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Coalition for Non-Violent Food Coordinator's Report

Animal Rights International

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FARM ANIMAL WELL-BEING:
SETTING THE WHEELS OF CHANGE IN MOTION

Over the past year we've achieved important campaign objectives. More importantly, perhaps, we've been able to set in motion machinery which is beginning to reduce farm animal misery and reverse the terrible downward trends of past decades.

Our recent campaigns have helped push the largely ignored farm animal issue towards center stage, where it rightfully belongs. They have also brought about significant improvements for millions of animals after decades of ever worsening conditions.

In the 1980s our lab animal campaigns led to the scientific mainstreaming of alternatives. We now see opportunities to apply this proven formula to the suffering of more than seven billion animals raised for dinner.

CAMPAIGN ENDS FACE BRANDING

An opportunity to apply that formula appeared in late 1993 when the US Department of Agriculture proposed to expand their requirements for the face branding of cattle imported from Mexico. We launched a public awareness campaign to first stop the proposed expansion and to then abolish the entire program.


After the first New York Times ad appeared on March 15th, 1994 Secretary Espy's office acknowledged getting at least a thousand phone calls within two days. And they kept coming.

This outpouring of anger from the general public was clearly impressive. The USDA cancelled their proposed expansion of the Mexican face branding program. In fact, by September 1994, in a complete reversal, the USDA had generated a new proposal to eliminate the Mexican face branding program altogether.

The following month, we ran a second round of ads asking the public to provide written support for the new proposal to end the Mexican face branding program. This time, the response was even more overwhelming. By the end of the 60 day comment period the Federal Register reported that the USDA had received more than 12,000 written comments, not counting petitions. A sampling of the correspondence suggests that these writers represent a broad cross-section of the public. Clearly, the USDA got the same message.

BEYOND FACE BRANDING...

On Dec 16th, 1994 USDA officials signed a rule abolishing the requirement to face brand the million steers imported each year from Mexico. However, a smaller number of domestic cattle continued to be face branded as part of national disease control programs.

Following our discussions with decision makers at
the USDA, they proposed to end face branding of all domestic cattle. And on September 19th, 1995, the Federal Register published the Final Rule, effective in 30 days. This completely eliminates the face branding of all cattle. We see this as a historic reversal in a 50-year trend of ever greater farm animal suffering.

Building on this constructive dialogue, we expressed our thanks to the USDA with full page ads. And this has opened additional doors. There's the recognition that we are looking to work together to solve problems.

**FARM ANIMAL WELL-BEING TASK FORCE LAUNCHED**

The face branding campaign affected millions of animals. Our dialogue with the USDA offers opportunities to upgrade the lives of literally billions more. One of these opportunities is an internal USDA task force to address the well-being of farm animals across the board.

On September 8, 1995, then USDA Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Patricia Jensen held the first meeting of the USDA Interagency Animal Well-Being Task Force. The goal of the group is to develop voluntary guidelines to improve conditions for farm animals in all areas. We see this as reason for optimism!

As we noted earlier, the face branding campaign clearly struck a nerve with the American public. Public concern for farm animals has just been quantified by a survey done for us by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, N.J.

**90% OPPOSE TODAY'S FACTORY FARMS**

Among the findings:

- More than eight out of ten people think the meat and egg industry should be held legally responsible for protecting farm animals from cruelty.
- 58% of adult Americans feel that fast food restaurants and supermarkets, who profit by selling meat, should also be held legally responsible.
- 91% think the USDA should be involved in protecting farm animals from cruelty.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

In approaching the USDA we were able to build on earlier campaigns, including our successful initiative to replace most of the shackling and hoisting of conscious animals with the much less traumatic upright restrainer systems. And our joint effort with Franklin Research & Development Corp which pressured McDonald's to require their suppliers to implement certain standards that take into account the most basic needs of farm animals.

- We are currently urging other major companies that profit from animal agriculture to follow McDonald's initiative. Our recent survey should help provide the leverage to accomplish this goal and further encourage the USDA to respond to public concerns.
- We continue to dialogue with USDA decision makers and are encouraging their emerging task force to launch an audit of farm animal practices to assess opportunities for improving conditions for billions of farm animals.
- We recently spoke to the Board of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society (NYSVMS) on the responsibilities of veterinarians to upgrade the lives of farm animals. Current veterinary practices tend to accommodate industry's economic interests while ignoring the individual animal's physical and behavioral needs. And there was sufficient positive response and interest to follow up with an article in their publication. NYSVMS is encouraging their members to discuss these issues.
The USDA is listening! They’re listening to the more than 7,000 people who submitted comments demanding an end to their face branding of cattle. Earlier

who's listening?

It's a good thing the USDA isn't in charge of childcare.

THE USDA WANTS TO KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS.

TELL THEM. QUICKLY.

When we first published the cruel practice of face branding cattle on June 21, the USDA responded by submitting a proposal to end face branding. USDA's proposal is now open for public comment. To respond, submit comments in writing to USDA (USDA, R-200A, 12th & Jefferson Sts. S.W., Washington, DC 20250).

Here's What You Can Do

Your comments must be postmarked by October 31, 2023. The USDA's proposal is due to be finalized by January 2024. To find out more about the USDA proposal and how you can submit comments, visit the website or call 1-800-327-1500.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1990

THIS IS WHAT USDA POLICY LOOKS LIKE.

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE?

