



Poultry Press

Promoting the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl

Special Report on Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) and the Mass Killing of Birds

"In an unscientific effort to prevent the spreading of END (exotic Newcastle disease), the task force kills all birds in an area where END has been allegedly located, regardless of the bird's status as a healthy, disease-free bird." - Attorney William H. Dailey in a Petition filed on March 24, 2003

In January, California Gov. Gray Davis and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) declared a state of emergency to protect California's \$3 billion poultry and egg industry from exotic Newcastle disease (END), a contagious virus that affects the respiratory, nervous and digestive systems of birds and, while said to be harmless to humans, "can cause pink eye in rare circumstances," according to Pima County, Arizona Sheriff's Detective Mike Duffey.

In February, UPC President Karen Davis joined a meeting of animal protection groups, concerned citizens, journalists, and government officials in Los Angeles to discuss the handling of the situation. Hosted by attorney William Dailey, and Cherylynn Costner of the Hillary Chicken Memorial Fund, the meeting also included representatives of The Fund For

Animals, the Humane Farming Association, The Humane Society of the United States, Last Chance for Animals, the Parrot Society of Los Angeles, Mike and Sue Swallow, and others.

On March 24, 2003, attorney William H. Dailey filed a Petition with the Superior Court of California on behalf of 13 bird owners, the Hillary Chicken Memorial Fund and the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights, urging

the court to order Gov. Davis to rescind his emergency order calling for the eradication of exotic Newcastle disease through the "expeditious disposal of poultry" and to order Davis and government agencies to establish due-process protections that prevent authorities from



Photo by Karen Davis

arbitrarily slaughtering companion or show birds. "We're asking the court to tell the government to do things differently and to obey the constitution," Dailey said. "Over 3 million birds were slaughtered to date just in California and most of them weren't infected." Dailey's motion accuses Gov. Davis and the CA task force of "repeated abuses of constitutional rights and cruelty toward citizens and violations of animal anti-cruelty statutes."

continued on page 2

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Visit Our Web Site:
www.upc-online.org



continued from page 1

To read the Petition go to http://www.upc-online.org/poultry_diseases/

For updates call Cherylynn Costner, Hillary Chicken Memorial Fund: 877-452-4425.

"Men in white suits come to your door to kill your precious birds." - Sue Swallow

So far the USDA and CA Dept of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) have killed more than 3 1/2 million birds at a cost to taxpayers in excess of \$40 million, including \$12.8 million paid in indemnities to bird owners (Scripps Howard, 4/1/03). Chickens, parrots, ducks, geese, pigeons, turkeys, emus, peafowl, and other birds were, and are now being, killed, the majority showing no sign of the disease. If one bird tests positive in a flock consisting of one bird or a million birds, all of the birds are destroyed.

California resident Sue Swallow describes the treatment of companion birds: "A vet shows up with a bunch of low paid thugs and prison labor. In full view of a family, including the children, they catch the birds they can catch, tape their legs together, put each one in a plastic bag, and gas them with carbon dioxide. The ones they can't catch they shoot with pellet guns until they are dead. Geese and emus they bludgeon to death with clubs."

"We can't even drive past the Norco Egg Ranch anymore. Just the thought of a quarter of a million innocent chickens who never saw the sun, never got to put their feet on the ground, never got to have a life, and then gassed like Jews in a concentration camp and thrown away like garbage, all to benefit a select bunch of well-connected millionaires, turns my stomach." - Mike and Sue Swallow

The Cockfighting Connection

Though cockfighting has been illegal in California since 1905 - as is raising roosters for fighting, participating in or attending a cockfight and possessing fighting paraphernalia -there are at least 3 million game birds in the state and 50,000 - 60,000 owners (*Poultry Times*, 2/17/03). A county detective explains, "These guys have two to 400 roosters, on the pretext of raising show birds. They're tied to stakes, in the open, and go through a training regimen to make them fighters"

(*Modesto Bee*, 2/9/03). Cockfighters bring birds up from Mexico and move them from state to state despite federal quarantines. They work on poultry and egg farms, tracking the disease into chicken houses.

Despite the illegality of cockfighting in California and 47 other states, USDA is compensating cockfighters whose birds are destroyed under the END eradication program, as high as \$1,850 per bird (*The Californian*, 3/15/03). This compensation supports cockfighting and encourages cockfighters to "find" END, kill their birds, and introduce new birds in order to get paid. California resident Mike Swallow told UPC (3/13/03), "They hide 5 or 6 dead birds and after depopulation sell those dead birds to other cockfighters to infect their birds and get the big payoff."

continued on page 3

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Psychologist
In Memoriam: Henry Spira,
Animal Rights International

The Poultry and Egg Industry: Culpability and Reward

"END spreads rapidly among birds kept in confinement, such as commercially raised chickens." USDA Fact Sheet (1/6/03)

"Chicken ranchers should be thrilled that the government has such a generous program to shield them from financial ruin." - Scripps Howard, 4/1/03

In addition to END's being transmitted through infected birds' droppings and secretions from the nose, mouth, and eyes, a USDA Fact Sheet (1/6/03) explains that the disease "is often spread by vaccination and debeaking crews, manure haulers, rendering truck drivers, feed delivery personnel, poultry buyers, egg service people, and poultry farm owners and employees." And while the mass killing of birds to eradicate END is being done to protect the poultry and egg industry, there is another side to the slaughter, exemplified by the egg rancher who killed 100,000 of his hens, not because they had END but because they were "spent." Since he couldn't truck them to slaughter due to the quarantine in his area, he was reimbursed for every hen "pouring over the side of the truck," whereupon he told the *Los Angeles Daily News* (2/15/03), "For a guy who's been losing money for three years this could be the first sizable check in a long time."

