



# SENTIENCE POLITICS

> POLITICS FOR ALL SENTIENT BEINGS

# About us

- › SENTIENCE POLITICS IS AN ANTI-SPECIESIST POLITICAL THINK-TANK.

We believe equal suffering should count equally, regardless of the external characteristics of the individual concerned, such as race, gender or species. That's why we advocate a society that grants moral consideration to all sentient beings. We use a rational and empirically grounded approach to achieve this goal.

**Anti-speciesism** is the rejection of discrimination on the basis of species membership.

**Sentience** is the capacity to have conscious experiences, particularly the ability to experience suffering. It's the only criterion for ethical consideration that includes all human beings (no matter their cognitive abilities) and which precludes arbitrary discrimination.

## ACTIVITIES OF SENTIENCE POLITICS

- › We produce high-quality, evidence-based policy papers
- › We run political initiatives to spread our message to broad audiences
- › We publish cutting-edge research in the form of academic papers and online articles
- › We organize events such as conferences and panel discussions
- › We provide careers advice and run workshops to help people find high-impact careers
- › We offer scholarships to promising students and researchers

# Effective altruism for all sentient beings

- › SENTIENCE POLITICS USES RATIONALITY AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING SUFFERING.

Our philosophy is based in effective altruism: the view that we should use our limited resources to help others in the most effective way possible. To do this, we work to identify the most effective leverage points for reducing the suffering of all sentient beings.

Leverage points are places in complex systems — such as the laws of a country or a field of scientific research — where a small change in one point can produce big changes in the entire system. By finding the

*If I am bound to do no injury to my fellow human beings, this is less because they are rational than because they are sentient beings; and this quality is common both to humans and animals.*

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**  
philosopher and writer (1712 — 1778)

right leverage points, we can greatly reduce suffering simply by using our limited resources in the right way.

*The question is not,  
Can they reason? nor,  
Can they talk? but,  
Can they suffer?*



**Jeremy Bentham**  
*philosopher and legal scholar (1748 – 1832)*



# Plant-based diet

## > SENTIENCE POLITICS PROMOTES PLANT-BASED FOOD THROUGH POLITICAL INITIATIVES.

Factory farms and slaughterhouses cause intense suffering to billions of sentient individuals every year. Moreover, animal agriculture is a major contributor to climate change and resource inefficiency.

For these reasons, Sentience Politics has launched several “popular initiatives” in Switzerland deman-

ding daily plant-based options in all public canteens. For the first time in history, about 500,000 Swiss citizens will be able to take a binding vote on a pro-vegan initiative. As the popular debate around our initiative demonstrates, one of the main advantages of our political approach is that we can spark large-scale societal debates with very little effort.

### **The strongest argument for a plant-based diet**

- I. We should not harm animals unnecessarily (cruelty to animals).
- II. The consumption of animal products harms animals.
- III. The consumption of animal products is unnecessary.
- IV. Therefore, we should not consume animal products.

# Cultured meat

## > DEVELOPING CULTURED MEAT IS A POTENTIALLY HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEVERAGE POINT.

Large scale dietary change to a plant-based diet may be difficult to bring about. But in the coming decades, we may see cultured meat replacing conventional meat production.

This means cultured meat, together with cultured eggs and cultured milk, have the potential to solve the problem of factory farming entirely — and without requiring a large-scale change in dietary habits. Moreover, by removing the need to rationalize meat consumption, these technological fixes could also facilitate a change in popular moral attitudes towards animals.

Sentience Politics outlines the benefits of cultured meat in a position paper, and calls for more public and private funding for research on cultured meat.



*Cultured meat is created by growing stem cells in a medium. It offers a way towards the consumption of real meat that does not cause suffering to sentient beings.*



*To give preference to the life of a being simply because that being is a member of our species would put us in the same position as racists who give preference to those who are members of their race.*

**Peter Singer**  
philosopher

# Basic rights for primates

> SENTIENCE POLITICS CONDUCTS CAMPAIGNS DEMANDING BASIC RIGHTS FOR ALL PRIMATES.

If we aspire to help as many non-human animals as we can in the long term, we need to change the speciesist attitude of our society, not just its current eating behaviour. One promising way to challenge society's speciesism is to obtain basic rights (particularly the rights to life and integrity) for non-human primates. Although these legal protections would only benefit a small number of individuals now, they may be critical in shaping how future generations view all non-human animals. Once their legal status changes, non-human animals will be perceived differently, and it will be easier to extend



*Denying an individual's rights based solely on external criteria like species membership is a form of arbitrary discrimination.*

rights to other species. This will in turn help the trillions of animals who will come to exist in the future.

