To Lyle D. Jaffe (Dockets Management) 5/27/99

I am supporting the petition to ban the forced molting of layer hens. (docket 98P-0203/CP.

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I am bringing up more subjects pertaining to what we eat.

I feel sad and angry at the lengths Factory Farmers go to in developing "high gear" egg and animal production. - An unnatural and cruel practice. - It only takes a small amount of intelligence to realize the more deadly strains of diseases being passed to us through our food are directly related to the new methods of "harvesting" our poultry and meat supplies. It's just taken awhile.

At the same time How many people really want hormones fed to or injected into our meat & milk? - Monsanto is certainly determined in this endeavor.

I think the Europeans are smarter than we are.

There is nothing natural about factory farms or hormones being fed or injected into live stock - Nature seems to have a way of getting back at us.

If few of us in our overcrowded, fast paced

98P-0203 C1553 →

World are concerned with our food production, I'm asking you to be concerned - I'm concerned the FDA is not doing its job well enough.

Thank you

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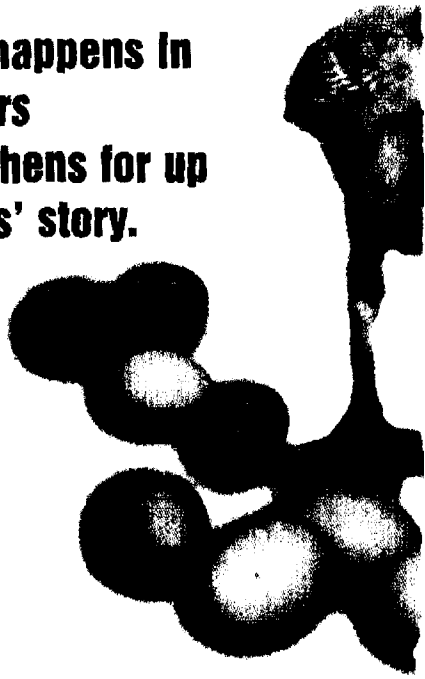
Susan Rayfield

Starved for

Each year, something hideous happens in the egg industry. Factory farmers intentionally starve millions of hens for up to eight weeks. This is the birds' story.



Patty Mark

The lives of today's hens are miserable enough to begin with: Hens used for their eggs are squeezed with up to five others into an indoor, wire cage with floor space the size of a folded newspaper! Born to flap their wings and walk around, these chickens are barely able to move; most can never even sit comfortably. To stop them from pecking at each other out of desperation, workers slice off the chicks' beaks with a hot blade, sometimes accidentally removing part of the birds' tongues or faces as well. But when egg production drops, at least 75 percent of the 260 million laying hens in North America endure another bizarre torment: Producers attempt to force one last laying cycle out of the exhausted spent hens before sending them to slaughter. They do it by cruelly and unnaturally forcing the hens into a "molt." In nature, hens replace old feathers with new ones every single year and spend about four months dropping old feathers and growing new ones. During molting season, hens don't produce eggs—an interruption factory farmers find unacceptably unprofitable.

Forced molting throws hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking them into losing their feathers quickly and forcing their worn-out bodies into a new laying cycle.

Research shows that forced molting is a major cause of salmonella poisoning in eggs. The stressful conditions weaken the birds' immune systems so badly that they become prone to diseases, lung problems and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

To trick the hens into laying more eggs, they are deprived of food and water for two weeks or more. Our researchers uncovered hundreds of thousands of hens slowly and painfully starving to death as a result of this trauma. Typically, birds who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Scottish researcher Dr. Peter Dun says food deprivation can last "until their combs turn blue" from lack of nutrition. To shock the birds' systems further, they are kept in total darkness for weeks on end.

As the days of torture go on, many birds—worth only pennies each to the factory farmer—die. The scared, confused survivors' crowded cages fill with rotting corpses and manure-covered feathers. The starving hens peck frantically at their empty feed trays, and many resort to eating feathers. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile and broken limbs.

When egg production finally becomes too low to be profitable, the

Each Year
The natural lifespan of a chicken is 15 to 20 years. "Broilers" are slaughtered when they are just 7 weeks old, and "layers" at 1 to 2 years.

Almost unrecognizable as hens after a year in a laying cage.

Patty Mark

an Egg

state of their battered and bruised flesh, like chicken soup and companion animal food.

Forced molting is so cruel that, in 1987, it was banned in Great Britain, and most European countries do not allow food deprivation for more than 24 hours. Yet, in North America, no laws protect these poor birds, and as you read this, more than 6 million hens are being force-molted.

THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE EGG

Egg yolks contain a whopping 212 mg of cholesterol each (among our last one egg for breakfast each morning will raise your cholesterol level by as much as 10 points! In fact, women who eat eggs daily triple their risk of breast cancer. Eggs also cause bad publicity and contribute to obesity, heart disease and other serious health problems.

Zoe Weil

YOU CAN HELP

- Stop eating eggs, and educate others! Contact PETA for free eggless recipes.
- If recipes call for eggs, substitute tofu, commercial egg replacer, arrowroot or bananas.
- Tell the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that you support the petition to ban the forced molting of layer hens (docket 98P-0203/CP). Write to: Lyle D. Jaffe, Dockets Management, FDA/DHHS, 12420 Parklawn Dr., Room 1-23, Rockville, MD 20857.
- Ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ban forced molting of layer hens. Write to: Dr. Ron DeHaven, Acting Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS Animal Care, 4700 River Rd., Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737.

"To the egg producer, a major advantage of induced molting is the reduction in time that the house is not producing income. Because flocks are replaced less frequently, the laying house will be empty less often, which can help smooth out the egg producer's cash flow."

—from the *Poultry Science and Technology Guide* (Extension Poultry Science, North Carolina State University).

weary hens are sent to slaughter. Because a lifetime of abuse has left them with injuries like broken bones, oozing abscesses and internal hemorrhaging, they are used in foods that hide the true

United Poultry Concerns

RESCUED! Escape From a "Henitentiary"!

Penny and Sweet Pea spent the first four months of their lives in a tiny wire cage among rows of other cages. Together with thousands of other miserable hens, they were kept in a factory farm. Their food was mixed with sawdust and antibiotics. They weren't able to move or stretch and never even saw the sun.

One dark night, kind strangers spirited Penny and Sweet Pea away to safety. When the hens arrived at their new home, they had scraggly feathers, sickly combs, and murky eyes. They had never walked or spread their wings, and they could hardly stand up, let alone fly!

Lovingly nursed back to health, a few months later these once sad, sickly birds had completely changed! They love to run in the yard on their strong little legs, darting around like dancers with snowy feathers, red combs, and bright eyes. They gobble up sunflower seeds, grass, grapes and spaghetti—their vegetarian worms!

With their fill of fresh air, exercise, good food and love, Penny and Sweet Pea have become so strong that they can fly up to the roof of the chicken house and back down to the ground. They love to perch in a big, leafy tree next to the kitchen porch with their friend Henny. Visitors walking outside often discover the three friends resting quietly in the branches. They love their perches so much that sometimes their human guardian has to climb up a ladder to bring them down at night and take them to their coop, where they'll be safe from raccoons and owls. They grumble and cluck when they see her coming to take them indoors!

Penny and Sweet Pea will live out the rest of their lives in peace. Help others like them have a chance to live, too, by boycotting eggs.

Story courtesy of Karen Davis, United Poultry Concerns

CROSS FILE SHEET

FILE NO: 98P-0203/C1553

SEE FILE NO: 98P-1194/C143

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