



Legal Protections for Animals on Farms

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Nine billion land animals are raised and slaughtered for food in the United States each year, yet the laws protecting these animals are strikingly limited. The absence of legal protections for farm animals allows producers to keep them in inhumane conditions with a poor quality of life. Throughout a majority of their short lives, farm animals are closely confined and deprived of the chance to exhibit natural behaviors. Common practices on factory farms include confining pregnant pigs to crates so small they cannot turn around, confining hens to cramped, barren cages, castrating male pigs without anesthesia, and killing sick and injured animals with blunt force. Producers utilize these practices in order to maximize productivity and profits.

FEDERAL LAWS

No single federal law expressly governs the treatment of animals used for food while on farms in the United States. In

fact, these animals do not have legal protections until they are transported off the farm.¹ Even then, poultry, which account for 98 percent of animals raised for food, do not fall under the protection of the few federal laws that apply to livestock.² For example, both the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act and the Twenty-Eight Hour Law, the latter of which regulates when animals must be given food and time to rest during transport, exclude poultry.³ Moreover, the federal Animal Welfare Act⁴—a law providing minimal standards of care for certain animals—exempts farm animals, except those used in research.

To date, all federal efforts to change the legal status quo for farm animals have failed. For example, in 1989, Rep. Charles Bennett (FL-3) introduced the Veal Calf Protection Act in the House of Representatives.⁵ The bill, which aimed to limit the use of tiny veal crates that prevent calves from turning around or lying down, was referred to the House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry, but never went before the full House for a vote.⁶ Federal legislators also tried to pass a law in 2008 prohibiting cruelty to farm animals, but the bill only attained six cosponsors and, after being referred to the subcommittee, received no hearing.⁷ In 2010, Rep. Diane Watson (CA-33), backed by animal advocacy groups, introduced a bill intended to prohibit the federal government from procuring food products from animals not given enough room to freely extend their limbs.⁸ While this bill had 40 cosponsors, it, too, was not given a hearing by the subcommittee.⁹

The Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2013 was an attempt to enact on-farm protections for animals through federal legislation.¹⁰ It would have increased minimum cage size requirements for egg-laying hens and producers would have been required to indicate on the product packaging if their eggs came from birds kept in cages.¹¹ However, similar to

other on-farm federal legislation, the bill did not advance, and attempts to add its provisions to the Agriculture Act of 2014 (also referred to as the 2014 Farm Bill) were unsuccessful.¹²

The most recent attempt to improve on-farm protections began on January 18, 2017, when the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced an Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule, which incorporated animal welfare standards into the National Organic Program.¹³ The rule stated its intent was to “clarif[y] how organic producers and handlers must treat their animals, bring[] clarity to the existing USDA organic regulations, and add[] new requirements for organic livestock and poultry living conditions, transport, and slaughter practices.”¹⁴ The effective date of the new organics standards was initially March 20, 2017.¹⁵ However, the USDA twice delayed the rule’s implementation¹⁶—first, until May 19 and then until November 14, 2017.¹⁷ At the time of the second delay, the USDA opened a second OLPP Proposed Rule for public comment to determine what action the USDA should take on the issue.¹⁸

In November 2017, the USDA published another rule, further delaying the effective date until May 14, 2018. Then, on December 18, 2017, the USDA proposed a rule to withdraw the OLPP final rule altogether. Despite the fact that 63,000 of the 72,000 comments submitted opposed this decision, the USDA withdrew the rule on March 13, 2018. The USDA cited as its reasons for withdrawal the fact that the Organic Foods Production Act¹⁹ does not give the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) statutory authority to promulgate animal welfare standards. Additionally, the AMS argued that the cost of implementation was too high for the benefits.²⁰ Currently, the withdrawal of the organic rule is the subject of pending litigation in the District Court for the Northern District of California.²¹ In June 2021, the USDA announced it would re-evaluate the withdrawal of the rule and promulgate a new rule.²²

While there are no laws other than the Organic Foods Production Act that directly address the treatment of animals on farms, the Animal Health Protection Act (AHPA) may give the USDA indirect authority to regulate the raising of animals for food.²³ Congress passed the AHPA in order to prevent and control animal diseases and pests.²⁴ It gives the USDA broad authority to “carry out operations and measures to detect” and control diseases of livestock.²⁵ This allows the USDA to regulate animal husbandry practices that could lead to disease outbreaks. Unfortunately, the USDA has not used this authority to change how animals are treated on farms.

STATE LAWS

Animal Cruelty Statutes and Their Relation to Farm Animals

Every state prohibits animal cruelty, but the definition of *animal cruelty* varies from state to state. The term *animal* is also subject to varied definitions across states’ statutory codes—with the definitions often serving to exclude a particular class of animal. For example, Delaware expressly excludes fish from the definition of *animal*, and Iowa excludes livestock and fur-bearing animals, among others.²⁶ In addition to those of Delaware and Iowa, the cruelty statutes of four other states (Hawaii, New Hampshire, Ohio, and South Carolina) do not cover, or specifically exclude, some or all species of farm animals.²⁷ A common definition found in several states for *animal*, which includes farm animals, is “every dumb creature.”²⁸ Yet, many states treat farm animals differently from dogs, cats, and other companion animals under their cruelty statutes.

Many state cruelty codes exempt practices that are routinely performed on farm animals. Animal cruelty laws commonly protect nonfarm animals from neglect, mutilation, and other forms of mistreatment. However, most state cruelty codes only protect farm animals from situations that no responsible farmer would defend, such as kicking “downed” animals or stabbing animals with pitchforks in order to get them to move.²⁹ In 37 states, common or recognized animal husbandry practices—such as tail docking and castration without anesthesia—are exempt from the definition of cruelty, unless the act is specifically prohibited (see Table 1, page 4). A person who performed these acts on a dog or cat could be charged with animal cruelty, but because the practices are considered routine in the agriculture industry they can be performed on farm animals without penalty. Some states have aggravated animal cruelty statutes, under which individuals who abuse animals can be charged with more severe penalties. However, as noted above, accepted agricultural husbandry practices may be exempt from punishment.

In addition to exemptions for common animal husbandry practices, the cruelty statutes of 11 states (Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Texas) provide jurisdictional exemptions for activities involving farm animals. Under these states’ statutes, an exemption is made for practices permitted by other laws or regulations. For example, Alabama’s code

excludes “conduct which is otherwise permitted under the agricultural or animal husbandry laws.”³⁰

Iowa’s statute provides all three types of exemption to animal cruelty laws discussed here—species, common industry practice, and jurisdictional—for activities involving farm animals. On the other hand, the cruelty statutes of six states (California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, and Oklahoma) provide none of these exemptions.

Three states—Nebraska, Iowa, and Texas—have expressly excluded livestock from their animal cruelty statute, and instead created specific legislation aimed at farm animal abuse.³¹ Nebraska’s Livestock Animal Welfare Act makes it a crime to cruelly mistreat livestock, including poultry, but commonly accepted husbandry practices are exempt from the statute.³² An interesting provision in Nebraska’s law prohibits a person who is convicted of a class IV felony under 54-903 (the abandonment/cruel neglect or mistreatment provision of the statute) from owning or possessing livestock for at least five years after the date of their conviction.³³ Iowa’s statute for injuries to livestock is much less severe than its counterpart for other animals; the law makes customary husbandry practices the accepted welfare standard.³⁴ Texas prohibits punishment for using any generally accepted animal husbandry practices.³⁵ Wyoming, by comparison, has a separate cruelty statute for livestock but does not expressly exclude them from the general cruelty law.³⁶

New Jersey is another state that treats farm animals uniquely under the law. In 1996, the New Jersey Legislature amended its cruelty law, delegating authority to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) to write regulations concerning the “humane raising, keeping, care, treatment, marketing, and sale of domestic livestock.”³⁷ The NJDA was told to look to “whether the treatment of [the] animals was ‘humane’” as a guiding principle in creating regulations.³⁸ In the final regulations, the department allowed an exemption to what is considered animal cruelty for “routine husbandry practices.”³⁹ The NJDA defined “routine husbandry practices” broadly to mean “techniques commonly taught by veterinary schools, land grant colleges, and agriculture extension agents.”⁴⁰ The regulations also named specific practices that would fall within this exemption and were presumptively humane.

The New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA) sued the NJDA, arguing in part that adoption of

the “routine husbandry practices” clause was arbitrary and capricious because of its broad definition.⁴¹ The court agreed with this, and also agreed with the NJSPCA that the department did not show enough evidence to support the assertion contained in the regulations that cattle tail docking was humane; therefore, the regulations allowing cattle tail docking violated the statute.⁴² The court found that other husbandry practices such as de-beaking of birds and castration of mammals could be humane; however, the regulatory qualifications for performing these practices were deemed too vague.⁴³

After the lawsuit, the NJDA rewrote some of its regulations. Currently, they only allow for tail docking of cattle when performed “by a veterinarian for individual animals.”⁴⁴ Additionally the regulations allow for the de-beaking of birds if it is done in compliance with the *United Egg Producers Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg Laying Flocks*, and is performed by a knowledgeable individual, which is defined in the regulations.⁴⁵

North Carolina’s criminal statute against cruelty to animals is similar to other state cruelty statutes; however, North Carolina has a citizen suit provision, which distinguishes it from other states.⁴⁶ The law allows any interested person to file a lawsuit, even if that person does not have “possessory or ownership rights in an animal.”⁴⁷ If a plaintiff prevails in a case like this, the court may give them ownership of the animal and order the defendant to pay the cost of food, water, shelter, and care.⁴⁸ This law is unique in that it allows any person, including organizations, to stand up for animals, even farm animals, when they believe they are being abused. However, the law, like most cruelty laws, has an exemption for “lawful activities conducted for purposes of ... production of livestock, poultry, or aquatic species.”⁴⁹

In sum, state cruelty laws do not exempt farm animals per se. Many state cruelty codes do exempt a number of practices that are routinely performed on farm animals, however. While the cruelty codes of three states do not include farm animals under the definition of *animal*, each of these states cover farm animals under a separate welfare statute that addresses intentional neglect and/or cruelty. There is no question that farm animals are treated far differently from other domestic animals not used for commercial purposes and receive significantly inferior protection under many state cruelty laws.

