



END THE CAGE AGE

**WHY THE EU MUST STOP
CAGING FARM ANIMALS**

2023

INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of millions of farm animals across the European Union (EU) are forced to live their entire lives imprisoned in tiny, barren cages. Many millions of others spend a significant proportion of their lives in cages. These inhumane systems confine and restrict, thwart many of an animal's natural instincts and are a desolate reflection on our society.

It's not just egg-laying hens that are caged. Millions of rabbits, pigs, quail, ducks, geese and calves also experience unimaginable suffering in cruel cages on farms throughout the EU – all sentient beings, capable of suffering and joy. These outdated and cramped conditions cause severe health and welfare compromises, preventing these sentient beings from experiencing a life worth living.

In October 2020, the European Citizens' Initiative 'End the Cage Age' was submitted with approximatively 1.4 million signatures. In response, the European Parliament voted in support of the Initiative and the European Commission committed to propose changes to existing animal welfare legislation by the end of 2023 so as to prohibit cages for farmed animals – including for hens, rabbits, pigs, quail, duck, geese and calves.

This report sets out why the EU must stop caging farm animals and what should be done to make that happen.

It's time to stand up and End the Cage Age.

“In formulating and implementing the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals...”

Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Official Journal of the European Union C 115, 09.05.2008



Factory farm sows confined in sow stalls

© Compassion in World Farming

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In the EU, around 300 million animals spend all, or a significant part, of their lives imprisoned in cages – from sows in farrowing crates to egg-laying hens in so-called ‘enriched’ cages.
- Eminent animal welfare scientists agree that confining animals in cages seriously harms their welfare.
- Science shows us that caging animals is cruel: they are sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and joy. These farming systems cause immense suffering because animals in cages have no control over their lives, experience extreme frustration, are severely restricted in their movement, and are prevented from performing almost all natural behaviours.
- The public believe more should be done to protect farm animals. A massive 94% of people in Europe believe protecting the welfare of farm animals is important, and 82% believe farm animals should be better protected.
- In October 2020, the European Citizens’ Initiative ‘End the Cage Age’ was submitted with approximatively 1.4 million signatures. In response, the European Parliament voted in support of the Initiative and the European Commission committed to prohibit cages for farmed animals in its expected revision of the EU animal welfare legislation, scheduled for the second half of 2023.
- Extreme confinement is still a feature of farming systems for many different species – from sows forced to nurse their piglets in crates, to rabbits and quail enduring whole lives in barren cages, and ducks and geese caged for force-feeding to produce foie gras.
- While the EU ban on the use of barren battery cages came into force in 2012, nearly half of commercial egg-laying hens are still kept in so-called ‘enriched’ cages. Additionally breeding flocks and chicks are also caged, often in barren cages.

- Calves are confined individually in small pens for the first 8 weeks of their lives.
- EU farm animal legislation stipulates that “the freedom of movement of an animal...must not be restricted to cause unnecessary suffering”. It also states that “where an animal is continuously or regularly confined, it must be given the space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge”. Each of the confinement systems in this booklet breaches this legislation, yet they continue to be routinely used in many Member States.
- Some enlightened EU Member States have already introduced national legislation to ban certain forms of caged farming. All cages for sows (sow stalls and farrowing crates) are banned in Sweden. Denmark has banned sow stalls for new systems and for existing housing by 2035. Germany will end the use of sow stalls by 2030, and restrict time spent in farrowing crates to a maximum of five days from 2035. Austria will restrict time spent in crates to a maximum of five days after farrowing from 2033. Enriched cages for laying hens are banned in Luxembourg and Austria; a ban is committed to in Germany (from 2025, in exceptional cases from 2028), and Slovakia (a signed memorandum between government and industry from 2030). In September 2020 Czech MPs voted to ban the cage farming of laying hens from the year 2027. Cages for farmed rabbits have been banned in Austria and remaining enriched cages in Belgium will be banned by 2025.
- EU legislation is urgently needed to end the inhumane practice of farming animals in cages. We also urge each Member State to introduce national legislation to move to more humane farming methods and outlaw the caging of farm animals.

“There is a hierarchy of needs and the need of free voluntary movement is among those at the base which means that no welfare measures can replace the freedom of movement. No life worth living is possible without moving around.”

Andrzej Elżanowski
Professor of Zoology
University of Warsaw

IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE.



EXTREME CONFINEMENT

Around 300 million farm animals – including hens, quail, rabbits, pigs, ducks and calves – are imprisoned in cages on EU farms each year.

A cage is a form of inescapable and extreme confinement which renders an animal solely dependent on their keeper for food, water and minimal comforts. It deprives that animal of autonomy, severely restricting their ability to meet essential behavioural, physical and psychological needs.

Farm animals are sentient beings. This means they have the ability to feel; they can experience a range of emotions such as joy, fear, pain and misery. Farm animals can also learn from experience, solve problems, and form close social bonds – akin to friendship in humans. Cages compromise their fundamental being and reduce animals to a mere unit of production.

Speaking of the “remarkable cognitive abilities and cultural innovations” of the chicken, for example, Professor Christine Nicol from the University of Bristol’s Department of Clinical Veterinary Science says: *“Our challenge is to teach others that every animal we intend to eat or use is a complex individual and to adjust our farming culture accordingly.”*



Hens in an enriched cage



A sow in a farrowing crate, with piglets

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THE PROBLEM WITH CAGES IS THAT THEY:

Can segregate individual animals (that are social by nature)... for example, breeding rabbits, calves up to 8 weeks old and sows in early pregnancy.

Provide very limited space, sometimes both vertically and horizontally. Female breeding rabbits are unable to sit up fully, lie stretched out or stand and sows cannot turn around or walk.

Are all too often barren. They usually consist of no more than metal bars and a mesh or concrete floor, with feed and water dispensers. For example, this applies to sows, quail, meat rabbits and female breeding rabbits.

Can be modular: usually stacked in tiers within a shed. Keeping so many animals in close proximity can increase the likelihood of disease spread and lead to poor environmental conditions, such as poor air quality.

Can keep animals in tightly-packed groups, for example, with quail and rabbits reared for meat. This makes it more difficult for animals to move around and rest.

Prevent meaningful exercise, leading to health problems such as low bone density, for example in sows, rabbits and laying hens, and frustration of mental needs by restricting behaviours important to the animal.

Leading animal welfare experts have also criticised cage systems.

“In caging the sow at farrowing, she is prohibited from leaving her group, finding a nest site, accessing and arranging nest material – all of which her physiology and behavior is striving towards. Subsequently, she responds with severe stress. She becomes more vulnerable to disease and giving birth takes longer, also risking the welfare of her offspring.”

Professor Bo Algers, Veterinarian and Professor Emeritus in Animal Hygiene at the Department of Animal Environment and Health, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The latest Eurobarometer report shows that public support for improving the welfare of farm animals is overwhelming – 94% of people in Europe believe protecting the welfare of farm animals is important and 82% think farm animals should be better protected than they are now. What’s more, the majority of people are prepared to pay more for products from higher animal welfare production systems.

Across the world, many leading businesses have listened to their customers and are going cage-free. Following McDonald’s landmark decision in 2015 to source only cage-free eggs by 2025, a wave of US companies – including Walmart, Nestlé and Starbucks – followed suit.

In Europe, hundreds of the biggest retailers and brands including Tesco, Morrisons, Carrefour, Intermarché, and the leading egg producers in the UK (Noble Foods) and France (Groupe Avril) have all committed to using only cage-free eggs by 2025. In addition, since 2016, the number of companies with global cage-free commitments has grown from 5 to at least 58, including global giants like Unilever, Danone, Compass Group, Aldi Sud, Nestle, Sodexo and Barilla.

