

Dr. Michael K. Schulz

**The Life and Death of the Livestock between Science, Economy and Animal Protection
in Central Europe from 1850 to 1950.**

The goal of my habilitation thesis is to show how the developments of the modern era affected the relations between humans and animals and the conditions in which livestock were kept. Three phenomena act as reference points through which I intend to reach my research goal. Firstly, modern sciences, such as biology, zoology, veterinary medicine, and animal psychology – known today as ethology – brought a new understanding of animals and their needs. These findings were increasingly acknowledged in society and they circulated along with other forms of knowledge. Secondly, the rationalization of the economy and the market orientation of the agriculture sector shaped a meritocratic view on animal husbandry. Ideally, the input of resources now had to match the desired outcome, be it the production of grain, vegetables, or milk and meat. Thirdly, the animal protection movement grew rapidly from the late 19th century onwards. It introduced new moral concepts to animals husbandry, which were either voluntarily accepted by the livestock owners and keepers or enforced by the police.

By focusing on the period from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, the project pinpoints the transitional phase from long-established animal husbandry as an element of a circular economy to the mechanized, mass production of animal-based products in largely industrialized facilities, which have endured in Europe until today. The geographical scope is Central Europe, which mostly includes Germany today and the former Prussian provinces of Poland. This allows me to examine the developments in various types of rural environments: from small-scale agriculture in South-Western Germany, through the predominantly middle and large-sized farms in Northern Germany and Bavaria, to the East Elbian latifundia owned by the Prussian landed gentry commonly known as junker. As the main suppliers of milk, meat and energy, three species constitute the focus of the research: cattle, pigs and horses.

Apart from analyzing the impact that science, economy and animal protection movement had on the concept of animal husbandry, the project examines the living conditions of the livestock from birth to death. Within various stages of their lives, I ask more or less similar questions. Did the animals have the possibility to interact with other representatives of their or other species? How far were they able to satisfy their natural needs? How did technical improvements, such as new harnesses, plows, stunning methods, railroads or trucks, influence the animals' living conditions? What measures were taken to avoid cruelty and how they reflect the social stratification of the population (middle and working classes, peasantry)?

The relevance of the project is foremost an integration of livestock into the general social history of Central Europe. It gives new insights into human-animal relations in the modern era on a broad source basis and with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. The project reflects the post-human approach in historiography, but above all, it makes use of traditional methods of historical research and concerns at least as much the lives of humans as it does the lives of animals. As such, the thesis not only focuses on the field of historical animal studies, but it also aims to contribute to social and economic history, as well as to some extent to moral and agricultural histories and urban studies.