



February 24, 2014

Wayne M. Perry  
President  
Boy Scouts of America

Dear Mr. Perry:

I'm writing as a former Boy Scout on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 3 million members and supporters—many other scouts and Girl Guides among them—regarding [disturbing reports](#) that a Boy Scout leader recently killed and cooked two rabbits in front of a group of children and that the regional director defended this callous and needless display as not being against your policy. We urge you to review the Boy Scouts of America's policy immediately, for as you know in other contexts, what was once socially acceptable has changed a great deal over the years.

Bludgeoning rabbits who have been purchased from a breeder in front of children may have been somehow "thrilling" for the scout leader, but such a gratuitous act of violence forces compassionate children who would otherwise never needlessly or willingly harm an animal to participate in acts of cruelty and violence or else be excluded from their social group. It teaches vegetarian or vegan children that they are "different" and that there is something wrong with their parents' counsel. We must also wonder what the psychological repercussions will be for the children who witnessed this violence.

There are, of course, myriad resources available to teach scouts how to survive in the wilderness on plant-based foods. For example, the well-respected naturalist and outdoor enthusiast Euell Gibbons wrote excellent guides to finding and gathering the "natural health foods that grow wild all about us" and which "can turn every field, forest, swamp, vacant lot and roadside into a health-food market with free merchandise" for all.

Sociologists and criminologists agree: The link between cruelty to animals and violence against people is undeniable. Allowing this kind of activity to occur puts children at risk by teaching them that it's acceptable to hurt others who are different or smaller than they are—not a lesson that the Boy Scouts would wish to promote, I'm sure.

With all due respect, we ask that you no longer permit scout leaders and other adults to teach children to kill animals. We are also happy to offer free humane-education resources through our TeachKind division. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Montville  
College Campaign Coordinator

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OF ANIMALS

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