We mustn’t let the EU fall behind.

Thanks to hard-hitting campaigns and investigations by Compassion in World Farming and other organisations, some progress has been made towards bringing EU farming out of the Dark Ages. Recent victories include veal crates being banned in 2007, barren battery cages for egg-laying hens outlawed in 2012, and a partial ban on the sow stall in 2013. From 2021, cages will be prohibited in all organic farming throughout the EU. Significantly, the EU’s Lisbon Treaty, signed in 2009, gave animals legal recognition as sentient beings. It means that their welfare must now be taken into consideration before any new legislation is passed.

“The animal world is teeming with an enormous variety of breathing, sensing, feeling creatures who are not merely alive, but living life. Each is trying to get along – to feed and shelter themselves, to reproduce, to seek what is good and avoid what is bad. There’s a diversity of good things to be gotten: food, water, movement, rest, shelter, sunshine, shade, discovery, anticipation, social interaction, play and sex. And because gaining these goods is adaptive, evolution has equipped animals with the capacity to experience their rewards. Like us, they are pleasure seekers.”

Dr Jonathan Balcombe, animal behaviour scientist, *Pleasurable Kingdom - Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good*

PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES:

- So-called ‘enriched’ cages for hens are banned in Luxembourg and Austria; a ban is committed to in Germany (from 2025, in exceptional cases from 2028), and Slovakia (a signed memorandum between government and industry from 2030). In September 2020 Czech MPs voted to ban the cage farming of laying hens from the year 2027. Cages were banned in the Wallonia region of Belgium in 2018 and new and retrofitted cage systems are banned in France.

- Sow stalls are banned completely in Sweden, and only permitted for the first four days after insemination in the Netherlands. In new pig housing in Denmark, sow stalls may only be

used for 3 days; this will apply to all systems by 2035. In July 2020, Germany voted to completely end the use of sow stalls within 8-10 years.

- Farrowing crates are banned in Sweden. In July 2020, Germany voted for a transition to a maximum of 5 days of confinement in farrowing crates. From 2033, Austria will restrict the confinement period in farrowing crates to one day before the expected farrowing date to five days afterwards.

- Cages for meat rabbits have been banned in Austria since 2012. Rabbits will no longer

be kept in cages in Belgium by 2025. Barren cages for rabbits were banned in the Netherlands in 2016 and will be banned in Germany in 2024. By 2025, all breeding rabbits in professional farms in Flanders must be no longer kept in cages.

However, these are exceptions: cage systems continue to be used throughout the EU. Experts, scientists and the public agree – the use of cages is cruel, outdated and unnecessary. Their use should be ended in all EU farming, and policy makers need to help bring about that change by initiating and supporting new legislation to bring farming into the 21st century.

RABBITS

Around 120 million rabbits are farmed commercially in the EU alone and almost all of them are confined to cages for their entire lives. Each one is kept in a space so small that all basic natural behaviours are seriously impaired. Some can't even stand upright. This is cruelty on a colossal scale and is completely unnecessary. More humane commercial alternatives are available.



“ The conditions in which rabbits are kept and farmed in many places in Europe can be inhumane, horrific, unhealthy and a disgrace to responsible husbandry, as evidenced by the incidence of physical and mental disease and unintentional losses...” ”

Professor David Morton CBE, Chair of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Scientific Report Working Group on the Impact of Housing and Husbandry Systems on the Health and Welfare of Farmed Rabbits; Professor Emeritus, School of Biosciences, University of Birmingham, UK

© Compassion in World Farming/free-range rabbit farm in France

The misery of living in cages

Almost all of the EU's rabbits are confined in barren wire cages, so overcrowded that each rabbit has less space than a single A4 sheet of paper. This means their movement is severely restricted; they cannot even adopt many normal postures such as lying stretched out or standing with their ears up. There is virtually no opportunity for exercise which can cause weakened bones, whilst wire flooring commonly leads to painful foot and leg sores: a common reason for the culling of breeding females.

Caged rabbits are also unable to perform many important natural behaviours such as digging, hiding and foraging. This can lead to immense stress and abnormal behaviours such as excessive grooming and repetitive gnawing on the cage.

Many of them die or are culled young, and are replaced. Antibiotic use is high to combat the high levels of respiratory and intestinal disease. Despite this, there are still unacceptably high mortality rates.

Higher welfare alternatives

Some forward-thinking EU Member States are leading the way and embracing higher welfare systems as alternatives to caged farming of rabbits.

For example, Belgium has moved to park systems in response to increasing public concern about conventional barren cages. The park system offers more space per rabbit than cages, the floors are more comfortable, there is no restriction on how high they can stretch, they can jump and there are tubes for them to hide in. Large platforms provide different levels for jumping, there are blocks to gnaw on and hay and straw provide fibre to aid digestion.

While no existing housing system meets all rabbits' behavioural needs, the park system provides better welfare for meat rabbits, and pen and group systems for breeding females are better than a cage system.

WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all of the EU's rabbits. We urge the Commission and the Member States to take effective steps to end the caging of rabbits and to ensure they are farmed in a more humane manner.

In 2016 there were an additional 61 million rabbits kept in 'backyard' systems in the EU. Governments do not record in which systems these rabbits are housed; however, many millions are thought to be confined in cages or hutches. Member States must be required to record housing systems for rabbits in backyard systems and new legislation banning cages and other barren close confinement systems should apply to these rabbits too.



Rabbits in a barren cage

© Compassion in World Farming

Legislation

The farming of rabbits in cages is cruel and must be phased out. There is currently no EU-wide, species-specific legislation protecting rabbits.

However, some Member States have made progress. Most notably, in 2016 Belgium began phasing out cages for rabbits; consequently, by 2025, no meat rabbits or breeding female (all breeding rabbits in Flanders) will be in cages.¹ Austria, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands all have national legislation that goes some way towards protecting rabbit welfare.



Caged EU rabbits

EXPOSING FACTORY FARMING'S BEST KEPT SECRET

2014: Compassion in World Farming's investigators went undercover to visit 16 rabbit factory farms in five countries – Italy, Greece, Czech Republic, Poland and Cyprus.

Our investigators documented appalling suffering.

“A typical rabbit factory farm. Doors are opened and flies buzz around your face, they are on all the cages and on the lens of my camera. Beyond that are the faces of thousands of rabbits packed in rows of cages with zero enrichment and no hope.”

Eyewitness report from CIWF investigator, commenting on a rabbit farm in Poland.

Dirty business: In many cases, live rabbits were sitting amongst rotting dead rabbits and large accumulated mounds of faeces.

Cruel industry: Rabbits were confined in tiny cages of bare wire, which caused injuries and stress, and prevented them expressing their natural behaviours.

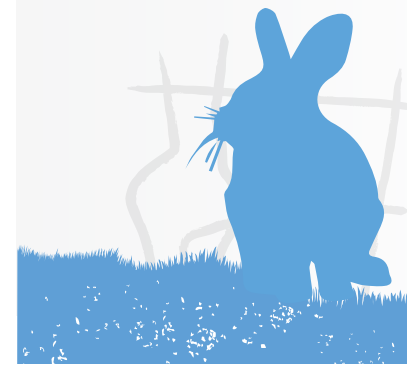
TAKE ACTION

In 2017 the European Parliament adopted a report which recognised barren battery cages as an inappropriate housing system for rabbits, and which called upon the European Commission to draw up legislation to protect farmed rabbits.

