

Factory Farming



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Working to reduce the suffering of
animals raised for meat, eggs, and milk



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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Humane Society International Applauds European Commission's Decision to Keep Ban on Barren Battery Cages

January 8, 2008

Humane Society International applauds the European Commission's landmark decision today to ban barren battery cages as scheduled. The highly significant move for animal welfare shows the intensive farming lobby that public opinion matters.

The European Commission rejected calls by industry lobby groups to delay the ban and instead responded to the wishes of European Union citizens. Some EU member states and some egg industry officials fought for postponement of the ban. Adopted in 1999, The European Union Laying Hens Directive prohibits the use of conventional battery cages beginning Jan. 1, 2012.

"The confinement of egg-laying hens in battery cages is among the most cruel and inhumane practices in the world of factory farming. It's heartening to see the European Commission rejecting calls for a postponement of the 2012 ban. Congratulations to the European citizens and animal advocacy groups who have supported the 2012 ban," said Wayne Pacelle, The Humane Society of the United States' President and CEO.

The European Commission's surveys confirm that the majority of EU citizens are willing to "pay more for eggs from a system that is animal welfare friendly" and that they would be "willing to change their usual place of shopping" in order to buy animal welfare friendly products. The LayWel scientific research project, co-financed by the EU, confirmed that barren battery cages are fundamentally problematic for animal welfare.

In the 27 member countries of the EU, more than 200 million hens are confined in battery cages -- tiny pens that constrict their wings and movement. The animals live out their lives in noisy and cramped conditions and never lay eggs in nests. While the 2012 ban will still allow so-called enriched cages to be used, it is an important step toward a total ban of cages for laying hens.

In the United Kingdom, supermarket chains Marks and Spencer and Waitrose have already stopped selling eggs from caged hens, and Sainsbury, Morrisons and the Co-op have also announced plans to phase out the sale of battery eggs. In the U.S., major food retailers such as Wolfgang Puck, Burger King and Ben & Jerry's have also all made important movement in the direction of cage-free eggs.

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Humane Society International is the international arm of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization—backed by 10 million Americans, or one of every 30. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education, and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty—on the web at humanesociety.org.

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