That's because the state is paying egg companies \$2 to \$5 per bird for losses incurred under the END eradication program, an exchange welcomed by an industry that's been trying to reduce the U.S. flock size for years and normally gets -0 to 10 cents per unwanted hen. **U.S. egg companies normally suffocate their "spent" flocks in dumpsters and sell them to renderers, having no other market for their "product."** "They'd be crying all the way to the bank," if their chickens were stricken, one poultry producer told the *Los Angeles Times* (1/8/03). It is thus reasonable to suppose that many flocks are intentionally being "stricken" and that END has to do not only with cockfighting but collusion between the egg industry and the government to consolidate the industry and eliminate the smaller guys, who are killing their birds, taking the money, and selling their land to real estate developers.



What Can I Do?

- Urge U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman to endorse, and your Members of Congress to support, the Ensign-Allard-Cantwell (Senate) and Bartlett-Andrews (House of Representatives) legislation that increases interstate commerce in birds intended for cockfighting from a misdemeanor to a felony. Tell Secretary Veneman to stop reimbursing cockfighters as part of the END eradication program. Tell your Members of Congress you do not want your taxes used to benefit cockfighters but to support a federal program to uphold federal and state laws that prohibit cockfighting.

The Honorable Ann Veneman
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC 20250
Phone: 202-720-3631
Fax: 202-720-2166
Email: agsec@usda.gov

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

To find your U.S. Senators and House Representative call the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121 or go to www.hsus.org.

- Tell Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman and your Members of Congress you do not want your taxes used to indemnify the poultry and egg industries for their "losses" - the suffocation, gassing, and "mulching" of millions of helpless birds. Ask why U.S. taxpayers are being forced to prop up these billion-dollar industries. The CA poultry industry is valued at \$3.2 billion and the U.S. chicken industry at nearly \$17 billion. Request a written response ☐

Egg Company Threw 30,000 Hens Into Wood-Chipping Machines

"The farmer, Bill Wilgenburg, said he had to use a mulcher . . . because of rules imposed by the federal-state Task Force on Newcastle Disease" that prevented him from moving his "spent" hens off the property. - North County Times (2/28/03)

San Diego County investigated the Ward Egg Ranch; whose workers said their arms got tired "from breaking the chickens' necks, so they threw them into the machinery." USDA veterinary consultant Gregg Cutler, who sits on the Animal Welfare Committee of the AVMA, reportedly told the ranch the wood chipper was "painless" (*San Diego Union-Tribune*, 2/22). Though

County Animal Services Lt. Mary Kay Gagliardo said "It's clearly animal cruelty" (*North County Times*, 2/28), the DA's Office announced on April 10 that the company "did not commit any crime because a veterinarian from the U.S. Department of Agriculture gave them permission to use wood chippers to destroy the birds" (*San Diego Union Tribune*, 4/11).

UPC had urged the District Attorney to prosecute the company and wrote to the AVMA concerning Cutler's advice to use wood-chippers. The AVMA wrote back: "Dr. Cutler informed us that he never recommended using a wood chipper." UPC is doing a follow-up investigation of this case. □

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Want to stay up on farmed animal issues? Subscribe to Farmed Animal Watch! This weekly email digest is free to interested individuals. Information is gleaned from an array of industry, advocacy, academic, and mainstream media sources. Archived issues and a wealth of other useful information can be found at: <http://www.FarmedAnimal.net>. To subscribe, send a message to: Info@FarmedAnimal.net.

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United Poultry Concerns

PO Box 150 • Machipongo, VA 23405-0150

**You are Cordially Invited to Attend
UNITED POULTRY CONCERNS FOURTH ANNUAL FORUM 2003
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**Saturday August 16 - Sunday August 17, 2003
University of Colorado-Boulder Campus**

Topic: How to promote veganism widely and effectively

Speakers

Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *Living Among MeatEaters*

Jack Norris, Vegan Outreach

Dave Crawford, Rocky Mountain Animal Defense

Karen Davis, United Poultry Concerns

Bruce Friedrich, PETA

Lauren Ornelas, VIVA!

Norm Phelps, The Fund for Animals

Paul Shapiro, Compassion Over Killing

Zoe Weil, International Institute for Humane Education

Forum Location The Forum will be held at the Events Center located on the southeastern edge of the campus of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Time: The Forum will consist of two full days from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Registration Fee: \$75.00 per person. Students & Seniors \$40 per person.

Registration must be paid in advance to United Poultry Concerns, PO Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405. Cash, Check or Money Order only.

Exhibit Table: \$50 with registration. \$125 without registration

Maximum Number of Forum Participants: 125 people.

Registration & Table Reservation Deadline: August 1, 2003

Meals: Two continental breakfasts and buffet luncheons are included in the Forum cost. World-class chef Lynn Halpern is providing fantastic food both days!

Accommodations: There are several hotels within walking distance of the Events Center. The Best Western Boulder Inn is recommended. Reservations: 1-800-233-8469. www.boulderinn.com. Rates vary from \$76 Single to \$84 - \$88 Double. International Youth Hostel 5 blocks from the University: 303-442-0522. A complete list of hotels near the Events Center can be found at the Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau website: www.bouldercoloradousa.com.

Airport: Denver International Airport. Denver International Airport Skyride provides service (\$10 one-way, \$16 roundtrip) to the Boulder Transit Center in downtown Boulder. From there buses and cabs run to the Events Center and hotels a mile or so away. There are plenty of restaurants with vegan selections in the vicinity.

For information about Boulder and other logistical Forum questions, please contact Lynn Halpern at 303-642-0414 or Lynn@leadingveg.com. For Forum updates, visit www.UPC-online.org or call Karen Davis at 757-678-7875.