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all of Europe's rabbits. We urge the Commission and the Member States to take effective steps to end the caging of rabbits and to ensure they are farmed in a humane manner.



WHY IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE FOR RABBITS IN THE EU



- **Behind bars:** Rabbits spend their whole lives in cages. Breeding females are slaughtered at around 10 months old. Breeding males may be kept for up to 6 years
- **Tiny space:** Each (meat) rabbit typically has only 450-600cm² of space, that's less than an A4 sheet of paper. Cages are a mere 28-35cm in height. Breeding females are individually confined in wire cages measuring around 45 x 65cm. In this space, they cannot even lie down stretched out, let alone take a single hop.
- **Barren cages:** Cages are often just bare metal wire, with no bedding and no enrichment
- **Rabbits' size:** Stretched out lying down: 75cm, standing up 75cm

HOUSING SYSTEMS FOR RABBITS

BARREN AND ENRICHED CAGES

BAD Severely restrict natural behaviours. The extremely narrow cages allow very limited movement meaning that rabbits can barely lie down and stand up. No bedding or other forms of enrichment are provided.

FREE RANGE, OUTDOOR PENS AND PARK SYSTEMS

BETTER Free-range systems provide space for normal behaviours such as hopping, and access to vegetation for grazing. However, there is increased risk of exposure to parasites, disease and predation. In park systems there are

platforms on different levels, more comfortable floors, gnawing blocks, and hay and straw for fibre. Group housing for females is essential for their mental wellbeing.



Caged rabbits

EGG-LAYING HENS

There are over 370 million egg-laying hens in commercial farms in the EU – almost half of them are forced to live in overcrowded cages. Each bird has a space only slightly larger than an A4 sheet of paper. This is completely unnecessary. Hens must be moved out of cages and farmed in more humane ways.



“ I had high hopes that (enriched cages)...would solve a lot of welfare problems, but the commercial furnished cages that I am seeing now really don't live up to that expectation...”

Ian Duncan, Professor Emeritus and Emeritus Chair of Animal Welfare, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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The misery of living in cages

Around 160 million hens are now kept in so-called 'enriched' cages. These were designed to meet a range of the hen's behavioural needs, but deficiencies in the law and restrictions due to lack of vertical space and high stocking densities, mean that natural behaviour is still severely limited.

A hen in an 'enriched' cage does not experience a life worth living. She has very little opportunity to exercise and is prevented from flying. The cages are supposed to be provided with scratching areas, but the law doesn't specify how large these should be, meaning they are often minimal. Material for scratching is provided only rarely. If it were, the crowded conditions could lead to high levels of dust.

There is no opportunity to dust-bathe and perches cannot be high enough to fulfil their main function – to enable the hens to get high enough to feel safe from predators.

Poorly-positioned perches may also impede movement or leave hens vulnerable to being pecked from below. Crowding inhibits basic behaviours such as wing-flapping. Severe restriction of natural behaviour can lead to frustration and stereotypical behaviours. Lack of exercise can lead to physical problems such as bone weakness.

Combi cages

'Combination' or 'convertible housing' systems are multi-tiered rows of cages, that can have their doors opened, creating a multi-tiered barn system, or closed, reverting to a caged system.

Combi systems are not a suitable alternative cage-free system for the following reasons:

- There commonly isn't space for ramps to permit birds to walk between levels with minimal risk of injury

- Birds resting on perches are at risk of feather pecking since these are not high enough to keep them out of reach of birds below. In addition, the perches are not high enough to make the birds feel safe (one of the key functions of a perch from the birds' point of view).
- The space on the floor between the tiers is not wide enough to create a good scratching and dust-bathing area
- The system provides the potential for birds to be confined in cages either routinely or permanently
- Stocking density is comparable to conventional cage systems when birds are confined
- Using doors routinely can potentially lead to increased levels of frustration and associated negative behaviours among birds as they transfer between the aviary environment and confinement
- Key features and equipment to encourage important behaviours such as nesting and scratching are lacking

Combi systems are not a satisfactory way forward and are unlikely to be certified by credible welfare schemes.

Higher welfare alternatives

Barns and aviaries offer improvements to the welfare of laying hens because they allow natural behaviours such as foraging, scratching and dust-bathing. They also offer much greater freedom of movement for exercise: flying, running and wing-flapping. In the EU, barns and aviaries have lower stocking densities than cage systems, with nine hens per square metre compared to over 13 per square metre in cages.

In free-range systems, hens are housed in barns, as above, but during daylight hours they also have access to outdoor pasture, which often includes trees and shrubs. In organic systems, hens also have outdoor access and additionally live in smaller flocks and have more space indoors compared with free-range systems.

WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all of the EU's egg-laying hens. We urge the Commission and the Member States to take effective steps to ban the use of cages in egg production and to ensure hens are farmed in more humane ways.

Free-range and organic systems provide greater opportunities for exercise, exploration and foraging. Hens can supplement their diets with vegetation and insects. They can also dust-bathe and scratch in the dirt, and can experience fresh air and sunlight.

Legislation

Following a long-running campaign by Compassion and other animal welfare organisations, the ban on barren cages came into force across the EU in 2012.²

However, the EU still allows so-called 'enriched' cages. A few Member States have made progress: enriched cages are prohibited in Luxembourg³ and Austria⁴; a ban is committed to in Germany (from 2025, in exceptional cases from 2028⁵), and Slovakia (a signed memorandum between government and industry from 2030). In September 2020 Czech MPs voted to ban the cage farming of laying hens from the year 2027. Cages were in the Wallonia region of Belgium in 2018 and France has banned new or retrofitted enriched cage systems. That means less than half of the

EU's egg-laying hens still live in cages.

In addition to over 350 million hens in commercial farms, there were an estimated 59 million in smaller flocks (of less than 350 hens per farm) in 2013. Some small flocks of hens are likely to be caged and the legislation covering commercially-farmed laying hens does not apply to these smaller flocks. This means that their cages can be barren and of no minimum size.

In addition to the 160 million adult hens in cages every year, there are many millions of young chicks and pullets also in cages. Their welfare is not covered by specific legislation, meaning that they too can be in barren cages of no minimum size. The number of pullets that are caged is not recorded, however, is likely to be well over 100 million each year.

Current laying hen legislation does not cover:

- Flocks with less than 350 hens
- Pullets (young hens before they start laying)

- Breeding flocks
- Other species of poultry

The European Commission must ensure that new legislation applies to all laying poultry, regardless of flock size and stage of production.



Hens in 'enriched' cages

TAKE ACTION

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all of Europe's egg-laying hens. We urge the Commission and the Member States to take effective steps to ban the use of cages in egg production and to ensure hens are farmed in more humane ways. Rules banning cages should also apply to flocks of under 350 hens.



END THE CAGE AGE

THE LONG ROAD TO FREEDOM

2012: The EU Laying Hens Directive came into force, banning barren battery cages in the EU.

2015: Compassion's investigators went undercover in four EU Member States to see what 'enriched' cages mean for Europe's laying hens.

Filming in ten farms across France, Italy, Czech Republic and Cyprus, they exposed the continued suffering faced by millions of hens who are still stuck in the Cage Age.

Legal but not right: whilst many of the farms visited may be meeting

the requirements of the Directive by adopting the so-called 'enriched' cage, they are all failing to address the welfare needs of their animals.

Investigators encountered hens with their beaks severely trimmed and their bodies badly feather-pecked. Animals were observed to be extremely anxious and fearful of human contact – while others were too ill to move.

