

Lifetime Protection For Domesticated Animals

Ministry of Agriculture

Notes from Mayapur 1984

Two principles were endorsed by the G.B.C. this year which directly concerned ISKCON farms. I wanted to briefly explain these as a prelude to future articles in which the different aspects of these principles will be discussed in detail.

The first principle is that domesticated farm animals who have come under our protection should not be given away or sold outside of ISKCON. This came up because, over the short history of ISKCON, a notable number of farm projects, ailing due to lack of manpower or funds, have, in the name of "practicality," had to seriously consider this issue. The point of this resolution is to clarify where the bounds of our responsibility lie.

In this age we can know for sure that if the ultimate destination of the animal is unknown, the animal will most likely end up getting slaughtered. This includes horses, sheep, cows and bulls, and any other domesticated animals. Even if someone promises never to kill a cow, he may change his mind or sell the offspring when they are born later on.

We cannot take that risk, saying that we are not responsible, and turn our heads. It is not within our jurisdiction to make that decision. Srila Prabhupada made it clear that the decision has already been made by Krsna, and "practicality" is no excuse.

The way out of this predicament is sought in the second resolution which says the Minister of Agriculture should be consulted before purchasing land and animals in order to guard against ill-advised, whimsical acquisitions that will end in disaster. This points to the gravity of the situation. Great caution and all good advice should be taken before accepting dependents. Some criteria for this decision are:

1. Qualified manpower.
2. Adequate land.
3. Adequate facilities.
4. Adequate resources to maintain the program.
5. Realistic plans for expansion.

Prior to acquisition, either myself or a local representative of the Ministry of Agriculture should report on these criteria to the local G.B.C. or his agriculture committee. A long-term expansion plan can be endorsed in this way; not that every little expansion will get bogged down in bureaucracy.

Paramananda dasa

ISKCON Minister of Agriculture

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