(No. 41) -- Mechanized Cruelty

Humane Information Services, Inc.
Mechanized Cruelty

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President

DOES A CHICKEN FEEL PAIN?

Please note, we are not condemning any one, much less the darling little girls who pluck the chickens you feed your garden and Sanders' bucket and crunch it with such pleasure for the benefit of the ad agency's photographer. Perhaps there is science backing for the almost universal belief that we don't have to worry about the suffering of chickens.

Major C. W. Hume, the well-known Brit ish scientist-humanitarian, has addressed himself to this question: "If I am asked why do low in the animal world such feelings (pain, fear, etc.) must be imput ed, the answer is plain: any organism which is capable of learning by rewards and punishments must be assumed to be capable of feeling pleasure and pain in the absence of proof to the contrary.

Are chickens capable of learning by re wards and punishment? For the answer to this question we do not have to search the..."
POULTRY—FROM PAGE 1

pages of journals of psychology. All we need do is place a dime in the slot of a vending machine attached to the cage of a chicken housed on the second floor of Webb's City, the World's Most Unusual Drugstore, right here in the fine City of St. Petersburg. The result: an ordinary chicken, will immediately take a miniature baseball bat in its beak and slug out a home run, thereby earning for its effort a small portion of grain. Still other chickens, and a duck, in similar cages will respond to diinking by playing a toy piano, and performing other tricks, no doubt learned at the expense of some starvation and perhaps even worse punishments as well as rewards. All of this seems to adequately meet the test propounded by Major Hume. The chicken does have sufficient intelligence or sensitivity to learn from a system of rewards and punishments.

THE POULTRY AND EGG INDUSTRY

Each year in the United States, farms and the commercial poultry and egg industry produce about 65 billion eggs and nearly 3.5 billion chickens, broilers and turkeys, with a combined value at the farm of nearly 4.5 billion dollars. This makes the poultry one of the most important in the country. For comparison, automobile production was valued at the plants at about 44 billion dollars. Any industry that is this large commands attention and respect, and the poultry industry receives from politicians, businessmen and consumers, if not from humanitarians more concerned with saving a few thousand starlings from being desecrated by a s乱al nuisance than with what happens to 3,500,000,000 fowl (probably more inches of type in human society publications in recent years have been devoted to the former than to the latter).

The poultry industry is intensive husbandry personified. It is highly mechanized, specialized and governed by scientific poultryman must know—something about biology, agronomy, nutrition, mechanical engineering, marketing and business administration.

Without this technical know-how it would be much more likely that the entire operation would be wiped out by disease. Such catastrophes can still occur withdiminishing frequency (Fig. 1).

The danger of disease is always uppermost in the mind of the poultry or egg producer. The chickens are dosed with disease-preventing drugs from beginning to end. And, while they are at it, the experts also may provide hormones or other drugs designed to produce more eggs per pound of feed and to control other conditions, although the use of such drugs is less common than formerly.

COMMERCIAL HATCHERIES

The application of scientific technology in the poultry industry starts with breeding the chickens which produce the eggs which in turn are hatched into chicks used as the layers in commercial egg production. The laws of genetics are followed to produce inbred birds which as layers produce far more eggs than the old farmyard breeds, and are better adapted to stand the severe stresses to which the birds are subjected. These chickens, produced on specialized farms controlled by the hatcheries which use their eggs, or operating independently and selling to commercial hatcheries, are the source of most of the laying hens used by the egg industry.

The hatchery frequently is the key part of the whole operation, owning and controlling the breeding birds, and operating large incubator capacity to produce millions of chicks annually, spaced out during the year to meet market needs (Fig. 2).

The hatchery also may have control over the other parts of the industry, including the brooder farm which keeps the chicks to about eight weeks, the pullet farm where they grow to laying size at about 18 to 20 weeks of age, and the laying farm where the eggs for consumers are produced.

