HSUS Veal Campaign Takes Off
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Milk-fed calves the focus of national public-education campaign

We hope, by now, that many of you have seen The HSUS’s ads in newspapers and magazines asking consumers to think twice before ordering veal when dining out. Our half-page ad in the New York Times in December kicked off what we believe to be the biggest campaign—ever—to help farm animals.

The focus of our campaign is milk-fed, or white, veal. Of all the confinement-raised animals, the veal calf endures probably the most restrictive conditions for the least justifiable reasons.

The New York Times ad was only the beginning of a carefully planned and coordinated campaign to increase the public’s awareness of the veal calf’s plight. Our goals: to make sure the public is aware of how its food animals are being produced, and the veal industry aware of the extent to which the public values humaneness in animal production. Our means: to enlist the aid of magazine ads in major veal-consuming cities, hundreds of local humane societies throughout the country, and you, our members, to help spread the word.

Through our action packet, which includes a fact sheet describing how veal calves are raised in this country, an action sheet showing what you can do to help, and bright yellow cards to leave when you dine out explaining why you didn’t choose veal, you can help get the word out.

It is clear that our efforts to reform milk-fed veal production methods in the U.S. are already producing results. Shortly after our New York Times ad appeared, a large farm group paid to have its own ad published in response. Agricultural trade papers have warned their readers against our campaign. And Provimi, Inc., one of the nation’s largest veal producers, has called on the farm community to boycott The HSUS and has pledged some $200,000 to fight us and our expert, Dr. Michael Fox. Yet the U.S. Department of Agriculture has recently announced grants of more than a quarter million dollars to study the effects of stress in farm animals. And, on Capitol Hill, a bill has been introduced to establish a special study commission to look into the problem.

The campaign is working.
Milk-fed veal ends up in the most elegant of surroundings, but it begins like this, with one stall so small it cannot even turn around. The veal calf’s miserable existence is only one example of the growing numbers of inhumane husbandry practices that have come to be known as factory farming.

The standard home for a confinement-raised calf is a bare wooden crate, two feet wide by five feet long. The sides and bottom of the crate are slats of wood. No bedding is used because the calves, naturally craving roughage, would be likely to chew on it. To keep the meat fashionably white, they must be denied roughage. To discourage the calves from moving around and turning flesh to muscle, producers used to keep their animals in total or semi-darkness up to 22 hours a day. However, prompted in part by animal welfare raisers, most of the large companies no longer encourage this inconvenience.

Calves destined to become milk-fed veal begin their lives as every other calf does. Nearly always the male offspring of a dairy cow, useless for milk production, a calf doomed to become white veal is taken from its mother three or four days after birth, bidding farewell to the out-of-doors until the day, some 16 weeks later, when it will be taken to slaughter. Some one million of these calves—one third of all calves raised for veal come to be known as white veal—are raised in confinement for white veal every year.

The establishment of such a committee would be the first step in improving the lives of veal calves and other animals that suffer under current confinement systems.

The original impetus for the development of the group-pen system was a special commission appointed by the British government to look at the welfare of animals kept under intensive-confinement conditions. Last summer, Ohio Congressman Ron Mottl introduced House Joint Resolution 305, which would establish a farm animal husbandry committee similar to Great Britain’s. The committee, comprised of farmers, farm organization officials, consumers, animal welfare advocates, and scientific and medical experts, would study the problems related to intensive farm animal husbandry systems used in the U.S., including those used for veal calves, and would then report its recommendations back to the Congress.

“‘One of the reasons I finally set my face against crated veal production was that I thought the number of restraints on natural behavior were just too great. The animal was prevented from ruminating. It was prevented from grooming itself, it was prevented from turning around, it was prevented from playing, jumping, exploring. . . .’”

—A spokesman for a British veal company that has abandoned the confinement system in favor of group pens (above). The U.S.’s largest veal company, Provimi, Inc., has recently begun testing the system.

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The Total confinement is supposedly the only way to produce taste. Taste tests show the color of veal has the difference. You can send for more cards to use or to distribute. (See below for prices.)

Support the Mottl bill. Write to your representative (c/o House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515) to urge him or her to cosponsor H.J.Res. 305 to establish a farm animal husbandry commission. Write your U.S. Senators (c/o Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510) urging them to introduce a similar bill in the Senate.

Spread the word, using the material we’ve designed to help you become an effective part of this nationwide campaign. Our “Fact Sheet” provides up-to-date information and statistics on veal production; the “Action Sheet” shows how to make your concern known to industry and government representatives who can make a difference. Our sample action packet contains ten each of the fact and action sheets, and 20 “NO VEAL THIS MEAL” cards.

Help support The HSUS’s campaign to end the misery of milk-fed veal calves and other farm animals. Your tax-deductible contribution will help us to continue our public awareness campaign as well as our full-time staff work with federal agencies, Congress, and industry. Contributors of $10 or more will automatically receive the sample action packet mentioned above. Remember, without your support, these animals will continue to suffer. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.

Additional copies of this report are available at 25¢ each.
Sample action packet available for $2.
Additional “NO VEAL THIS MEAL CARDS” 50/$1.00; 100/$4.00; 500/$6.00.
Other bulk prices available upon request.