TABLE 1. CRUELTY STATUTES: COMMON ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICE EXEMPTIONS⁵⁰

State	Statutory Code Section
Alabama	ALA. CODE § 13A-11-14.1(c)(1)
Alaska	ALASKA STAT. § 11.61.140(c)(3)
Arizona	ARIZ. REV. STAT. ANN. § 13-2910(c)(2)
Arkansas	ARK. CODE ANN. § 5-62-105(A)(5)
Colorado	COLO. REV. STAT. § 18-9-201.5(1)
Connecticut	CONN. GEN. STAT. § 53-247(b)
Florida	FLA. STAT. § 828.125(5)
Georgia	GA. CODE ANN. § 16-12-4(g)
Idaho	IDAHO CODE § 25-3514(5)
Illinois	510 ILL. COMP. STAT. 70/13
Indiana	IND. CODE § 35-46-3-5(5)
Iowa	IOWA CODE §§ 717B.1, 717B.3A(2)(c)
Kansas	KAN. STAT. ANN. § 21-6412 (c)(6)
Maine	ME. STAT. TIT. 7, § 4011(2)(d)
Maryland	MD. CODE ANN., CRIM. LAW § 10-603(1)
Michigan	MICH. COMP. LAWS § 750.50B(8)
Missouri	MO. REV. STAT. § 578.007(8)
Montana	MONT. CODE ANN. § 45-8-211(4)(b)
Nebraska	NEB. REV. STAT. § 54-907
New Jersey	N.J. STAT. ANN. § 4:22-16(ε)
New Mexico	N.M. STAT. ANN. § 30-18-1(l)(4)
North Carolina	N.C. GEN. STAT. § 14-360(c)(5)
North Dakota	N.D. CENT CODE § 36-21.2-01(4)
Ohio	OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 959.13(4)
Oregon	OR. REV. STAT. § 167.335
Pennsylvania	18 PA. CONS. STAT. § 5511(c)(3)
South Carolina	S.C. CODE ANN. § 47-1-40(c)
South Dakota	S.D. CODIFIED LAWS § 40-1-17
Tennessee	TENN. CODE ANN. § 39-14-202(f)(1)
Texas	TEX. PENAL CODE ANN. § 42.09(f)(2)
Utah	UTAH CODE ANN. § 76-9-301(1)(b)(ii)
Vermont	Vt. STAT. ANN. TIT. 13, § 351B(3)
Virginia	VA. CODE ANN. § 3.2-6570(c)
Washington	WASH. REV. CODE §§ 16.52.185, 16.52.205(6)
West Virginia	W. VA. CODE § 61-8-19(f)
Wisconsin	WIS. STAT. § 951.14
Wyoming	WYO. STAT. ANN. § 6-3-203(m)

Enforcement of State Animal Cruelty Laws

As noted above, state animal cruelty laws are limited in terms of protecting farm animals, and they generally impose light penalties on those who abuse farm animals. Several states (e.g., Nebraska⁵¹ and Ohio⁵²) explicitly exclude cruelty to farm animals from felony charges, while Pennsylvania’s felony charges apply only to zoo animals, cats, and dogs.⁵³ In Utah, felony charges for animal cruelty can only be applied to companion animals.⁵⁴ Oregon excludes “commercially grown poultry” unless there is evidence of gross negligence.⁵⁵

Despite these exemptions, there have been some successful prosecutions under state cruelty laws for on-farm animal abuse. In 1998, after a People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) undercover investigation revealed systematic, horrific treatment of farm animals at a pig breeding operation in North Carolina, a grand jury indicted three workers and a manager for felony abuse.⁵⁶ The three workers were eventually convicted of animal cruelty and one served five months in jail.⁵⁷ Another PETA investigation at Seaboard Farms in Oklahoma led to a plea agreement in which the defendant pleaded guilty

to felony animal cruelty charges.⁵⁸ In Iowa, the top pork-producing state, 22 charges were brought against workers at a pig farm after an undercover investigation revealed the workers beating pigs with metal rods and stabbing clothespins into the animals' faces.⁵⁹ Five of the six employees pleaded guilty to the charges against them.⁶⁰

These and similar cases illustrate how animal cruelty statutes can be used to protect farm animals. However, prosecutors have discretion over which cases they want to take on and, unfortunately, animal cruelty is often low on the list.⁶¹ This may be due, in part, to the fact that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to gather sufficient evidence of animal abuse on farms without undercover investigations or the testimony of employee whistleblowers; confined animal housing facilities are routinely closed off to the public. Additionally, animal cruelty prosecutions do not always get to the root cause of the farm animal abuse. Employees are punished for their egregious actions, but managers who allowed or created conditions in which this behavior was condoned usually are not—and continue to operate as before once the attention has died down.

Strengthening Farm Animal Protection Through State and Local Legislation

In addition to broad animal cruelty laws, a number of states have enacted legislation specifically targeting some of the agriculture industry's most egregious animal husbandry practices. (These laws are described in Table 2 on page 10.) Efforts have focused on limiting gestation crates for pregnant sows, crates or tethers for veal calves, battery cages for egg-laying hens, tail docking of meat and dairy cows, and, to a lesser degree, the force-feeding of ducks and geese for foie gras. Advocates have focused on these abusive practices, which otherwise would often be considered "routine husbandry practices" and therefore exempt from animal cruelty statutes. Below is a chronological account of recent efforts to limit specific forms of farm animal abuse through state legislation.

In 2004, California became the first and only state to ban the force-feeding of ducks and geese used for foie gras. As written, the law prohibited selling products from birds who were forcefully fed in order to enlarge their livers.⁶² The law went into effect in 2012 after contentious attempts by producers and some restaurants to stop it through litigation.⁶³ In 2015, a federal district court overturned the section of law banning the sale of foie gras.⁶⁴ California appealed the decision to the Ninth

Circuit Court of Appeals, and in 2017 the three judge panel unanimously reversed the district court decision, reinstating the ban. Opponents of the ban then petitioned the Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari. The court asked the solicitor general to file a brief in the case. In late 2018, the solicitor general filed an amicus brief urging the court to deny review.⁶⁵ In early 2019, the Supreme Court denied certiorari, leaving the ban in place.⁶⁶

There have also been attempts to prohibit the sale of foie gras in New York state through litigation, but these attempts have proven unsuccessful thus far.⁶⁷ Additionally, Chicago banned foie gras in 2006, but in 2008 the city council overturned the ban.⁶⁸ Recently, however, the New York City Council passed a city-wide ban on poultry products that are the result of force-feeding, which would effectively ban foie gras.⁶⁹ The local law amends the city's administrative code and includes criminal enforcement provisions, levies fines of up to \$1,000, and even provides for up to one year of imprisonment for violations.⁷⁰

In 2004, Alaska adopted standards of care for animals with bare minimum requirements: Animals must be given enough food and water to maintain their health, an environment that protects and maintains their health, and "reasonable medical care at times and to the extent available and necessary to maintain ... animal[s] in good health."⁷¹ The law also gives authority to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to write regulations to implement the law. In 2011, Alaska's Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV), a subdivision of the DEC, initiated a process to adopt more comprehensive animal care standards.⁷² By 2012, the OSV had drafted and taken public comments on the proposed standards, which were adopted in 2017.⁷³ The standards contain specific requirements for equines, cattle, and swine,⁷⁴ and some basic standards for poultry.⁷⁵

In 2007, Oregon became the first state to limit the use of gestation crates through the legislative process.⁷⁶ The law makes it illegal to confine a pregnant pig for more than 12 hours a day in a space that prohibits her from lying down and fully extending her limbs, or turning around freely.⁷⁷ Governor Ted Kulongoski signed the bill into law on June 28, 2007, when there were approximately 4,000 breeding sows in the state.⁷⁸ Enforcement of this law could be difficult, however, because of the time element.⁷⁹ In order to build a case against a pork producer, one would need to show an animal being confined for more than 12 hours.

Following Oregon's lead, in 2008, Colorado limited gestation crates for pregnant pigs and crates that do not allow veal calves to turn around and lie down.⁸⁰ The statutory language is similar to Oregon's, but Colorado's prohibition is likely easier to enforce, as there is no allowance for such confinement that lasts no more than 12 hours per day.⁸¹ The one subsection in the Colorado statute that may create enforcement difficulties allows for sows to be kept in crates 12 days before farrowing (giving birth).⁸² It may be difficult for those attempting to enforce the law to obtain expected farrowing dates or determine if a sow has been confined longer than 12 days. Violation of this law is a class two misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail, a \$5,000 fine, or both.⁸³

In 2008, Arizona enacted legislation giving authority to the director of the state's Department of Agriculture to adopt rules for poultry husbandry standards, but limited the rules to egg producers with at least 20,000 hens at each facility.⁸⁴ The law also declares that poultry husbandry practices are a statewide issue, and therefore counties, cities, and towns cannot adopt further regulation over the subject matter.⁸⁵ In the year following the law's enactment, the director codified poultry husbandry standards in the Arizona Administrative Code.⁸⁶ The rule adopts United Egg Producer's 2008 *Animal Husbandry Guidelines*, which allow as little as 67 square inches of floor space per bird and do not provide for any form of enrichment for the hens.⁸⁷ All eggs sold in the state must come from hens raised under these standards, unless the operation maintains fewer than 20,000 hens or the hens are raised cage-free.⁸⁸ Additionally, all eggs sold in Arizona must display the UEP certified logo or an equivalent third-party certification.⁸⁹

Three states—Maine, Michigan, and California—passed legislation in 2009 to limit cruel animal agriculture practices:

- Maine banned the binding or restricting of sows or calves for a majority of the day in a manner that stops them from lying down, standing up and fully extending their limbs, and turning around freely.⁹⁰ A first violation is considered a civil violation and can result in a fine of up to \$2,500.⁹¹
- Michigan passed a law that limits the use of gestation crates, veal crates, and battery cages.⁹² The law provides that gestating sows, calves raised for veal, and egg-laying hens shall not be confined for a majority of the day in a manner that prohibits the animal from performing movements such as turning around.⁹³ The law further requires 144 square

inches of floor space for each egg-laying hen.⁹⁴ The provision relating to veal calves went into effect in 2012, while the provisions relating to pigs and egg-laying hens were scheduled to go into effect in 2019 (but have since been delayed to April 1, 2020, for pigs, and December 31, 2024, for egg-laying hens; see page 8).⁹⁵

- Originally, the Michigan Legislature introduced two industry-backed bills: The first codified the industry's quality assurance programs and the second created an industry-stacked animal care advisory board.⁹⁶ Unimpressed, animal advocacy groups pressured the legislature to replace the language of the bill with language taking animal welfare into account. The industry went along with the plan in order to stop animal advocates from pursuing a citizen initiative campaign to place a stronger animal protection measure on the state ballot. The Michigan Senate passed the new version unanimously, while the House passed it 86 to 22.⁹⁷
- California passed a bill that bans tail docking of cattle unless necessary to save the animal's life or relieve its pain.⁹⁸

