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California Bans Foie Gras Force-Feeding Starting in 2012

SAN FRANCISCO — California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill this week banning the force-feeding of ducks and geese to make foie gras starting in 2012.

The governor said he hoped the long lead time would encourage foie gras producers to find other ways to make the delicacy.

"The bill's intent is to ban the current foie gras production of forcing a tube down a bird's throat to greatly increase the consumption of grain by the bird," Schwarzenegger said in a statement. "It does not ban the food product, foie gras. The bill provides seven-and-one-half years for agricultural husbandry practices to evolve and perfect a humane way for a duck to consume grain to increase the size of its liver through natural processes."

Animal rights activists say enlarging the birds' livers to produce the delicacy is cruel and have made the issue a priority. Vandals last year trashed a restaurant north of San Francisco and threatened its co-owner at his residence for serving foie gras.

Only one farm in California, Sonoma Foie Gras, now makes foie gras. The California law will impose fines of \$1,000 a day for force-feeding birds in foie gras production.

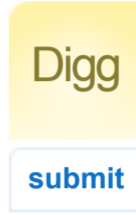
France and Hungary are well known for their foie gras although a number of European countries ban production via forced feeding. In the United States, 90 percent of the goose liver comes from two New York state firms.

On another animal-related issue, Schwarzenegger vetoed a measure that would have made it easier for Californians to keep ferrets as pets.

"I love ferrets. I co-starred with a ferret in Kindergarten Cop," the former Hollywood actor wrote in his veto message.

"However this bill is far too bureaucratic, and it legalizes ferrets prior to conducting an environmental impact report."

Source: Reuters



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