All of these specialized types of farms usually are run by the hatchery enterprise, which furnishes the chickens, the feed, the medications, the transportation of the chickens to and from the farms, and detailed instructions based on daily reports received from the farms. The owners of the contract farms provide the facilities and the labor in the states where the poultry and eggs are produced. All of these specialized types of farms usually are run by the hatchery enterprise, which furnishes the chickens, the feed, the medications, the transportation of the chickens to and from the farms, and detailed instructions based on daily reports received from the farms. The owners of the contract farms provide the facilities and the labor in the states where poultry and eggs are produced. All of these specialized types of farms usually are run by the hatchery enterprise.

KILLING UNWANTED CHICKS

Almost immediately after hatching, the chicks are sexed. This is for eliminating the male chicks, which are of no use since they cannot lay eggs and the laying type of chicken is not suitable for broiler meat production.

Other chicks become unwanted because of fluctuations in demand for the chicks. The hatchery, for economical operation, to 100,000 eggs of chicks. Once born, the chicks cannot easily "stockpile", although the "brooks" can take up the slack. Such times drastic changes in weather or market prices can result sizable changes in the current demand need for chicks.

Formerly, the determination of the sex of the chicks was done almost exclusively by highly specialized persons who examined the chick sex organs. With advent of modern bred strains it became possible to terminate sex by examining the chicks, thus reducing the cost to the hatchery and the hatch and bear on the chicks (Fig. 3).

Some of the unwarranted chicks may be sold for medical purposes, or to eradicators of game to be used for food, or in states not having strictive laws they may go into the chick trade. Most of them, however, are of no value, and are destroyed on the spot.

See POULTRY, page 3, column 1.)
Poultry—From Page 2—

Their necks may be wrung before they are thrown in a big trash barrel, later to be converted into poultry feed, or they may just be thrown in live, to gradually smother to death, or the barrel may contain water so the chicks will drown, or may just be thrown in live, to gradually smother to death.

Fig. 4. Male baby chicks of egg-laying type are destroyed soon after sexing, by dumping alive into barrels or stuffing into plastic trash bags. (Photograph from one of our members, Mrs. William M. Arnold, of Hot Springs, South Dakota.)

Several years ago poultrymen protesting low egg and broiler prices invited reporters to view the destruction of several thousand chicks which supposedly were being diverted from production, but which in all likelihood were just some of the unwanted chicks that would have been killed anyway. The photograph shown in Fig. 4 appeared in newspapers at that time.

Counter-protests by animal lovers demanded that the killing be stopped, or done more humanely, not aware that many times more thousands of chicks are destroyed in hatcheries every day as a routine operation. One national humane society with the humane way of disposing of these unwanted chicks. In past issues of Report to Humanitarians it was found that the same reaction occurred in hatcheries every day as a routine operation.

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...a few hours. Chloroform or carbon tetrachloride were considered most suitable for smaller establishments. We have made a number of major attempts to make use of these findings.

DE-BEAKING

Shortly after the chicks are sexed the female chicks go through the process of being immunized and having their beaks partially removed.

De-beaking may be done before the chicks leave the hatchery, or at the brooder farm. A small machine is operated by a person with a trayful of chicks in front of her. She takes a chick out of the tray, applies it to the de-beaker, and throws the chick in a brooder box, all in one swift operation. Here, as elsewhere, the operation is highly mechanized and efficient (Fig. 5). De-beaking may be of only the upper peak or parts of both (Fig. 6). The chick is held in one hand and its beak applied to a guillotine-like machine which cuts off part of the beak. A red hot bar behind the blade cauterizes the wound.

The purpose of the operation is to prevent the chicks from pecking each other, which can result in serious injury (cannibalism). They do this apparently mainly because they are in such tight quarters, subject to stress at all times. Birds have been known to strip a fellow occupant of a cage of nearly all its feathers, and to pick big holes in a chicken's body. If a cannibalized hen suffering from a severe wound is able to continue to lay, it will be left in the cage until it dies. The bird's suffering is less important than the extra money obtained from the additional eggs it lays.