The conditions inside the cages were cramped, severely restricting the birds' movement.

WHY IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE FOR LAYING HENS IN THE EU



- **Behind bars:** Hens in so-called 'enriched' cages still spend their entire egg-laying lives confined in a cage. Over 40% of the EU's 376 million hens in commercial units are farmed this way
- **Minimal space:** Enriched cages provide only 750cm² per hen; little more than the area of an A4 sheet of paper. Minimum cage height is only 45cm
- **Behavioural restriction:** Hens still cannot freely run, fly, forage in the ground, dust-bathe, or experience fresh air or sunlight
- **Average hen size:** Wingspan: 76cm; height: 25cm - 38cm



LAYING HEN SYSTEMS

ENRICHED AND COLONY CAGES

BAD

Severely limit natural behaviours such as exercising and dust-bathing. Each hen has only slightly more space than an A4 sheet of paper.

BARNs

BETTER

Allow for some natural behaviours such as foraging, scratching and dust-bathing.

FREE RANGE AND ORGANIC

BEST

Allow a full range of behaviours with access to outdoor pasture and sufficient room for exercise.

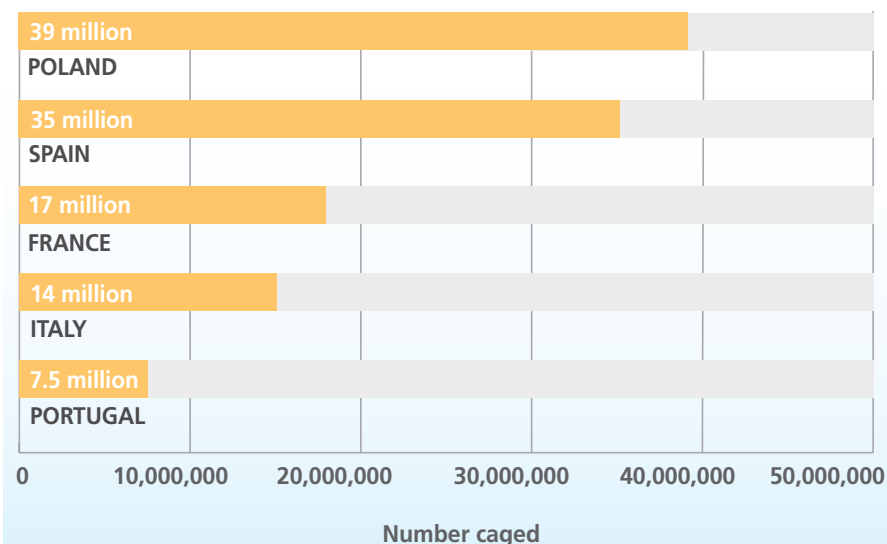
Industry Changes

Hundreds of the EU's biggest retailers and brands – including Danone, Nestlé, Aramark, Lidl and Sodexo – have committed to or achieved using only cage-free eggs throughout the entire region.



TOP 5

EU COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS OF CAGED LAYING-HENS



Hens in an enriched cage

SOWS

There are around 11 million sows in the EU. The majority spend nearly half of every year inside cages, in which they cannot even turn around. Most are caged for around five weeks before and in early pregnancy. Then, about a week before giving birth, they are confined again for around a further five weeks. They give birth in a cage and suckle their piglets through the cage bars. Once released, they are re-inseminated and the caged cycle begins again.

Sows must be taken out of cages and treated more humanely.



“We have shown that pigs share a number of cognitive capacities with other highly intelligent species such as dogs, chimpanzees, elephants, dolphins, and even humans. There is good scientific evidence to suggest we need to rethink our overall relationship to them.”

Neuroscientist, Lori Marino of Emory University

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Pig Cages

Sow stall (also known as insemination or gestation stall): a narrow metal crate that a sow is confined in for up to five weeks around early pregnancy.



Sow in stall presenting abnormal 'bar-biting' behaviour

Farrowing crate: a narrow metal crate that a sow is confined in from a week before she gives birth (farrows), until her piglets are weaned at 21-28 days old. The crate prevents her from interacting with her piglets other than to lie down to feed them through bars.



Sow confined in farrowing crate

When the piglets are removed, the sow is released from the farrowing crate, and within a few days is returned to a sow stall and re-inseminated to start the cycle over again.

The misery of living in cages

When confined in stalls and crates, sows are denied any sense of autonomy; they cannot perform many basic behaviours. They are reduced from highly sentient animals to caged units of production. This is not a life that is worth living.

For five weeks around early pregnancy, confinement in sow stalls prevents sows from interacting properly with other pigs and doesn't allow them to defecate or urinate away from their resting area. They cannot even walk or turn around. This confinement can lead to abnormal behaviours such as bar-biting, excessive drinking and apathy. It can also cause bone weakness due to lack of exercise and urinary infections from lying in their own waste.

Sows give birth just over twice a year and spend some four to five weeks confined to farrowing crates before, during and after each birth. There is a physical risk of sores and lesions from lying for long periods on the hard floor; often bare concrete. During labour, a sow cannot even take a few steps or turn around to reposition herself. Farrowing crates also prevent a sow from fulfilling her intense natural drive to make a nest before giving birth, interacting properly with her piglets, or moving away from them for rest.

Frustrated natural behaviours can result in delayed or prolonged labour, higher rates of stillbirths and the sow savaging her piglets.

Higher welfare alternatives

Alternative to sow stalls: Many EU sows are already successfully kept cage free throughout their pregnancy; in groups either indoors or free range.

A good housing system provides an interesting environment that permits a wide range of behaviours. Sows are provided with material for rooting and foraging, a space allowance of at least three square metres per animal and more functional areas in the pen, for example, separate feeding, resting and activity areas.

Alternative to farrowing crates: Many sows are successfully kept in full free farrowing systems whilst farrowing and suckling their piglets. When provided with space and bedding, sows are able to perform their important nesting behaviours prior to giving birth.

WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting sows from the cruelty of cages. Compassion believes the EU and all the Member States should follow the example of other countries and introduce a complete ban on sow stalls and farrowing crates in favour of more humane alternatives.

They are able to interact with their piglets and have space to move away from them for rest when needed. Well-designed and managed free farrowing systems provide high welfare for sows and piglets and are shown to be commercially viable.

Legislation

Until 2013, in most of the European Union, sow stalls could be used throughout pregnancy. Now, the EU Pigs Directive prohibits the use of sow stalls after the first four weeks following insemination. Sows must then be kept in groups until a week before they give birth.

The use of sow stalls was banned completely in Sweden in 1988,⁶ in the UK in 1999⁷ and in Norway in 2000.⁸

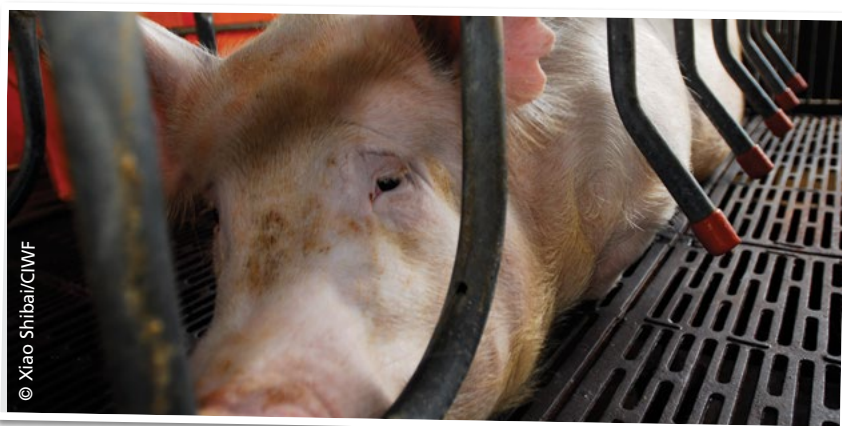
Sow stalls may only be used for up to four days in The Netherlands.⁹ Any new pig units built in Denmark since 2015 may only use sow stalls for up to 3 days and this must apply to all existing units by 2035.¹⁰ Austria restricts time in

sow stalls to maximum of 10 days.¹¹

Germany will end the use of sow stalls by 2030.