Moreover, granting non-human primates basic rights has the potential to spark societal and academic debate about anti-speciesism outside the polarizing context of people's everyday food choices.

# Further topics

> WE INCLUDE ALL SENTIENT BEINGS IN OUR CIRCLE OF EMPATHY, EVEN AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE USUALLY NEGLECTED.

Consistent altruism for all sentient beings encompasses not only farm animals, but also wild animals. We're all familiar with the idea of nature as an idyllic place, but this romanticized view conceals the fact that trillions of wild animals suffer intensely due to starvation, disease, parasitism and predation.

Sentience Politics is also aware of the possibility of future **digital sentience**. It remains to be seen whether and when it will be created, but if digitally sentient beings come into existence, they too deserve equal moral consideration.

*In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's everyday performances.*

**John Stuart Mill**  
*philosopher and economist*

Since wild animals are no less ethically important than other types of animals, we aim to reduce wild animal suffering. However, the complexity of ecosystems warrants a cautious approach. At present, we focus on conducting research and raising awareness of wild animal suffering.



*Nothing is more  
powerful than an idea whose  
time has come.*

**Victor Hugo**  
writer (1802 – 1885)

# Effective giving

- › DONATING TO EFFECTIVE ANIMAL CHARITIES COULD BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOING VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN.

A natural first step in helping non-human animals is to adopt a plant-based diet. We believe this is very important. But the sheer scale of animal suffering means that it's crucial that we alleviate it in the most cost-effective ways open to us.

That's why we believe effective giving is essential. By donating significant amounts of money to the best organizations, we can save far more animals than we would directly con-

*Counterintuitively, you can save many more animals with your wallet than with your plate. Empirical data shows that when we decide whether and where to donate, much more is at stake than with our food choices.*

**Adriano Mannino**  
*philosopher and co-founder of Sentience Politics*

sume ourselves. This is because donations fund activists at NGOs to persuade lots of people to make more animal-friendly food choices.

*Consequently, an increasing number of effective activists are pursuing **earning to give** as a career. They deliberately take up lucrative jobs – not in order to get rich, but in order to donate a large fraction of their earnings to effective NGOs, where their donations can enable several full-time jobs.*

# Meta-strategies

- › SENTIENCE POLITICS PURSUES META-STRATEGIES THAT MAY BE PIVOTAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE ANIMAL MOVEMENT.

Meta-strategies try and multiply our impact by working on a higher level. Instead of helping directly, they enhance the animal advocacy movement's capacities first, for greater leverage later on. This allows us to use our resources to maximum advantage. Meta-strategic approaches that have huge potential include:

- › *Encouraging a culture of effectiveness in animal organizations.*  
Sentience Politics encourages both organizations and donors to use their limited resources in the ways which will have the greatest possible positive impact.
- › *Improving the funding situation:*  
One of the main barriers facing the animal advocacy movement is simply a lack of funds. So it's strategically crucial to spread ideas such as effective giving and earning to give within the animal advocacy movement.
- › *Effective movement-building:*  
Creating new effective activists may be even more important than creating new vegans. Sentience Politics therefore offers career workshops and scholarships to young academics and professionals working as effective animal advocates.

## SUPPORT US WITH YOUR DONATION!

By donating to Sentience Politics, you are casting your vote for a society where the interests of all sentient beings have full moral and political consideration, regardless of species membership. We're bringing this about by considering every possible strategy — from helping the existing animal advocacy movement, to finding new ways of attacking old problems. Our focus on rationality and evidence means we can find and implement the best of these strategies as quickly and effectively as possible.

Visit our website:

➤ [www.sentience-politics.org](http://www.sentience-politics.org)

Get in touch:

➤ [info@sentience-politics.org](mailto:info@sentience-politics.org)

This is only possible due to our fast-growing community of supporters and volunteers. We hope you can join us. To keep up-to-date with the latest ideas in making the world a better place for all sentient beings, like our page on Facebook or sign-up to our mailing list. And to become part of the community that makes world-changing ideas a reality, please support us with your donation today.

**Thank you for your interest and generous support!**

### Bank account

Recipient: Effective Altruism Foundation,  
Efringerstrasse 25, CH-4057 Basel, Switzerland

IBAN CHF: CH67 0023 3233 1775 4501 N

IBAN EUR: CH20 0023 3233 1775 4560 D

IBAN USD: CH79 0023 3233 1775 4561 F

IBAN GBP: CH08 0023 3233 1775 4562 T

BIC/SWIFT: UBSWCHZH80A

Note: "Sentience"