In the broiler industry, damage to carcasses results in placing the bird in a lower grade, or making it unfit for sale as a whole bird. So, from both a humane and economic standpoint, de-beaking is necessary. The books on factory farming make a big point of it, but from a humane standpoint the net result probably is a plus.

Formerly, the chicks' combs also were removed, because it was believed they offered a tempting place for the companion chicks to peck. Now, however, the combs are left on; it was discovered that apparently they are heat resistors. Well, less misery for the chicks to suffer!

Fig. 6. Only the upper beak is partially cut off (above), or both beaks are cut below. (Drawings by Joan Goodman.)

Brooder Farms

Although arrangements are not exactly the same in different parts of the country and for different operators, it is generally the practice to have the growing chicks pass through two stages before they reach the laying stage. The first of these is the brooder farm, where the young chicks grow rapidly until they reach the age of about eight weeks. This operation usually is financed and managed by the hatchery, the "farmer" merely supplying the land, buildings and labor. They may be small subsistence farms, the owners of which work in a nearby town or city, with the families supplying much of the labor.

Fig. 7, although poorly lighted, shows how the birds are crowded into small cages with little room to do more than stand or sit.

Fig. 7. Chicks destined to become laying hens may first go to a brooder farm, where they remain for about eight weeks. The coves on the brooder farms vary in size, such as 2' x 5' containing about 40 chicks, or about one-quarter square foot per bird. Not exactly Waldorf-Astoria living! We regret the poor lighting for this picture, but it shows the crowded conditions better than some clearer photographs we have.

Pullet Farms

By the time the chickens are eight weeks old they are ready for transfer to larger quarters, which may be on a separate "pullet farm." Here the cages may be about 15" wide, 18" high, and 18" to 20" deep, with as many as 12 birds per cage depending on size (Figs. 8 and 9).

As throughout their lives from chick to chicken soup, the pullets have to stand and move about on wire floors with about a 1" x 2" mesh.

The crowding and resulting stress on the birds causes heavy losses. The dead birds are dumped into garbage cans or a chute leading to a buried tank.
more eggs per bird. After molting is completed, the birds may lay for up to five additional months. All of these practices and conditions vary from farm to farm and from one part of the country to another. The descriptions given are very general, and should not be taken as exact. This applies throughout this discussion.

The hens are kept in cages with wire floors which slope toward the aisle where the farm workers operate. When the hen lays an egg, it rolls down to a trough in front of the cage, where the eggs are collected several times daily. Above this trough on the outside of the cage is the feeding trough. The feeding procedure is mechanized, in different ways on different farms. Water is provided either in smaller troughs below the feed troughs, or in automatic devices actuated by the bird’s beak. The droppings fall through the wire mesh floor of the cages to the floor, from which they are removed periodically with mechanical devices, part of which is shown in the exterior view of Fig. 10.

The egg production may be increased by a close look at Fig. 9 below.

The middle photograph shows a two-tier arrangement, the one and two-tier arrangements are most common. Figs. 10 and 11 show a two-tier arrangement.

The individual cages vary in size and the number of birds housed in each one. That shown in the top view in Fig. 11 is 10” wide, 14” high and 15” long, and holds three hens. This gives about 50 square inches per bird. On other farms, 12”-wide cages hold four hens, even more crowded. Some hatcheries which control the operations of the contract farms pay more money per bird to contractors who house fewer birds per cage, apparently in the belief that this platonic relationship serves to quiet the hens and is conducive to less pecking and more egg laying.

The laying hens are suspended on wires, in one, two, three, or even more tiers. The one and two-tier arrangements are most common. The two-tier arrangements are most common. The eggs are collected from the cages about three times daily, coated with mineral oil to prevent evaporative moisture through the shell, cooled, and picked up one or more times a week by egg processors. The latter “candles” the eggs on an illuminated table holding the eggs at a time, to remove eggs with one or blood spots; these eggs are broken cans of whole eggs, yolks or whites are discarded by processors of prepared foods, bakeries, etc. The other are sorted automatically, by size, and packaged in the cartons so familiar to consumers.

