

United Poultry Concerns

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Battery-Caged Chicken Houses Under Rapid Fire

UPC President Karen Davis published the following letter in the Dec. 8, 2005 edition of the *Minnesota Daily*, the University of Minnesota's student newspaper, in response to an article by Jason Ketola: "See the horrors of battery cages: The push for UDS [University Dining Services] to carry cage-free eggs offers an opportunity to reassess relationships" (<http://www.mndaily.com/articles/2005/12/05/66462>).

The University of Minnesota Student Association is considering a cage-free egg initiative. According to a related article on Dec. 6, "More than 70 colleges in the U.S. already have switched from battery-cage eggs to cage-free eggs, and there is growing student support here for the University to make just such a switch, as can be seen in the recent news in coverage and opinions expressed in the Daily." (See "After real dining hall solutions to problems-MSA is looking seriously at affordable cage-free egg options" by Donny Mansfield. (<http://www.mndaily.com/articles/2005/12/05/66465>))

OPINION

December 8, 2005

Letters to the Editor

<http://www.mndaily.com/articles/2005/12/08/66512>

See the difference

Karen Davis

Thank you for the Dec. 6 column "See the horrors of battery cages" by Jason Ketola. Ketola brings out so much that needs to be said but, as he says, caring about suffering animals, especially farmed animals, is largely taboo in our society. Still, this is starting to change, thanks to Compassionate Action for Animals and others like Ketola himself.

I've been inside many battery-cage hen houses. They are terrible places. The very young hens are jumping all over each other in the cages. Even worse is seeing the birds who have been caged for months. It's like they've given up. They don't even respond to stimuli.

Their combs are doughy and white and hang over their faces. Dust, dander and other debris float visibly in the air, and droppings encrust and drip through the bars. The houses are so full of excretory ammonia fumes you can't stand the burning sensation in your eyes, throat and chest. To suggest that these houses are hygienic is absurd.

Fortunately, there's a ton of science showing that chickens are miserable in cages. If anyone doubts this, come see our former battery-caged hens in our yard. In less than a month, you'd never know they were the same birds! Even their doughy white combs become vibrant again. Pretty soon they're scratching away in the dirt, chomping on greens, sunning themselves and running around the way nature intended – it's all right there in their genes.

Thank you for the great article.

Karen Davis

President of United Poultry Concerns