For years, animals have affected how humans live. Animals have versatile uses in our society. They provide companionship, food, and clothing. Animals are vital to all of us, no matter where we live in the country. The animal industry is not only important but also large and thriving.

Objectives:

1. Define the animal industry and its important areas.
2. Describe uses of animals.

Key Terms:

- animal industry
- animal marketing
- animal processing
- animal production
- animal services
- animal supplies
- livestock
- mutton
- beef
- companion animals
- pork
- draft animals
- poultry
- lamb
- veal

The Animal Industry and Its Important Areas

In response to public demand, many products and services have emerged to assure that animals receive the care that promotes their well-being and livelihood. Whether raising an animal to maturity for its meat value or caring for a pet, we must recognize that animals are unique and require a great deal of care and assistance for optimal health and value. The animal industry is all the activities in producing animals and their products or benefits to meet the needs of people. These industry activities strive to catalyze animal production for maximum
human benefit. With these activities, the animal industry has expanded to become very broad as well as vast. The animal industry is broken down into three major areas: production, supplies and services, and marketing and processing.

**PRODUCTION**

The **animal production** area of the animal industry primarily produces animals for food and other uses. Animal production enterprises vary greatly in size and shape because of the nature of production, owner interest, and the technology available. Production livestock might be raised on large, open-range ranches. Niche animals might be raised on a smaller scale—for example, ornamental fish in aquariums.

Animal production may be divided into categories, such as large animal, poultry, companion animal, and so on. These groupings emerge based on differences in production value, feeding, and housing. Large animal production generally focuses on **livestock**, which is mammals produced on farms and ranches for food and other purposes. Animals commonly associated with this production type are cattle, swine, sheep, horses, and goats. In recent years, a variety of new species also have emerged in this production type—for example, elk, llamas, bison, and deer.

**Poultry** (bird) production deals strictly with fowl produced for food and other purposes. Specific needs for feed, housing, and disease control must be met to maintain optimal health. Poultry is produced not only for meat but for eggs and feathers as well. Chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese are widespread species established in poultry production, while quail, ostriches, and emu are species that are increasing on production farms around the country.

On a smaller scale, companion animal production deals with animals used solely for fun and friendship by humans. **Companion animals** are commonly known as pets. Animal species often associated with this type of production are dogs, cats, rabbits, fish, hamsters, and ferrets. In addition, companion animal production offers services for municipal purposes and for individuals whose vision or hearing is impaired.

Other animal production farms are devoted to laboratory animals, exotic animals, and food fish.

**FIGURE 1. Turkey production has increased in recent years due to demand for healthy meat choices. (Courtesy, Agricultural Research Service, USDA)**
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

In the supplies and services area of the animal industry, animal supplies provide the goods and products needed to produce animals. These typically include products from dealers or agribusinesses. Feed, pens, medicines, and trailers are examples of common animal supplies. Animal services provide professional and technical assistance to producers. Professionals in this area might often travel from farm to farm or offer assistance online or by phone. Examples of such professionals are sheep shearers, veterinarians, and farriers.

MARKETING AND PROCESSING

The last category of the animal industry is the marketing and processing area. Animal marketing assures consumers of animal products in demand. At this stage, an animal product moves from the producer to the consumer. This stage includes transportation, grading, selling, and inspection.

Animal processing is characterized as the preparation of animals for consumption or human use. This stage is closely linked with marketing but is altered based on functionality of the product. For instance, pork and beef can be processed into a variety of cuts of meat. After being attractively packaged to maintain quality, these cuts are delivered to the local grocer.

Uses of Animals

Our society uses animals for food, clothing and ornamentation, companionship, work services, research, and environmental functions. Often animals are killed to obtain their products.

From cattle to fish, animals produce products for human consumption that vary with the kinds of animals and their ages. For example, veal is the meat of cattle younger than three months of age, whereas beef is the meat of cattle three months of age or older. Lamb is the meat of sheep less than one year of age, whereas mutton is the meat of sheep one year of age or older. Pork is the meat of swine.

Another use of animals by humans is for clothing and ornamentation. Many animals provide products used for clothing, buttons, and jewelry. For example, sheep provide wool, and oysters provide pearls.

Many animals are simply used for their companionship. Companion animals, or pets, are animals kept long term by humans for their enjoyment.

FIGURE 2. Companion animals play vital roles in relationship building. (Courtesy, U.S. Department of Agriculture)
Also, animals are used for the services they can provide. **Draft animals**, like horses, buffalos, and mules, are animals kept for pulling and working with heavy loads. Other animals guard property, herd other animals, and assist people whose vision or hearing is impaired.

Another use of animals can be quite controversial but is responsible for advances in production and technology. Animals are often used to test products that benefit humans, such as cosmetics, medicines, and health-care products.

Moreover, animals are important to the environment because they play niche roles in the ecology of the earth. They help clean the environment, such as by eating dead animals, or they serve as food for other animals in the food chain.

**Summary:**

The animal industry is a broad and diverse industry that encompasses production, supplies and services, and marketing and processing. Animals greatly affect our society, which depends on their products and services to survive. Animals provide a variety of uses, such as food, clothing and ornamentation, companionship, work services, research, and environmental functions.

**Checking Your Knowledge:**

1. What is the animal industry?
2. What are the main areas of the animal industry?
3. What do we call an animal kept for personal enjoyment?
4. What do we call the meat of a beef animal that is less than three months of age?

**Expanding Your Knowledge:**

Look around your room and identify animal products. Do you see products from sheep, cattle, or pigs? Set up three columns on paper or on your computer. In the first column, name each product. In the second column, identify the animal connected with it. In the third column, cite the area the product is most closely associated with in the animal industry.

**Web Links:**

- The Role of Government in the Animal Industry  
  [http://www.ag.state.co.us/animals/animals.html](http://www.ag.state.co.us/animals/animals.html)

- Draft Animals  
  [http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/AppalFor/draftl.html](http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/AppalFor/draftl.html)

- Animal Production Practices and Marketing  