In all of these procedures the sole criterion governing the size and capacity of the cages, the number of birds, the kind and quantity of feed, medications given in the feed—every consideration simply do not enter into the picture at all.

The laying hens are controlled by the poultry meat processors—who use the term “broiler” for marketing “stewing hens.” “Roasting chickens” are discarded hens raised on farms which produce the eggs used for broiler chicks. These are heavier breeds than the hens for egg laying.

Broiler production uses a different kind of chicken, bred to produce eggs which when hatched will give maximum gain in weight and which have good body conformations. The whole operation, from the contract farm producing the fertilized eggs for the broiler farms, to the hatchery which operates similarly to those providing chicks for laying, to the control farmers who raise the chicks to broiler size, may be controlled by the poultry plant which kills, dresses and markets broilers. The arrangements vary in different parts of the country, but every where the tendency is strongly toward centralization of control, rather than dispersion among a number of different kinds of producers. This concentration makes possible to produce a pound of chicken for a far lower cost than the old way!
POULTRY — FROM PAGE 4

chicken, but scientific breeding and mod-
ern feeding methods now make it possible to
produce chickens sufficiently fat for
marketing at eight weeks.

In broiler production the male as well
as female chicks are utilized, so the
problem faced by hatcheries producing lay-
ing chickens, of killing chicks right after
they are hatched, does not arise. The
exception to this may occur if market
prices for broilers drop precipitously,
after the eggs have been placed in the
incubator, and it becomes necessary to cur-
tail the feeding operations. In that
event, either unhatched eggs in the incu-
bator or newly-hatched chicks may be de-
stroyed.

BROILER FEEDING

Broiler chickens, after they go through
the broader stage, are fed out in gigantic
houses holding thousands of birds crowded
tight against the wire floors and on the
ropes, and perhaps in some parts of the
United States, broilers are kept on wire
floors so that the droppings fall through
for easy cleanup after the birds have gone to
the processing plant, meanwhile keeping
the birds cleaner and perhaps contributing
to making the bird flesher, although far too
few know, however, the common practice in
this country is to raise the broilers on solid
floors and in small rooms.

Automatic water and feed-dispensing
equipment greatly reduces labor require-
ments. The checked cylinders seen on each
of the tiers in Fig. 13 are the feeders. These
are filled from overhead conveyors.

Fig. 13. Chickens for broilers are grown
in large broiler houses containing thou-
sands of birds, with automatic feeders,
but generally on solid floors and under
more comfortable conditions than those
prevailing for chickens for egg produc-
tion.

TRANSPORTATION OF CHICKENS

Fig. 14 shows a truck packed with
crates of chickens. The whole process of
catching the birds, cramming the strug-
gling birds into crates, and then removing
them from the crates to the assembly line
shackles at the processing plant is fraught
with stress, terror and pain. And, of course,
the laying chickens transferred from one kind of farm to another,
and finally from the laying farm to the
canery, also experience this trauma.

THE CHICKEN-PROCESSING PLANT

In Denmark, which is a big
producer of chickens with a law requiring humane slaughter
of poultry, this, as for other
products that are also
fore cutting and bleeding out.
Formerly the bird was stunned
by hitting it on the neck with
a stick. Later, electric stun-
ners were developed, and appar-
ently satisfy the requirements of
the law. The cabinets in which this
is done are closed from view by
sliding doors or, in some cases, the birds enter and exit. How-
ever, the writer got down on
the dirty floor and looked up into the
cabinet, to see something which
he doesn't want to again soon. Blue
sparks from the electrodes jumped out to
graze the bird's head, the neck, and the
feet (a feature of some stunners to be avoided). The
chickens squawked and struggled as their
heads and necks were electrocuted across
cuts of wireless electrodes. Even with all this,
not all of the chickens were stunned; some
were stuck in the cabinets after the next
station while still conscious.