The routine use of farrowing crates is banned in Norway¹², Sweden¹³ and Switzerland¹⁴. From 2033 in Austria and 2035 in Germany, time in spent in crates will be restricted to a maximum of five days after farrowing.

The farrowing crate is allowed and used routinely for about 5 weeks per pregnancy in the rest of the EU.



A sow has to give birth in a farrowing crate and spends around 4-5 weeks confined in here

Hard to Enforce

It is naturally very difficult for authorities to establish whether sows are being confined in sow stalls or farrowing crates for longer than the maximum time permitted. Any length of time in these grossly restrictive cages is too long, but the real potential that sows are left in for longer than four weeks after insemination or 3-7 days after farrowing makes them even more inhumane. An outright ban on these systems would greatly improve sow welfare, whilst making it much more practicable for authorities to ensure compliance.

THE REALITY OF STALLS AND CRATES

Sows

In the past few years Compassion has visited many pig farms across the EU. Investigating farms producing for the so called top quality supply chains like Parma or Bayonne Ham, the desperate reality of life in farrowing crates and sow stalls was all too evident, farm after farm.

Not only were sows unable to walk, but they could not even stand up and lie down with ease; the metal bars, combined with leg weakness and overgrown hooves made this very difficult. They often appeared scared by noises and people walking around the rooms and were unable to turn to face the

source of fear or to protect their piglets, as is their natural behaviour.

Sows that were close to giving birth tried to find comfortable positions, but this was impossible. They had to endure labour being unable to turn around, stretch or even lie on a soft surface.

Piglets, deprived of any foraging material, were seen chewing the sows' tails; unable to even turn their heads, sows could do nothing about this and simply had to endure it. Deprived of the ability to forage naturally for food, sows were seen repetitively 'chewing' the air and the bars of their cages.

TAKE ACTION

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting sows from the cruelty of cages. Compassion calls upon the EU and all the Member States to introduce a complete ban on sow stalls and farrowing crates in favour of more humane, indoor or free-range systems.



END THE CAGE AGE

WHY IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE FOR SOWS IN THE EU

- **Behind bars:** There are nearly 11 million sows used in the EU every year. Approximately 88% of them are caged in sow stalls or farrowing crates
- **Average sow size:** width: 40cm; length: 171cm
- **Sow stall/farrowing crate size:** width: 60cm; length 200-240cm

SOW SYSTEMS

INDOOR INTENSIVE

BAD Use of sow stalls and farrowing crates, with minimal enrichment and severe restriction of movement and natural behaviour.

HIGHER WELFARE INDOOR

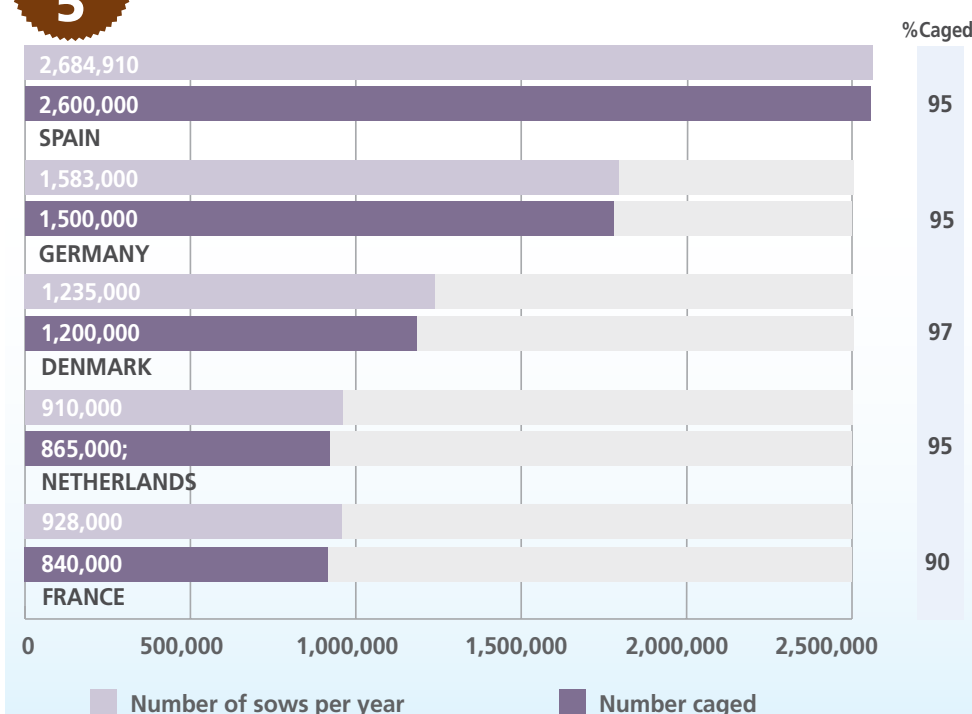
BETTER No use of sow stalls or farrowing crates. Sows are housed indoors in groups throughout gestation, and give birth indoors in pens in which they can turn around freely. Nesting material and bedding are provided.

FREE RANGE OR ORGANIC

BEST Whilst there is no EU legal definition of free range regarding pigs, Member States are obliged to adhere to legislation regarding labelling claims and therefore labels denoting free range should provide outdoor access and would not normally use confinement systems like sow stalls and farrowing crates.

TOP 5

EU COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS OF CAGED SOWS



EU Organic legislation

EU Organic legislation prohibits the use of all cages and requires an outdoor run with provision of bedding. It also allows piglets to remain with their mother for longer, reducing stress and the need for antibiotics.

QUAIL

At least 140 million quail are farmed in the EU for their meat and eggs. Many of these are kept in cages where they are unable to perform even basic behaviours. This suffering is completely unnecessary as humane alternatives are available.

The misery of living in cages

Perhaps one of the worst welfare problems for caged quail relates to their innate fear response. When in danger, quail use rapid, upward flight to escape. This response can be easily triggered in cage systems, for example, when people enter the barns housing the cages, and can lead to injury as the birds hit the top of the cage, head first.

As with laying hens, the movement of quail in cages is severely restricted and they can experience extreme frustration. They are unable to perform most of their natural behaviours, including running, dust-bathing and foraging.

In some farms, as many as 80 birds are kept in a single cage and have very limited space, which causes stress, increases the risk of feather pecking and decreases food intake.

Higher welfare alternatives

Higher welfare systems for quail include free range as well as well-designed barn systems that give sufficient space, and environmental enrichment, such as dust baths. Some barn systems also provide outdoor

access. It is important for quail to be provided with adequate ground cover to mimic their natural environment and help prevent them feeling fearful, while still allowing them enough space to fly up.

Legislation

There is currently no species-specific legislation protecting farmed quail. General EU Farm Directive legislation and country-specific welfare legislation will apply, but these do not provide any specific protection for quail, meaning that barren battery cages, as seen below, are routinely used.

WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all farmed quail. We urge the Commission and the Member States to take effective steps to ensure that quail are not caged and are farmed in a more humane way.



Quail in a barren battery cage

WHY IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE FOR QUAIL IN THE EU

- **Behind bars:** At least 140 million quail are farmed in the EU for meat and eggs. Many of these birds will spend their whole lives crammed into cages with as many as 80 other birds
- **Quail size:** Wingspan: 36cm, length: 18cm
- **No space:** Group cages contain as many as 80 quail, giving them just 9.3cm x 9.3cm per bird. That's less than the average size of a smartphone



QUAIL SYSTEMS

BARREN CAGES AND BARNs

BAD Severely limit natural behaviours. Lack of cover means that quail are often fearful and fly into the top of the cages, hitting their heads.

HIGHER WELFARE BARNs

BETTER Provide extra space, daylight and enrichment, allowing for greater expression of natural behaviours, such as dust-bathing.

FREE RANGE

BEST Provides access to pasture allowing for a full range of natural behaviours, including foraging.

DUCKS AND GEESE

Around 35 million ducks and geese are farmed for foie gras in the EU every year. Over ninety percent of these are ducks. Most of them are imprisoned in cages for the last two weeks of their lives so that they can be force-fed. Both keeping animals in cages and force-feeding, are inhumane practices and completely unnecessary.



“Group cages for ducks are small and barren, with a bare mesh floor. There is no litter or rest area. The birds show aversive behaviour towards the force-feeder and crowd-gates are used to push birds to the front of the cage and immobilise them for force-feeding.”

Professor Donald M. Broom, Emeritus Professor of Animal Welfare, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge. Co-author of The welfare of ducks during foie gras production¹⁶

© istockphoto

The misery of living in cages

Most ducks and geese farmed for foie gras live in cages for the last two weeks of their lives, having spent the first part of their lives with access to the outdoors. As well as being cruelly caged, these birds are force-fed massive amounts of food to make their livers swell to ten times their natural size, causing appalling suffering.

Cages are usually small, with a wire mesh floor, without any bedding or solid area to rest. Aside from a water trough, cages are usually completely barren. Birds develop posture and gait abnormalities, wing lesions and sores on their feet. Force-feeding can cause inflammation and other injuries of the oesophagus.

No higher welfare alternatives

Foie gras produced via force-feeding is intrinsically cruel and such production should be banned.

Legislation

EU legislation requires that, when ducks or geese are housed, floors are of a suitable design not to cause discomfort and are covered with suitable bedding material, litter is provided for enrichment and barren environments are avoided.¹⁷ Yet, most of the foie gras industry does not adhere to this during the force feeding period, routinely housing ducks on bare mesh floor, in completely barren cages.

The force feeding of animals for non-medical purposes, intrinsic to current foie gras production, is explicitly prohibited by specific

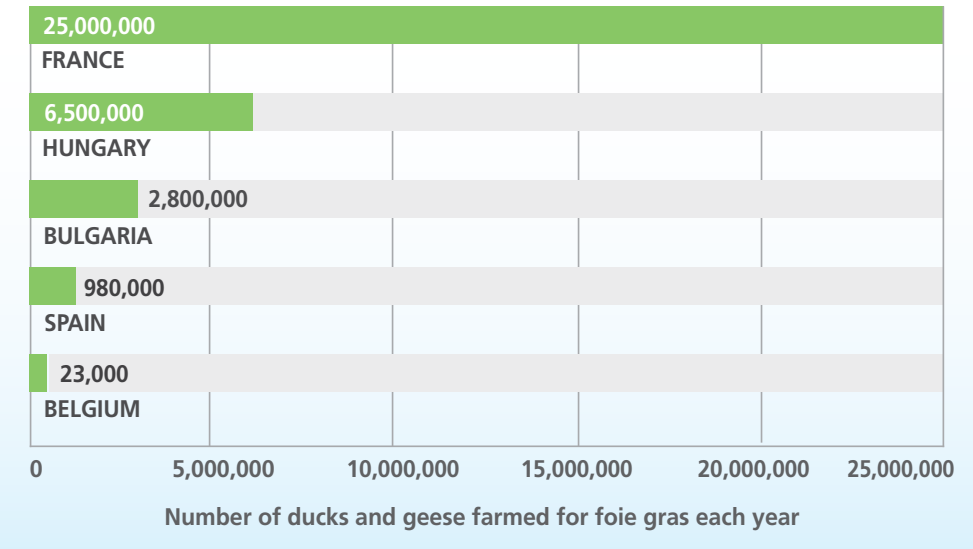
laws in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland and, following interpretation of general animal protection laws, in Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In 2018, the Flanders region of Belgium banned foie gras production by force feeding. All foie gras farms were successfully phased out within five years, using government compensation.



Duck following force-feeding procedure in France

TOP 5

EU PRODUCERS OF FOIE GRAS

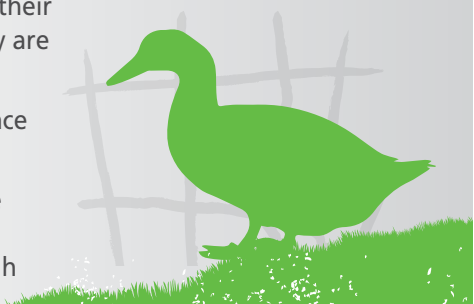


WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting all farmed ducks and geese. We urge the Commission and all the Member States to introduce and enforce legislation to clearly ban the farming of ducks and geese in cages and to also ban the practice of force-feeding animals.

WHY IT'S TIME TO END THE CAGE AGE FOR FOIE GRAS DUCKS AND GEESE IN THE EU

- **Behind bars:** Ducks and geese are caged for the last two weeks of their 8-11 week life during which they are force fed 2- 4 times per day
- **Cage size:** Each duck has the space of about 2 sheets of A4 paper
- **Barren cages:** Ducks live on bare wire mesh; cages are completely barren apart from a water trough



CALVES

Around 18 million dairy calves are born in the EU each year. From the limited data available, more than half of these (and probably over 75%) are kept in small, individual pens with restricted social contact. They are kept in this confinement for the first 8 weeks of their lives.

“Calves are social animals that learn their role in their hierarchical group at a very early stage. Experience shows that keeping calves of the same age in small groups from their first days of life can work very well.

Marta Brscic, Associate Professor at the Department of Animal Medicine Production and Health (MAPS) of the University of Padova. EBVS® European Veterinary Specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law.

© istockphoto

The misery of living in solitary confinement

A newborn calf to be used for veal production is usually removed from his mother at a few hours old, once he has suckled antibody-rich colostrum, or immediately after birth and fed colostrum from a bottle. Separating the cow and her calf and confining the newborn in an individual pen causes great and prolonged distress to both. Once in the single stall, calves are also commonly deprived of proper contact with each other.

Under natural conditions, newborn calves lie together in groups whilst their mothers move off to graze. They form strong bonds which can last a lifetime. These bonds are enhanced by close body contact and mutual licking. However, under Council Directive

2008/119/EC, calves may be removed soon after birth to be shut into an individual stall for up to 8 weeks.

Although the rules require that a veal calf must be able to see other calves from their pen, being reared in isolation damages calves' physical and social development. Studies indicate that calves reared in isolation do not develop social skills properly, have difficulties in coping with novel situations and show cognitive impairment. Over 11 million EU calves may be subjected to this each year. In standard production, after up to two months in isolation, the calf is moved to a group of up to 80 others, often in barren and overcrowded sheds with unsuitable slatted floors.

