The previous issue of PoultryPress gave a synopsis of speeches by Drs. Joy Mench and Ian Duncan on welfare problems for birds in the poultry and egg industries. The conference was sponsored by the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights, Animal Place, and United Poultry Concerns on June 28-29, 2001. The following is a synopsis of talks given by bird specialists Lesley J. Rogers and Gisela Kaplan. Dr. Rogers is a professor of Neuroscience and Animal Behaviour at the University of New England in Australia and the author of The Development of Brain and Behaviour in the Chicken (1995). Dr. Kaplan is a full professor specializing in ethology in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of New England in Australia and coauthor (with Lesley Rogers) of Birds: Their Habits and Skills (2001)

"Changing Our Views About the Domestic Chicken"

Dr. Lesley J. Rogers
Professor of Neuroscience and Animal Behaviour, University of New England, Australia

Observing that science shows "the cognitive demands of the hitherto underestimated chicken brain," Rogers said that "people need to see chickens as animals equivalent to other creatures" and that all the information shows that chickens cannot be reduced to inferior creatures. Based on their complex memory formations and demonstrated learning capabilities, chickens "should not be in cages at all." Rogers told the audience that "despite domestication, very little has changed in the chicken's cognitive powers." Slides from her laboratory showed the chicken's ability to correctly identify and distinguish among a range of objects, to locate objects that have been removed from sight and to "tell that an object behind an object is a whole object." These and other studies, she said, reveal "the complexity of the chicken's cognition." While noting that the long history of domestication of the chicken has led to birds who may be somewhat less stressed by being caged or handled by humans than their junglefowl relatives, "this does not mean that domestic breeds are well-adapted to living in intensive poultry systems." Rogers concluded, "I would argue that genetic selection has favored chickens that can live in farmyard free-ranging conditions in contact with humans and other species, but not in battery cages."
"Chickens with weak legs and weak hearts, pregnant pigs in cramped housing, lame cattle and other afflictions on the farm are on the agenda of an unusual conference opening today on the campus of the University of California, Davis."


Even though science is starting to take birds seriously, progress is slow. In Australia, for example, there was no real veterinary training in birds until a few years ago, and the 2001 European Commission's Report on the Welfare of Broiler Chickens is, deplorably, 20 years out of date. It ignores such vital aspects as fear, boredom, the need to preen, and much more. What needs to be understood is that "animals," like humans, are whole beings. For example, the voices of birds involve "learned, complex vocalizations" that are part of "very complex social interactions; and vocalization is just one of many ways in which birds communicate with one another."

From the Book

"Some people have thought that all animals that have wings and lay eggs are the same kind of creature, but birds' evolutionary distance from one another (e.g., owls evolved about 60 million years ago, about 30 to 50 million years earlier than songbirds) and their differences in behavior make this as absurd as saying that mice and tigers are similar. But it is not just for reasons of appearance that birds have been seen as a unitary set of species; the history of ideas has also played a role. Descartes's notion that only humans are 'complete' beings by virtue of their ability to think had particularly bad repercussions for birds. A false impression was created that birds are essentially like mechanistic toys. Likenesses of birds have been used as colorful decorations in living rooms or as self-propelled music boxes on mantelpieces, just to adorn human dwellings, with little thought of the live birds."

From "Communication in Birds," Songs, Bears, and Rituals by Lesley J. Rogers and Gisela Kaplan.


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Carnegie Science Center Shuts Down Chick Hatchery Exhibit
UPC Protest Finally Pays Off

The Carnegie Science Center, located in Pittsburgh, PA, closed down its chick hatchery operation in late September due to its failure as an educational exhibit. Exhibit director Tom Flaherty told United Poultry Concerns that the hatchery wasn't meeting the center's "educational objectives any more so we stopped hatching chicks."

In February 2000, United Poultry Concerns launched a vigorous national campaign to prevent the hatchery exhibit from opening, followed by our national effort to close down the hatchery after it opened despite hundreds of protest letters. On April 22, 2000, United Poultry Concerns and Animal Advocates of Pittsburgh held an all-day Earth Day protest and candlelight vigil at the Carnegie Science Center. We handed out educational leaflets to Carnegie patrons under the name of Citizens Against the Carnegie Chick Hatchery which explained why "a mechanical hatchery does not illustrate the natural life of chickens." We urged patrons to protest the hatchery for being unnatural, cruel, and misleading.