Photo by Linda Spillers
Gazette Newspapers

Killer Pneumonia Virus Infects Birds, Humans & Other Animals

In April 2003, 80 people were reported dead and over 2300 people infected in 23 countries with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), a virus first identified in poultry vendors and chefs in China's Guangdong province in November 2002. The virus, which has since spread to Hong Kong and North America, is similar to coronavirus, which can cause gut infections in humans, pneumonia in cattle, and infectious gut and respiratory infections in chickens and other birds. Guangdong health officials said the earliest SARS patients had been "in close and continued contact with chickens, ducks, pigeons and owls." The U.S. Centers for Disease Control warned it is "too early to know if a global pandemic of SARS can be avoided." - *New Scientist*, April 3, 2003 □

Tell President Bush to Stop Using Birds to Detect Poisons in Iraq

UPC's letter to President Bush (3/11)) urging the military to stop using chickens (and now pigeons) to detect deadly chemicals in Iraq sparked media coverage around the world. The Scripps Howard News Service, *The Daily Telegraph* in London, *The Oklahoman*, and the online news service Onet.pl in Poland quoted UPC that the military's use of birds is "cruel, unjust, and ludicrous. Transported to a desert changed into a battlefield, many of them will die as a result of stress; the rest will die from hunger, thirst, or lack of air." U.S. soldiers say they don't know the cause of death in birds who have already died or how to take care of them (*St Louis Dispatch* 3/2/03; Reuters, 3/14/03).

<http://www.upc-online.org/whatsnew/31103lettertobush.htm>

<http://www.upc-online.org/alerts/022303iraq.htm>



What Can I Do?

- Urge President Bush and your Members of Congress to stop using birds to detect deadly chemicals in Iraq.

The Honorable George W. Bush

President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington DC 20500

Fax: 202-456-2461

Email: president@Whitehouse.gov.

To find your U.S. Senators and House Representative call the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121 or go to www.hsus.org. □

STOCK CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Friends,

Several of our members have made financial contributions in the form of stock to United Poultry Concerns through our securities account. We are deeply grateful for these gifts, and anticipate more in the future. There are two obvious benefits in making stock contributions. Please consider these advantages in making your future gifts to United Poultry Concerns.

Donors may give as much stock as they want to a nonprofit organization without impinging upon their estate. By giving this way, they avoid paying a capital gains tax on their assets, because they are gifting their assets.

The benefits to the nonprofit are obvious. In giving a gift of stock, you enable the nonprofit of your choice to grow and do more. It's as simple and important as that. Everyone wins.

United Poultry Concerns has a securities account with **Paine-Webber**. For information on how you can donate to us this way, please call our financial advisor, **Claudia Puopolo**, at Paine-Webber at **757-490-5639** or **800-368-4070**.

From United Poultry Concerns and all our Feathered Friends, we thank you for helping to ensure our future!

Sincerely,
Karen Davis, Ph.D.
President



Photo by Tai Rönner

Inside the Egg Industry: New Investigations Show the Horror of a Hen's Life



Compassion Over Killing (COK), an animal advocacy group based in Washington DC, documented 3 buildings caved in by snow at an ISE battery-hen operation in Maryland in February. 300,000 caged hens were trapped, many of them crushed, in the collapsed buildings. The hens were gassed following a rumor that they were to be burned along with the buildings. COK footage from this and previous investigations prompted an 8-minute report on Washington DC Fox News Channel 5, on February 23, with follow-up coverage the next day. Footage of sick, suffering, dead and dying hens alternated with images of the birds viewed from the manure pits beneath the cages. COK's Paul Shapiro told Fox, "The factory farmer's worst nightmare is an activist with a video camera." Visit <http://www.cok.net>

Mercy For Animals (MFA), an animal advocacy group based in Columbus, Ohio, released findings of an investigation at Weaver Brothers Egg Farm in Versailles, Ohio, in March, attracting major media coverage. 15 months after disclosing conditions at Ohio's two largest hen factory farms, Buckeye and Daylay, MFA again documented battery-hen conditions during nighttime

visits. United Egg Producers (UEP, the egg industry-trade group) suggested the investigators staged or "caused" the scenes of suffering on tape. MFA's Nathan Runkle countered: "We find it offensive that someone who profits off the exploitation of egg-laying hens would point the finger at activists who are exposing the inherent cruelty . . . and rescuing hens who are in dire need of veterinary care." MFA asked prosecutors to file cruelty charges against Weaver Bros. Visit <http://www.MercyForAnimals.org>.

A February 10 *Chicago Tribune* article, "Activists Target Factory Farms," featured investigations of battery-hen operations by **Mercy for Animals** and **Compassionate Action for Animals** (<http://www.ca4a.org>). CAA, based in Minneapolis, Minn., described birds with "large tumors on their legs" and "blisters where their beaks had been cut off." United Egg Producers sought to dodge accusations by pointing to UEP's new welfare guidelines, which, in fact, are nothing but a reaffirmation of animal abuse: battery cages, debeaking, and forced molting.



What Can I Do?

- Write letters to the editor, call talk radio shows, and voice your concerns to
Albert E. Pope, President
United Egg Producers
1720 Windward Concourse, Suite 320
Alpharetta, GA 30005
Ph: 770-360-9220
Fax: 770-360-7058
Email: info@unitedegg.org □

VHS Chicken Walk

Join the Vancouver Humane Society's CHICKEN WALK in Support of Their New Chicken Out! Campaign to educate and raise awareness about the terrible conditions in which battery hens live. "YOU'LL SEE OUR FIVE-FOOT BATTERY HEN MASCOT, HENNY, EVERYWHERE! HENNY WANTS TO SEE THE 24 MILLION LAYING HENS IN CANADA OUT OF CAGES! The CHICKEN WALK takes place at Lost Lagoon at Stanley Park on Sunday, June 8, 2003 rain or shine. Henny will be there! Registration begins at 11 AM. The Chicken Walk begins at Noon. For more information, please contact Stacy at 604-266-9744, or visit the VHS website: www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca. Learn more about the Chicken Out! Campaign: www.chickenout.ca

AVMA's Forced Molting Position Still Unacceptable

See *AVAR Directions*, Winter 2003, the quarterly newsletter of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights. <http://AVAR.org>