Also in 2009, Maine passed a resolution authorizing the state's commissioner of agriculture, food, and rural resources to develop best management practices for poultry facilities with more than 10,000 birds.⁹⁹ The resolution followed an undercover investigation at the largest egg farm in New England, which captured images of workers swinging birds in circles by their necks to kill them, rotting carcasses left in cages with living birds, and birds with broken bones and open wounds.¹⁰⁰ The commissioner subsequently developed standards, but did not stray far from the industry's status quo. The standards specify that (1) companies must designate an individual responsible for overseeing the care and welfare of animals, (2) new housing built after January 1, 2010, must allow for 76 square inches of floor space per brown egg-laying hen and 67 square inches per white leghorn hen, and (3) beak trimming without anesthesia is allowed.¹⁰¹

In 2010, California passed a law banning the sale of shelled eggs from egg-laying hens confined in a manner not in compliance with the codified language of Proposition 2, a California ballot measure that passed in 2008.¹⁰² The law allows hens raised in California to be kept confined only if they can turn around, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their wings without touching the sides of a cage.¹⁰³ In addition to the welfare concerns, California passed the shelled-egg law to

create an even playing field between in-state and out-of-state egg producers.¹⁰⁴ Violation of the law is punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and up to 180 days in jail.¹⁰⁵

Additionally, in 2013, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) promulgated regulations pertaining to the confinement of egg-laying hens as a matter of food safety.¹⁰⁶ The regulations state that after January 2015, “no egg handler or producer may sell or contract to sell a shelled egg for human consumption in California if it is the product of an egg-laying hen that was confined in an enclosure that fails to comply with [the expressed standards].”¹⁰⁷ Each egg-laying hen, when there are nine or more birds, must be provided with 116 square inches of floor space.¹⁰⁸ The formula used to determine the space allotted per bird if there are fewer than nine birds is: $322 + [(n-1) \times 87.3] / n$, where n represents the number of birds.¹⁰⁹

In February 2014, 11 months before the law went into effect, Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster and five other state attorneys general filed a lawsuit against California, attempting to stop the law from taking effect.¹¹⁰ The states challenged the California law based on the Commerce and Supremacy Clauses of the US Constitution. In response to these legal challenges, the District Court for the Eastern District of California dismissed the claims, finding that the states failed to demonstrate that their citizens suffered an injury in fact.¹¹¹ Without a substantial harm to their citizenry, the states were unable to establish constitutional standing.¹¹² On appeal, the Ninth Circuit affirmed and remanded the case, agreeing that the allegations claiming the law “would result in fluctuations of egg prices” was insufficient to establish standing.¹¹³ Finally, in 2017, the Supreme Court of the United States declined to hear the case, allowing the Ninth Circuit decision to stand.¹¹⁴

Despite the various legal challenges, the 2010 shelled-egg law, the CDFA’s shell egg food safety regulations, and Proposition 2 all went into effect on January 1, 2015. Two years later, on February 17, 2017, California brought the first-ever criminal charges against an egg-producer within the state.¹¹⁵ Brought by District Attorney Michael Ramos (who also prosecuted the Westland/Hallmark downed cattle case mentioned later in this report), the charges included 39 counts of violating California’s Proposition 2.¹¹⁶

In 2011, Oregon again enacted legislation pertaining to animal confinement—this time affecting egg-laying hens.

The law established a timeline for egg producers to move hens into “enriched colony cages” by 2026, a process that is to be monitored by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.¹¹⁷ According to the law, a person must not sell eggs or egg products if they know, or reasonably should know, that the products came from hens confined in a manner that does not comply with the law and its regulations.¹¹⁸ Five stages, running from 2012 to 2026, slowly push producers to meet enclosure standards equivalent to the requirements for certification of enriched colony facility systems established by the farm animal welfare program of the American Humane Association (AHA).¹¹⁹ The AHA certification requires that (1) all birds have enough space to turn around and stretch their wings “without difficulty,” (2) each bird be allotted a minimum of 116.3 square inches (including nest space), (3) hens have access to a forage or scratch mat at all times, (4) a nest box must be within each unit, and (5) perches must be provided.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, when promulgated, the Oregon regulations merely provided that enclosures constructed after January 1, 2012, “must be convertible into an enclosure that allows a minimum of 116.3 square inches of floor space per hen, including nest, and not less than 17.7 inches of height,” or must directly meet these space requirements.¹²¹ This left several important welfare requirements of AHA certification out of Oregon’s regulatory framework. However, this law was later abrogated by a 2019 law that required cage-free systems and enrichment; see page 8.

Washington also codified rules for egg-laying hens in 2011. The law is similar to Oregon’s law in that it sets timelines for when egg producers must comply with the law’s standards. For example, “all new and renewal [egg handler or dealer] applications submitted ... on or after January 1, 2026, must include proof that all eggs and egg products provided in intrastate commerce ... are produced by commercial egg layer operations that either” are approved under the AHA “enriched colony cage” protocol or equivalent standards set by the regulating agency.¹²² The law exempts producers with fewer than 3,000 egg-laying hens.¹²³ Unlike Oregon’s 2011 law, the Washington law mandates that egg-laying hens have “areas for nesting, scratching, and perching.”¹²⁴

In 2012, Rhode Island passed a law banning gestation crates, veal crates, and routine tail docking.¹²⁵ Under the law, anyone who intentionally cuts the tail off any bovine is guilty of a misdemeanor unless performed by a “veterinarian for veterinary

purposes,” and the animal is anesthetized, the procedure is done in a manner that minimizes long-term pain and suffering, and the procedure is performed using suitable instruments in hygienic conditions.¹²⁶ Violating the law is punishable by up to a year in prison and a \$500 maximum fine.¹²⁷

In 2018, Rhode Island added battery cages to the list of extreme confinement practices that the state will phase out. The law states that egg-laying hens raised in Rhode Island must be allocated at least 216 square inches and must be able to fully spread both wings without touching the side of an enclosure or other hens. This is currently the highest legal minimum space requirement for egg-laying hens in the United States.¹²⁸

In December 2018, Michigan’s governor vetoed SB 660, which would have delayed implementation of the state’s cage-free standards to 2025.¹²⁹ Later in 2019, a new bill was introduced that would have repealed all of the state’s anti-confinement laws.¹³⁰ Fortunately, a new version of the bill was substituted and subsequently enacted, without the repeal language. The new version also included provisions requiring cage-free housing per UEP guidelines as well as enrichment for hens whose eggs are sold in the state and extended implementation of these provision until Dec. 31, 2024. Limits on the use of gestation crates were also delayed until April 2020.¹³¹

In late 2019, Oregon and Washington enacted laws banning the sale of eggs from intensively confined hens—wherever they are raised—by 2024.¹³² Both laws adopt United Egg Producers’ cage-free standards for space for in-state egg operations.¹³³ Both bills also require eggs sold within the states to come from hens that were provided enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors, including scratch and dust bathing areas, perches, and nest boxes.¹³⁴

In 2020, Colorado enacted legislation that requires egg-laying hens be provided at least one square foot of usable floor space by January 1, 2023. Beginning January 1, 2025, all producers with more than 3,000 egg-laying hens are required to use cage-free systems that comply with UEP guidelines and provide hens with enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors. The bill also prohibits the sale of eggs produced from hens confined in a manner that does not meet these standards.¹³⁵

In 2021, Nevada and Utah passed similar laws applicable to producers with more than 3,000 hens. After July 1, 2022,

in Nevada, producers must provide at least one square foot per hen. After January 1, 2024, producers must use cage-free housing, including enrichment to allow hens to engage in natural behaviors. If elevated platforms and perching opportunities are provided, each hen must have one square foot. If the housing is a single level, one and half square feet per hen is required. Most importantly, the law includes a sales ban on eggs from noncompliant facilities.¹³⁶ Utah’s law is nearly identical to Colorado’s. By 2025, It requires cage-free housing that complies with UEP standards and includes enrichment. It also requires the state Department of Agriculture to submit a report by 2023 detailing “efforts taken by farm owners and operators to come into compliance” as well as “the retail demand for and conditions related to the sale of cage-free eggs.”¹³⁷ Unlike the laws in Colorado and Nevada, however, Utah’s does not include a sales ban.

In summary, through legislation and regulation in recent years, six states banned or limited the use of sow gestation crates, seven states banned or limited the use of conventional battery cages for housing egg-laying hens, six states banned or limited the use of veal crates, one state prohibited the force-feeding of birds for foie gras, and four states put a strict limit on cattle tail docking.

Many of the state laws limiting specific farming practices, however, have language that may make regulation difficult. Anti-confinement laws have several common exemptions for periods when animals are on exhibition, in use for agriculture research, being transported, and being examined¹³⁸—although the overall impact of these exemptions is likely minimal. Two of the practices targeted by state legislation—tail docking and veal crates—are being voluntarily phased out by the industry.¹³⁹ (The threat of legislative bans likely had an impact on the industry’s decision to end the practices, particularly in the case of dairy cattle tail docking.) Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, many of the states that have enacted legislation limiting animal husbandry practices do not have large numbers of farmed animals impacted by the curtailed practices; in some cases, the number is very small or zero.

Anti-confinement laws passed to date have not actually banned close confinement altogether. The laws limit or ban some of the most extreme confinement methods, such as gestation and veal crates. But producers remain free to place gestating sows in “turn-around” crates, and calves raised for

veal may still be housed in small stalls so long as the animal can turn around. It appears that producers have opted to discontinue use of gestation and veal crates in response to the laws passed thus far. However, none of the laws provide for the welfare of the animals in terms of mandating group housing or requiring appropriate bedding and environmental enrichment—and there are no guarantees that producers will address these issues in order to maximize animal welfare and minimize disease and mortality.

While many states make strides toward higher welfare eggs by prohibiting extreme confinement, Iowa appears committed to maintaining the status quo. In 2018, Iowa became the first state to pass a law mandating that grocery stores sell conventional eggs from caged hens. Specifically, the law requires any grocery store participating in a federal food program selling “specialty eggs” (cage-free, free-range, or enriched colony cages) to also stock eggs from hens housed in conventional battery cages.¹⁴⁰

Despite these shortcomings, anti-confinement laws do further the goal of improving farm animal welfare. First and foremost, they serve to educate elected officials, media, and the public regarding the treatment of animals raised for food. Increased awareness may in turn impact consumer food choices and the requirements that food retailers impose on their suppliers. The laws probably also deter industrial farms from planting roots in a particular state. They codify standards for farm animal production practices in state law, and may eventually lead to federal regulation of farm animal welfare.

