty.

Voiceless encourages critical thinking, discussion and healthy debate. The video contains no graphic footage and is suitable for use in all high school classrooms for all ages and countries.

To explore the full 'Comparing Cruelty' Animal Protection Education (APE) toolkit, head to our website:  
[www.voiceless.org.au/schools/comparing-cruelty/](http://www.voiceless.org.au/schools/comparing-cruelty/).

For more Animal Protection Education (APE) resources: [www.voiceless.org.au/schools/](http://www.voiceless.org.au/schools/).

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Everyone has different ideas about what it means to be cruel.

Is it cruel to keep a dog permanently locked in a cage? How about a pig or a chicken, is it the same?

Even if we all agreed on how to define cruelty, it's tricky to figure out how we can best measure the ways a country contributes to **animal cruelty**.

One approach is to consider the laws and regulations protecting **animal welfare** in that country.

But this isn't the only way.

The Voiceless Animal Cruelty Index, or 'VACI' evaluates and ranks 50 of the world's largest livestock producing countries based on the nature, extent and severity of farmed **animal cruelty** in addition to taking into account the quality of animal protection laws within each country.

The index gives countries an overall ranking from 1-50, as well as rankings for three categories.

Producing, Consuming and Sanctioning Cruelty.

The first category, Producing Cruelty, ranks the number of farmed animals slaughtered each year for food.

The VACI found that; more than 77 billion farmed animals are slaughtered around the world every year for human consumption.

That's almost 211 million animals per day.

Or, 2,442 animals per second.

Now let's look at the consumption of animals or animal products.

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The animals used in the meat, egg, and dairy industries are mostly farmed on a mass scale in intensive industrial systems known as **factory farms**. These factories produce the highest quantity of animal products, at the lowest possible cost.

In **factory farms**, animals live in confinement, in cages, stalls or sheds, and struggle to find space to move. They often can't perform their natural behaviours like raising their young, or even playing.

**Factory farming** causes the greatest suffering to the largest number of animals globally.

The third category is the sanctioning of cruelty based on a country's social and cultural attitudes towards animals.

These attitudes are reflected in a country's laws and regulations.

Let's examine three countries. Australia - the worst performer alongside Belarus of all 50 countries, France – a moderate performer, and India – the top performer overall.

Australia ranks 49th out of 50 countries. Why does a country like Australia perform so badly?

Australia ranks 44th in the Producing Cruelty indicator because it slaughters around 28 land animals per person every year, almost triple the global average of 10!

Australia ranked last in the Consuming Cruelty category, consuming the second highest number of land-based animals in the world – after the USA.

In addition to domestic consumption, Australia is also a major exporter of live animals.

On average, Australia exports 2.5 million animals each year to countries around the world for breeding, dairy and slaughter.

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Australia received a relatively low ranking in the final category; Sanctioning Cruelty, due to its lack of national animal protection laws and failure to ban practices that cause pain and suffering to animals.

For example, Australian law permits hens to be confined in **battery cages** and allows painful procedures to be conducted without pain relief, such as debeaking chickens and tail docking piglets.

France ranks 22nd on the VACI.

France is a major producer of factory farmed duck meat, the largest outside Asia.

And cage production for egg-laying hens and the use of stalls for pig production has become widespread.

France slaughters around 16 land-based animals per person, per year – and, like Australia, this is higher than the global average of 10.

The French diet contains a high proportion of animal products.

And land-based animals make up around 59% of the average diet – much higher than the global average of 35%.

For Sanctioning Cruelty, France performs adequately.

However, whilst animal protection laws in the country are considered adequate, there are limitations due in part to cultural and legislative acceptance of a number of cruel animal practices such as the force feeding of ducks and geese in **factory farms**.

If Australia was ranked poorly and France is a moderate performer, who is doing well for animals?

India ranks 1st on the VACI – why?

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India slaughters around 2 land-based animals per person per year, a fifth of the global average of 10.

Vegetarianism is part of the major religious and cultural traditions in the country; Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, and around 23-37% of Indian citizens are estimated to be vegetarians.

Although India has some adequate animal protection laws, its legislation falls short of international standards in many areas.

For example, painful husbandry practices, such as dehorning and nose roping cattle are legal.

The VACI provides interesting ways of thinking about **animal cruelty**, and how **animal cruelty** can be measured and compared across countries.

The VACI can help us reflect upon the immense use of animals throughout the world, as well as think critically about the impact this may have on animals.

What do you think constitutes **animal cruelty**?

And what do you think countries could be doing better to protect animals from cruelty?

Consider the different views on this issue and decide for yourself where you stand.

Then discuss your thoughts with other people, because debating complex issues is healthy and helpful.

For more information and further resources visit [www.voiceless.org.au](http://www.voiceless.org.au).

Words in **bold font** are defined on the [Voiceless Animal Protection Encyclopedia](#) on the Voiceless website.

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