



News release

For immediate use

## Clucking mad

19 April 2011

### Celebrities cram into cages for Compassion in World Farming

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 demonstrate against delays on the ban of barren battery cages as part of The Big Move campaign ([www.thebigmove.org](http://www.thebigmove.org)). Joining the charity in its call to action was TV presenter, Bill Oddie, and author, Victoria Connelly.

An EU-wide ban on the use of barren battery cages is due to come into action on 1 January 2010. Yet, despite having had up to 12 years to prepare for the ban, some countries, such as Poland are calling for a delay because they feel they are not ready to make the move. Any delays could weaken the political resolve at EU level and would result in millions of hens continuing to remain in cruel confinement.

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.

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.

Compassion in World Farming's The Big Move campaign aims to ensure the proposed ban goes ahead across the EU on 1 January 2012 without any delay or exceptions.

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\* 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, including Poland, Germany, Netherlands and Finland. More than 60,000 Europeans have signed petitions or written letters to MEPs to protest against a delay. This shows how strong Europeans' support is for the legislation and highlights the need for politicians and the egg industry to listen to their public and go ahead with the ban in 2012 as scheduled.

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]

member of the public says: *"It was like being in an underground train during rush hour. I can barely imagine having to spend my entire life in such a squashed, claustrophobic space. I hope the EU goes ahead with the ban as planned, to prevent any more poor hens having to experience such distress."*

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](http://www.thebigmove.org) or contact Compassion in World Farming on T: 01483 521 950 E: [supporters@ciwf.org.uk](mailto:supporters@ciwf.org.uk)

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**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](mailto:ali.watkinson@ciwf.org.uk) or [Julie.jenner@ciwf.org.uk](mailto: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 07771 926005.

**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.

**\* Enfacp members organisations that held events across Europe include:**

**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