Strengthening Farm Animal Protection Through Ballot Initiatives

In addition to working through the legislative process, animal advocates have sought to pass farm animal protection laws through citizen-initiated state ballot measures. (Laws passed through the ballot initiative process are included in Table 2, page 10.) Twenty-four states allow for citizen initiative ballot measures, which give citizens the power to bring proposals to statewide elections.¹⁴¹ Since the 1920s, animal advocates have used the ballot initiative process to influence how animals are treated.¹⁴² But it was not until 1998 that a ballot initiative relating to the consumption of animals passed: That year, California voters approved a ban on horse slaughter for human consumption.¹⁴³

To date, four states—Arizona, California, Florida, and Massachusetts—have placed limits on specific animal husbandry practices through the ballot initiative process. Florida limited the use of sow gestation crates through the initiative process on November 5, 2002—the first time a ballot initiative was used to improve living conditions for conventionally raised farm animals.¹⁴⁴ Fifty-five percent of Florida voters (over 2.6 million people) voted in favor of the initiative.¹⁴⁵ The measure is now codified in the Florida Constitution. In addition to the anti-confinement language, the Florida Constitution now states, “Inhumane treatment of animals is a concern of Florida citizens.”¹⁴⁶ Persons found guilty under the constitutional amendment can be fined up to \$5,000 and imprisoned for up to one year.¹⁴⁷ Each sow held in illegal confinement is considered a separate offense for the violator.¹⁴⁸

In 2006, Arizona voters approved the Humane Treatment of Farm Animals Act, an initiative to restrict the use of gestation crates and veal crates, by a margin of 62 percent to 38 percent.¹⁴⁹ The law went into effect six years later, on December 31, 2012.¹⁵⁰ Arizona had approximately 31,000 sows in the state at the time the measure passed, most confined in 2’ x 7’ crates.¹⁵¹ The measure also created the Arizona Humane Treatment of Farm Animals Fund.¹⁵² This fund allows the Arizona attorney general to deposit money into a fund when violators of the Humane Treatment of Farm Animals Act are fined and when donations are made.¹⁵³ The funds are used for mandatory and administrative expenses of the law.¹⁵⁴

California restricted three forms of cruel confinement—battery cages for egg-laying hens, gestation crates, and veal crates—through Proposition 2, a 2008 ballot initiative.¹⁵⁵ Sixty-three percent of voters—more than 8.2 million people—voted yes on the measure.¹⁵⁶ The year before Proposition 2 was on the ballot, an undercover investigation of Hallmark Meat Packing Company in Chino, California, led to the largest meat recall in US history.¹⁵⁷ Media coverage of this incident helped show Americans the severe abuses that take place on factory farms and helped propel the ballot initiative to victory.

California codified Proposition 2 into its Health and Safety Code, and the law went into effect January 1, 2015.¹⁵⁸ The language was similar to many of the other state restrictions on specific husbandry practices—it prohibited confining or tethering sows, veal calves, and egg-laying hens for all or a majority of the day in ways that prevent them from lying

down, turning around, standing up, and fully extending their limbs.¹⁵⁹ Although advocacy groups believed the standards for egg-laying hens could only be met with cage-free systems, the CDFA determined that 116 square inches per bird met the law's requirement.¹⁶⁰ Violation of the law is a misdemeanor; upon conviction a person may be fined up to \$1,000, imprisoned not more than 180 days, or both.¹⁶¹

In 2016, Massachusetts placed Question 3, An Act to Prevent Cruelty to Farm Animals, on its November ballot.¹⁶² The initiative prohibited the cruel confinement of animals, defined as "confined so as to prevent a covered animal from lying down, standing up, fully extending the animal's limbs, or turning around freely."¹⁶³ In addition, the proposed language implemented a sales ban on products from animals confined in a cruel manner.¹⁶⁴ Before the proposal was placed on the ballot, the highest court in Massachusetts unanimously ruled that the sales provisions and the animal welfare concerns "share a common purpose of preventing farm animals from being caged in overly cramped conditions."¹⁶⁵ The initiative passed overwhelmingly, with 78 percent of the vote (over 2.5 of nearly 3.3 million votes cast) in favor of the referendum.¹⁶⁶ The rule requires a phase-in program, with full compliance required by January 1, 2022.¹⁶⁷ Finally, the law allows the Massachusetts attorney general to impose a \$1,000 civil fine for each violation.¹⁶⁸

In response to fears about egg shortages, the Massachusetts legislature amended the provision to reduce space requirement for hens from one and a half to one square foot if farmers employ a multilevel cage design. The amendments also include a six-month delay in the effective date of the pork sales ban, as well as a shift of enforcement responsibility from the attorney general to the state Department of Agriculture.¹⁶⁹

In 2018, California again used a ballot measure to improve conditions for animals on farms by passing Proposition 12.¹⁷⁰ The proposition passed by a wide margin, with 63 percent voting yes.¹⁷¹ Proposition 12 amended California's existing anti-confinement laws within the Health and Safety Code to establish minimum space requirements for calves raised for veal, sows, and egg-laying hens and banned the in-state sale of veal, pork, and eggs (in the shell or in liquid form) from animals raised in intensive confinement.¹⁷² It maintained Proposition 2's enforcement provisions and required the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the

California Department of Public Health to write regulations to implement its provisions by September 2019.¹⁷³

In 2019, the National Pork Producers Council and the American Farm Bureau Federation filed a lawsuit challenging California's Proposition 12. Plaintiffs argued that the sales ban on out-of-state pork products that didn't meet the standard unlawfully affected interstate commerce and therefore violated the Commerce Clause of the US Constitution. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the case in 2021 after determining that, while the law may have an indirect practical effect on how pork is produced and sold outside California, the law itself did not violate the principles of the Commerce Clause.¹⁷⁴ In March 2022, the US Supreme Court granted the plaintiff's petition to appeal this ruling.¹⁷⁵

Ballot initiatives contribute to the forward movement of farm animal welfare in the United States, particularly in terms of public awareness, since measures on the ballot generally receive far greater media attention than bills introduced in the state legislature. In fact, it could be argued that the Prop. 2 campaign in California represents the single most significant event to date for farm animal protection, responsible for generating mainstream interest in the treatment of farm animals throughout the country.

In response to anti-confinement legislation and ballot initiatives elsewhere, the Missouri legislature passed a law specifying that only the USDA, Missouri Department of Agriculture, county sheriff, or other Missouri official has the authority to inspect agricultural facilities. The purpose of the law is to prevent other states from inspecting facilities within Missouri to ensure compliance with those state's laws.¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, there are limits to the ballot initiative strategy. Twenty-six states do not have the ballot measure process—many of them top animal production states. For example, Iowa, the state with the highest egg production (with production nearly double that of Ohio, its nearest competitor)¹⁷⁷ does not allow for citizen-initiated ballot measures. The states with the second-, third-, and fourth-largest red meat production in 2012 (Iowa, Kansas, and Texas) also do not allow for citizen initiatives.¹⁷⁸ In addition, the advent of right-to-farm laws that seek to shield agricultural operations from further restrictions make ballot initiatives regulating industrial livestock production difficult or nearly impossible to pass.¹⁷⁹

TABLE 2. STATE LAWS LIMITING FARM ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICES

Tail Docking			
STATE	YEAR	TEXT	ENACTED THROUGH
California	2009	Prohibits tail docking of cattle unless for emergency purposes.	Legislation: CAL. PENAL CODE § 597N
New Jersey	2012	Prohibits tail docking of cattle unless performed by a veterinarian for individual animals.	Regulation: N.J. ADMIN. CODE § 2:8-2.6
Ohio	2011	Prohibits tail docking of dairy cattle unless performed by a veterinarian and medically necessary.	Regulation: OHIO ADMIN. CODE 901:12-6-02
Rhode Island	2012	Prohibits tail docking of cattle unless performed by a veterinarian for veterinary purposes and the animal is anesthetized.	Legislation: 4 R.I. GEN. LAWS ANN. § 4-1-6.1

Sow Gestation Confinement			
STATE	YEAR	TEXT	ENACTED THROUGH
Arizona	2006	Prohibits confining a pig during pregnancy for all or a majority of the day in a manner that prevents her from lying down and fully extending her limbs, or turning around freely.	Ballot initiative, codified as ARIZ. REV. STAT. ANN. § 13- 2910.07
California	2008	Prohibits confinement of sows for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25990
California	2019	Prohibits confinement of breeding pigs with less than 24 square feet usable floorspace per pig. Prohibits in-state sale of pork products produced from animals raised in intensive confinement.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE, Ch. 13.8 § 25990
Colorado	2008	Prohibits confinement of sows in a manner that does not allow them to stand up, lie down, and turn around without having to touch the sides of enclosures. However, sows can be placed in farrowing crates 12 days prior to expected farrowing date.	Legislation: COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 35-50.5- 102
Florida	2002	Prohibits confinement of pregnant pigs in a manner that does not allow them to turn around freely; there is a separate offense for each sow so confined.	Ballot initiative, codified as FLA. CONST. ART. X, § 21
Maine	2009	Prohibits confinement of sows for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: ME. REV. STAT. tit. 7, § 4020
Massachusetts	2016	Prohibits confinement of sows in a manner that prevents them from lying down, standing up, fully extending their limbs, or turning around freely.	Ballot initiative, amended by legislation in 2021. Temporarily codified as 2021 MASS. LAWS 108.
Michigan	2009	Prohibits confinement of sows for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: MICH. COMP. LAWS ANN. § 287.746
Ohio	2010	As of 2026, gestation stalls can only be used post weaning for a period of time that seeks to maximize embryonic welfare and allows for confirmation of pregnancy.	Regulation: OHIO ADMIN. CODE 901:12-8
Oregon	2007	Prohibits confinement of sows for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: OR. REV. STAT. § 600.150
Rhode Island	2012	Prohibits knowing confinement of sows in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: 4 R.I. GEN. LAWS ANN. § 4-1.1-3