Face Branding Is Barbaric!

Hidden from the public, this unregulated cruelty is how the USDA actually identifies Mexican cattle. Next, the USDA proposal to end face branding will be voted on publicly at a meeting.

In branding, the animals face is first strapped between two metal plates. Then, a hot iron is forced through the ears and nostrils. The hot iron is then removed, leaving a burnt scar.

The animal's face is then branded with a number or initials, and the iron is forced into the animal's ear and nostrils, leaving a scar on the animal's face. The animal is then released into the wild, where it will spend the rest of its life, scarred and disfigured.

It's Completely Unnecessary!

There are far less painful ways of satisfying the USDA's desire to trace Mexican cattle. Using a DNA database, for example, would be far more humane and efficient.

FACE BRANDING IS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY!

In face branding, the faces of branded cattle are used to identify them. But DNA testing can be used to identify cattle. This would be far more humane and efficient.

In response to your concerns, the USDA is proposing to end face branding. But on the other hand, the USDA is proposing to expand its face branding program. This is completely unnecessary and cruel.

Stop The Face Branding Now!

Call Mike Espy today at (202) 720-1631 or write to:


In response to your concerns, the USDA is proposing to end face branding. This is completely unnecessary and cruel.
Here's a World of Misery in Every Mouthful of Meat

The misery in meat is food for thought. The preferred meal of affluent societies is a proven killer linked to cancer, heart disease and diabetes. It kills people in other ways too. The grain which fattens animals for our dinner tables is often grown on the backs of millions of people throughout the world; it poisons dictators while most populations starve.

Meat production destroys the environment, squanders dwindling water reserves, pollutes our rivers and lakes with waste animal wastes and causes the destruction of rain forests.

Beyond satisfying our addiction, meat has no demonstrable benefits. It creates enduring suffering for people, destroys the environment, afflicts horrendous pain on more than 300 million animals confined in this country each year.

Egg-laying hens are confined to an area smaller than this page. Factory-farmed animals are so stressed that only a constant diet of drugs keeps them alive until slaughter. Beyond satisfying our addiction, meat has no demonstrable benefits. It creates enduring suffering for people, destroys the environment and inflicts horrendous pain on more than 600 million animals confined in this country each year.

Meat comes in cages the size of this page. Veal calves live their entire lives in dark wooden crates unable to turn around. Factory-farmed animals are so stressed that only a constant diet of drugs keeps them alive until slaughter.

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Only you can do something about the misery. Cut it out or cut it down. You'll be taking a bite out of misery.

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We are collaborating with an attorney to publish and disseminate a study on the legal status of farm animals, documenting that present USA laws are of no help to the cruel realities suffered by seven billion farm animals.

We are preparing aggressive ad campaigns which will use the findings of ARI's farm animal survey. As noted earlier, nine out of ten adult Americans reject raising animals in spaces so confining that sows and calves are unable to even turn around and that laying hens are unable to stretch their wings. We believe these practices are now viable candidates for change.

Based on our earlier positive experience with centers for alternatives to lab animals, we are discussing similar centers at major universities that would focus on food for the future as well as farm animal well-being.

While campaigning to reduce the pain and distress of farm animals, we are energetically promoting the vegetarian lifestyle through advertisements, articles and speaking opportunities. We encourage school and company cafeterias as well as fast food chains and supermarkets to offer more vegetarian options. We lobby youth oriented and mainstream media to tell the "meat is misery" story. And we urge environmental activists to promote non-violent food.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!

But words alone are not enough. They cannot bring the grim realities of factory farming to the public. As The Economist cover story (August 19, 1995) observed, "What television did for the opponents of the Vietnam war the videocassette recorder has done for the animal-rights movement." While there's no shortage of visuals of lab animal horrors, there's the need for photos, videos, and commercials documenting the suffering of the billions of farm animals. With that in mind, we are in discussions with photographers and film makers. As we discussed earlier, our face branding campaign was swift and totally successful because we obtained photos of the faces of the steers being torched. The public responded with shock and outrage. At this time, the movement's most urgent need is to document the entire factory farming nightmare. And have it shown in every community from San Diego up to Maine.

STRATEGY FOR THE NON-VIOLENT DINNER TABLE: REPLACEMENT, REDUCTION & REFINEMENT

Our ideal is a non-violent dinner table. Wouldn't we all rather stroll through apple orchards than stumble through slaughter-houses? We actively and urgently encourage the public to upgrade to a meatless diet for ethical reasons. But the reality is that eating habits tend to change slowly and so we also promote part-time vegetarianism by eating fewer animals. And as long as people continue to consider animals as edibles, we will relentlessly pressure industry and government to develop, promote and implement systems that reduce their suffering.

THANKS

Our coalition's success is the result of generous, ongoing contributions of time, expertise, and/or financial support from The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Bernice Barbour Fdn., The Helen V. Brach Fdn., Roger A. Caras, Barbara S. Clapp, Mark Graham, John A. Hoyt, The Humane Society of the United States, Paul G. Irwin, Sid and Helaine Lerner, The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Elinor Molbegott, the William and Charlotte Parks Fdn., Linda W. Petrie, Bernard E Rollin, Andrew N. Rowan, Marilyn M. Simpson Trust, Peter Singer, the Summerlee Fdn., Gus W. Thornton, Jeanne Waller, Palmer Wayne, Joan Zacharias and others too numerous to mention.

Henry Spira