In the United States, the practice of
stunning has gradually increased until
now it is practiced in all poultry plants.
This is not done for humane reasons, but for
the purpose of quieting the birds so they
can be stuck and bled out more easily and quickly.

Several methods of stunning now are in
use. One is the stun stick, the sticker makes the cut, a button on the
knife is pressed, producing a controlled
electric current which stuns the bird.

The advertising literature of the manufac-
turer states: "Sticking becomes a desired job because it is clean; no fighting of birds. Electric knives are easy to use; no pinfeathers, (7) cutting off head, (8 ) cutting off feet, (9) re--hanging the leg-
ner, (10) cutting open the carcass, (11) removing entrails, (12) inspection by United States
Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspec-
tors, (13) removing edible giblets, (14) cutting off heads and necks past the
vessels, (15) grading, (16) cutting carcass into parts if any part is damaged or if
the demand for separate parts is greater
than for the whole chicken, (17) packag-
ing, (18) freezing if called for, depend-
ing on market outlets. The head, lower
legs and feet, indelible entrails, etc.,
are cooked and ground into chicken feed.

Everything but the squash is utilized!
Although all of these processes are in-
teresting, at least to anyone concerned
with industrial efficiency, the only ones
that concern us as humanists are hang-
ning, stunning and cutting.

STUNNING

About 20 years ago Anthony W. Kotula
and colleagues of the Agricultural Market-
ing Service of the United States Depart-
ment of Agriculture (USDA) reported on
methods of stunning birds in poultry
plants. The report, "Carbon Dioxide Immobilization
of Turkeys Before Slaughter", while
informative, was of questionable
practicability, we would be accused of
soaking the chicken.

"No birds lost in scalding
control of fighting birds in scalding pre-
vents birds from falling when
scalded.

If we stated that in
plants that stick without stunning some
birds reach the scalding tanks con-
scious, because of a poor stick or incom-
plete bleed-out, we would be accused of being emotive and unscientific.
The statement from the advertisement may constitute verification, although it may refer to re-
flex actions of the birds after they are uncons-
scious. In other types of electric stunners, some of them "homemade" in the process-
ing plants, the bird is stunned by being
handled over a high-voltage grid or plate, and the current passes through whatever part of the body makes contact. The
charge is released to the grid, then through the body to the
feet and then to the scalding, which is grounded. The current passes over the skin and flesh, and whether any passes through the brain, a prereq-
usite of humane stunning, cannot be easily determined.

The Universities Federation for Animal
Welfare, of Great Britain, has made a
strong bond of opposition to the use of elec-
tric stunners, concluding that the former,
described last above, was of questionable
Poultry — from page 5 —
which the chickens pass through the flexible wire electrodes was found to result in effective stunning in at least 90 percent of the birds studied, "but mistakes did certainly occur." That agrees with our own observations.

A more recently-developed type of stunner which is called the "electrically-shocking device" is being used in Florida and some other places in the United States (Fig. 15). This is based on the water bath principle. The chickens are not touched by the mechanical parts of the stunner, contact being made by the head and neck of the chicken with the electrified water at low voltage. This stunner is designed to operate at speeds up to 6,000 birds per hour. The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) examined chickens passing through the stunner and not subjected to venesection (cutting). "It was concluded that after stunning the birds were unconscious for 35-40 seconds and definitely unconscious for the next two minutes." This allowed sufficient time for venesection and bleeding before entering the slaughtering tanks.