Veal Calf Confinement

STATE	YEAR	TEXT	ENACTED THROUGH
Arizona	2006	Prohibits confining a veal calf for all or a majority of the day in a manner that prevents him from lying down and fully extending his limbs, or turning around freely.	Ballot initiative, codified as ARIZ. REV. STAT. ANN. § 13-2910.07
California	2008	Prohibits confinement of veal calves for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25990
California	2019	Prohibits confinement of calf raised for veal with less than 43 square feet of usable floorspace per calf. Prohibits in-state sale of veal products produced from animals raised in intensive confinement.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE, Ch. 13.8 § 25990
Colorado	2008	Prohibits confinement of calves in a manner that does not allow them to stand up, lie down, and turn around without having to touch their enclosures.	Legislation: COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 35-50.5-102
Kentucky	2014	Veal calves must be raised in group pens.	Regulation: 302 KY. ADMIN. REGS. 21:030
Maine	2009	Prohibits confinement of calves for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: ME. REV. STAT. tit.7 § 4020
Massachusetts	2016	Prohibits confining of veal calves so as to prevent them from lying down, standing up, fully extending their limbs, or turning around freely.	Ballot initiative, amended by legislation in 2021. Temporarily codified as 2021 MASS. LAWS 108.
Michigan	2009	Prohibits confinement of veal calves for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: MICH. COMP. LAWS ANN. § 287746
Ohio	2010	Veal calves must be housed in group pens by 10 weeks of age. Calves must be able to stand without impediment, rest using normal postures, groom, eat, turn around, and lie down.	Regulation: OHIO ADMIN. CODE §§ 901:12-4, 901:12-5-03
Rhode Island	2012	Prohibits knowing confinement of veal calves in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extending their limbs, and turn around freely.	Legislation: 4 R.I. GEN. LAWS ANN. § 4-1.1-3

Egg-laying Hen Confinement

STATE	YEAR	TEXT	ENACTED THROUGH
California	2008	Prohibits confinement of egg-laying hens for the majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their wings, and turn around.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25990
California	2019	Prohibits confinement of egg-laying hens with less than 144 square inches usable floorspace per hen after December 31, 2019. Prohibits confining an egg-laying hen with less than the amount required by the 2017 edition of the <i>UEP Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing</i> or in a non-cage-free housing system. Cage-free is defined to include enrichment. Prohibits in-state sale of shell eggs or liquid eggs produced from animals raised in intensive confinement.	Ballot initiative, codified as CAL. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE, Ch. 13.8 § 25990

Colorado	2020	Prohibits confinement of egg-laying hens with less than 1 square foot of usable floor space after January 1, 2023. Requires use of cage-free systems on operations with more than 3,000 egg-laying hens and requires hens be provided enrichments beginning January 1, 2025. Prohibits the in-state sale of eggs from hens housed in violation of these standards.	Legislation: COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 35-21-203.
Massachusetts	2016	Prohibits confining egg-laying hens so as to prevent them from lying down, standing up, fully extending their limbs, or turning around freely.	Ballot initiative, amended by legislation in 2021. Temporarily codified as 2021 MASS. LAWS 108.
Michigan	2009	Prohibits confinement of egg-laying hens for a majority of the day in a manner that does not allow them to lie down, stand up, fully extend their wings, and turn around freely. Fully extending limbs is defined as “at least 1.0 square feet of usable floor space per hen.”	Legislation: MICH. COMP. LAWS ANN. § 287746(G)
Nevada	2021	For producers with more than 3,000 hens, requires cage-free housing by 2024 and one square foot per hen if vertical space is provided or one and a half square feet if not. Also bans the in-state sale of eggs that come from hens not kept in cage-free housing.	Legislation: Temporarily codified as 2021 NEV. STAT. 2209.
Oregon	2011	Dept. of Agriculture has the authority to create regulations that will phase in colony cages by 2026 that comply with the American Humane Association’s farm animal welfare certification standards or their equivalent.	Legislation: OR. REV. STAT. § 632.840
Oregon	2019	Bans the in-state sale of eggs from hens housed in cruel confinement by the end of 2023. Changes space requirement to follow UEP 2017 of <i>Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing</i> .	Legislation: OR. REV. STAT. § 632.835-632.850.
Rhode Island	2018	Prohibits confinement of egg-laying hens in a manner that prevents them from fully stretching their wings without touching the sides of the enclosure or other birds. Also mandates that each hen have access to usable floor space of 1.5 square feet.	Legislation: R.I. GEN. LAWS ANN §§ 4-1.1-1 TO 1.5
Utah	2021	Requires the use of cage-free housing by 2025 for producers with more than 3,000 hens that allows for the amount of floor space mandated by the UEP 2017 <i>Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing</i> .	Legislation: UTAH CODE §§ 4-41-101-107 (2021)
Washington	2011	As of 2026, for commercial producers with 3,000 egg-laying hens or more, each hen must have 116.3 square inches of space and access to areas for nesting, scratching, and perching.	Legislation: WASH. REV. CODE §§ 69.25.065, 69.25.107
Washington	2019	Bans the in-state sale of eggs from hens housed in cruel confinement by the end of 2023. Changes space requirement to follow UEP 2017 of <i>Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing</i> .	Legislation: WASH. REV. CODE § 69.25.107-69.25.110.

ANTI-WHISTLEBLOWER STATE LAWS

Farm animal welfare improvements over the past several years have resulted in significant push-back from the animal agriculture industry. Attempts have been made in several states to pass legislation that makes it a crime to take unauthorized videos and photographs at farming facilities. Some states have tried to make it a crime to lie on employment applications, while other states have tried to place restrictions on when

evidence of animal abuse can be turned in to state authorities. These whistleblower suppression bills, often referred to as “ag-gag” legislation (a term coined by Mark Bittman in 2011) specifically target animal advocates and criminalize attempts to make agriculture facilities more transparent.¹⁸⁰

Kansas, Montana, and North Dakota have had whistleblower suppression laws for almost 25 years. All three states

criminalize entering an animal agriculture facility to take recordings without approval.¹⁸¹ In recent years, the industry has been pushing for more whistleblower suppression laws. Iowa passed legislation in 2012 making it illegal to give false information on an application to work in an agriculture facility—in order to prevent undercover animal advocates from obtaining employment.¹⁸² Utah and Missouri also passed legislation in 2012: It is a misdemeanor in Utah to record images or sounds at an agriculture facility, while Missouri’s law requires employees to deliver any recordings of animal abuse to authorities within 24 hours of the recording, effectively cutting short investigations and preventing investigators from gathering enough evidence to establish a pattern of animal abuse that would be necessary for successful prosecution.¹⁸³

In 2013, whistleblower suppression legislation was introduced in 11 states: Arkansas, California, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wyoming, and Vermont. None of these bills passed, but the industry has not been deterred. In 2014, Idaho passed anti-whistleblower legislation making it illegal to record conduct at an agriculture facility or obtain employment through misrepresentation.¹⁸⁴ Bills were also introduced in several other states in 2014. In 2015, North Carolina passed an expansive anti-whistleblower bill that prohibits informants from disclosing information obtained not only from agriculture facilities, but also from other nonpublic businesses.¹⁸⁵ North Carolina’s governor vetoed the bill, but the legislature overturned the veto, and the law went into effect January 1, 2016.¹⁸⁶ This was the first ag-gag bill to impose a civil, rather than criminal, penalty. Arkansas also enacted ag-gag legislation in 2017.¹⁸⁷ As in North Carolina, the Arkansas legislation creates a civil cause of action, but it only applies to whistleblowers on agricultural and business properties.¹⁸⁸ Despite attempts by animal welfare organizations to stop the bill, the governor signed it, and the Arkansas ag-gag law went into effect on March 23, 2017.¹⁸⁹ The law is currently being challenged in court. As a preliminary procedural matter, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals has determined that the plaintiffs have suffered an injury sufficient to confer standing to challenge the law.¹⁹⁰

In both 2019 and 2020, Iowa became the latest state to enact ag-gag laws. The 2019 law established the crime of “agricultural production facility trespass” and made it illegal to enter a facility or gain employment under false pretenses with

the intent to harm the owner of the facility or its operations.¹⁹¹ The US District Court for the Southern District of Iowa found the law violated the First Amendment.¹⁹² The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed in part and affirmed in part, holding that the establishment of criminal penalties for gaining access to an agricultural production facility using false pretenses did not violate the constitution, but prohibiting false statements to obtain employment at an animal production facility did.¹⁹³ Subsequently in 2020, Iowa enacted yet another ag-gag law that established the crime of “food operation trespass” which prohibits entering or remaining on the property of a food operation without consent and establishes rather harsh penalties.¹⁹⁴ This bill was signed into law on June 10, 2020, and took effect immediately. In April 2021, the Iowa legislature again passed a law meant to curtail whistleblowing. It prohibits placing a camera or recording device on the property while trespassing (something already prohibited under Iowa law).¹⁹⁵ This law is currently being challenged in court.

Animal and consumer advocates are challenging several of these anti-whistleblower laws in court. In 2015, a federal district court found Idaho’s law to be unconstitutional and overturned it.¹⁹⁶ On appeal, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court’s holding, finding that the law violated the First Amendment.¹⁹⁷ The state of Idaho was ordered to pay \$260,000 in legal fees to the plaintiffs who challenged this unconstitutional ag-gag law.¹⁹⁸ A challenge to Utah’s ag-gag law also resulted in the law being struck down as a violation of the First Amendment. Utah did not appeal the case and was ordered to pay a \$349,000 settlement to the plaintiffs.¹⁹⁹ In February 2018, a coalition of organizations brought a lawsuit in federal court challenging Iowa’s ag-gag statute. In January 2019, the court found that the Iowa law was an unconstitutional infringement on First Amendment rights.²⁰⁰ While the state appealed the ruling, legislators busily crafted a new version of the statute meant to circumvent the lower court’s opinion.²⁰¹ The new law was also challenged by animal and free speech advocates, as noted above. These cases are still pending. In June 2018, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a federal district court’s dismissal of the lawsuit challenging the North Carolina ag-gag law, allowing the case to move forward.²⁰² In June, 2020, the court found that the law was unconstitutional and struck it down.²⁰³ Additionally in 2020, a federal district court struck down Kansas’ ag-gag law, the oldest in the country, for violating the First Amendment.²⁰⁴

STATE LIVESTOCK CARE STANDARDS BOARDS

In addition to whistleblower suppression laws, the agriculture industry has persuaded some states to delegate authority for oversight of farm animal welfare to state livestock boards. Some states have also taken the power to regulate animal care away from local governments. Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and South Carolina all have specific statutes preempting counties, municipalities, and other local governments from promulgating animal husbandry standards.²⁰⁵

The following states have established livestock care standards boards: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, and West Virginia. These boards either regulate animal care in the state or act in an advisory capacity to state authorities. For the boards that have promulgated written standards of care, most have codified the agriculture industry status quo. This is likely due in large part to the composition of the boards—most consist primarily of conventional industry representatives and do not include animal welfare specialists. (See Table 3, page 16, for further details.)