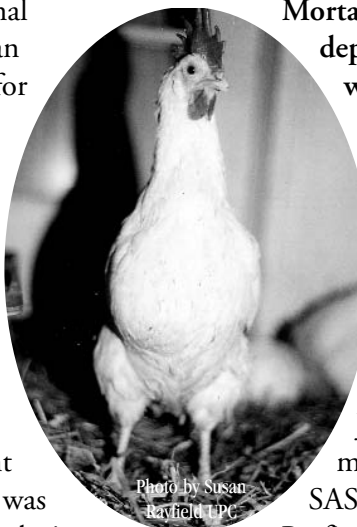
The Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (AVAR) will approach the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) for the 5th time asking it to change its position statement on forced molting in "laying" hens. The U.S. egg industry force molts hens by depriving them of food for 4 to 21 days to manipulate egg prices and to pump a few hundred more eggs out of exhausted hens when it is deemed cheaper to "recycle" them rather than immediately destroy them after a year of relentless egg-laying on a calcium-deficient diet. A revised AVMA position statement was accepted last year in accordance with a resolution submitted by the American Association of Avian Pathologists and the Association of Avian Veterinarians. Although the AVMA's new position statement condemns total food withdrawal, it still finds "intermittent" feeding acceptable.

However, according to poultry specialist Dr. Ian Duncan of the University of Guelph in Ontario, "'Intermittent' feeding, referred to in the position statement, is not used [by the egg industry] to induce molt

and, in any case, is wide open to abuse since the deprivation period could vary from hours to weeks."

Duncan states, "The evidence that forced molting reduces well-being is overwhelming.

Mortality doubles in the first week of food deprivation, doubles again in the second week, and the behavioral evidence suggests that hens suffer enormously."



UPC has urged the AVMA to oppose forced molting since 1993. This year we're part of a coalition that's asking the AVMA to oppose forced molting, and we're holding an exhibit booth at the AVMA's Annual Convention in Denver, July 19 - 22. To learn more about forced molting, visit www.UPC-online.org or send a SASE for our fact sheet "Starving Hens For Profit Has Got To Stop."



What Can I Do?

- If you are a veterinarian or can persuade your veterinarian to ask the AVMA to oppose the forced molting of commercial laying hens, contact: Bruce Little, DVM, Executive Vice President, AVMA, 1931 N. Meacham Rd, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360. Ph: 847-925-8070. Fax: 847-925-1329 □

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Please consider an enduring gift of behalf of the birds.

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I give, devise and bequeath to United Poultry Concerns, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the state of Maryland and located in the state of Virginia, the sum of \$ _____ and/or (specifically designated property and/or stock contribution).

We welcome inquiries.

United Poultry Concerns, Inc.
P.O. Box 150 • Machipongo, Virginia 23405-0150
(757) 678-7875



Photo by Tal Ronnen

Freddaflower Memorial Fund

The pain of losing them is the price we pay for the privilege of knowing them and sharing their lives. . . . Vicky Barbee

We thank those people who have contributed to our work with recent donations *In Loving Memory and in Honor* of the following beloved family members and friends:

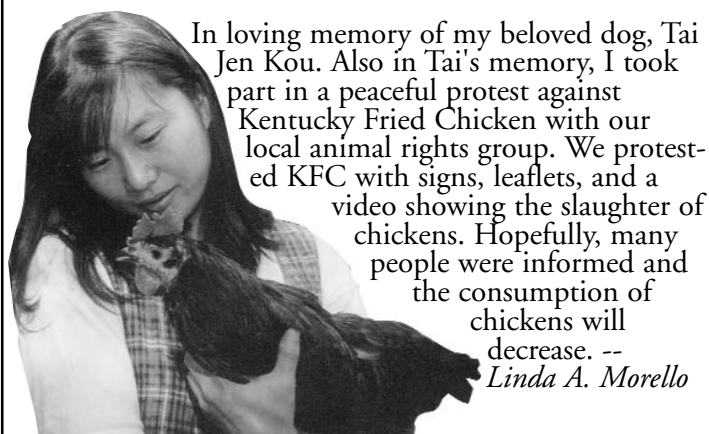
In loving memory of Queen Bee, our dear friend and "mother hen." - *Kip & Emily Bellairs*

In loving memory of Matilda and Penny, our dear hens.
- *Edna-Ann Senecal*



UPC Chickens and Ducks - Happy Together!

Would you like to sponsor a rescued UPC chicken or duck for \$6 a month, \$72 a year? If so, please send us your check or money order stating the number of birds you wish to sponsor. Pay by the month, bi-annually, or in one yearly installment. Upon receiving your sponsorship fee, we will send you a color photo of your happy bird(s), and his, her, or their name(s). Thank you for helping



In loving memory of my beloved dog, Tai Jen Kou. Also in Tai's memory, I took part in a peaceful protest against Kentucky Fried Chicken with our local animal rights group. We protested KFC with signs, leaflets, and a video showing the slaughter of chickens. Hopefully, many people were informed and the consumption of chickens will decrease. --
Linda A. Morello

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United Poultry Concerns is one of the sponsors of the Animal Rights 2003 National Conferences



Photo by Clyde Lassell

Employee Describes Deliberate Torture of Chickens at Tyson Slaughter Plant



Photo by Carol McCormick for UPC

"I just visited your site and support your work. I appreciate you putting my statement on your website and wish there were more sites like it to reach more people. The only way to stop this kind of thing is to bring it out into the open for people to see it for what it is." - Virgil Butler, former Tyson employee to United Poultry Concerns, 3/14/03

In an affidavit signed on January 30, 2003 to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, former Tyson employee Virgil Butler said that the Tyson chicken slaughter plant where he worked the nightshift for five years in Grannis, Arkansas, for 1997 to 2002, was a "nightmare."

"My name is Virgil Butler. I worked at the Tyson plant in Grannis, Arkansas from July, 1997 until November 12, 2002. I worked on the night shift in the Receiving department as a live-hanger [of birds] as well as on the kill-floor. I personally witnessed many acts of cruelty toward the chickens by employees of the plant on a nightly basis.

