

Catching, Transport, and Slaughter



the time they reach their final destination – the rendering company, slaughterhouse, landfill, grinder. Starved for 4 days before catching, they are a mass of broken bones, oozing abscesses, bruises, and internal hemorrhage. They are covered with the slime of broken eggs and pieces of shells. When not buried alive, these hens are shredded into human food, pet food, mink feed and poultry feed.

At the slaughterhouse, after being held in the trucks for 1 to 12 hours, chickens raised for meat are torn from the cages and hung upside down on a movable rack. As they move towards the killing knife, they are dragged through an electric current that paralyzes them but does not render them unconscious or pain-free. Millions of birds are alive, conscious and breathing not only as their throats are cut but afterwards, when their bodies are plunged into scalding water to remove their feathers. In the scalding “**the chickens scream, kick, and their eyeballs pop out of their heads.**” The industry calls these birds “redskins” – birds who were scalded while they were still alive.

People who know chickens as friends know that chickens are not “all alike.” They know that, like all species with certain traits in common, chickens have individual personalities, distinctive identities, and unique ways of expressing themselves.



At 6 - 12 weeks old, baby “broiler” and “roaster” chickens are cornered and grabbed by catching crews and carried upside down by their legs – **struggling, flapping, and crying** – to the transport truck. Jammed inside coops they may travel up to 12 hours to the slaughterhouse through heat, wind, rain, sleet, and snow without food or water.

Spent laying hens are simply flung from the battery cages to the transport crates by their wings, feet, legs, head, or whatever is grabbed. They are **electrocuted, suffocated, buried alive, gassed, or chopped to pieces, alive, by woodchipper blades.** Half-naked from feather loss caused by crowded caging, and terrorized by a lifetime of abuse, hens in transport experience such intense fear that many are paralyzed by

What Can I Do?

- 🐔 Please show kindness and respect to birds and other animals by not eating them or their eggs or drinking their milk. Instead, discover the variety of all-vegetarian, vegan foods and cooking ideas. For recipes and cookbooks, go to www.upc-online.org/recipes. For vegetarian and healthy food options worldwide, go to HappyCow Compassionate Eating Guide at www.HappyCow.net.
- 🐔 Contact your federal and state senators and representatives. Urge them to ban battery cages and debeaking, and to include poultry under the Federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.
- 🐔 Stick up for chickens. Tell your family and friends how badly chickens are treated. Contact your newspaper editor and TV and radio stations, using the information in this brochure to educate people. Urge everyone to join you in making a better life for chickens.

🐔 Write to United Poultry Concerns, PO Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405 (or call 757-678-7875, or visit our website at www.upc-online.org) for more information.

🐔 Distribute copies of this brochure. Order 20 for \$3 or 50 for \$6.

United Poultry Concerns is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the compassionate and respectful treatment of chickens and other domestic fowl.



Chickens

“Chickens are great companions. If only people knew how smart and lovable they can be.”



Chickens enjoy being together in small flocks, sunning, dustbathing, and scratching in the soil for food. A mother hen will tenderly and even fiercely protect her young brood, driving off predators and sheltering her little chicks beneath her wings.

The rooster proudly keeps watch over the flock. He alerts the hens if he senses danger, and when he finds a tasty morsel for his family to share, he calls them excitedly. Roosters often join in the hen’s egg-laying ritual, which is an extremely important and private part of a chicken’s life.

Chickens Raised for Meat:

Their Life is Not "For the Birds"



"Broiler" chickens are crowded by the thousands into filthy, closed sheds contaminated with poisonous **Salmonella** and **Campylobacter** bacteria. In addition to sickening the birds, these bacteria often remain in the cooked flesh, a common cause of food poisoning.

The Egg-Laying Hen:

Her Eggs are Laid in Pain



The modern hen used for egg production is far removed from the active Southeast Asian jungle fowl from whom she's derived and from the active farmyard birds of the more recent past. She is a **painfully debeaked**, tortured bird who is jammed in a wire cage for a year or two, squeezed together with 8 or 9 other tormented hens in sheds holding 40,000 to 125,000 terrified, bewildered birds.

A small bird, forced to churn out huge numbers of large eggs, this hen is prone to a cruel condition known as **Uterine Prolapse**. When a small chicken pushes and strains day after day to expel large eggs, her uterus pushes out through the vent area leading to painful infection and a slow, agonizing death. The egg industry deprives hens of all food or severely restricts their rations from one to three weeks straight to manipulate egg

laying and market prices, and to "save feed costs." This practice is called **Forced Molting**.

Cooped for life without exercise while constantly drained of calcium to produce egg shells, laying hens develop **osteoporosis**, a mineral depletion and breaking of the bones from which many hens die miserably in their cages, often with their heads trapped between the bars. This disease of imprisonment is called **Caged Layer Fatigue**. Approximately 300 million hens are caged for egg production in the U.S. each year, 26 million in Canada, and 40 million in the U.K. Worldwide, about 5600 million hens are living in cages.



The Male Chick of the Egg Industry:

He is Treated Like Trash

What happens to the 250 million male chicks born to hens in the U.S. egg industry each year?

Along with defective and slow-hatching female chicks, they are trashed as soon as they hatch. Upon breaking out of their shells, instead of being sheltered by a mother's wings, the newborns are



Male Chicks Suffocated in Trash Bags

ground up alive, electrocuted, or thrown into trashcans where they slowly suffocate on top of one another, **peeping to death** while a human foot stomps them down to make more room for more chicks. Because the male chicken of the egg industry cannot lay eggs, and has not been genetically manipulated for profitable meat production, he is of no use to the egg industry. Destruction of unwanted male chicks is a worldwide practice.



In the U.S., each year, more than 9 billion "broiler" (baby) chickens, both males and females, are raised and killed for food. Worldwide over 50 billion chickens are now being slaughtered each year. As a result of genetic manipulation for overgrown muscle tissue (meat) of the breast and thighs, these birds suffer miserably from **painful lameness** causing them to crouch and hobble in pain, from gastrointestinal and blood diseases, and chronic respiratory infections. The parents of these birds are **raised in darkness** and kept on semi-starvation diets to reduce the mating infirmities caused by forcing chickens bred for meat to grow too large too fast.

During their 45 days of life, "broiler" chickens live in semi-darkness on manure-soaked wood shavings, unchanged through several flocks of 30,000 or more birds in a single shed. Excretory ammonia fumes often become so strong that the birds develop a blinding eye disease called **ammonia burn**. So painful is this disease that afflicted birds rub their hurting eyes with their wings and let out cries of pain.