Ohio created the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board (OLCSB) in 2009 via an amendment to the state constitution.²⁰⁶ The board has the authority to “establish standards governing the care and well-being of livestock and poultry in [the] state.”²⁰⁷ However, an underlying goal for creating the board was to stop animal advocacy organizations from achieving farm animal care standards through legislation or ballot initiative.²⁰⁸ The OLCSB has set livestock care standards that, in many respects, do not stray far from industry standards. For example, physical alterations can be performed without pain medication, and euthanasia practices include blunt force trauma, electrocution, and gun shot.²⁰⁹ There has been slight progress with respect to species-specific regulations: Veal crates and tail docking of dairy cattle were phased out at the end of 2017, and gestation crates will be phased out by 2025. In addition, new egg farms are not permitted to use conventional battery cage systems.²¹⁰

In 2010, several other states created livestock boards, or gave existing authorities power over all animal care standards. For example, Vermont created the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council (LCSAC), consisting mostly of members

representing the agriculture industry.²¹¹ However, the LCSAC does provide a seat for a member with experience in investigating animal cruelty, and another for a representative of a local humane society.²¹² The addition of these seats would seem to increase the potential that adequate standards for animal care could be implemented; however, the board only acts in an advisory capacity, and animal welfare advocates are still a minority among board members.²¹³ Since taking effect in 2010, the board has held several meetings and published position statements on some of the more egregious farming practices. In 2015 and 2016, the board wrote transportation guidelines for cattle and newborn calves that also provide cursory on-farm recommendations.²¹⁴

Unfortunately, LCSAC positions often align with industry standards. For example, in 2012 the council recommended a “no” vote on S. 107, a bill prohibiting tail docking on horses and bovine unless performed by a veterinarian,²¹⁵ stating, “It is the overall consensus of the Council that criminalizing the act of tail docking or the owners of animals with docked tails is not the best way to effect change within the Vermont dairy industry.”²¹⁶ Consequently, the bill was never enacted.²¹⁷ When the Vermont House Committee on Agriculture requested the council’s position on the use of gestation crates, it recommended that during gestation, sows be kept in a manner that allows them to “turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their limbs.” However, this statement was qualified by the recommendation that “the use of crates for limited restraint of swine for purposes of feeding, breeding, handling, farrowing and disease control be permitted [and] the Council does not support an outright ban on gestation crates.”²¹⁸

Utah and Kentucky also created advisory livestock care boards in 2010. Kentucky’s Livestock Care Standards Commission advises the Board of Agriculture on standards “governing the care and well-being of on-farm livestock and poultry.”²¹⁹ Kentucky published final regulations in 2014.²²⁰ They require that veal calves be raised in group housing by 2017.²²¹ However, they allow for nonambulatory animals to be shipped to slaughter and mutilations to be performed without anesthesia and at any age.²²² In 2020, the Kentucky legislature passed a law that allows veterinarians to report cases of animal cruelty or abuse of livestock and poultry covered under the state’s livestock care standards. The law provides a shield against liability for a breach of client relationship for veterinarians who report abuse in good faith.²²³

Utah created its agriculture advisory board in 1979; in 2010, the Utah State Legislature authorized the board to advise the agriculture commissioner on the standards of care for farm animals.²²⁴ In 2021, after consistent pressure from AWI, Utah's agricultural advisory board adopted best management practices for the state's animal agriculture industry. The standards, however, are relatively weak and are only recommendations.²²⁵

Illinois and West Virginia also created livestock care boards in 2010. In Illinois, the Department of Agriculture must submit rules and regulations pertaining to the "well-being of domestic animals and poultry" to the state's Advisory Board of Livestock Commissioners for approval.²²⁶ To date, however, the advisory board has not yet approved standards for on-farm treatment of animals.

West Virginia's board must establish animal care standards for livestock, including determining agriculture best management practices for farm animals, which then must be approved by the state legislature.²²⁷ In 2014, the West Virginia Livestock Care Standards Board finalized the animal care standards, which were approved by the state's legislature. The standards allow for nonambulatory animals to suffer indefinitely and do not require pain relief for physical alterations.²²⁸ In 2021, the farm appropriations bill passed by the West Virginia legislature restructured the board—limiting its power and making it essentially an advisory committee. The bill also made complaints to the state Department of Agriculture or the board about violations of the care standards, as well as subsequent investigations, exempt from state public disclosure law.²²⁹

Indiana took another route, and in 2011 gave the existing Board of Animal Health (BOAH) the discretionary authority to adopt rules governing the care of livestock and poultry.²³⁰ This legislation came about because agriculture industry groups feared animal advocates would try to push for strong animal care standards in the state, as they had a few years earlier in neighboring Michigan. The Indiana Farm Bureau's director of state government relations, Bob Craft, stated, "[the Indiana Farm Bureau] support[s] this legislation so that what happened in Michigan will not happen in Indiana."²³¹ In Michigan, animal advocacy groups had threatened to get legislation enacted through a state ballot measure to improve the lives of farm animals.²³² To avoid a fight at the ballot box, the animal agriculture industry came to an agreement with

animal advocates to instead pass legislation limiting the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens, gestation crates for pregnant sows, and veal crates for young calves.²³³

The Indiana livestock care statute listed factors BOAH can consider when promulgating rules, none of which directly reference animal welfare.²³⁴ The regulations require caretakers to provide "animals with an environment that can reasonably be expected to maintain the health of animals of that species, breed, sex, and age, raised using applicable production methods."²³⁵ Several other sections in the regulations provide similarly vague statements, allowing for broad interpretations of the rules and reliance on conventional industry practices.²³⁶

The Rhode Island General Assembly created a livestock advisory board in 2012 to help the state agriculture department review and evaluate laws and rules relating to agriculture best management practices and the overall health and welfare of livestock—a purpose that departs from other livestock boards.²³⁷ The board is responsible for defining an "adequate living condition" for livestock, which it did on July 1, 2014. Persons not in compliance with the standards can be charged with animal cruelty.

The *Livestock Welfare and Care Standards* adopted by the Rhode Island board are similar to those set in Ohio. The standards provide that dairy cattle kept in tie stalls must be given the opportunity to exercise and enough room to stand up, lie down, eat, drink, defecate, and urinate comfortably.²³⁸ For beef cattle, pain management must be used if dehorning occurs after eruption.²³⁹ Additionally, calves with navels that have not dried after birth cannot be transported to a slaughterhouse, a market, or collection facility.²⁴⁰ These are movements in the right direction. However, there are several other provisions in the document that are paltry and vague. For example, castration of pigs should be done at "as young an age as is practical," but if done on "older and larger boars" pain management must be used. Unfortunately, there is no definition for "older and larger boars."²⁴¹

In Louisiana, the Board of Animal Health is responsible for adopting standards applicable to the care of farm animals, subject to the approval of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry commissioner.²⁴² The same law that provides for this process also prohibits municipalities and other local governments from adopting their own regulations pertaining

to the care of farm animals.²⁴³ Local governments can request to amend the standards to provide for specific problems within their geographic area, however.²⁴⁴

In 2013, Louisiana’s Board of Animal Health adopted animal care standards with the commissioner’s approval. The standards are broad and leave a significant amount of room for interpretation. For example, regulations read: “Livestock personnel shall have the proper level of knowledge, ability, and competency to maintain the health and care and well-being of livestock as specified in this Code.”²⁴⁵ There is no definition within the regulations for “proper level,” or “ability, and competency.”

Some of the species-specific standards in Louisiana allow for extreme confinement and mutilation of animals. Sows, for example, can be kept in gestation crates and farrowing stalls. The standards specify that sows must be able to get up and lie down at will and, when standing, touch only one side of the enclosure; the ability to turn around is not a requirement, however.²⁴⁶ The poultry standards codify the National Chicken Council’s stocking density, which currently allows for up to 9.0 pounds per square foot.²⁴⁷ Mutilations such as beak trimming, tail docking, and claw removal can be performed without anesthesia, but must be performed within a certain number of days after the animal is born.²⁴⁸

In sum, livestock boards have the power to enrich the lives of farm animals, but they also have the power to maintain the status quo, which is generally what they’ve done thus far. However, in a very few instances they have implemented standards that (after their effective dates) will elevate farm animal welfare within the state, as in the limits placed by Ohio’s board on the use of gestation crates and veal crates and the practice of docking the tails of dairy cattle.

ENFORCEMENT OF STATE FARM ANIMAL PROTECTION LAWS

State laws protecting farm animals fall into three main categories: (1) on-farm minimum animal care standards, (2) bans on the sale of products that do not meet certain care standards, and (3) prohibitions on specific conventional industry practices, such as intensive confinement and physical alterations. In 2019, AWI surveyed each state that has enacted on-farm animal protections to determine whether the

provisions of those laws and/or regulations are being enforced, and if so, to what degree. To conduct this research, AWI submitted state public records requests for documents related to the enforcement of all state farm animal protection laws in effect as of January 2019.

Animal protection advocates have generally opposed the creation of minimum state animal care regulations due to concerns that they will present an obstacle to obtaining higher-level husbandry standards. However, AWI’s survey reveals that a majority of states (7 of 12) that have enacted these minimum standards are conducting some type of enforcement activity, primarily investigating complaints received from humane societies, neighbors, and members of the public. While a majority of the investigations to date have focused on the treatment of animals on small “hobby” farms, some commercial operations have been inspected as well.

Two states have passed bans on the sale of food products that were produced in violation of minimum animal care standards, and one state provided evidence of enforcement.

Unlike for minimum care standards and sale bans, AWI has received no enforcement evidence for 17 of 18 state anti-confinement laws covered by the survey. One possible explanation for the lack of enforcement of these laws is that a mechanism to facilitate enforcement was not included in the measures. Examples of enforcement mechanisms include producer reports or affidavits, third-party audits, and departmental inspections. There is also no evidence that animal protection advocates are filing complaints and/or requests for investigation with state agencies, possibly because access to animals held in intensive confinement settings is extremely limited. It is assumed that a vast majority of producers comply with anti-confinement laws by the time they go into effect, but there is currently no way to confirm this.