"One of the most recent problems that I observed was the night shift superintendent, Richard Frasier, turning down the stunner and ordering the employees to leave it down. This machine is the device that is supposed to stun [paralyze] chickens before they are killed. Turning it down results in the chickens missing the killing machine [because they avert their heads]

and evading the killer [the human backup] behind the machine, so that they end up being scalded to death by water in the scalding tank. The scalding tank loosens up the feathers so that they can be picked out. The chickens are supposed to be dead before they reach this point. I as well as Ed Taylor (my immediate supervisor), Troy Shepmann, and Aron Harris (fellow employees) argued this action with Richard, who refused to stop doing this. . . .

"I was responsible for trying to slit the throats of the chickens the machine missed on the nights I worked the killing room. Our line runs 182 shackles per minute. It is physically impossible to check them all. Therefore, they are scalded alive. When this happens, the chickens flop, scream, kick, and their eyeballs pop out of their heads. They often come out of the other end with broken bones and disfigured and missing body parts because they've struggled so much in the tank. Sometimes, when we had a line broken down, they would be left hanging upside down in the stunner in the water to drown. In the stunner, the water is cold and salted to better conduct the electricity. I have personally seen them hang in this position for hours.

"One night in early spring last year we lost hydraulic pressure. Perhaps 300-400 chickens missed the stunner because the line slowed down so much that the birds could avoid it while those who were stunned were able to recover by the time they reached the killing machine - which was only working sporadically. The live birds were left hanging upside down in the scalders while the machinery was being fixed. We could have quit hanging more chickens at this point and let the line run empty while the killing machine was off-line. Instead, we were ordered by Richard Frasier and Ed Taylor to continue to hang the chickens, while Aron Harris was required to kill all of them by hand. This could not be done by one person, even at half the speed and it was clear to everyone there that birds were

continued on page 11

"...just a part of a regular night's work."

continued from page 10

going by untouched. Several hundred chickens were scalded to death by this decision.

"Most of my fellow employees were extremely abusive to the chickens. Our job was to pick up the chickens off of the belt and hang them upside down in the shackles. This could rarely be accomplished without problems, due to several reasons. We were extremely shorthanded, due to the horrendous working conditions. This led to a high turnover rate with inexperienced, frustrated workers under pressure to keep the production numbers up. If production fell, it would mean overtime work, so that the belt speed was turned up. This resulted in the belt becoming overloaded in the area where the chickens awaited shackling, which ended up smothering hundreds of chickens a night. I heard Richard Frasier say, 'I would rather smother a few hundred goddamned birds, than to lose time because of empty shackles.' (This was said in late July, 2002 when temperatures in the hanging cage were exceeding 100 degrees in the middle of the night.) . . .

"The heater in the 'cage,' which is the area where birds are hung, worked less than half of the time I worked there. Many times the temperatures would be well below freezing. This resulted in the chickens freezing to the belt last winter and the winter before. They froze to death this way inside the building, where the temperature was below freezing. I and my co-workers complained about this to Richard Frasier, but to no avail. He would just turn and walk away. The reverse of this problem happened in the summertime, where there is no adequate air conditioning. Most of the time, it doesn't work at all, and blows hot air. This results in the chickens dying of heat stroke, heart attack, and suffocation.

"When the plant breaks down or when there are too many chickens on the kill schedule for the shift, they are left over for the next shift. . . . In the summer on day shift, when they leave the birds, they sit from 3:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. under a tin shed roof with no water and no food. I have seen hundreds die of dehydration from this practice. This could be remedied by simply stopping the catchers from catching any more [birds] until the problem in the plant is resolved or by not scheduling as big a kill to begin with. These uncomfortable conditions, coupled with the unrelenting pressure to keep the shackles filled at all costs, lead to much frustration and outright rage among the employees.

"I have witnessed Troy Sheppmann build dry ice bombs

(made by putting dry ice and a small amount of water in a plastic Pepsi bottle and screwing the lid down tight) and putting it on the belt with live chickens during break time. This results in a high pressure explosion that rips the chickens' bodies apart and scatters them all over the room. This occurred numerous times, but the one I remember the most was one night last June when he made a small dry ice bomb by shoving a piece of dry ice up a live chicken's rectum, then plugging it with a wooden cork. It built up enough pressure inside the chicken to blow it apart.

I have also seen Aron Harris rip the heads, legs, and wings off of live chickens, or just stomp them to death on the floor because he was aggravated. This occurred on a regular basis for about the last year and a half that I worked there. I have also seen George Watson, a forklift driver, run over the chickens on purpose, then laugh about it. These kinds of incidents were ongoing and repetitive-just a part of a regular night's work.

"Other problems that came up when I worked there were a result of mismanagement. One, in particular, happened several times when we would get orders for bigger birds. The worst was in the week ending on September 14 of last year. In this instance we were given thousands of chickens to hang that were above the size limit we were used to. The shackles were not designed to fit the oversize legs of the chickens. They were

too small for their legs to fit into. In the process of hanging the live birds, we were forced to break their legs to get them to fit into the shackles. This was unnecessary. The shackles could have been spread out to fit the larger-sized birds. It would only have taken about an hour for two maintenance personnel to accomplish this. However, Richard Frasier decided that it wasn't necessary and didn't want to lose the production time to do it. . . .

"We processed deboned thigh and leg meat and boneless, skinless split breasts. Most of the deboned meat is shipped to a further processing plant where it is made into chicken nuggets for KFC. I am writing this letter because I want to see something done about this cruelty. I don't wish to be a part of the nightmare any longer and am willing to speak out about this to anyone at any time.

Thank you,
Virgil Butler"

I am writing this letter because I want to see something done about this cruelty. I don't wish to be a part of the nightmare any longer and am willing to speak out about this to anyone at any time.

continued on page 12

continued from page 11



What Can I Do?

- The Polk County sheriff is investigating the matter and will be reporting his findings to the prosecuting attorney. Please contact the sheriff and the prosecuting attorney and politely urge them to file cruelty-to-animals charges against all those responsible, as described in Mr. Butler's testimony, at the Tyson facility in Grannis, Arkansas.

