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Making History for Animals: YES! on Prop 2

By [Doris Lin](#), About.com

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Egg Industry magazine calls it "one of the biggest and most important battles of U.S. egg industry history." The president of the United Egg Producers asserts "We are in a battle to save our industry. We have to be united."

Agribusiness giant Foster Farms and the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association both made quarter million dollar contributions to try to defeat it, and the egg-producing subsidiary of Land-O-Lakes gave even more. In all, opponents claim they intend to spend \$10-50 million dollars to fight it.

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What could be so threatening to the agribusiness industry to elicit such apocalyptic proclamations and [huge spending](#)? It's California's [Prop 2](#)—a modest anti-cruelty measure that California voters will consider this Election Day.

When passed, Prop 2 will phase out some of the most extreme confinement systems we force upon farm animals, including battery cages for laying hens, veal crates for calves, and gestation crates for breeding pigs. It will reduce the suffering of 20 million animals in the country's largest agricultural state, and set the nation on a trajectory away from these types of factory farming systems.

The animal movement has been waiting for years for such an historic opportunity—the chance to help such a huge number of animals with one single vote. Prop 2 presents an extraordinary opportunity to expose these emblematic practices of factory farming and then allow the voters to decide if they want to allow such animal cruelty to continue.

That's one reason Prop 2 is endorsed by such a wide range of [animal protection organizations](#), from The Humane Society of the United States, the ASPCA and Farm Sanctuary to United Poultry Concerns, Animal Acres, and In Defense of Animals. The California Veterinary Medical Association and 700 individual California veterinarians have signed on in support, too.

The Prop 2 campaign has also succeeded in building important bridges between the animal movement and a number of other social justice organizations. Members of the [YES! on Prop 2 coalition](#) include the Cesar Chavez Foundation, Sierra Club, Center for Food Safety, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the Consumer Federation of America.

This diverse group of endorsers shares the common sense view that it's simply cruel and inhumane to confine animals in tiny cages where they can't even turn around and extend their limbs. It really is that basic.

Part of Prop 2's strength is the modesty of the initiative. It doesn't eliminate all animal cruelty nor does it require idyllic living conditions for animals. It simply moves these three industries away from some of their worst abuses—something the majority of voters are likely to support, presuming they're not misled by the agribusiness misinformation campaign.

Anyone who doubts just how seriously the factory farming interests are taking this campaign need look no further than [this melodramatic editorial](#) in the ag trade publication *Feedstuffs* calling on all animal agribusiness to unite against Prop 2.

The animal movement should be similarly unified in our call to ban battery cages, veal crates, and gestation crates.

Paul Shapiro is the senior director of *The Humane Society of the United States'* factory farming campaign.

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