



# Animal Welfare Institute

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## WHAT'S DUAL PRODUCTION AND WHY IS IT A BAD THING?

Dual production refers to agricultural enterprises that raise some animals under an industrialized, factory-style system and others under an alternative, higher-welfare system. One high-welfare certification program, Animal Welfare Approved (AWA), works with independent family farmers and requires compliance with its standards throughout the farm. The AWA program prohibits the operation of dual systems for the following reasons:

- 1.) Any dual systems program is harmful because it creates an incentive for industrial meat, dairy and egg producers to exploit humane markets for a relatively small percentage of their animals while continuing to house literally millions of animals inside factories—*billions* in the case of poultry. Even if oversight of a smaller dual systems business were possible, the dual system model rewards animal factory operators by allowing them to have their cake and eat it too.
- 2.) Proponents of dual production sometimes compare it to the evolution of organic farming in which growers operated both conventional and organic systems simultaneously, increasing their production of organics as the market grew. But animals aren't vegetables: they're sentient creatures. If a comparison is to be made, it is more appropriate to compare animals to people than to vegetables. We would not knowingly buy a rug from a company that sells a percentage of rugs made by artisans who work in decent conditions if that same company simultaneously operated a rug factory in which children slaved under harsh conditions to manufacture cheaper rugs.
- 3.) "Dual systems" agribusinesses operations have the financial resources from their factory farming enterprises to sell their meat, egg and dairy products for less, underbidding in the marketplace those independent farm families who choose to absorb the additional costs of caring for *all* their animals humanely. This means that industrial meat, egg and dairy producers are positioned to displace the independent farm families who so far have dominated the humane market because they held animal-friendly values in the first place.
- 4.) In order to enact national legislation to promote humane conditions for farmed animals, senators and representatives in rural states will need a constituency of independent family farmers who meet high standards of animal welfare and rely on humane markets for their livelihood. If these farmers disappear, and the only "farmers" that Congress represents are absentee owners and contract workers, then those senators and representatives will have no humane-minded constituency to represent, no pressure to stand up straight to fight the animal factory interests.
- 5.) Numerous investigations and reports of farm animal abuse and neglect have revealed the misery suffered by animals at the hands of hired low-wage workers or contract farmers in absentee-owned factories. Even high standards of welfare cannot protect animals who are in the "humane" part of a dual system operation that employs cheap labor and is designed to pursue profits first and foremost.
- 6.) If a program certifies "products" or specific "facilities"—as opposed to "farmers" and their "farms"—then consumers who think they are rejecting cruelty by their purchase of humanely labeled products may in fact be giving financial support to a company that keeps sows in gestation crates while raising the market pigs in conditions that meet their "humane" standards.