TABLE 3. STATE LIVESTOCK BOARDS

State	Board Name	Obligated to Write Animal Care Standards?	Animal Welfare Board Member?	Standards Written?
Illinois	Advisory Board of Livestock Commissioners	No	No	No
Indiana	Board of Animal Health	No	No	Yes, 345 IND. ADMIN. CODE 14-2-1-14-2-5
Kentucky	Livestock Care Standards Commission	No	No	Yes, 302 KY. ADMIN. REGS. 21:001-080
Louisiana	Board of Animal Health	Yes	No	Yes, LA. ADMIN. CODE tit. 7, §§ 2101-2117
Ohio	Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board	No ^A	Yes ^B	Yes, OHIO ADMIN. CODE 901:12-1-15
Rhode Island	Livestock Welfare and Care Standards Advisory Council	No	Yes	Yes, 250-40 R.I. CODE. R. § 05.
Utah	Agriculture Advisory Board	No ^C	No	Yes, best management practices, but not codified
Vermont	Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council	No	Yes ^D	Yes, but not codified ^E
West Virginia	Livestock Care Standards Board	Yes	Yes ^F	Yes, 73 c.s.r. § 1.

A. "The Board shall have authority to establish standards governing the care and well-being of livestock and poultry in this state, subject to the authority of the General Assembly."
 B. One member representing a county humane society that is organized under state law.
 C. Obligated to advise on establishment of standards governing the care of livestock and poultry.
 D. A person with experience investigating charges of animal cruelty involving livestock and a representative of a local humane society or organization.
 E. The board wrote transportation guidelines (with minimal on-farm recommendations) for newborn calves in 2015, and has provided other superficial recommendations.
 F. One member representing a county humane society that is organized under state law.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Advances for farm animal welfare have also been made through changing the policies of industry trade associations. Animal advocacy organizations push industry associations—along with retailers and individual producers—to phase out the worst animal husbandry practices. For instance, in 2007 Strauss Veal and March Farms, two of the largest veal producers in the United States, pledged to go crate-free within two years.²⁴⁹ Soon after, the American Veal Association (AVA) encouraged all veal producers to go crate-free by 2017.²⁵⁰ In January 2018, the AVA announced that all member companies had completed this transition.²⁵¹ Similarly, in 2013, the National Milk Producers Federation recommended that tail docking of dairy cattle be phased out by 2022.²⁵² Two years later, it moved up the phase-out date to 2017 at the request of dairy retailers.²⁵³ The first industry trade association to limit a conventional animal husbandry practice was United Egg Producers, which

in 2002 amended its animal care guidelines pertaining to acceptable methods of forcing hens to molt.²⁵⁴ It prohibited water- and feed-withdrawal molting methods and required that lighting periods be at least eight hours in length.²⁵⁵ These industry-initiated phase-outs of conventional practices are merely voluntary, however, and the percent of producers complying with the recommendations is unknown.

While the industry is making self-imposed changes, retail food companies such as Wendy’s, The Cheesecake Factory, Safeway, Papa John’s Pizza, and Target pressure the industry to modify their practices incrementally as well. These companies, along with others, have announced that they will not buy pork products from producers using gestation crates after a phase-in period. In 2013, Safeway announced that its entire eastern division of pork supply had eliminated gestation crates.²⁵⁶ Retailers are also pushing the industry to move toward cage-

free systems for egg-laying hens. Numerous companies have made cage-free commitments. In fact, if the companies that have already made commitments stick to them, over 60 percent of eggs will come from cage-free hens by 2025.²⁵⁷

Extreme confinement has been the main target when pressuring companies to improve how they treat animals raised for food. Other areas have received some attention, however. In 2013, Tyson announced that its contract farmers can no longer euthanize sick or injured piglets by blunt force, which includes slamming their heads into the ground.²⁵⁸ This was the only new requirement announced by Tyson at the time, but the company also urged its farmers to use pain mitigation for tail docking and castration of piglets and to use video monitoring in barns as well.²⁵⁹ Additionally, many companies are committing to better welfare practices for broiler chickens. These include environmental enrichments, more space, and a switch to slower-growing breeds (that are not as subject to health issues).²⁶⁰

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The World Organisation for Animal Health (known by its French abbreviation, “OIE”) is an intergovernmental organization made up of 180 member states. Since 2005 the organization has adopted 11 sets of farm animal welfare standards, which cover transport by land, sea, and air; transport of farmed fish; the slaughter process; killing of animals for disease control purposes; and the welfare of animals in beef, dairy, pork, and broiler production systems.²⁶¹ The OIE intends to produce standards to cover the on-farm treatment of other species, including laying hens.

In the United States, interested stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the OIE standards-setting process through submitting comments on proposed animal welfare standards to USDA Veterinary Services. Veterinary Services in turn submits comments on behalf of the United States to the OIE. Stakeholders, including animal welfare organizations, have had some success in influencing USDA submissions over the past few years. To date, the USDA has failed to implement most OIE standards in regulation or to recommend statutory amendments to Congress. Consequently, the United States is not in compliance with OIE standards in many aspects of farm animal welfare.

Several countries have taken steps to implement OIE standards. This includes both national regulations and industry-recommended codes of practice. For example, in 2013 Canada’s National Farm Animal Care Council published the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle*.²⁶² The document covers both recommended and required practices, which may be enforceable under national and provincial regulation in Canada. The code for beef cattle is generally consistent with the OIE standards for the welfare of animals in beef production systems.

Unlike the United States, many developed countries have enacted comprehensive regulations and/or industry best practices to address the welfare of animals raised for food. As mentioned above, Canada has enacted a comprehensive code of practice for beef cattle. In recent years it also published revised standards for the raising of pigs and revised standards for egg-laying hens.²⁶³ The pig standards phase out the use of gestation crates.²⁶⁴ As of July 1, 2014, all new installation and replacement of existing individual stalls must allow sows to stand up without touching both sides of their stalls and to lie down.²⁶⁵ By 2024, all sows and gilts must be housed in groups, individual pens, or stalls that allow them to turn around or get periodic exercise (this was to be defined in more detail by 2019).²⁶⁶ In addition to addressing confinement housing, the code requires environmental enrichment for pigs²⁶⁷ and the use of analgesics for the castration²⁶⁸ and tail docking²⁶⁹ of pigs.

OTHER REPORTS IN THIS SERIES:

- [Legal Protections for Farm Animals During Transport](#)
- [Legal Protections for Nonambulatory \(or “Downed”\) Farm Animals](#)
- [Legal Protections for Farm Animals at Slaughter](#)

1. For a detailed review of legal protections related to transport to slaughter, please see ANIMAL WELFARE INST., LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR FARM ANIMALS DURING TRANSPORT (2017), available at <https://awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/fa-legalprotectionsduringtransport-12262013.pdf>.
2. See 7 U.S.C. § 1902 (1978) (limiting the humane slaughter laws to “cattle, calves, horses, mules, sheep, swine, and other livestock” which, has not been interpreted to include poultry); see also *Clay v. N.Y. Cent. R. Co.*, 224 A.D. 508, 511-512 (App. Div. 1928) (holding that the Twenty-Eight Hour Law applies only to “cattle, sheep, swine, and other animals” but, does not apply to poultry).
3. BRUCE WAGMAN ET AL., ANIMAL LAW: CASES AND MATERIALS 420 (4th ed. 2009).
4. Transportation, Sale, and Handling of Certain Animals, 7 U.S.C. §§ 2131-2159 (1966) (otherwise known as the Animal Welfare Act).
5. Veal Calf Protection Act, H.R. 84, 101st Cong. (1989).
6. *Id.*; see also *Actions Overview H.R.84—101st Congress (1989-1990)*, CONGRESS.GOV, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/84/actions> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019) (indicating that the bill was introduced to the House on January 1, 1989, but did not go to a vote).
7. Farm Animals Anti-Cruelty Act, H.R. 6202, 110th Cong. (2008).
8. Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, H.R. 4733, 111th Cong. (2010).
9. See *Cosponsors: H.R.4733—111th Congress (2009-2010)*, CONGRESS.GOV, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/4733/cosponsors> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019) (listing the 40 cosponsors of the bill); see also *All Actions H.R. 4733—111th Congress (2009-2010)*, CONGRESS.GOV, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/4733/all-actions> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019) (indicating that the bill was not given a hearing before a subcommittee).
10. Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2013, H.R. 1731, 113th Cong. (2013).
11. *Id.*
12. See Agricultural Act of 2014, H.R. 2642, 113th Cong. (2014). Additionally, the two driving forces behind the bill, United Egg Producers and The Humane Society of the United States, ended their agreement to work on this legislation together. UEP will cease working to pass national cage standards altogether.
13. See CYNTHIA BROUGH, CONG. RESEARCH SERV. R40577, USDA AUTHORITY TO REGULATE ON-FARM ACTIVITY 1-2 (2009) (explaining that the AHPA delegates to APHIS the authority to regulate on-farm activities as a matter of animal health).
14. 7 U.S.C. § 8301 (2002).
15. 7 U.S.C. § 8308 (2008).
16. Elanor Starmer, *Supporting Organic Integrity with Clear Livestock and Poultry Standards*, U.S. DEP’T AGRIC. (Jan. 18, 2017), <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/01/18/supporting-organic-integrity-clear-livestock-and-poultry-standards>.
17. Agric. Mktg. Serv., *Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices*, U.S. DEP’T AGRIC., <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic-livestock-and-poultry-practices> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019).
18. *Id.*
19. 7 U.S.C. § 6501-24.
20. *Id.*
21. Center for Environmental Health et al v. Perdue et al, Docket No. 3:18-cv-01763 (N.D. Cal. Mar 21, 2018); Organic Trade Association v. U.S. Dep’t of Agric. et al, Docket No. 1:17-cv-01875 (D.D.C. Sept 13, 2017).
22. Press Release, U.S. DEP’T AGRIC., *Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Final Rule* (June 17, 2021) available at <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/06/17/statement-agriculture-secretary-tom-vilsack-organic-livestock-and>
23. *Id.*
24. *Id.*
25. Agric. Mktg. Serv., *Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Second Proposed Rule*, U.S. DEP’T AGRIC., <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/national-organic-program-organic-livestock-and-poultry-practices-second-proposed> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019).
26. DEL. CODE ANN. tit.11, § 1325 (2016); IOWA CODE § 717B.1 (2013).
27. HAW. REV. STAT. § 711-1108.5(1)(a); N.H. REV. STAT. ANN. § 644.8; OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 959.13(4); S.C. CODE ANN. § 47-1-40(c).
28. For an example, see CAL. PENAL CODE §599b (2003).
29. In an undercover investigation, farm employees were caught performing such heinous acts on dairy calves and cows. See Mercy for Animals, *Ohio Dairy Farm Brutality*, YouTube (May 25, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYTkM1OHFQg>; see also Pamela D. Frasch et al., *State Animal Anti-Cruelty Statutes: An Overview*, 5 ANIMAL L. 69, 77-76 (1999) (explaining the state exemptions for livestock).
30. ALA. CODE § 13A-11-14.1(c)(1).
31. NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 54-901 to 54-913 (2013); IOWA CODE §§ 717.1-717.6 (2011); TEX. PENAL CODE ANN. § 42.09 (2007).
32. NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 54-902, 54-903, 54-907 (2013).
33. NEB. REV. STAT. § 54-909 (2010).
34. IOWA CODE §§ 717.1-717.6 (2011).
35. TEX. PENAL CODE ANN. § 42.09 (2007).
36. Compare Wyo. STAT. ANN. §§ 11-29-101 to 11-29-115 (2011); with Wyo. STAT. ANN. § 6-3-203 (2017).
37. N.J. STAT. ANN. § 4:22-16.1 (1996).
38. *New Jersey Soc’y for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals v. New Jersey Dep’t of Agric.*, 196 N.J. 366, 402 (N.J. Sup. Ct. 2008).
39. *Id.*
40. *Id.* at 396.
41. *Id.* at 371.
42. *Id.* at 404.
43. The regulations stated that de-beaking and castration could be performed “in a sanitary manner by a knowledgeable individual and in such a way as to minimize [the animals’] pain.” The court concluded that while the husbandry practices could be done humanely, the language referring to a “sanitary manner,” “knowledgeable individual,” and “minimiz[ing] pain,” were not enough to show the procedures would be done humanely because they were not clearly defined. *Id.* at 409-410.
44. N.J. ADMIN. CODE § 2:8-2.6 (2012).

