Life Behind Bars...

An Introduction to Factory Farming

Table of Contents

Published by Farm Sanctuary, Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Introduction

Our inhumane treatment of livestock is becoming widespread and more and more barbaric. Six-hundred-pound hogs raised in two-foot-wide metal cages called gestation crates, in which the poor beasts are unable to turn around or lie down in natural positions, and this way they live for months at a time. On profit-driven factory farms, veal calves are confined to dark wooden crates so small that they are prevented from lying down or scratching themselves. These creatures feel; they know pain. They suffer pain just as we humans suffer pain. Egg-laying hens are confined to battery cages. Unable to spread their wings, they are reduced to nothing more than an egg-laying machine... Barbaric treatment of helpless, defenseless creatures must not be tolerated... Life must be respected and dealt with humanely in a civilized society.

- Senator Robert Byrd (on the floor of the U.S. Senate, July 9, 2001)

In recent decades, farm animals in America have been subjected to increasingly inhumane conditions. Chickens are confined so tightly in tiny wire battery cages that they can barely move, veal calves spend their short lives chained by the neck in crates too small for them to lie down comfortably, and breeding pigs spend years imprisoned in small metal crates, unable even to turn around. Meanwhile, a growing number of consumers are voicing ethical concerns about inhumane methods used to produce meat, milk and eggs.

Practices common in animal agriculture — such as intensive confinement housing — face widespread public opposition according to public opinion polls. Most Americans consider the treatment of calves in the production of veal inhumane and unacceptable. Over half of Americans never eat veal, and concern about the cruel treatment of veal calves is a key reason why. Polls have also found that the majority of consumers believe that the confinement of pigs and hens in commercial production is inhumane and unacceptable.

While the American public opposes intensive confinement systems, they are common across the U.S. Each year, about 300 million egg-laying hens are imprisoned in battery cages, about 5 million pregnant pigs suffer in gestation crates, and about 750,000 calves are confined in veal crates.

Beginning with Sweden's farm animal protection law, which was enacted in 1988, several European countries have now passed legislation to prohibit the use of veal crates, battery cages, and gestation crates. In fact, prohibitions on cruel factory farming practices are now being adopted by the entire European Union. These laws reflect popular sentiments in Europe, and laws in the U.S. should begin to reflect popular sentiments as well.

Most egg-laying hens in the U.S. are confined in battery cages.

In the U.S., large corporations – including major fast food restaurants – are now responding to public opposition to cruel farming practices, and enacting guidelines that call for more humane treatment of farm animals. America's agribusiness industry is also beginning to recognize that it needs to address consumers' concerns. A front-page article in the industry journal *Feedstuffs*, titled "Mainstream consumers driving animal welfare push," states that "producers have been so intent on producing cheap, safe and abundant food supplies, they have failed to recognize the profound cultural changes driving consumers." Dr. Janice Swanson, an animal behavior specialist, reminded a meeting of the United Egg Producers, "You are not handling a lump of plastic. You are handling animals with central nervous systems that feel pain and suffering."

While consumer and industry attitudes are beginning to change in the U.S., legal protection remains grossly inadequate, and animal suffering abounds. Farm animals are specifically excluded from the federal Animal Welfare Act and from most state anti-cruelty laws. Consequently, agribusiness can treat living animals as commodities, subjecting them to grossly inhumane conditions with impunity.

A glaring example of agribusiness' disregard for farm animals' well-being involves a case in which two injured hens were dumped in a trash can full of dead birds at ISE's egg factory in New Jersey. ISE was taken to court and its lawyer asserted that it is legally acceptable to discard live birds as if they were manure. When the judge asked, "Isn't there a big distinction between manure and live animals?" ISE's lawyer responded, "No, your honor." The company was found not guilty of animal cruelty.

Breeding sows spend years in crates that prevent them from turning around.

In the absence of basic legal protections, farm animals across America are commonly subjected to inhumane confinement, spending their lives behind bars.

Farm animals, like all animals, have feelings and should be protected from cruelty. Factory farming methods such as battery cages, veal crates and gestation crates are inherently cruel, and they should be outlawed in the United States, as they have been in other countries.

Statistics of Confinement

	Individuals Confined	Average Duration	Living Space
Egg-Laying Hens	300 million	1 - 2 years	1/2 square foot
Breeding Sows	5 million	2 - 4 years	two-foot-wide crate
Veal Calves	750,000	5 months	two-foot-wide crate

Chickens Living Free

Even vastly improved intensive systems are unlikely to meet the cognitive demands of the hitherto underestimated chicken brain... In no way can these living conditions meet the demands of a complex nervous system designed to form a multitude of memories and to make complex decisions.

- Lesley Rogers, Professor of Physiology, University of New England, Australia

Chickens are inquisitive and social creatures. They explore their surroundings in a variety of ways, using their sensitive beaks to probe the soil in search of food. The beak is also used for grooming and dust-bathing, a sequence of movements that spreads dust through the feathers. The sand and other fine materials remove oil build-up and keep the feathers clean and fluffy.

Chickens also explore their environment and search for food by scratching with their feet. Just as most people are right-handed, most chickens prefer to scratch for food with their right foot. Chickens' senses are acute — they have excellent vision, seeing a color range similar to that of humans and a field of 300 degrees. A scientific study showed that the music of choice for chickens is Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" — the "Spring" section caused the birds to playfully run, jump and chase one another. Chickens also enjoy playing with toys.

Social ties are extremely important to chickens, who live in structured groups. At night, domestic hens, like their wild cousins the Red Jungle Fowl, roost together on the branches of bushes or trees. By day, they spread out to forage. Chickens can recognize and remember about 100 other chickens, and usually live in groups around this size. Though they spread apart to forage, chickens remain in contact, calling to one another periodically, and sounding warning calls if danger appears.