Sheriff Michael Oglesby
Polk County Sheriff's
Office
507 Church Street
Mena, AR 71953
Phone: 479-394-8163
Fax: 479-394-1975

The Honorable Tim
Williamson
Prosecuting Attorney
Polk County Prosecutor's
Office
PO Drawer 109
600 Port Arthur Street
Mena, AR 71953
Phone: 479-394-6114
Fax: 479-394-6173



- Urge the National Chicken Council (NCC, the industry trade group), Tyson Foods, and KFC to provide natural light and fresh air in the chicken houses, space for each bird to walk freely in fresh litter instead of in ammoniated feces, and to stop the forced rapid growth of chickens. Chickens can no longer walk normally due to lameness, pain, and metabolic disorders. In an email to UPC (2/20/03), a resident of Siloam Springs, Arkansas said chickens being raised for Simmons Foods in totally enclosed dark houses, called "tunnel ventilation" houses, "at 5 weeks can hardly stand because their legs are so weak and with no natural light or exercise their joints are too soft to carry the weight."

- Urge the NCC, Tyson Foods, and KFC to replace the use of paralytic electric shock equipment (misnamed "stunners") in the slaughterhouses with gas-based technology that will kill the birds in the transport crates prior to shackling, thus sparing them

the pain and stress of live shackling, neck cutting, and for millions of chickens each year, being scalded alive.

- Urge the NCC, Tyson Foods, and KFC to develop standards of employee conduct to the birds, to post these standards in the slaughter plants in the appropriate languages, and to make these standards a major part of all employee training programs. Urge that the working environment be improved to eliminate the "frustration and outright rage" that contributes to birds being targeted for abuse.

National Chicken Council
1015 15th Street, NW, Suite 930
Washington DC 20005-2605
Ph: 202-296-2622
Fax: 202-293-4005
Email: Gwatts@ChickenUSA.org
Rlobb@ChickenUSA.org (Richard Lobb,
Communications Director)

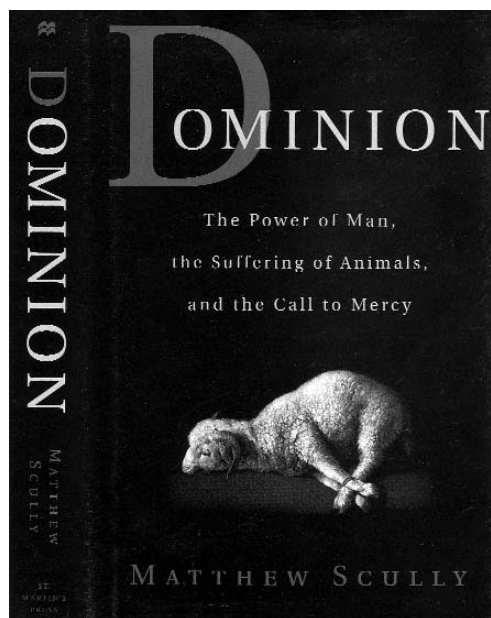
John Tyson, CEO/Chairman
Tyson Foods, Inc.
PO Box 2020
Springdale, AR 72765-2020
Ph: 479-290-4000
Customer Hotline: 800-643-3410
Fax: 479-290-3923
Email: John.Tyson@Tyson.com

David Novak, Chair and CEO
KFC - Yum! Brands
1441 Gardiner Lane
Louisville, KY 40213
Ph: 502-874-8300
Customer Hotline: 800-225-5532
Fax: 502-874-8567

For information on "broiler" chickens: <http://www.UPC-online.org/broiler/>
For information on the poultry industry: <http://www.UPC-online.org/industry/>
For information on poultry slaughter: <http://www.UPC-online.org/slaughter/> □

Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, And the Call to Mercy

©2003 Reviewed by Karen Davis, PhD



By Matthew Scully

St. Martin's Press, 2002

Wwww.stmartins.com

\$27.95 USA \$41.95 Canada

In *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*, Matthew Scully, a speechwriter for George W. Bush, says that he seeks above all to reach religious people whose spirit of kindness and mercy has not yet been extended to animals. However, *Dominion* is not just for religious believers and "dominionists." It combines strong investigative journalism with polemical rigor, droll humor, searing images, a call to action, and a set of recommended legal reforms to protect animals against the most extreme forms of institutionalized abuse. Some might fear that a book about "mercy" would be mushy. This one isn't. Scully exposes the cynical sentimentality of phony realists who accuse people who care about animals of being "weak" and "soft." Rather, he says, it's the animal person who's the realist, "someone who wants to know the facts of the case, what is actually taking place and how

it feels to the victim."

Scully's chapters on his visits to the Safari Club International's 27th annual convention, the International Whaling Commission's 52nd annual meeting, and a Smithfield industrial pig complex in North Carolina take us into these harrowing places. With him, we meet the people, hear the talk, feel the ambiance. Here we are, for example, in a Smithfield Gestation Barn filled with crated pregnant sows. Scully is with a young animal scientist named Gay - "Loves her career. Loves animals."

It takes an extra moment for the eyes and ears to register a single clear perception. But you can just tell by their immediate reactions which sows have been here the longest. Some of them are still defiant, roaring and rattling violently as we approach. Some of them are defeated, motionless even at the touch. Some of them are dead.

"They don't get a lot of exercise," says Gay.

"But at the same time, that's good because they can carry more fetuses. We get rid of them after eight litters."

Further on.

What's that on the thigh of NPD 45-051? I ask. "That's a tumor," says Gay. The tumor, I observe, is the size of half a soccer ball. "Yeah, and she's just one year old," says Gay. "Getting thin, too. So, she's not desirable any more." . . . NPD 40-602 appears to have a tumor as well. I tell Gay. "That's just a pus pocket. They all get those."