45. N.J. ADMIN. CODE § 2:8-4.7(e)-(f)(2012) (incorporating the definition of a “knowledgeable person” from the FED’N OF ANIMAL SCI. SOCIETIES, GUIDE FOR THE CARE AND USE OF AGRICULTURAL ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING (3rd ed. 2010), and RICHARD A. BATTAGLIA, HANDBOOK OF LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT (4th ed. 2006).
46. See N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 19A (1995).
47. N.C. GEN. STAT. § 19A-2 (1995).
48. N.C. GEN. STAT. § 19A-4 (1979).
49. N.C. GEN. STAT. § 19A-1.1 (1995).
50. Several of the exemptions found within these statutes are narrow in scope. For example under Virginia’s cruelty code, the exemption only applies to the dehorning of cattle conducted in a reasonable and customary manner.
51. See NEB. REV. STAT. § 28-1009 (2015) (limiting the anti-cruelty statute to apply only those species included within the definition of “animal” under the code); see also NEB. REV. STAT. § 28-1008 (2015) (excluding livestock from the definition for “animal”).
52. See OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 959.131(A)(1) (2016) (excluding livestock from the definition of companion animal); OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 959.131(B)-(C) (prohibiting intentional harm to companion animals); see also OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 959.99 (2017) (making it a felony to knowingly harm a companion animal).
53. 18 PA. CONS. STAT. §§ 5511(a)(i), (a)(2.1)(ii) (2015).
54. UTAH CODE ANN. § 76-9-301(6) (2015).
55. OR. REV. STAT. § 167.335(1-11) (2015).
56. Cheryl L. Leahy, *Large-Scale Farmed Animal Abuse and Neglect: Law and its Enforcement*, 4 J. ANIMAL L. & ETHICS 63, 63-132 (2011); See *Investigation of North Carolina Pig Farm Results in Historic Felony Cruelty Convictions*, PETA (April 2000), <http://www.peta.org/about-peta/victories/investigation-north-carolina-pig-farm-results-historic-felony-cruelty-convictions/#ixzz2qaxJNeVv> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019).
57. Leahy, *supra* note 55, at 81.
58. *Id.* at 82.
59. *Id.* at 84.
60. *Id.* at 85.
61. For example, after a 2014 undercover investigation, where animals were buried alive, the county officials decided they would not prosecute under the state cruelty law. See *COK Investigation Update: Burying Birds Alive is Apparently Not a Crime in North Carolina*, COMPASSION OVER KILLING (August 5, 2014), <https://cok.net/burying-birds-alive-north-carolina/>.
62. CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §§ 25980-25984 (2011).
63. *Id.*; See *Association Des Eleveurs de Carnards et D’oies du Quebec v. Harris*, 729 F.3d 937 (9th Cir. 2013).
64. *Association Des Eleveurs de Carnards et D’oies du Quebec v. Harris*, 79 F.Supp.3d 1136 (C.D. Cal. 2015).
65. Brief for United States as Amicus Curiae Supporting Respondents, Ass’n des Eleveurs de Canards et d’Oies du Quebec, et al. v. Becerra, No. 17-1285 (Dec. 2018) available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/17/17-1285/74157/20181204222633023_17-1285%20-%20Association%20des%20Eleveurs.pdf
66. 586 U.S. __ (Jan. 7, 2019) https://www.supremecourt.gov/orders/courtorders/010719zor_m6ho.pdf.
67. See *Animal Legal Def. Fund v. Aubertine*, 119 A.D.4d 1202 (N.Y. App. Div. 2014) (holding that the residents and corporations did not have standing to bring the action against the foie gras producers).
68. Nick Fox, *Chicago Overturns Foie Gras Ban*, N.Y. TIMES (May 14, 2008, 3:33 PM), <http://dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/chicago-overturns-foie-gras-ban/?hp>.
69. Int. No. 1378-2019, Banning the sale of certain poultry products that are the result of force-feeding birds (2019) available at <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3844860&GUID=A91556AB-4F62-4902-A808-0FEE9B46F16D&Options=Advanced&Search=>
70. *Id.*
71. ALASKA STAT. § 03.55.100 (2004).
72. *Status of Animal Care Standards*, DEC ST. VETERINARIAN, https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&x=016629259767872399745:k960dr43-7e&q=https://dec.alaska.gov/media/12463/12-09-animal-care-standards-workshops-2012-02-10.pdf&sa=U&ved=2ahUKewiT_JP42_nlAhWVr54KHcwfBdYQFjADegQICBAC&usq=AOvVaw2YyE3uiYL8nhOWev1L1si (last visited Nov. 11, 2019).
73. 18 ALASKA ADMIN. CODE tit. 18, § 36.500-36.540.
74. *Id.* §§ 36.510-36.530.
75. 18 ALASKA ADMIN. CODE. tit. 18, § 36.500.
76. OR. REV. STAT. § 600.150(2) (2008).
77. *Id.*
78. *Oregon Legislative Information System, 2007 Regular Session: SB 69*, OR. ST. LEGIS., <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2007R1/Measures/Overview/SB694> (last visited Nov. 11, 2019); *Oregon’s Governor Signs Gestation Ban into Law*, PORK NETWORK (Jan. 18, 2011, 1:13 AM), <http://www.porknetwork.com/pork-news/oregons-governor-signs-gestation-sow-crate-ban-into-law-114062169.html>.
79. OR. REV. STAT. § 600.150(2)(2008).
80. COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 35-50.5-102 (2008).
81. *Id.*
82. COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 35-50.5-102(1)(b)(2008).
83. COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 18-1.3-501 (2015).
84. ARIZ. REV. STAT. ANN. § 3-710 (2011).
85. *Id.*
86. ARIZ. ADMIN. CODE § R3-2-907 (2009)
87. *Id.*; see also UNITED EGG PRODUCERS, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY GUIDELINES FOR U.S. EGG LAYING FLOCKS (2008). UEP has since updated its *Husbandry Guidelines*, however the space allotment has not changed, remaining at 67-86 square inches per bird. See UNITED EGG PRODUCERS, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY GUIDELINES (2016)
88. AZ. ADMIN. CODE § R3-2-907 (2009).
89. *Id.*
90. ME. REV. STAT. tit. 7, § 4020 (2009).
91. ME. REV. STAT. tit. 7, § 4016(A) (2008).
92. MICH. COMP. LAWS ANN. § 287746 (2010).
93. *Id.*

94. *Id.*
95. *Id.*
96. H.B. 5127, 95th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Mich. 2009), <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2009-2010/billintroduced/House/pdf/2009-HIB-5127.pdf>; H.B. 5128, 95th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Mich. 2009), <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2009-2010/billintroduced/House/pdf/2009-HIB-5128.pdf>.
97. *House Bill 5127 (2009)*, MICH. LEGISLATURE, [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(qapb5q0jihf3bxwv4rop12t3\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2009-HB-5127](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(qapb5q0jihf3bxwv4rop12t3))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2009-HB-5127) (last visited Nov. 11, 2019).
98. CAL. PENAL CODE § 597n (2010).
99. L.D. 692, 124th Leg., 1st Reg. Sess. (Me. 2009), http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chappdfs/RESOLVE63.pdf.
100. *See Mercy for Animals, New England Egg Farm Investigation*, YouTube (Mar. 24, 2009), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dOauM9LNTc>.
101. OFFICE OF THE STATE VETERINARIAN, MAIN DEP'T OF AGRIC., CONSERVATION & FORESTRY, STATE OF MAINE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP'S) FOR POULTRY FACILITIES OF MORE THAN 10,000 BIRDS (2010).
102. CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §§ 25995-25997.1 (2011).
103. CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §§ 25990-25994 (2015).
104. *See CAL HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25996 (2014)* (implementing a sales ban on eggs sold within the state that fail to comply with the codes requirements).
105. CAL. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25996.1 (2016).
106. CAL. CODE REGS. tit. 3, § 1350.
107. *Id.*
108. *Id.*
109. *Id.*
110. Egg-producers from Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Alabama, Kentucky, and Iowa challenged the law based on the *parens patriae* doctrine, claiming that each state had a “quasi-sovereign interest[] in protecting its citizens economic health and constitutional rights, as well as preserving its own rightful status within the federal system.” *See Missouri v. Harris*, 58 F.Supp.3d 1059, 1064 (E.D. Cal. 2014).
111. *Id.* at 1065-1066.
112. The court denied standing because, while the states could assert a hypothetical injury to their egg producers, the injury could not extend to all the citizens as a whole. *Id.* at 1072-1075.
113. *Missouri v. Harris*, 847 F.3d 646, 653-655 (9th Cir. 2017).
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