



News release

For immediate use

Europeans unite against battery cages

19 April 2011

Fourteen EU countries join force in fight against delay on ban of barren battery cages

On Tuesday 19 April 2011, a normal weekday lunch time was turned upside down when **Compassion in World Farming** showed up at Trafalgar Square in London to stage a demonstration to defend the ban of barren battery cages as part of The Big Move campaign (www.thebigmove.org).

The charity erected four human-sized battery cages crammed with five red headed women in each to symbolise the plight of hens (usually red in colour!) reared in barren battery cages and to raise awareness of the ban. The “hens” even tweeted about their experience from the cages. Joining the charity in its call to action was TV presenter Bill Oddie and author, Victoria Connelly.

European Citizens united across Europe to defend the most important piece of animal welfare legislation in the history of the EU. Sixteen other member organisations* in 14 different EU countries of Compassion’s coalition, the European Network for Farm Animal Protection (Enfap), also staged public events and hand-ins of letters to Polish Embassies and Agricultural Ministries in their own countries. The actions took place in Poland, Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Bulgaria and others. A substantial number of supporters in Poland are protesting to the Polish Government over their attempts to secure a postponement of the Directive.

The EU battery cage ban enjoys widespread public support; over 30,000 supporters have taken action resulting in more than 20,000 emails being sent to the UK Government and 16,000 to the Polish, Spanish and Italian Governments. A further 65,000 postcards are due

to arrive at the EU Agriculture Council over the Easter period from supporters from all over the EU. In each case the message is that there should be no postponement or weakening of the EU ban on barren cages and the sale of battery eggs.

Typically in Europe, four or five hens are packed into each barren battery cage and the dimensions of the human cages in Trafalgar Square were representative of the amount of space each hen would have in this system. These cages are so small and bare that the hens are denied their most basic behavioural needs: simple things such as rolling in dust, scratching for food and flapping or even stretching their wings. Each hen has less space than the size of an A4 piece of paper in which to stand for their entire adult lives.

Despite having had up to 12 years to prepare for the ban, the Polish government is calling for a delay because they feel they are not ready to make the move. Compassion in World Farming's The Big Move campaign believes these asks are unacceptable from a country like Poland that had eight years to prepare and aims to ensure the proposed ban goes ahead across the EU on 1 January 2012 without any delay or exceptions. Any delays could undermine the ban.

Members of the public were invited to join the "battery cage experience" by spending 10 minutes confined in one of the cages with four other people, barely being given enough space to move.

Bill Oddie says: [insert quote from day]

Michele Danan, Head of Public Affairs at Compassion in World Farming says:

"This landmark piece of legislation will save millions of hens every year from a barren and brutal existence.

"Requests for delays, like the one from Poland, can weaken the political resolve at EU level and are dangerous if not counteracted by strong public pressure. Compassion staff and our supporters have all worked so hard to get this ban in place, we don't want to look back this time next year and feel that we didn't do everything possible to defend it."

After the demonstration, supporters marched to the European Commission to hand in the

NUMBER OF SIGS signatures received in support of The Big Move.]

To defend The Big Move and find out more about the campaign, visit www.thebigmove.org or contact Compassion in World Farming on T: 01483 521 950 E: supporters@ciwf.org.uk

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

Images of the events held across Europe are available. For further information, images, videos, or to arrange interviews contact Ali Watkinson or Julie Jenner 01483 521995 or 07584 683485 or email ali.watkinson@ciwf.org.uk or Julie.jenner@ciwf.org.uk

1. The directive on the housing of egg-laying hens was agreed by the European Union in 1999, members have had 12 years to prepare for the ban, yet there are hundreds of millions of hens still living in battery cages across Europe. It is imperative, for the welfare of these hens, that every member of the European Union takes the directive seriously and makes plans for better welfare systems.

2. Enriched Cages

The move to 'enriched' cages, which will be legal, provides some small improvement. Enriched cages have slightly higher minimum space requirements and contain nest boxes, scratching areas and a perch space.

However, a cage is still a cage and enriched cages do not allow the hen to perform all her natural behaviours. For example, she cannot dust-bathe or perch properly. Compassion's aim is for all hens to be, ultimately, cage-free.

3. Barren Battery Cage

Currently, a battery cage in the UK typically holds four or five hens with a legal space allowance per bird of less than an A4 sheet of paper. The cages usually have a sloping wire mesh floor and are kept in rows stacked in several tiers. Hens in barren cages are unable to perform a range of natural behaviours including nesting, perching, dust-bathing and scratching for food and they cannot stretch their wings properly. Each unit holds thousands of hens this way.

Still and moving images of such systems are available from the Media Team at Compassion in World Farming on 01483 521973 or 07584 683 485

4. Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming was founded over 40 years ago in 1967 by a British farmer who became horrified by the development of modern, intensive factory farming. Today we campaign peacefully to end all cruel factory farming practices. We believe that the biggest cause of animal cruelty on the planet deserves a focused, specialised approach – so we only work on farm animal welfare.

* **Enfap members organisations that held events across Europe include:**

17 groups and 14 EU Countries

Austria: Animal Spirit

Bulgaria: Intimate with Nature Society

Czech Republic: Society for Animals

Denmark: Animal and Dyrennes Venner

Estonia: Estonian Society for the Protection of Animals

Finland: SEY and Animalia

Germany: Albert Schweitzer Foundation

Greece: Greek Animal Welfare Fund

Latvia: Animals' Friends

Netherlands: Compassion in World Farming

Poland: Klub Gaja

Slovakia: Animal Freedom

Sweden: Animal Rights Sweden

UK: Compassion in World Farming and Four Paws UK