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## Leading the way

At the cash register and at the ballot box, people are increasingly demonstrating that they no longer feel it is acceptable to confine animals in this manner. Hens don't have to be caged to produce lots of eggs, and people are demanding change. Trends show they are willing to pay a few cents more to ensure hens have space to turn around and stretch their wings, and companies, schools and governments are responding.



### Leaders choosing cage-free eggs:

- Compass Group, world's largest food-service
- Amazon, AOL and Google staff cafeterias
- Burger King, Denny's, Wendy's, and Quiznos (USA), Subway (USA)
- Safeway, Whole Foods
- 350+ universities and colleges in North America
- 15+ Canadian municipalities

### Leaders phasing-out battery cages:

- European Union by 2012
- California by 2015
- Michigan by 2019



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## What you can do

If you buy eggs, choose cage-free and look for these labels:

✓ Free-Run – Hens are allowed to move freely in a barn, have access to nest boxes, but no outdoor access. However, this label is not regulated, so standards may vary.

✓ ✓ Free-Range – Hens are allowed to move freely, have access to nest boxes and outdoor access (weather permitting). However, this label is not regulated, so standards may vary.

✓ ✓ ✓ Canada Organic – In order for eggs to be labelled organic they must be certified according to the Organic Products Regulation, which requires hens to be free-run or free-range, have at least 1667 cm<sup>2</sup> of space, outdoor access, organic feed and

living conditions that encourage natural behaviour.

✓ ✓ ✓ BC SPCA certified – Based on the five freedoms of animal welfare. All hens must be free-run or free-range, have at least 1100 cm<sup>2</sup> of space, nest boxes, perches and bedding material.



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For more information, visit [www.choosecagefree.ca](http://www.choosecagefree.ca)

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## Cage-free eggs Making more humane choices



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“80% of Canadians feel it's unacceptable to confine farm animals to small cages.”





# More people are demanding humane food



## Inside Canada's egg farms

Designed to produce the highest number of eggs as quickly and cheaply as possible, the battery cage is one of the most inhumane ways to keep farm animals. The average hen can now produce up to 300 eggs in a year; 64% more than they could produce 40 years ago due to selective breeding. The hens pay the price.

Five to seven hens are typically crammed into one cage, with almost no room to turn around or stretch their wings. They are not able to nest, perch, peck, scratch, or behave naturally, causing severe stress and frustration. This can cause hens to peck each other, sometimes to death. The industry's solution is to sever the chicks' beaks

painfully with a red-hot blade or infra-red beam. The hens suffer loss of feathers, bruising and abrasions from constantly rubbing against the cage and each other.

Hens live in these cages until they can no longer produce eggs "efficiently" (at about 18 months of age), during which time their bones become so brittle - from lack of exercise as well as calcium depletion from producing so many eggs - that some suffer breakages and some can no longer stand. These "spent hens" are then sent off to slaughter for low-grade chicken products, and some cannot even be used for this, so there is no incentive for handling them carefully when transported to slaughter.



## More than a humane choice

### The environment

Cage systems use more energy and water and produce more pollution. When smaller flocks forage outdoors, the manure can be absorbed in the ground, serving as a fertilizer. When tens of thousands of hens are kept on one farm, the huge volume of manure produced becomes a problem that must be cleaned out, transported, and stored with environmental costs at each step. When it seeps into our water, high levels of phosphorus boost algae and kill fish. When it decomposes, it emits ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, methane and other harmful gases into the air.



### Human health

According to Health Canada's website, between 6,000 and 12,000 Canadians contract *Salmonella* each year, often as a result of eating improperly cooked meat or eggs. Recent research indicates that battery cage operations have an increased risk of *Salmonella* infection. For example, in 2007 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) analyzed data from 5,000 egg farms in more than 20 countries and found the chance of *Salmonella* infection was greater in farms where hens were kept in battery cages than in farms using any non-cage system.

As consumer awareness grows so does the shift in public opinion – and the demand for cage-free options.

- 96% of Canadians feel that farm animals should be treated humanely.\*
- 80% of Canadians feel it is unacceptable to confine farm animals to small cages. \*\*
- 76% of Canadians agree grocery stores should offer more pork and eggs from farms that don't keep animals in small cages. \*\*
- 75% of Canadians agree that fast food restaurants should ensure the pork and eggs they buy come from farms that don't keep their animals in small cages. \*\*

- 82% of Canadians feel it is important to be able to buy meat and eggs labelled "free range", "certified organic" and/or "SPCA certified" in their local grocery store.\*
- 72% of Canadians are willing to pay more for farm animal products that were certified to humane standards of care by a third-party organization.\*\*\*

Fortunately, some farmers are going the extra distance to ensure that the animals they raise experience a decent quality of life. And as demand for humane and organic options grows, even more farmers will choose cage-free.

\*2008 Harris/Decima poll for WSPA  
\*\*2005 Decima poll for WSPA and Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA)  
\*\*\*2009 Harris/Decima poll for Vancouver Humane Society (VHS)