While Scully makes a point of rejecting the concept of animal rights, and his insistence on the "lowliness" of animals is galling, his goal, to achieve which he

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

apparently considers these belittling concessions requisite, is to reach that huge audience for whom animals have so far counted morally for nothing at all, to whom the idea of the "lowly" chicken, cow, or pig might actually be a peg up from the bottomless gulf of nothingness occupied by the rest of creation in the minds of so many.

But there's more. Scully's literary skills make *Dominion* a book to reckon with. If he starts off saying that animals have no rights, which legally they don't, he develops powerful arguments on behalf of animals' "moral claims" and humankind's corresponding responsibility to animals. "Laws protecting animals from mistreatment, abuse, and exploitation are not a moral luxury or sentimental afterthought to be shrugged off," he says. "They are a serious moral obligation." Refuting the idea that morality is a mere matter of "culture," "opinion," and "choice," castigating the caprice that allows us to treat animals whom we know with some decency while condemning animals in farms and laboratories to "lives of ceaseless misery," he declares that "the moral claims of other creatures are facts about those creatures, regardless of when or where or whether it pleases us to recognize them" (310).

As does Norm Phelps in *The Dominion of Love: Animal Rights and the Bible*, Scully observes that the idea of human rights, like that of animal rights, is not a given but rather "a practical response to the most fundamental of all moral problems: Human evil." Thus, he says, "[b]efore you dismiss vegetarianism as radical animal rights nonsense, contradicted by ages of custom and habit the world over, reflect for a moment on our own human experience, on all the violence and brutality and ceaseless subjugation from which our own concepts of human rights arise" (313).

Scully emphasizes the morality of substitution, a theme that I stress in my book *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*. I argue that in the religious realm, for example, if we can substitute animal flesh for human flesh and bread and wine for "all flesh" and the shedding of innocent blood, and view these changes as advances of civilization and not as inferior substitutes for genuine religious experience, we are ready to go forward in our everyday lives on ground that is already laid. Regarding the consumption of animal products and all other forms of animal exploitation, Scully, who is a vegan, similarly writes that "[w]hen

substitute products are found, with each creature in turn, responsible dominion calls for a reprieve. . . . What were once 'necessary evils' become just evils" (43).

Though I do not share Scully's theological outlook and disdain his tributes to certain public figures who practice what he had declared just a few pages earlier to be "just evils," I do think this book makes an important contribution to the effort to try to awaken the public's conscience and mitigate the cruelty of our species to other species. There's a kind of irony where Scully says that "In a strange way the more insistent human beings are of our singularity among creatures, the more aggressive and vocal in denigrating animals, the more indistinct and small we ourselves come to seem." Seen in this perspective, the human species might well be in a process of dwindling away to just dots, then a dot, and then nothing, like the characters in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald. If this happened to us, it would be no loss for the animals. They don't need us, we are not their keepers, and we have abused our privilege of sharing the earth with them □

UPC Letter in the March 2003 Atlantic Monthly

UPC President Karen Davis's letter appeared in the March 2003 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* in response to columnist Christopher Hitchens's November 2002 review ("Political Animals") of Matthew Scully's book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*.

Thank you for Christopher Hitchens's critical review of Matthew Scully's book *Dominion: the Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. I would like to respond to a couple of things Hitchens says about social justice responses to animals and animal rights.

Hitchens invokes the English utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham to support his claim that talk about animals' rights is "nonsense upon stilts" because rights "have to be asserted," and animals "cannot make such assertions." However, we make representations all the time on behalf of people who cannot speak for themselves due to infancy, debility, or senility, and Bentham himself said that nonhuman animals possess

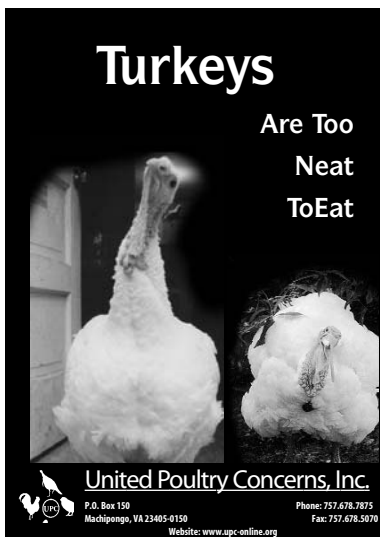
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continued from page 14

rights that have been withheld from them by human tyranny. He was talking about moral claims of fellowship that transcend the ability to articulate a plea for fairness in polished verbal language and which are yet a basis for legal rights. Indeed, we hire lawyers and members of the clergy to assert claims that exist in us as sentiments of justice and injustice that, if pleaded by ourselves on our own behalf, without intercession, might to a judge's ear (or the ear of God) sound like nothing more than "bleats and roars and trumpetings"-a lot of unambiguous protest, in fact.

I think it's time for our species to step down from the "chilly eminence" that Hitchens ascribes to the animal advocacy philosopher Peter Singer and give to these animals, who are neither "voiceless" nor "dumb," a voice in every affair that concerns them. If we can speak for people who can't speak for themselves, we can speak for these animals, and so we should.

