

Factory Farming



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



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Burger King Sets Precedent in Fast Food Sector

March 28, 2007

In a move sure to send shock waves through animal agribusiness, fast-food giant Burger King is implementing a set of animal welfare policies aimed at reducing its support for some of the worst factory farm abuses.

"With its new policy changes, Burger King is signaling to agribusiness that the most inhumane factory farming practices are on the way out," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "As a result of this decision, large numbers of farm animals across the nation will be spared much needless suffering."



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After extensive dialogue with The HSUS and independent discussions with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Burger King spelled out details of its decision:

Burger King's new policies will ease the suffering of thousands of farm animals.

- It has begun purchasing 2 percent of its eggs from producers that do not confine laying hens in **battery cages**. It will more than double the percentage of **cage-free eggs** it's using to 5 percent by the end of the year.
- It has implemented a purchasing preference for cage-free eggs. Such a preference is intended to favor producers that convert away from battery-cage confinement systems.
- It has started purchasing 10 percent of its pork from producers that do not confine breeding pigs in gestation crates, which are too small to allow even ordinary movement. The volume of pork purchases coming from gestation crate-free producers will double to 20 percent by the end of the year.
- It has also implemented a purchasing preference for pork from producers that do not confine breeding sows in gestation crates.
- It has implemented a preference for producers that use **controlled atmosphere killing** of chickens used for meat. This has been shown to cause significantly less suffering than the conventional method of slaughter used by most of the nation's poultry slaughterers.

"The more consumers learn about factory farming cruelties, the more they insist upon better treatment for animals," said Pacelle. "There is a long way to go before we end farm animal abuse, but today's announcement sets the country on a clear trajectory on factory farming issues."

A Trend Away from The Most Intensive Confinement

Burger King's announcement comes at a time when a snowballing number of major corporations are moving away from supporting factory farm abuses. Just last week, [Wolfgang Puck](#) announced a wide-ranging plan to improve animal welfare in his supply chain. Earlier this year, the world's largest pig producer, [Smithfield Foods](#), shocked the pig industry by committing to phasing out its use of gestation crates over the next decade. Restaurant chains such as Chipotle refuse to use pork from producers that use crates. [Florida](#) and [Arizona](#) voters have overwhelmingly passed ballot initiatives—spearheaded by The HSUS—banning the use of crates to confine breeding pigs.

And companies such as [Whole Foods Market](#), [Wild Oats Natural Marketplace](#) and [Ben & Jerry's](#) have moved away from cage eggs. More than [100 schools](#) have eliminated or greatly reduced their use of cage eggs.

Burger King's commitment to begin moving away from these abuses confirms a clear vision of the future: one where practices such as intensive confinement in tiny crates has no place.

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