Hens leave their social group and home range to select a nest site before egg laying. Nest sites are typically secluded, enclosed by vegetation or hidden in the ground. Each hen will carefully build a nest to hold her eggs by gathering loose materials, such as dry grass or moss.

Nesting is extremely important to laying hens. They have an elaborate sequence of behaviors they perform while searching for a nest site, building the nest, and laying their eggs.

While chickens enjoy close social bonds with each other, they will bond with humans and other animals as well. Henny, a hen rescued from a slaughterhouse by Farm Sanctuary, was brought to live in a household with two people, three cats, and four dogs — and she enjoyed everybody's company. She would sit on the couch close to the cats and dogs, and she also liked to sit on people's laps. At night, Henny happily perched on the corner of the bed. She would express her comfort and satisfaction with gentle cooing sounds.

Henny with her adopted family

Chickens in Battery Cages

You are not handling a lump of plastic. You are handling animals with central nervous systems that feel pain and suffering.

- Dr. Janice Swanson, animal behavior specialist at Kansas State University, addressing an assembly of egg producers.

Egg factory warehouses commonly confine 80,000 birds in a single building.

Every year in the United States, approximately 300 million hens provide Americans with their eggs. Each chicken, averaging three to four pounds — with a wingspan of about 30 inches — is given just half a square foot of living space, crammed with four to eight other birds into tiny wire cages. These battery cages are stacked in tiers and lined up in rows in huge factory warehouses, which commonly house 80,000 birds. The hens are crowded so tightly that they cannot even stretch their wings or legs, and they cannot fulfill normal behavioral patterns or social needs. Constantly rubbing against the wire cages, they suffer from severe feather loss, and their bodies are covered with bruises and abrasions.

Practically all laying hens are debeaked in order to reduce injuries resulting from excessive pecking, an aberrant behavior that occurs when the confined birds are bored and frustrated and driven to aggression. Debeaking is a painful procedure that involves cutting through bone, cartilage, and soft tissue to remove part of the beak.

Laying more than 250 eggs per year each, hens' bodies are severely taxed. Calcium deficiency, osteoporosis and weak bones are rampant among hens on egg factories — caused by intensive egg production and lack of exercise. These conditions lead to broken bones, paralysis, and even death.

After a year of heavy egg production, the chickens are "spent," and then are either "force molted" or slaughtered. Force molting involves starving the hens for up to 18 days, keeping them in the dark, and denying them water to shock their bodies into another egg-laying cycle. It is common for five to 10 percent to die during force molting.

When slaughtered, the hens are bound for pot pies and other low-grade chicken meat products, where their bruised and battered bodies can be shredded and the blemishes hidden from consumers. Spent hens' brittle, calcium-depleted bones typically shatter during handling or at the slaughterhouse.

A Farm Sanctuary Investigator reports:

"What the pictures don't tell is how badly this environment smells. Or how awful it sounds. Odors of feces and decomposing flesh are encountered long before one enters the row of sheds. It is a heavy stench. And then there's the noise: a cacophony of voices, rising in a tremendous pitch, dropping, and then picking up again for some reason or other, some unseen trauma only the birds can detect."

Chickens : Consequences of Confinement

Scientific Evidence Finds Welfare Problems with Battery Cages

Hens used for egg production are typically raised in battery cages that are stacked in tiers and lined up in rows in warehouse-like factories. Battery cages are usually constructed of wire, and the birds may be given less than 48 square inches of space each. It is widely acknowledged that there are significant welfare problems for laying hens in battery cages, and they are being outlawed across Europe on cruelty grounds.

Scientific evidence has shown that hens housed in battery cages experience both chronic and acute suffering and that battery cages inhibit the performance of virtually all aspects of hen behavior due to the severe confinement and barrenness of the environment. Environments enriched with nest boxes, dust baths, and perches offer considerable benefits for welfare.

Lack of Space

General freedom of movement is necessary to perform specific behaviors (e.g., pre-laying behavior, dustbathing, pecking, and scratching), the prevention of which can cause frustration. Battery cage confinement severely restricts hens' ability to perform basic behaviors, and causes a breakdown in the hens' carefully regulated social life and cohesive social group structure. Scientific studies have found that the space allotted hens in battery cages is insufficient for the maintenance of natural social spacing, and that chronic stress results from the hens' continual attempts to keep themselves dispersed.

Perching and Nesting

Studies have shown that the use of a perch can improve foot condition, reduce foot and claw damage, stimulate bone mass and strength, and provide refuge for subordinate hens, allowing them to avoid aggressive cagemates. Providing a perch results in reduced feather wear and damage, and hens housed in the perchery system are less aggressive than caged hens.
Much evidence shows that providing nests meets an important need of laying hens, who may exhibit very disturbed behavior without a nest. The inability to satisfy intense nesting instincts is likely to cause significant suffering during the hen's regular pre-laying period.

Flooring

Battery cages usually have wire mesh flooring, despite research showing that particle or litter floors allow for the performance of a wider range of behaviors, including scratching, dustbathing, and nesting, and are strongly preferred to floors without litter. Studies also show that hens with access to litter spend about 18 percent of their time engaged in litter-related activities.

Feather Pecking

Feather pecking is worse in battery cages than in other systems, probably due in part to the lack of varied stimuli for pecking. The inability to forage causes hens to redirect ground pecking behavior into feather pecking aimed at their cagemates, causing pain, reduced feather cover, and heat loss. Birds caged with no access to sand tend to direct more feather pecks at cagemates than do birds with access to sand, and feather pecking may lead to fatalities.