The final conclusion: "The electric water-bath poultry stunner is certainly the most humane method of stunning which has been investigated by UFAW. When carried out properly the electric stunning of poultry which passes an electric current is humane and reduces over-all suffering. Some doubt exists, however, as to whether in all circumstances electrical stunning is properly carried out." England in 1967 adopted the Slaughter of Poultry Act which became effective in 1970. The Act made it mandatory for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to enforce the Act approved stunning instruments of the following kind: "An instrument, the action of which is determined by means other than the movement of the bird sufficient to render the bird instantaneously insensible." The UFAW from U.S.A. informed us all of this information is obtained, expresses doubt that the phrase "instantaneously insensible" is being correctly interpreted at all places. Whether the phenomenon of the electroplastic spasm is neither understood nor indeed recognized by many operators of stunning devices and it may well be that inspecting officers also have difficulties in differentiating electrical paralysis from electrical narcosis." This differentiation has been an important contribution by UFAW.

Venesection
There are several different methods of venesection, or making the cut by which the bird is bled to death. Each has its proponents. Humane Information Services has made no study of this subject, which is not especially important from a humane standpoint if the birds are properly stunned before venesection.

TRY AND EGG INDUSTRY HAS BEEN "BACK TO OLD-FASHIONED BARNYARD PRODUCTION."
A British humane society that is devoted to this approach. While it may be the key to reform of the poultry and egg industry in Great Britain, a small country, in our opinion it is not the approach to take in the United States.

Back to the Hen House?
In the good old days nearly every family farm had at least a few cows and a flock of chickens. The killing of chickens and other birds of prey and among other things was killed between other chores such as looking after a bunch of kids, cooking, housecleaning, keeping wood in the woodshed, feeding the chickens and the kids in a big galvanized washtub, and nursing the butter, also tended the farm flock. Of course the kids, when they were old enough, helped milk the cows, feed the chickens, and weed the vegetable garden.

The eggs were sold by the family accumulated in the underground cellar. Periodically the farmer hatched up a rig, or a cranked the pleasure to the point to see the banker or to shop, carrying a can of sour cream and the eggs with him. If the town was sufficiently large to support a "produce house," feed store or grain elevator, and perhaps even a small creamery, the farmer sold the cream and eggs to them. Otherwise he delivered them at the railroad station platform, later to be loaded on the passenger train express car for transportation to the big city. Figure 15, along with an occasional coop of chickens destined for a poultry house where they were used and shipped with or without first being fed out.

The can of cream, by the time it got to the creamery, was frequently with dirt or a dead rat in it. The eggs were far from having that "farm fresh" quality prized by the advertising writers.

At the produce house the eggs were candied to eliminate the "badies," cooled and shipped to the sun summer market, the spring market, the fall market, or the winter market. In the spring, when laying hens felt more like laying, a good proportion of the eggs were removed and sold during the season of low egg production. Now, egg production on the factory farms is adjusted to supply fresh eggs of better quality. Cold-storage eggs, which actually were better than many "fresh" ones produced in the sun summer, are seldom encountered. That agrees with our own observations.

WHAT ARE THE FEASIBLE REMEDIES
It seems that the remedies for the cruelties to which the chickens are subjected on the factory farms?

They consist of modifications of current practices that are now followed which could much to alleviate or prevent the suffer of chickens.

Cooperate, not fight
These practical remedies can be implemented only by cooperation between the egg industry and poultry industry, not by fighting. For reasons indicated in the first part of this article, the industry is too big and too politically powerful to have anything to do with the humane slaughter law for poultry, if it could even be passed. Why then not, immediately demand a fee based on the number of chickens, the amount of feed, the manure, the litter, the equipment used, and the soil and water costs. This differentiation has been an important contribution by UFAW.

A HUMANE SLAUGHTER LAW FOR POULTRY
As we have seen, the slaughter of million pounds of chicken a year is made humane by the adoption of the best method or methods of stunning the birds before striking. England and some European countries have laws which are based on this principle. Why not, then, immediately demand a federal humane slaughter law for poultry, if it is economically practical to do so?

