

During transport, lack of protection from extreme weather, mixing of unfamiliar animals, overcrowding, poor driving, and long periods without food or water cause injuries and sometimes the deaths of animals.

The Humane Slaughter Act directs the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure that pigs, cows, sheep, goats and horses are rendered insensible to pain before being killed. However, the Act excludes poultry and animals killed for ritual slaughter. Even for protected species, the law is blatantly flouted at some large slaughterhouses. The drive to increase profits has led plants to increase the number of animals slaughtered per hour. Consequently, animals are sometimes scalded, skinned and dismembered without having been properly stunned.

Industrial agriculture is inherently inhumane, but cruelty to animals is not the only consequence of treating animals as machines. Factory-raised animals are routinely administered non-therapeutic levels of antibiotics to promote growth and control health problems that develop under hostile, factory conditions. Not only do residues of the drugs sometimes end up in the meat, but the inappropriate use of antibiotics also enables bacteria to develop resistance to antibiotics, giving rise to "superbugs" and diseases.

Factory production concentrates tremendous amounts of manure in small areas. Unlike human waste, there is no requirement to treat waste from farm animals. Their manure is collected and stored in vast quantities, creating environmental and health hazards. Liquid manure cesspools have overflowed and their earthen liners routinely leak into groundwater.

The cruelty of industrial animal agriculture affects us all.



Steve Reid/www.flickr.com/photos/dicerever/sets/7215760091/0804279/

*Animal factories devour fresh water and produce massive amounts of liquefied manure, stored in cesspools that routinely contaminate public waters with feces and pathogens.*

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Ensure your food choices alleviate animal suffering, rather than perpetuate cruelty. If you consume animal products, buy from humane family farms where animals are not confined to cages or crates, and where they can roam freely and behave naturally. Contact AWI and request copies of our *Animal Welfare Approved* husbandry standards. Take the criteria to managers of your local grocery stores and restaurants and urge them to provide products from animals raised according to a high welfare standard. Use customer comment cards to show that you care about farm animal welfare and to educate others. Animal factories cannot exist if consumers demand that animals raised for food are treated as sentient beings, with dignity and respect.

Contact your Members of Congress and request strong enforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act. Respectfully suggest that USDA inspectors work full-time at each slaughter plant to observe the unloading, handling, stunning and killing of the animals. Write to: The Honorable (full name of Senator), US Senate, Washington, DC 20510; The Honorable (full name of Representative), US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Contact AWI for the names of your Members of Congress.

## ABOUT US

The *Animal Welfare Institute* is a non-profit charitable organization that was founded in 1951 to reduce the sum total of pain and fear inflicted on animals by humans. We seek to replace factory animal production with farming methods that are both humane and responsible.



Popular Spring Animal Sanctuary

*Previously denied their basic needs, animals released from factory confinement instinctively express natural behaviors such as nest building by hens.*



**Animal Welfare  
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# FARM ANIMALS

ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE



cover: Laurie Smith

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## ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

### AGRICULTURE: PAST AND PRESENT

Over 9 billion animals are raised and slaughtered for food annually in America. Each is a living, feeling individual capable of experiencing pleasure and pain.

Half a century ago, family farms were prevalent. Animals grazed on pasture, breathing fresh air and feeling the sunshine on their backs. During inclement weather, they were sheltered in straw-bedded barns. In contrast, the rearing of farm animals today is dominated by industrialized facilities that maximize profits by treating animals not as sentient creatures, but as production units. Raised by the thousands at a single site, animals are confined in such tight quarters that they can scarcely move, let alone behave normally.

### THE CRUELTY OF ANIMAL FACTORIES

Chickens have an innate desire to stretch their wings, perch, dust-bathe, forage for food, and run. Hens instinctively want to build nests in which to lay their eggs. In the egg industry, a hen's every pleasure is denied. Four or five of the birds are packed into a battery cage, a wire enclosure so small that none can spread her wings. The cages are stacked side-by-side, row upon row, in long windowless sheds. Housing hens densely in cages or without access to

the outdoors is contrary to their biological and social natures and commonly leads them to peck harmfully at each other's feathers and bodies.

To address the situation, a substantial portion of each hen's beak is cut off. This makes it difficult for her to eat and can cause lifelong pain. At the end of a laying cycle, hens naturally molt, shedding their feathers. In order to force a molt artificially and promote an additional laying cycle, hens are deprived of food and water for up to two weeks. When production of eggs drops off, the hens are killed. In the process of hatching and raising chicks to replace them, just as many males as females are born. The unwanted male chicks are callously ground up alive or thrown into trashcans, where they suffocate when other chicks are piled on top of them.

"Broilers," as the industry refers to chickens raised for meat, spend relatively short lives in warehouses containing thousands of birds. Bred for rapid growth and large breast size, they are predisposed to disease and crippling physical abnormalities. Many birds die of heart attacks. Others eventually die from dehydration or starvation because they cannot stand or walk to feeders.

Pigs are intelligent and highly social. They keep clean in the wild and maintain separate areas for defecating, resting and eating. Pregnant sows instinctively gather materials to build nests in which to give birth. Yet, in industrialized facilities, they spend each of their nearly four-month pregnancies confined to a gestation crate—a stark, metal enclosure that is scarcely wider and longer than the sow herself. The sow is so restricted that she is unable to walk or turn around, much less socialize. She develops abnormal behaviors and suffers from leg problems and skin

lesions due to relentless confinement on concrete floors. Over time, her muscles deteriorate and she may develop osteoporosis.

The sow is also crated during delivery and for the short period in which her piglets are allowed to nurse. She is deprived of bedding for building a nest and foraging. Male pigs kept for breeding purposes are also often housed individually in crates or barren pens. Growing pigs are confined to slatted, bare concrete floors. Stressed by crowding and boredom, the pigs behave aggressively and seek stimulation. They frequently turn to biting the tails of penmates. Consequently, their tails are routinely cut off soon after birth.

Milk production is increasingly industrialized. In factory dairies, cows often have their tails cut off, are denied pasture, instead spending their entire lives confined on concrete. Lactating cows are injected with the synthetic growth hormone rBGH to boost milk production. The hormone causes tremendous stress on their bodies, and if the diet is not adequate, calcium is leached from the cows' bones, predisposing them to lameness. Cows injected with rBGH have a higher incidence of mastitis, a painful infection of the udder, than their non-injected counterparts do.

Female calves born to these cows will also be used for milking, but male calves have no value to a specialized dairy factory. Typically, they are sent to slaughter within 48 hours after birth, or they are sold and raised for veal. In veal factories, calves are confined for four months to barren crates and tethered to the floor. Unable to walk or turn around, they are fed a liquid diet, intentionally deficient in iron, to create "milk-fed" veal.



Humane Farming Association



Diane Halverson/AWI



Marlene Halverson/AWI

*Confined to cramped wire cages in factories, laying hens experience severe feather loss, and their beaks are seared off with a hot blade in an attempt to reduce the impact of stress-induced feather-pecking.*

*In industrialized facilities, sows spend most of their bleak lives in coffin-sized crates where they must stand and sleep on concrete slatted floors devoid of bedding so that their manure can be readily collected and liquefied.*

*Cows on this factory dairy are not permitted to graze on pasture; instead they stand, walk and rest on concrete. Their tails are cut off so that the manure-laden switches do not get in workers' faces.*