Plumage, Foot, and Claw Damage

Studies show that feather loss from abrasion is worse in cages than in other systems, and this is compounded by feather pecking. Foot damage caused by wire flooring, including lesions, fissures, and hyperkeratosis on the feet and twisted, broken, or overgrown claws, is common among hens kept in battery cages. Caged hens may have uncontrolled and excessive growth of the claws, which often leads to breakage that may inflict damage to the underlying tissues. Slanted cage floors (which allow eggs to roll into collection trays) can also cause foot deformities.

Bone Weakness

Studies show that hens with high egg production tend to develop osteoporosis (thinning of the bones), due to the large demand for calcium. After laying eggs for a year, the hen's skeleton is fragile, depleted of calcium due to the production of many egg shells. The disease is particularly serious in caged hens. The maintenance of bone strength depends upon the hen's ability to exercise, and the space provided in a battery cage does not allow hens sufficient freedom of movement for the development of normal bone strength. Bone fragility increases susceptibility to bone fractures, which are likely to cause pain.

Injuries from Equipment

The breakdown of automatic feeders and drinkers can lead to limited access to feed, causing aggression and cannibalism. Another welfare problem associated with the battery system is the entrapment of body parts, most commonly the head or neck, in the cage, which can lead to severe trauma or death.

Debeaking

The partial amputation of the beak, also known as debeaking, is performed by removing one-third to one-half of the beak with a heated blade, which cuts and cauterizes. The painful procedure can be fatal. Its purpose is to prevent or reduce injury and feather pecking, which occurs in crowded battery cage conditions. The avian beak is a complex sensory organ that serves to grasp food particles and manipulate nesting materials, and allows for nesting exploration, drinking, preening, and defense. The beak has an extensive nerve supply, and studies have shown that debeaking results in the formation of large neuromas, or bundles of nerve tissue, in the healed stump of the beak. Other studies suggest that the behavioral changes associated with debeaking are similar to depression.

Forced Molting

Under natural conditions, hens are stimulated to lay eggs by increasing daylight. When daylight decreases in the fall, the hen will stop laying and begin molting, or shedding feathers, which are gradually replaced after molting.

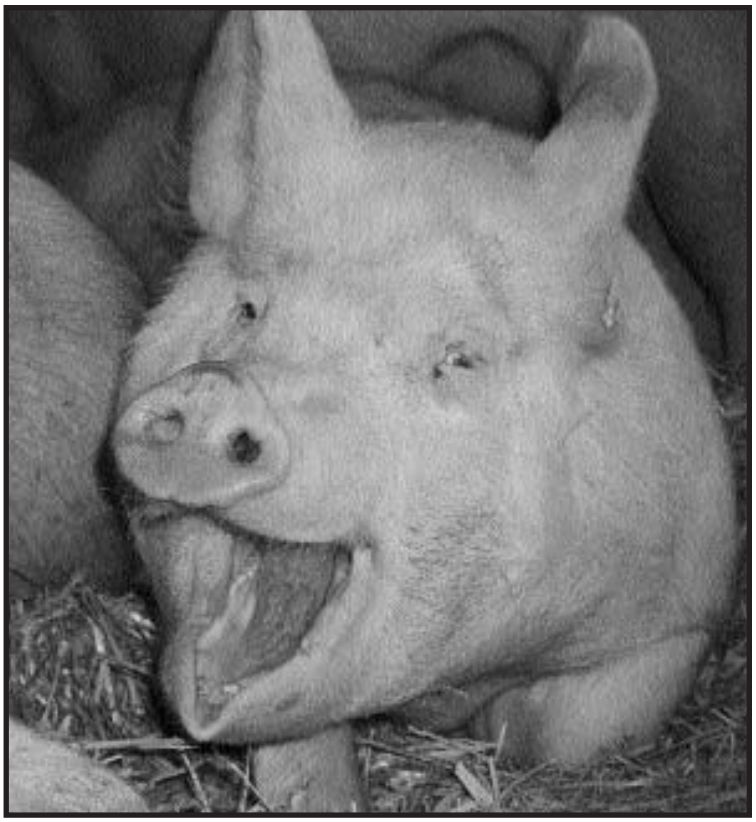
Commercial egg producers employ "forced molting" as a means of expediting the natural egg-laying cycle, depriving birds of food for up to 18 days and water for up to three days, and keeping them in the dark. This brings about a change in hormone levels and shortens the molting process to eight weeks, from 16 weeks in natural conditions. Much scientific evidence shows that forced molting is a traumatic procedure for hens and that mortality increases dramatically during forced molting.

For the complete report of the scientific evidence, including bibliography, from which Consequences of Confinement was derived, visit **www.freefarmanimals.org,** or you can also obtain a copy from Farm Sanctuary.

Pigs Living Free

I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.

- Sir Winston Churchill

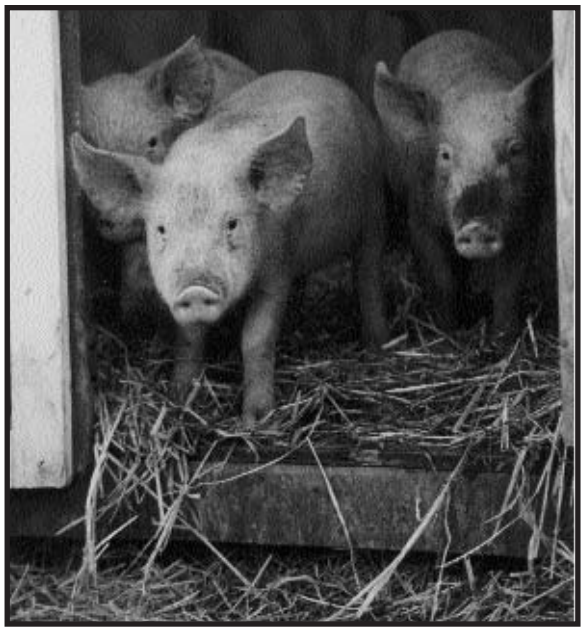


Pigs normally live in groups where they form complex social bonds. Pigs cooperate with and defend one another — adults in the entire social group will protect a piglet, leaving their own litters to defend the endangered youngster. If one pig begins an activity, others will invariably join in. Pigs are loyal by nature, and often form close friendships with one another.

