



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 30, 2020

Monkey Business: PETA Wants to Make Working Thai Monkeys Unemployed

They're just doing the jobs humans won't do — or, at least, can't easily do. But People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) isn't happy and wants these workers, Thailand's coconut-picking monkeys, booted from their jobs.

No, the issue isn't that the monkeys may serve a more useful purpose in this world than PETA does. It's that, claims the organization, they're abused. Thus is PETA encouraging retailers to discontinue merchandise with ingredients derived from monkey labor, and it has already convinced Costco to do just that.

In fact, "Costco follows Walgreens, Food Lion, Giant Food and Stop & Shop, who [sic] also stopped stocking brands of coconut milk including Chaokoh after PETA alleged that monkeys in Thailand were picking coconuts," [reports USA Today](#).

"No kind shopper wants monkeys to be chained up and treated like coconut-picking machines,' PETA President Ingrid Newkirk said in a statement. 'Costco made the right call to reject animal exploitation, and PETA is calling on holdouts like Kroger to follow suit,'" the paper continues.

The *New York Post* also [reported](#) on the story and included a PETA-generated video that does appear to show monkeys being treated poorly in Thailand. Yet there may be another side to this story, one that certainly wouldn't be presented by an "animal rights" organization that not only [insisted earlier this year](#) that "pet" is a derogatory term patronizing to the animal, but that people *shouldn't even have pets*.

Now, let's begin with the common ground shared by virtually all Americans: We're an animal-friendly culture, and while most of us do consume meat, we don't want to see our furry friends abused or caused unnecessary pain. And just to cut the leftists off at the pass, know that I love and respect God's entire creation and am the kind of person who will, when possible, even put insects outside rather than kill them (okay, you can call me a nut). Moreover, unlike Manhattanite PETA donors, I've actually spent ample time in the wilderness and don't just see it on the Bronx Zoo monorail.

But now let's consider what appears the other side of the monkey business. The 2010 video below features a coconut farmer and his prize-pupil monkey, which appears strong and healthy, as his acrobatic leaps from tree to tree attest.

The monkey hardly seems abused. And the farmer, who appears sincere, says at one point, "I love the monkeys like my own children."



Photo: Rangtheclick/iStock/Getty Images Plus



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Then there's the 2015 AP video below. There are no subtitles, but the pictures are worth a thousand words.

Then there's perspective, offered by a commenter under a WND.com [article](#) in a hundred words:

People have found uses for a wide variety of abilities in animals, and even industrialized societies use many animals for work. People use the strength of horses, elephants, and oxen to pull carts and move logs. Law enforcement uses the keen sense of smell of dogs to search for drugs and explosives, and others use dogs to find game or search for missing or trapped people. People use various animals—camels, donkeys, horses, dogs, etc.—for transport, either for riding or to pull wagons and sleds. Other animals, including dogs and monkeys, help blind or disabled people.

Of course, there must be some Thai coconut farmers who abuse their monkeys, just as there are miscreants who abuse camels, donkeys, horses, dogs, cats, and other creatures. This is wrong, but is misuse occurring in particular cases. It tells us nothing about whether using animals for labor is right or wrong in principle.

Make no mistake, either, PETA absolutely objects to it in principle. If the organization had its way, not only would everyone be vegan, but disabled people couldn't even have service animals. Moreover, consider:

- Attorney and animal advocate Nathan Winograd [reported](#) in 2014 that he debated PETA's attorney at the University of Virginia Law School, and the person said "that **animals were better off dead** and that shelters should do little more than kill them."
- Winograd also alleged in 2014 "that PETA has killed 29,426 animals in the last decade, [and] has been caught stealing animals [from pet owners] to put them to death." The group is said to have espoused the principle, "Better dead than fed."
- Common Sense Home [quotes](#) then-PETA Campaign Director Bruce Friedrich as saying in 2001 that if "we really believe that animals have the same right to be free from pain and suffering at our hands, then, of course, we're going to be blowing things up and smashing windows."
- Approximately 25 years ago, I personally heard a PETA representative say on the radio that a baby's life was no more valuable than a rat's. Yes, really.

The point is that PETA is a radical death cult comprising unhinged nuts. I don't know for certain how Thai worker monkeys are treated in general, but I do know that I wouldn't trust a PETA campaign's claims as far as a small primate could throw a coconut.

I also know that these issues are far more complicated than activist sound bites indicate. Consider big game "trophy" hunting in Africa. While seeing pictures of wealthy Westerners having shot a lion or rhinoceros understandably evokes an emotional reaction, their activities actually *help preserve species*. How?

Lion-reserve scientists in Africa have explained that their lands have a limited carrying capacity. Once their lion population exceeds that number, they have two choices: Either spend money culling the animals themselves — or let Western hunters bag the same number of lions at \$25,000 a beast.

The latter way, these reserves raise money that can be used to fund their endeavors and preserve wildlife. The amounts are significant, too; in fact, a [study found](#) that trophy hunters pumped \$11 million



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into Namibia alone in 2000.

As for Thai coconut farmers, forbidding the use of monkey labor might ensure that large companies, which can afford to automate, would dominate the business. And if this leads to greater impoverishment, is it possible that some poor Thais wouldn't be using monkeys for labor to survive, but would be eating them to survive?

If PETA had its way, animals would have no market value and, in many places, would be worth more dead than alive. Besides, do you think the happy primate in the video below should be done out of his job?

And, anyway, we all know you can't treat simians too shoddily without consequences. *The Planet of the Apes* taught us that.



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