Karen Davis
President
United Poultry Concerns, Inc. □



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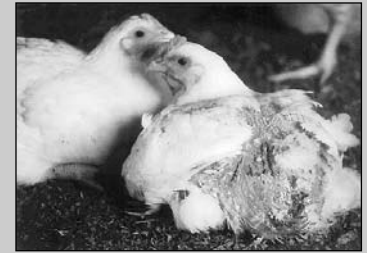
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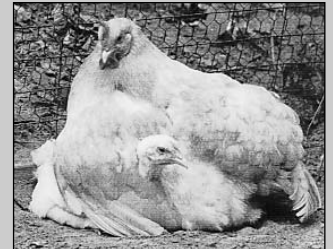
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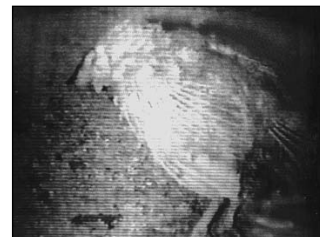
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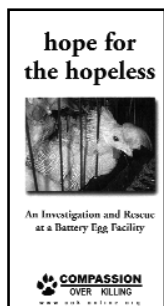
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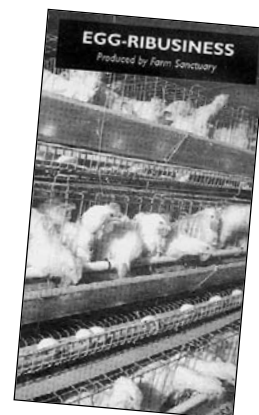
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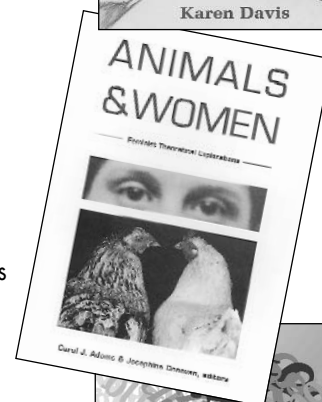
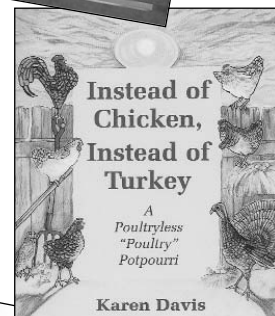
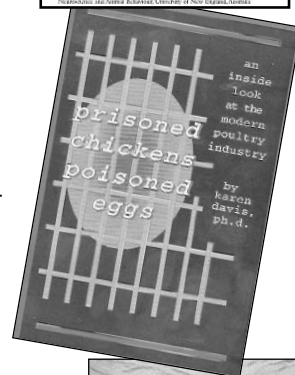
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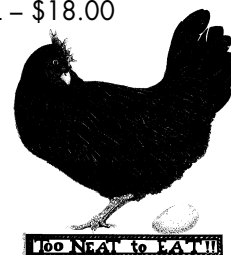
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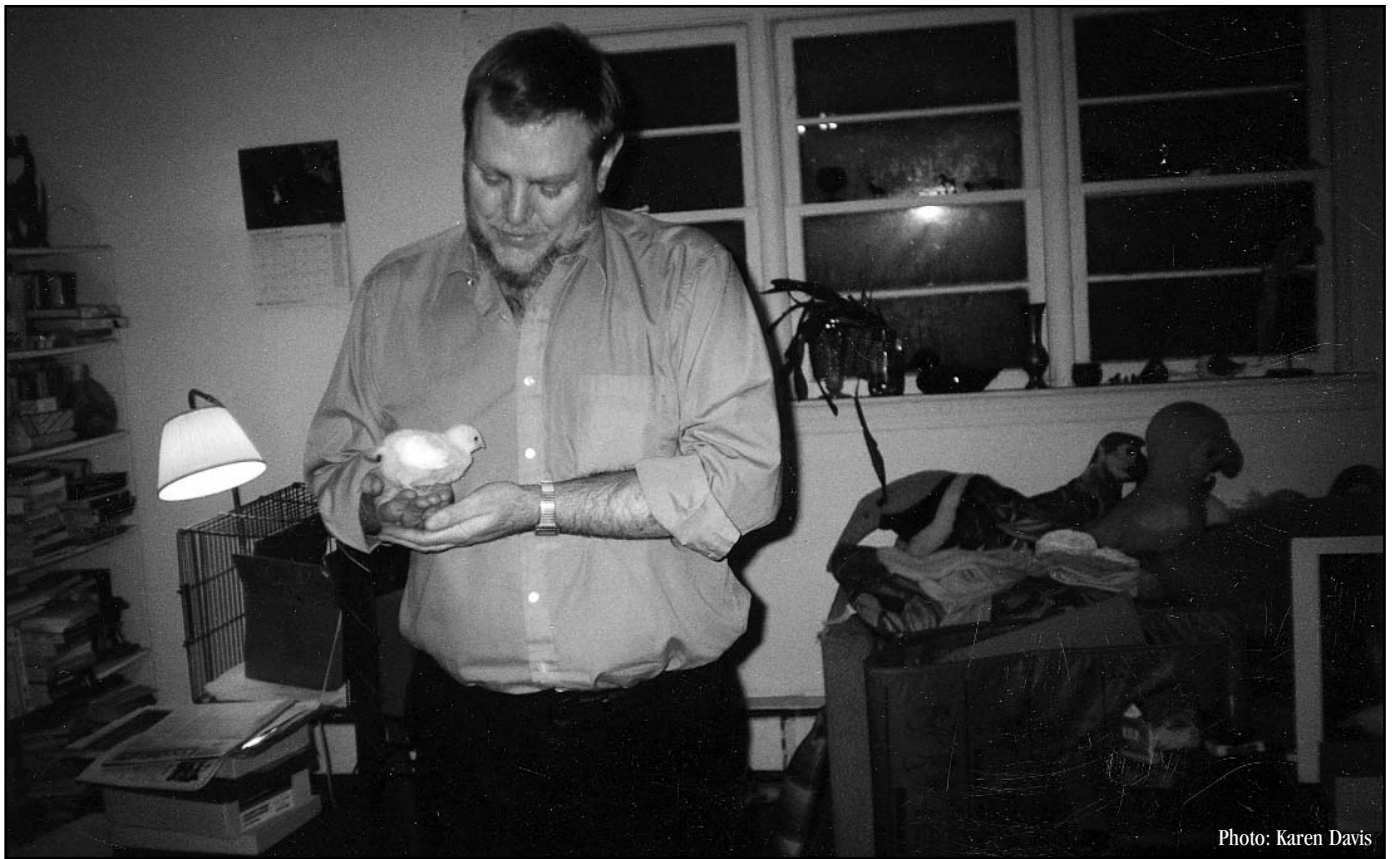


Photo: Karen Davis

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