Physical contact is very important to pigs, and they will lie together when resting. Pigs enjoy close contact with humans as well. They like being scratched behind the ears and shoulders, grunting contentedly, and will happily roll over for belly rubs.

Pigs are also very vocal. They use over 20 identified vocalizations to constantly communicate with one another. Males and females have a "song" they use when courting, and pigs also enjoy music. Newborn piglets learn to come to their mother's voice, and the mother pig "sings" to her young as they nurse.

When ready to give birth, the sow searches, sometimes walking for miles, to find a suitable nest site. She then hollows out the nest and lines it with grass, straw, or other materials. When her babies are five to 10 days old, she encourages them to socialize with the other pigs. Even after weaning, young pigs continue to live with their mothers in a close family group. Two or more sows and their babies will join together in an extended family, with close friendships developing between sows. Young piglets play with great enthusiasm, play-fighting and lifting, moving, or throwing objects into the air. Often one will suddenly dart away with the others in hot pursuit. A piglet playing alone will whirl around and jump up and down.



Pigs are very clean animals and discriminating eaters. They carefully keep their sleeping area clean and will designate a spot as far from this area as possible for waste. Unable to sweat, pigs bathe in mud to cool themselves and to protect their skin from sun and insects. They prefer water to mud, however, and are good swimmers.

Pigs are intelligent, and like puppies, piglets will learn their names and come when called. They exhibit great physical stamina — they can run at speeds around 11 miles an hour and can trot for relatively long distances. Pigs are active and inquisitive animals who spend much of their time rooting, or exploring the soil with their noses. When they find something interesting, they will sniff, nibble and manipulate the object with their powerful, but sensitive, snout.

Pigs are loyal companions and have saved people from harm. Upon seeing a drowning 11-year-old boy, a pig named Priscilla swam out and rescued him. Priscilla remembered the stressful incident and would become upset whenever she saw children near water.

Pigs in Gestation Crates

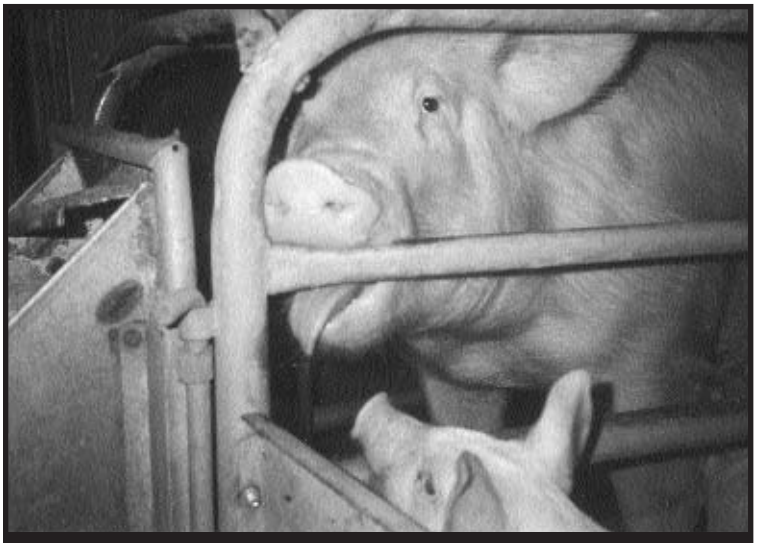
The breeding sow should be thought of, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery whos function is to pump out baby pigs like a sausage machine.

- L.J. Taylor, export development manager for Wall's Meat Company, Ltd., National Hog Farmer

With corporate hog factories replacing traditional farms across the United States, pigs are being treated more as inanimate tools of production than as living, feeling animals. Among the most cruelly treated are breeding sows who live a continuous cycle of impregnation, birth and re-impregnation, with each sow producing more than 20 piglets per year.

Most sows in the U.S. are confined in small metal crates that are just two feet wide, and this is where they spend most of their lives. The sows barely have room to stand up and lie down, and many suffer from sores on their bodies from constantly rubbing against the crates. Denied straw bedding, the pigs are forced to stand on uncomfortable slatted or grated floors that are not designed for animal comfort or well-being, but to allow urine and feces to fall through.

Numerous research studies have identified physical and psychological maladies experienced by sows in confinement. The unnatural flooring and lack of exercise cause obesity and crippling leg disorders, while the deprived environment results in neurotic coping behaviors such as bar biting, head waving and sham chewing.



Sow in a farrowing crate.

Pigs have a four-month pregnancy, during which they are confined in narrow metal "gestation crates." Shortly before giving birth, they are moved to similarly restrictive "farrowing crates" where they give birth and nurse their young. When the piglets are taken away at about three weeks old, the sows are immediately re-impregnated and returned to gestation crates. Hog factories strive to keep their sows "100 percent active." As explained in *Successful Farming:* "Any sow that is not gestating, lactating or within seven days post weaning is non-active."

When sows are no longer deemed productive breeders, they are sent to slaughter. Their battered, worn-out bodies are typically ground up for low-grade meat products, like pepperoni and sausage, where the bruises and blemishes can go unnoticed. In some cases, the sows are so beaten up that they cannot walk.