We expect that H.R. 1464, the Humane Slaughter Act of 1977, which our state senator has introduced, will be passed in the United States Congress. And, despite allegations to the contrary, the quality of the products sold at all federally or state-inspected plants in the United States, would greatly improve enforcement of the 1958 Act, and also would call to all farmers and poultry plants selling meat products to the United States. Why not a similar law for poultry?
LIVING CONDITIONS ON PULLET AND LAYING FARMS

We believe, but cannot now prove, that the saving of millions of chicks a year represents the margin of economic advantage the reduction in cage space per bird on pullet and laying farms. It is well known that at least one hatchery is willing to pay the contract farmer more for keeping three birds in a cage than four. If there is one entrepreneur who is ready for this, then the advantage of reduced crowding cannot be discreet as between three and four, but as between a small and a very small relationship. The real problem is to find the point of maximum returns on this curve.

We do not put much importance on the results of the agricultural experiment stations. In the first place, these are only retests, and the amount of space allotted per bird would be to critically examine these studies to see which, if any, and if the findings which have resulted in such crowding take into account the cost of labor, mortality. Without wishing to disparage the excellent research by agricultural experiment stations which has led to tremendous increases in crop yields and animal productivity, it must be said that investigations have demonstrated lack of staff.

Both poultry meat processors already have large plants concentrated on hatcheries might bring results. Even if the bill should never be passed, it might start the ball rolling toward a solution of the problem. If potential contributors are not ready, if their conclusions differ, and if so, the industry has carried beyond the margins of economic advantage the reduction in cage space per bird on pullet and laying farms. This may be indicated by the fact that the overcrowding of chickens on the pullet and laying farms is not based on invalid research findings and biased assumptions. The true benefits of a shift from concentration to barnyard eggs. There is a natural bias toward more crowding, because it saves in initial costs.

As to the per square foot of space is not the only criterion that should govern the industry’s public image may become increasingly important as consumers demand something that is good for the birds and farm operators. We cannot afford to ignore this factor entirely."

If pressure on the industry does not bring results, then the only alternative would be to encourage the individual egg producers to merchandise eggs produced under conditions from a human standpoint. In England the emphasis has been on promoting barnyard eggs. In this country it might be more appropriately, especially if we could bring some of the pullet and laying farms, but humanely. We believe this has an important potential, i.e., humanely-produced eggs would sell for a higher price, but not as much as would be required for barnyard production.

Fig. 16. To the left shows a pen of broilers one with sodium pentobarbital per pound of feed. In photograph at right partially-anesthetized birds offer no resistance to handling.

HUMANE KILLING OF BABY CHICKS

The killing of millions of male baby chickens is the most inhumane animal-handling operation in the United States humane publica

The best of all potential remedies? The single remedy having perhaps the greatest potential for making the poultry and egg industry humane is one which would be applicable to all. This remedy would be the development of a drug for sedating the birds before they are moved from cage to cage, or cage to coop, or coop to cage, or coop to shackle. It is this rough handling that constitutes the greatest single cruelty to broilers. The drug should be orally administered so as to be easily caught and inserted in the crates for transportation to the processing facilities. Without spending the money for such an introduction, if they could receive a sedative in the last feed, they would be quiet, partially-anesthetized, so as to be easily caught and inserted in the crates for transportation to the processing facilities. It is this rough handling that constitutes the greatest single cruelty to broilers. The drug should be orally administered so as to be easily caught and inserted in the crates for transportation to the processing facilities. It is this rough handling that constitutes the greatest single cruelty to broilers. The drug should be orally administered so as to be easily caught and inserted in the crates for transportation to the processing facilities.

HUMANE INFORMATION SERVICES will write to Abbott Laboratories, which furnished the sodium pentobarbital for these tests and also determined the tissue residue, suggesting that the search for a satisfactory sedating agent be continued. There is no indication that this is being done. It is up to the humane movement itself to determine the possibilities in testing the relative humaneness of the several different methods of stunning. This will take time.

So, we are not ready now to ask for humane slaughter legislation for poultry. But the humane movement should be alive to other possibilities of the remedy. We cannot recall ever running across any reference to this subject in any United States humane publica.