WHAT ACTION IS NEEDED?

The European Commission must take a lead in protecting calves from the suffering of cages. Compassion believes the EU and all the Member States should introduce a complete ban on calves' individual pens in favour of more humane alternatives.



Newborn calves are removed from their mother and housed individually for the first 8 weeks of life

© Compassion in World Farming

Higher welfare systems

A minority of European dairy calves are kept from birth in group housing with key benefits for their mental health. Group-housed calves have more space for exercise. They play more, which is an important source of learning and emotional well-being. These calves are more active and can perform natural social behaviours such as grooming. They also develop better social skills and emotional resilience which helps them to cope with stress. Group-housed calves can deal better with challenging procedures, including restraint and blood sampling, and vocalise less after separation from their mother.

Keeping calves in groups is good for production as well as welfare. Social facilitation, where calves imitate each other's behaviour, can result in higher feed intake. Calves housed in pairs show higher weight gain and begin to eat solid food earlier than those which are individually housed. They consume more concentrate feed in more frequent meals and this persists during weaning.

The frustration of natural motivations can result in non-adaptive behaviour.

Individually-housed calves can show fluctuations in weight gain, overconsuming feed, suffering discomfort and then consuming less.

The better systems provide straw and ideally access to outdoors. Many **organic systems** keep calves in groups and an older cow retired from the dairy herd will suckle them. These systems provide greater comfort, reduced risk of injury and better opportunities for natural behaviour, social interaction and exercise – all vitally important for calves' welfare. Higher-welfare 'cow-with-calf' dairy systems are leading the way by allowing cows and their calves to stay together with the herd. One such farm, The Ethical Dairy in Scotland, reports that this has improved the animals' health and had a "staggering" impact on cow contentment.

Preventing disease and reducing navel-sucking

Preventing disease like diarrhoea and pneumonia and reducing navel-sucking are some of the main justifications used for keeping calves in individual pens. But confinement is an extreme measure, and those conditions can be

addressed easily when calves are taken out of the pens. For calves kept naturally, digestive and respiratory infections are less of a problem. Risk of these diseases for calves kept in groups indoors can be reduced by ensuring good management and decent housing. They need good colostrum to provide antibodies immediately after birth. Young calves from different farms should be kept in different groups. Pens should be clean, well ventilated and bedded.

Calves would naturally suckle from their mothers whenever they like, usually six or more times per day. EU law merely requires that calves who have been separated from their mothers are fed at least twice per day. Calves become extremely hungry waiting for feeding and will attempt to suckle anything within reach including each other's navels, leading to infection. Navel-sucking can be avoided by ensuring that group-housed dairy calves have opportunities to suckle and are not kept hungry. Group-housed calves can be given continuous milk replacement feeds which they can obtain using artificial teats, so they can always feed when hungry.



Higher welfare group housing for calves

Legislation

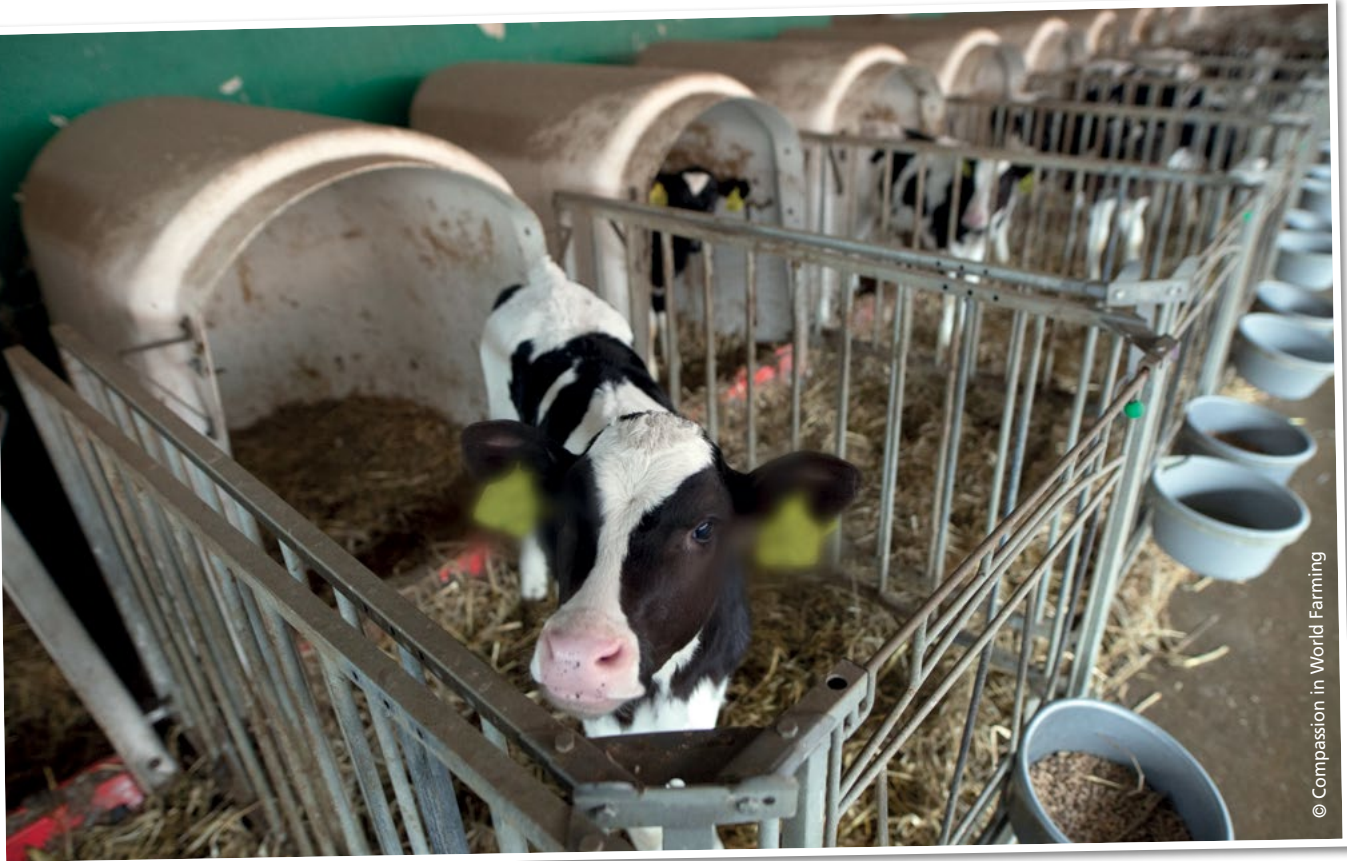
Following a long-running campaign by Compassion and other animal welfare organisations, the ban of narrow veal crates across Europe resulted in new legislation in 2007. In veal crates it was impossible for calves to turn around and many were tied by the neck.

Despite the 2007 ban, EU Directive 2008/119/EC for minimum standards for the protection of calves still allows calves to be shut into individual stalls for up to 8 weeks, causing severe welfare issues. The Directive requires that isolated calves must be able to lie down, rest, stand up and groom themselves without difficulty. They must have perforated walls which

allow the calves to have visual and tactile contact.

However, individual pens still cause several welfare issues to calves, including:

- lack of space for exercise
- severely restricted social interaction
- long-term social development problems



EU calf in an individual pen

THE REALITY OF INDIVIDUAL CAGES





In 2019, Compassion in World Farming investigated five typical Polish dairy farms. The undercover investigators found young dairy calves confined in small pens with minimal opportunity for play, exercise or social contact.