A Farm Sanctuary investigator reports:

"At one location, female breeding pigs were forced to live in metal gestation crates just two feet wide. Standing on hard, slatted floors, the sows were confined so intensely they could not walk or even turn around. Sores were visible on the pigs' bodies and faces from scraping against the bars of their crates. As I walked through the warehouse-like building, pigs began screaming. A desperate, pleading chorus rose, and the bars of the metal crates rattled and clanked against each other and against the animals' bodies. I felt like I was in a madhouse — one from which the pigs had no escape."

Pig : Consequences of Confinement

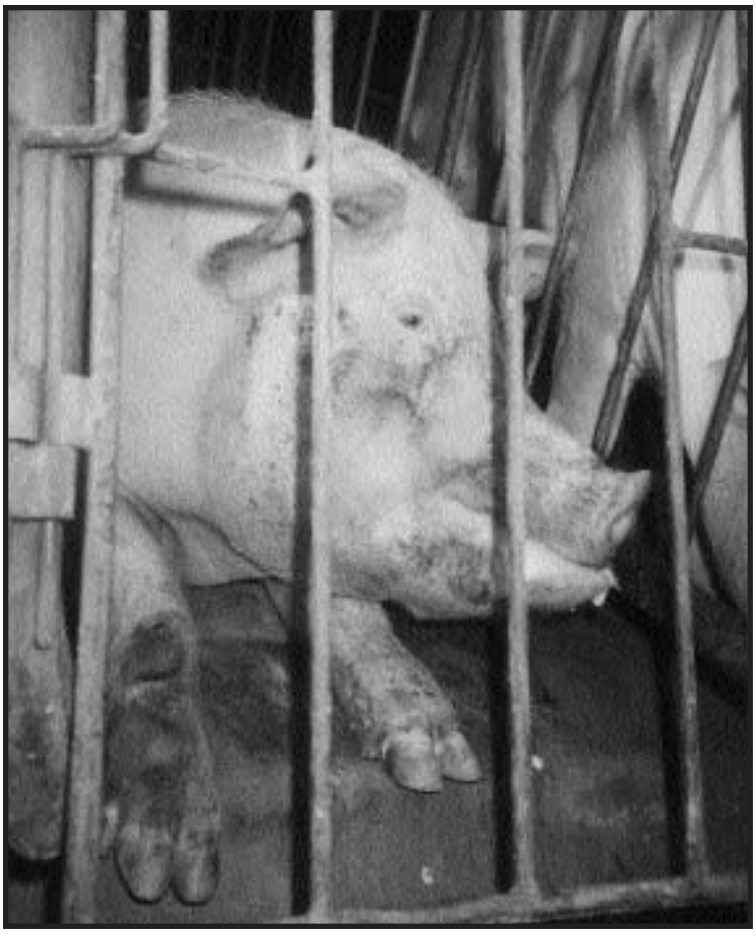
Scientific Evidence Finds Welfare Problems with Gestation Crates

The industrialization of livestock farming has led to the development of intensive confinement housing systems for farm animals. Breeding sows in the U.S. are typically kept in gestation crates for most of their lives, often three to five years. Scientific evidence shows that these animals experience both physical and psychological disorders.

Physical Disorders

Joint Damage and Impaired mobility

Studies have shown that the degree of joint damage in pigs was directly related to the duration of confinement. Damage is also greater in pigs confined individually compared to group-housed pigs. This difference is associated with the difference in degree of activity and exercise in the two populations, since pigs housed in groups are generally more active than crated pigs. Confined pigs have lower total bone mass and only two-thirds the strength of pigs reared in large pens, and they also have significantly greater locomotion problems than pigs raised in pens.



The hard flooring in gestation crates is another condition that was found to contribute to leg weakness in pigs, and may be a contributing factor affecting the crated sows' difficulty to stand up and lie down. Sows are more likely to slip when attempting to lie down on the bare concrete or metal floors of a gestation crate as compared to lying down on straw.

According to the European Commission's Scientific Veterinary Committee and other scientists, the lack of exercise in crates leads to a reduction in muscle mass that affects the sows' ability to move. Crated sows have smaller locomotor muscles in proportion to total body weight than do group-housed sows. When exercised pigs slip, they are usually able to transfer weight to other legs and resist falling, whereas unexercised animals usually slip further and fall down.

Urinary Tract Infections

Studies show that confined sows have increased levels of urinary tract infections, due to the accumulation of bacteria from less frequent urination than unconfined animals (probably because confined sows are less active and drink less than unconfined sows). Further, it is thought that confined sows are more susceptible to infections of the urinary tract because they often have no other choice but to lie or sit in their feces.

Psychological Problems

Studies of pigs in a natural environment show the importance of a complex environment and interactions with other animals. Much of their time is spent rooting, or exploring the soil with their noses. Pigs are social animals who normally live in groups, cooperatively build communal nests, and form complex social bonds.

When confined to crates, pigs are deprived of nearly all possibilities of expressing themselves. Pigs are easily bored, and the lack of environmental stimulation in the barren crates along with the sows' inability to perform normal behaviors leads to psychological disorders including chronic stress, depression and frustration, aggression, and abnormal and neurotic coping behaviors called stereotypies.

Chronic Stress

Neurophysiological indicators of chronic stress have been found in sows housed in crates. They have elevated levels of the hormone cortisol compared to sows who are group-housed, while pigs housed in larger enclosures that allow them to turn around have reduced cortisol levels than those more severely confined.

Depression and Frustration

Sows housed in crates with no hope of escape may develop an emotional state similar to depression. In an observational study of sows housed in different systems (but under the same diet and stockmanship), crated sows found the conditions "more difficult" than those housed in groups. Crated sows encountered frustration likely caused by their inability to move and express other behaviors. This intense frustration often results in abnormal and neurotic coping behaviors.

