

# TEACHkind.org

## BATTERY HEN PHOTO GUIDE

### STUDENT HANDOUT AND TEACHERS' GUIDE

**T**hese pictures of hens in battery cages were taken at the Michael Foods factory farm in LeSueur, Minn. The eggs produced there are sold to consumers under the brand name Crystal Farms. The picture of hens in a tree was taken in Virginia at the United Poultry Concerns sanctuary.

#### Photo of Hens in a Crowded Cage

Ninety-eight percent of eggs come from hens who were raised in battery cages. With eight to 11 hens per cage, each hen lives in an area that is smaller than a standard sheet of paper. Battery cages do not provide hens with enough space to turn around, stretch, or stand fully upright without bumping into other hens or the walls of the cage. Birds kept in battery cages are also denied the ability to satisfy their basic needs, such as sunbathing, dustbathing, perching, nesting, socializing normally, and staying clean. The metal and wire of the cages abrades the animals' bodies, resulting in feather loss and skin problems, like the blisters on the hen in this photo.

#### Photo of a Debeaked Hen With a Beak Neuroma

To prevent stress-induced fighting, which can cause the normally peaceful birds to injure or even kill one another, hens confined to battery cages are debeaked without any painkillers. Studies show that the pain from this traumatic procedure can last for months. The hen in this photo is suffering from a painful beak neuroma, a common condition that occurs when severed nerve endings attempt to regenerate. If hens were given enough space to move freely and socialize normally, debeaking would not be considered necessary.

#### Photo of Rows of Chickens in Cages

When this photograph was taken, there were 1.6 million hens at this facility. The cages are stacked six tiers high in rows that extend hundreds of feet. The filthy, overcrowded, stressful conditions make the animals very susceptible to contagious diseases. Antibiotics are routinely added to their feed in an effort to prevent disease and boost production. Manure handling and disposal is an environmental problem that also affects the hens' welfare. The high concentration of waste produces ammonia and other noxious fumes that lead to respiratory and eye problems.

#### Photo of Hens Perching in a Tree at a Sanctuary

Contrast the hens in this photo, who were rescued from a factory farm, with the picture of those who are confined to battery cages. What differences do you notice? Which animals are cleaner? Which have room to move? Which look healthier? Chickens are jungle fowl who originated from the jungles of Southeast Asia. At night, they perch high in trees to avoid predators. Perching is a natural and healthy practice that helps chickens' muscular, skeletal, and respiratory systems. Can chickens in battery cages perch? Can they dustbathe or sunbathe? Which animals seem happier and more content?

For more information on egg production, visit the following sites:

- [ca4a.org/bbc](http://ca4a.org/bbc) shows Compassionate Action for Animals' investigations at Michael Foods egg farm, which produces Crystal Farms eggs.
- [EggCruelty.com](http://EggCruelty.com) shows Mercy for Animals' investigations of the two largest egg factory farms in Ohio, Buckeye Egg Farm and Daylay Egg Farm.
- [ISECruelty.com](http://ISECruelty.com) provides Compassion Over Killing's documentation of an investigation at the Maryland-based "humane care certified" ISE egg farm.
- [EggScam.com](http://EggScam.com) explains what the "humane care certified" logo on egg cartons actually means and argues that the logo is nothing more than a public relations ploy used to mislead the public.
- [Free-Range Facts](http://Free-Range Facts) ([www.goveg.com/active/factsheet/files/FactsheetDisplay.asp?ID=96](http://www.goveg.com/active/factsheet/files/FactsheetDisplay.asp?ID=96)) features information on free-range egg farming.
- [UPC-online.org](http://UPC-online.org), United Poultry Concerns' Web site, covers issues related to chickens and turkeys.



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