Humane Information Services is prepared with knowledge of the problem, and a willingness to tackle it. But we cannot do so without some financial support. If you would like to help, send us a generous donation! Dollar bills won't do much good in such an effort.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

We have recently received some interesting letters which we hoped to use in this issue. But the need for space for the lead article on poultry and egg production prevented. Some may say it is just a waste of words, that the porkers in the article that they think could be eliminated without reducing the readers’ understanding of what needs to be done and why. We will save the rest for a future issue.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

Ten years ago this month the first issue of Report to Humanitarians was reproduced on a small offset press in a room in the home of Dr. Thomas, our president. The first issue was mainly devoted to laboratory animal legislation, which then had the ring of controversy in contrast to 90% of those having acceptable animal protection. The circulation was to a few hundred names culled from Doc’s and Emily’s correspondence with humanitarians, mainly in Europe. Human Information Services has come a long way since then. Report to Humanitarians now goes to nearly 19,000 off¬

ers in 30 countries and 120 countries. It is now sent to humanities, in every state and many foreign countries. Our comprehensive, factual reports are read by human leaders everywhere; we know, because of the letters we receive coming from the animal protection community.

Human Information Services takes this anniversary occa¬

sion to thank all of its members, whose interest and financial support have made all this possible. And, our deepest and best wishes for the future, dear friends.

STATE OF WASHINGTON LEGISLATION MAKES SODIUM PENTOBARBITAL AVAILABLE TO ANIMAL SHELTERS

The State of Washington has followed Virginia and several other states in making available to humane society and animal control shelters the restricted euthanasia drug sodium pentobarbitol. Many shelters and pounds claim that they would like to shift from some less humane method of destroying dogs and cats to less cruel methods of killing. The reason they do not, it is said, is that they have no veterinarian on their staff and cannot obtain the drug without the cooperation of private veterinarians who often refuse to sell it even on a request, go along because they are afraid that the shelter or pound will not follow the regulations regarding purchase, reporting, and use of the drug. In the case of the cooperators, the cooperation of a veterinarian is in trouble with the authorities.

In Virginia, the law making barbiturates available to shelters seems to have worked very well. We heard from a Shelter veterinarian report that they have encountered no difficulties if they follow the rules.

The Humane Information Services for a long time has been urging humanitarians to initiate state laws similar to the one in Vir¬

ginia. Apparently the two greatest obstacles to such action have been (1) inertia on the part of humane societies which prefer to continue using a method that they are not willing to have phased out in the excuse of non-availability of sodium pentobarbital eliminat¬

ed: (2) opposition by veterinarians who apparently fear a move as just another step toward asphyxia, and animal health mat¬

ters. Frequently, we believe, these attitudes result from lack of understanding of the proposed legislation and its prospective results.

Humane Information Services will make a copy of the new Wash¬

ington law for anyone requesting it. Please allow sufficient time for reply to enable us to determine how many to reproduce.

We were flattered to receive a number of long letters setting us straight about the dog hangings in Greenland (Report to Humanitarians No. 40, June, 1977). It seems that:

(1) Denmark is a very humane country.
(2) We know that if anything could be done to improve condi¬

tions in Greenland, the Danish government would be more than willing.
(3) Even if hanging is not a humane method, we think we have a right to know if any cruelty is being committed.
(4) Although hanging of dogs was and still is done to some extent in remote ar¬


tains where no other methods are practical, the method is being used only as a last resort, and only in cases of severe neglect or possibly abuse.
(5) We have the right to tell the public the truth about inhuman acts wherever they are committed.
(6) We must continue to use all the methods available to us to prevent cruelty to animals.

The real point we were trying to make is that far greater cruelties to far greater numbers of animals occur regularly and daily right here under our noses in the United States of America. About these cruelties we are in a position to do something. The real problem is not what and how to do it, but how to divert the flow of funds from what borders on unethical to humane efforts.