Aggression

Gestation crates prevent socialization with other animals, which can affect pigs' level of motivation to interact socially. Pigs in crates show higher levels of behavioral responses to other pigs than pigs housed in groups, which is possibly due to the high levels of frustration encountered by crated pigs. Another negative consequence of stress specifically applicable to crated sows is the high levels of hostile behavior (e.g., biting through bars) and aggression.

Abnormal and Neurotic Behaviors (including Stereotypies)

Striking evidence of welfare problems in crated sows is the fact that animals in this housing system perform more stereotypic or abnormal behavior than those in other systems. Stereotypic behavior has been viewed as abnormal because it does not occur in the range of situations that could normally be encountered in nature. According to Stolba et al., "the available evidence on stereotypies in higher mammals shows beyond doubt, that these patterns are sure signs of severely disturbed welfare." Stereotypies can also be viewed as a "normal" response to an abnormal environment that lacks adequate space and stimulation.

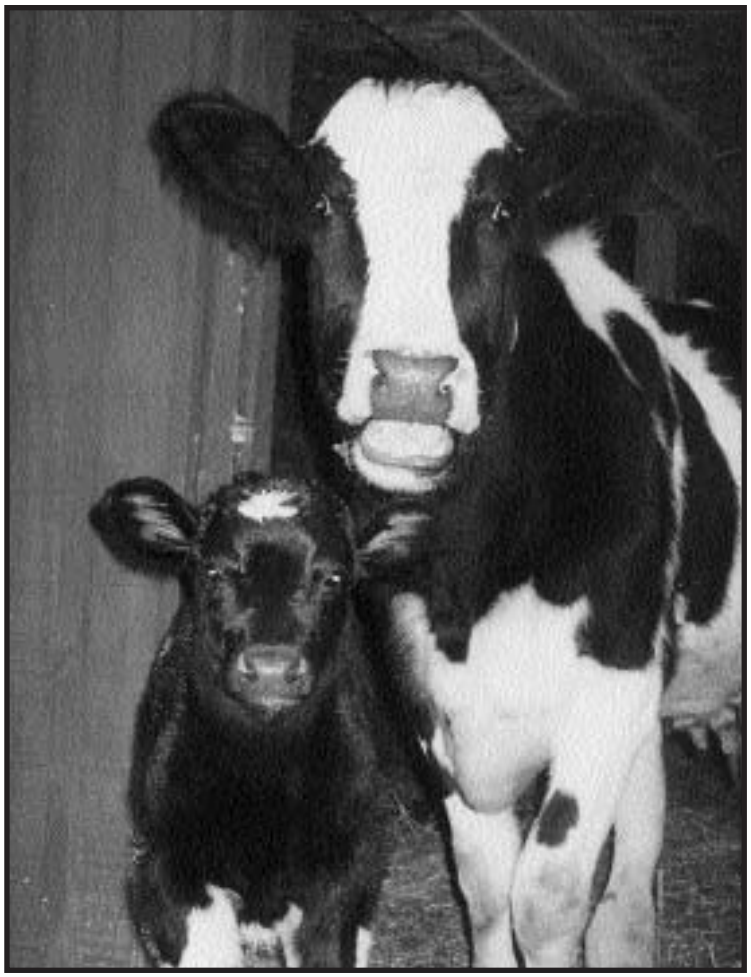
Causal explanations for this type of stereotypic or abnormal behavior have included frustration and boredom resulting from lack of environmental stimulation. Stereotypies in sows include vacuum or sham chewing (chewing nothing), head waving, chewing of bars, licking, and chewing or nosing of object

For the complete report of the scientific evidence, including bibliography, from which Consequences of Confinement was derived, visit **www.freefarmanimals.org,** or you can also obtain a copy from Farm Sanctuary.

Calves Living Free

That's one sad, unhappy, upset cow. She wants her baby. Bellowing for it, hunting for it. It's like grieving, mourning -- not much written about it. People don't like to allow them thoughts or feelings.

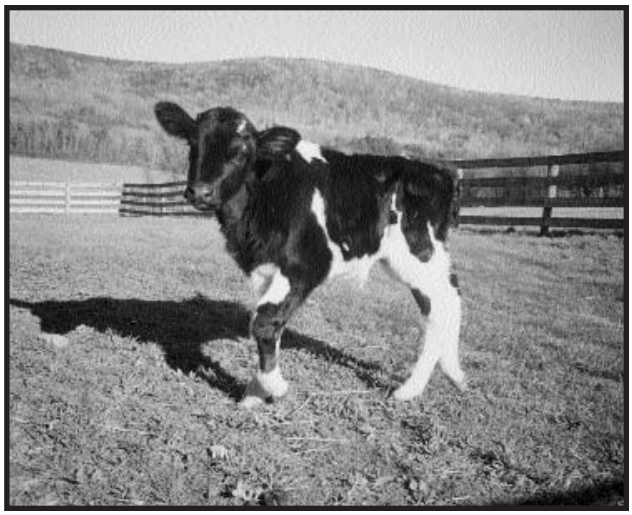
- Temple Grandin, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, referring to the reaction of a mother cow when her calf was taken from her, as quoted in Oliver W. Sacks's An Anthropologist on Mars



Dairy cows are sensitive and social animals. They are inquisitive and will closely investigate anything new in their environment. They are very responsive to the treatment they receive, and are able to remember a bad experience for years afterward.

Cows are herd animals who rely on various means of communication to govern the movement and assembly of the group. A hierarchy is established within each herd, with different cows acting as leaders at different times. Cows prefer to keep herd mates in sight and become distressed when separated from them.