We also documented various infringements of the Calf Directive, including:

- Calves transferred shortly after birth into closed wooden pens, with no possibility of seeing or touching each other
- Isolated beyond 8 weeks: in one farm, several calves were estimated to be aged 3-4 months and were still in individual pens in contravention of the Calf Directive.



Individual calf pen

COUNTRY	LAYING HENS		RABBITS		SOWS			ALL ANIMALS
		END THE CAGE AGE		END THE CAGE AGE		END THE CAGE AGE		
	Number farmed per year	Number caged (% caged)	Number farmed per year	Number caged (% caged)	Number farmed per year	Number in sow stalls (% in stalls)	Number in farrowing crates (% in crates)	Number caged (also including quail, ducks, geese)
Austria	7,406,040	-	0	0	224,080	170,000 (75%)	210,000 (95%)	210,000
Belgium	10,814,337	3,920,000 (36.2%)	2,876,572	0	386,340	360,000 (94%)	360,000 (94%)	4,300,000
Bulgaria	5,090,680	3,570,000 (70.1%)	8,556	8,200 (96%)	65,750	59,000 (90%)	59,000 (90%)	6,200,000
Croatia	2,369,476	1,470,000 (62.1%)	4,177	4,000 (96%)	104,000	44,000 (42%)	44,000 (42%)	1,500,000
Cyprus	516,461	350,000 (67.8%)	9,702	9,300 (96%)	31,020	24,000 (78%)	31,000 (99%)	390,000
Czech Republic	7,471,545	4,640,000 (62.1%)	655,838	630,000 (96%)	126,360	99,000 (78%)	120,000 (99%)	5,400,000
Denmark	4,331,408	429,000 (9.9%)	0	0	1,235,000	800,000 (65%)	1,200,000 (97%)	1,600,000
Estonia	843,487	740,000 (87.7%)	0	0	25,700	19,000 (75%)	24,000 (95%)	760,000
Finland	5,071,922	2,310,000 (45.5%)	0	0	93,000	54,000 (58%)	74,000 (80%)	2,400,000
France	48,255,709	17,400,000 (36%)	29,000,000	28,000,000 (97%)	928,000	670,000 (72%)	840,000 (90%)	68,000,000
Germany	58,064,747	3,190,000 (5.5%)	3,400,000	3,300,000 (96%)	1,583,000	1,300,000 (80%)	1,500,000 (95%)	8,000,000
Greece	4,649,598	3,560,000 (76.5%)	336,801	320,000 (96%)	100,000	55,000 (55%)	69,000 (69%)	4,000,000
Hungary	7,548,745	5,370,000 (71.2%)	4,350,000	2,600,000 (60%)	240,700	72,000 (30%)	190,000 (79%)	14,000,000
Ireland	3,880,164	1,880,000 (48.5%)	0	0	144,840	110,000 (77%)	140,000 (98%)	2,000,000
Italy	40,519,407	14,400,000 (35.6%)	24,500,000	24,000,000 (97%)	550,990	409,000 (74%)	520,000 (94%)	39,000,000
Latvia	3,533,598	2,450,000 (69.3%)	30,000	29,000 (96%)	39,690	28,000 (71%)	36,000 (90%)	2,500,000
Lithuania	2,926,891	2,330,000 (79.6%)	0	0	44,300	21,000 (47%)	26,000 (59%)	2,400,000
Luxembourg	134,497	-	0	0	3,110	2,000 (65%)	2,600 (82%)	2,600
Malta	360,585	358,000 (99.4%)	50,000	48,000 (96%)	3,660	3,500 (95%)	3,660 (100%)	410,000
Netherlands	31,483,393	2,460,000 (7.8%)	25,000	10,000 (40%)	910,000	820,000 (90%)	865,000 (95%)	3,300,000
Poland	51,241,025	39,100,000 (76.2%)	1,010,000	970,000 (96%)	654,100	230,000 (35%)	290,000 (44%)	40,000,000
Portugal	10,228,212	7,670,000 (75%)	4,295,940	4,100,000 (96%)	229,580	160,000 (70%)	200,000 (88%)	12,000,000
Romania	8,954,319	5,130,000 (57.3%)	0	0	298,900	130,000 (45%)	135,000 (40%)	5,300,000
Slovakia	3,126,067	2,350,000 (75.3%)	0	0	37,200	26,000 (71%)	33,000 (90%)	2,400,000
Slovenia	1,449,060	249,000 (17.2%)	10,000	9,600 (96%)	14,180	2,600 (18%)	3,300 (23%)	260,000
Spain	47,069,236	34,500,000 (73.3%)	48,500,000	48,000,000 (99%)	2,684,910	2,300,000 (87%)	2,600,000 (95%)	86,000,000
Sweden	8,655,197	324,000 (3.7%)	12,500	0	120,700	0	0	320,000
EU 27	375,995,806	160,000,000 (42.6%)	119,075,086	110,000,000 (92%)	10,879,110	8,000,000 (73%)	9,600,000 (88%)	310,000,000

Data on annual animal numbers were taken from the following sources according to the most recent published data: Sows – Eurostat 2021; Laying Hens – EU COM 2021; Rabbits – European Commission (DG Sant.) 2016; Ducks and Geese - ITAVI 2020 and SSP, Eurofoiegras 2021. Note: Most figures are for 2021. The above numbers of rabbits farmed were published by EU COM in 2016. However, we believe EU total has since dropped from 119 million to around 78 million overall based on EU COM changes in tonnage reported for 2016 and projected for 2021. We estimate that 74 million of these are caged. Individual member state (MS) rabbit tonnages are not reported for the same period,

hence we are unable to adjust numbers farmed in MSs. but data suggests that French, Italian and Polish production has dropped, whilst Spanish production has stayed more constant. Where published figures are not available, estimates of number of animals farmed and caged have been calculated using generic estimates and data from various sources. Despite the suspected drop in rabbits, the total number of caged animals in the EU would still be around 300 million given that the above estimate does not include pullets or calves. Please contact research@ciwv.org if you would like further information on the methodology used.

CONCLUSION

With over 1.4 million signatures secured for the European Citizens Initiative to ban cages, both experts and the public agree – the use of cages is cruel, outdated and inflicts unnecessary suffering on animals. Now it's time for policy makers to listen to their constituents and support new European legislation to phase out cages in farms as soon as possible. You can help us make this happen.

WE URGE YOU TO TAKE ACTION BY:

Tweeting or writing to your agriculture minister, asking to support an EU-level ban on caged farming: www.endthecageage.eu/#LeagueTable

Contacting Members of the European Parliament from your country to tell them you care about the issue: www.europarl.europa.eu/meps

Lobbying your own government to introduce domestic legislation to ban caged farming

Asking retailers and restaurants you frequent to go cage-free

Buying cage-free products: look for higher welfare alternatives, free range, pasture-fed, organic

Following the campaign developments www.endthecageage.eu

**IT'S TIME TO
END THE
CAGE AGE**

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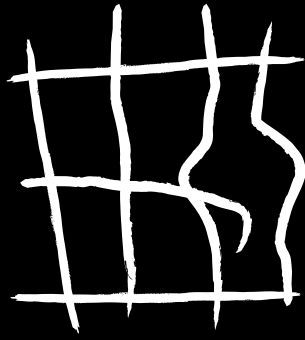
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END THE CAGE AGE

**WHY THE EU MUST STOP
CAGING FARM ANIMALS**

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