Cows have a nine-month pregnancy. Shortly before her baby is born, a cow will find a secluted area. After birth, she immediately begins licking the newborn, encouraging him to stand and begin suckling. Cows are caring mothers and will bravely defend their young. The mother-child relationship is extremely important to cows. In a natural environment, newborn calves' lives revolve around their mothers. As the calf grows, he begins to spend most of his time around other calves, but is still very much attached to his mother, suckling several times a day. Eventually, the calf moves on to grazing, and will spend up to six hours a day nibbling grass.



Mother cows share "baby-sitting" duties, with one or two cows watching all the calves while the other mother cows graze. As calves grow up together and have calves of their own, their calves may also befriend each other.

Calves begin to play with other calves at around two weeks of age. Groups of calves gallop, buck, kick and butt heads as they romp together. Their mothers are also frequently the object of this playful behavior. At Farm Sanctuary, rescued calves run through the pastures, kicking up their legs joyfully as they play "chase" games with each other. Cows have keen senses of hearing and smell — they can perceive higher and fainter noises than humans and can detect odors from over six miles away.

Cows also exhibit affection and loyalty to humans. A cow named Carletta rescued an elderly Italian farmer from being gored by a wild boar by mooing loudly and chasing the boar with her horns. The farmer, Bruno Cipriani, said of Carletta, "We just have a great affection for each other."

Calves in Veal Crates

Since white veal production is inefficient and there are inevitable welfare problems it is to be hoped that public demand for it will continue its rapid downward trend and such production systems will soon disappear.

- A. F. Fraser, Professor of Veterinary Surgery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada & D. M. Broom, Professor of Clinical Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge, U.K from their book Farm Animal Behavior and Welfare

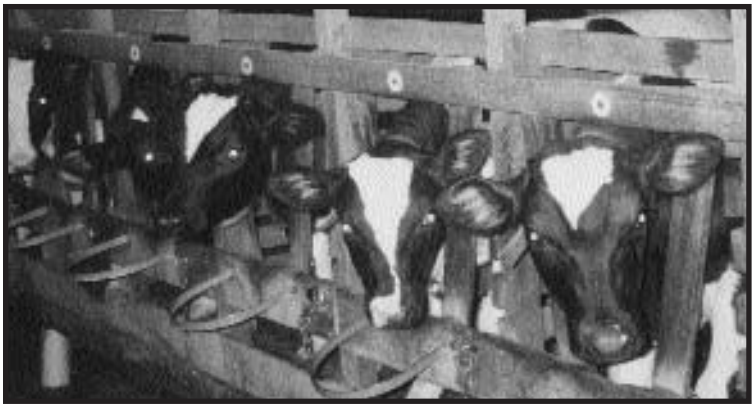
Veal is a by-product of the dairy industry. In order for dairy cows to produce milk, they must be impregnated and give birth. Half of the calves born are female, and they are used to replace older cows in the milking herd. The other half are male, and because they are of no use to the dairy industry, most are used for beef or veal.

Within moments of birth, male calves born on dairies are taken away from their mothers and loaded onto trucks. Many are sold through auction rings where they are subjected to transportation and handling stresses. The fragile animals are shocked and kicked, and when they can no longer walk, they are commonly dragged by their legs or even their ears.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of calves are confined in crates just two feet wide in order to produce “white” veal. They are chained by the neck to restrict all movement, making it is impossible for them to turn around, stretch, or even lie down comfortably. This severe confinement makes the calves' meat tender since the animals' muscles cannot develop.

Scientific research indicates that calves confined in crates experience chronic stress and require more medication than calves living in more spacious conditions. It is not surprising then, that veal is among the most likely meat to contain illegal drug residues that pose a threat to human health.

In addition to restricting the animals' movement, veal producers severely limit what their animals eat. The calves are fed an all-liquid milk substitute that is purposely deficient in iron and fiber. It is intended to produce borderline anemia and the pale-colored flesh fancied by gourmets. At approximately 20 weeks of age, these weak animals are slaughtered and marketed as white veal (also known as "fancy" or "milk-fed"). The sick and malnourished animals do not develop properly, and would not survive to adulthood.



A Farm Sanctuary investigator reports:

"The windowless warehouses looked more like storage buildings than 'barns.' Inside, in the dim light, there were hundreds of calves in the building, each one tethered into a small crate. The crates of calves were organized into a series of rooms in the warehouse, according to size and age. The older, larger calves had difficulty standing up in the cramped space, and when they lay down, the back section of their bodies hung uncomfortably out the back of the crate. All the calves were tied so tightly that they couldn't turn around. The floors consisted of slatted wood and metal mesh, and the calves struggled to gain their footing on the slick, diarrhea-coated flooring. The calves' hindquarters were caked with dried excrement, and a stench filled the air. Mucus dripped from their nostrils and their eyes were tearing." Months later the investigator returned to the same farm, this time finding the barns empty, except for one "downed" calf lying in an alleyway. He was too sick to walk onto the slaughterhouse truck, and he was left behind.

Calves : Consequences of Confinement

Scientific Evidence Finds Welfare Problems with Veal Crates

Most veal calves are unwanted males from dairy farms, typically slaughtered before five months of age. Unlike calves raised by the beef industry, who usually nurse from their mothers for about six months, calves raised for veal are taken from their mothers immediately after birth. They experience the stress of minimal colostrum (first milk) intake as well as isolation from their mothers and other calves.

The calves are fed a deficient diet, designed to cause anemia and produce the pale-colored flesh sold as veal. They are confined in crates just two feet wide, and they are unable to walk or exercise throughout their lives. This confinement prevents muscle development to keep the meat tender. No straw or other bedding is provided due to the fear that the calves may eat it, which would make their flesh darker in color.

Physical Disorders

Abnormal Gut Development and Stomach Ulceration

Numerous studies show that the veal calves' all-liquid diet, which is deficient in iron and fiber, can lead to serious maladies for the calves and cause abnormal gut development. In fact, calves fed a milk replacer diet with no solid feed would die before adulthood.

The restricted diet may also cause stomach ulceration. Ulceration of the abomasum (a stomach-like organ) is common in veal calves slaughtered at three to five months of age. Lesions are commonly found in calves, and are primarily associated with the consumption of milk replacer. Stress can also contribute to the development of stomach ulcers.

Physical Discomfort

The standard size of veal crates is not sufficient for the calves to lie down normally, and they are forced to assume abnormal and uncomfortable positions. Above the age of about 10 weeks, crated calves are unable to adopt a comfortable sleeping posture. Most crate systems have slatted or grated floors to allow urine and feces to fall through, but which are uncomfortable and hinder the calves' ability to move. During the first few weeks of life, calves in commercial crates with unbedded wooden slats spend less time lying down than calves in other systems, and spend nearly twice as much time standing idle.

Impaired Locomotion

Studies show that crate-housed calves are far more likely to have impaired locomotor ability than calves raised outside in groups. In an open field, animals who had been confined in crates were observed stumbling and falling while animals who had not been confined experienced no walking problems. Calves housed in crates have more problems walking and boarding the ramp during transport to slaughter than do those housed in groups.

Increased Susceptibility to Disease

Calves isolated in crates have more medical problems than calves housed in other systems, due to the stress of isolation. USDA-funded research has found that crated calves require approximately five times the amount of medication as calves housed in other systems.

Psychological Disorders

Frustration

Cattle are gregarious herd animals whose primary food in nature is obtained by grazing. Confining calves in crates and preventing them from consuming a natural diet results in significant frustration. Confinement also decreases a calf's ability to make behavioral responses to the environment. Sufficient space is essential for the expression of play behavior, an indicator of good welfare in calves.

Food Refusals

Restriction of movement makes calves depressed and stressed, resulting in a loss of interest in eating. Studies show that food refusals are common among crated calves, and uncommon among those with freedom of movement. Isolated, crated calves also gain weight more slowly than group-housed animals.

Stress, Boredom, Social Isolation, and Abnormal Coping Behaviors

Physiological measurements such as blood cell counts and hormone concentrations can signal stress in animals, which have various physical and psychological effects on the individual.

One behavioral study, in conjunction with a companion physiological study, suggests that thwarted motivation to perform certain behaviors prevented by the crate may be accompanied by physiological indications of chronic stress. Calves housed in small pens with slatted floors had higher eosinophil counts (a blood cell measure that has been viewed to signal stress) than those in large pens with solid floors and straw. Among calves housed in crates, pens, hutches, and yards, calves in crates had the greatest stress hormone concentrations. These elevated hormone levels were reduced after moving the crated calves into more spacious hutches. Calves in indoor metal pens had about double the concentration of the stress hormone cortisol in the blood plasma than those in outdoor hutches. Crated animals have also been shown to have the greatest increase in adrenal response of calves raised in various systems, which indicates stress and may have occurred in response to motor and sensory deprivation.

A typical veal crate in which the calf is tethered without bedding. Calves housed in this type of crate exhibit significant, severe physical and psychological disorders.

For the complete report of the scientific evidence, including bibliography, from which Consequences of Confinement was derived, visit **www.freefarmanimals.org,** or you can also obtain a copy from Farm Sanctuary.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP THE CRUELTY OF FACTORY FARMING

Inhumane factory farming is allowed to exist because consumers purchase meat, milk and eggs from factory farmed animals and unwittingly support these cruel systems. You can make a difference through your own consumer habits and through educating others.

Be a Conscientious Consumer
Don't buy meat, milk, or eggs produced on factory farms, and urge grocery stores, restaurants, and other retailers not to carry battery cage eggs, crated veal, or pork from animals raised on farms that use gestation crates. If the retail establishment is hesitant to provide information about the source of its meat, milk, or eggs, they may have something to hide.

Contact Government Officials
Contact your state and federal legislators and other officials and urge them to outlaw cruel factory farming methods such as battery cages, gestation crates and veal crates.

Educate Others
Tell your family, friends, co-workers, and others about the cruelty of veal crates, gestation crates and battery cages, and encourage them to avoid eating the products of these inhumane farming methods. You can also educate by write letters to the editor of your local newspapers to inform readers about the cruelty of factory farming.

Please Join Farm Sanctuary
The organization operates shelters for rescued animals in New York and California, educates the public about factory farming cruelty, and campaigns to stop farm animal abuse.

Please visit Farm Sanctuary's websites for more information:

www.FarmSanctuary.org
www.FarmAnimalShelters.org
www.SentientBeings.org
www.FactoryFarming.com
www.Poultry.org
www.FreeFarmAnimals.org
www.NoVeal.org
www.NJFarms.org
www.NoDowners.org

Join Farm Sanctuary

Farm Sanctuary is a national non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing and protecting farm animals from abuse. Farm Sanctuary established the first shelters in the United States for victims of "food animal" production, has successfully prosecuted stockyards and factory farms in precedent-setting cruelty cases, and has helped enact ground-breaking humane legislation. Pictures, video and other information obtained through Farm Sanctuary's undercover investigations have been aired by national and international media organizations, educating millions about the cruelty of factory farming.

New York · P.O. Box 150 · Watkins Glen, NY 14891 · Phone: 607-583-2225
California · P.O. Box 1065 · Orland, CA 95963 · Phone: 530-865-4617

Like all animals farm animals have feelings, and they deserve to be treated with compassion and respect.

Please Join Us

Farm Sanctuary

P.O. Box 150 · Watkins Glen, NY 14891
P.O. Box · 1065 Orland, CA 95963

www.farmsanctuary.org