The birds were being hatched on a plastic grid in a desolate mechanical display supposed to show "the miracle of birth," "natural systems," and, most bizarrely, "where eggs come from," in a noisy carnival atmosphere. In a letter published in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (March 14, 2000), United Poultry Concerns president Karen Davis said that the hatchery "should be closed down." We are pleased to report that our goal has been reached. We thank everyone who contacted the Carnegie Science Center urging that the chick hatchery be canceled. We are grateful for the center's decision.

What Can I Do?

Please urge the Boston Museum of Science to follow the example of the Carnegie Science Center by shutting down its chick hatchery exhibit. Last year the museum started hatching about 15 chicks per day under the heading of "The Human Body Connection." The chicks are reportedly then gassed and fed to other animal exhibits at the museum.

Contact: David Ellis, Director
Museum of Science
Science Park
Boston, MA 02114
Ph: 617-589-0100 • Fax: 617-589-0454
Email: Dellis@mos.org.

A short polite firm letter sent by regular mail or fax is best if you have time. Request a written reply from Mr. Ellis.

Germany Moves Independently to Ban Battery Cages for Hens

The German Upper House (Bundesrat) of Parliament voted on October 19, 2001 in favor of a bill to reform hen housing legislation in Germany. The vote supports the 1999 finding by Germany's highest court—the German Constitutional Court—that battery cages violate German law. Thus, not only as a member state of the European Union but independently, Germany is expected to ban the cage including the so-called enriched cage. The new law, which is expected to come into force in 2002, will ban conventional battery cages by December 31, 2006—five years earlier than the EU ban by 2012. Enriched or furnished cages with perches, nest boxes, and scratching areas will be banned by the end of 2011. The height of any system in which hens are currently caged and in which they cannot stand fully upright. No more than 6,000 hens may be housed together in a single unit (as opposed to the conventional 85,000-100,000 hens caged in a single building in the U.S.). For every nine hens there must be at least one meter—10 square feet—of living space, which is slightly more than one square foot per hen. Nests may not be made of wire and new buildings must include natural light under the new law.

The Bundesrat is calling on the German Federal Government to encourage the EU to adopt Germany's standards so German egg producers will not be at a disadvantage. However, German consumer affairs minister Renate Kunast says that over 90% of German customers are opposed to battery farming and are willing to pay more for eggs from cage-free hens.
Protest the Use of Live Hens in Casino Video Game

"The Tropicana Casino in Atlantic City should cancel the 'Chicken Challenge' and use a computerized opponent instead of a live bird. There was never an excuse for cruelty, but with the technology we now have, the infliction of suffering on a sentient creature for fun is even more atrocious." UPC President Karen Davis, Letter in The New York Times, September 10, 2001.

In September, the Tropicana Casino in Atlantic City introduced a tic tac toe video game in which hens are forced to "play" opposite gamblers. The gamblers press buttons on an electrically lighted panel outside a booth in which the hen is confined, causing her to peck.

The Tropicana has refused to explain what is done to the hens to make them perform, or what happens to them if they don't perform or if the machinery malfunctions, which frequently happens in electronic games.

What Can I Do?

Urge the Tropicana Casino and the casino's parent company Aztar Corporation to replace the hens with a computerized opponent. Tell them you strongly object to subjecting these birds to an environment of derision, gambling, and alcohol with a strong potential for injury to the birds trapped inside gambling machines. Urge them to confine their business to human participants and to leave the birds alone. Request a written reply.

Contact:
Ms. Pamela Popielarski
President, General Manager
Tropicana Casino
2801 Pacific Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401
Ph: 609-340-4368
Fax: 609-343-5254
Email: ppopielarski@tropicana.net

Dennis Gomes, President
Aztar Corporation
Corporate Communications
2390 E. Camelback Road, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85016-3452
Ph: 602-381-4111
Fax: 602-381-4108
Email: azcorp@aztar.com

Use of Antibiotics in Farmed Animals and Growing Disease Resistance


Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are rampant in meat and poultry and can be found in consumers' intestines, researchers are showing. The findings suggest that many food-borne illnesses [the majority of which come from eating animal products including eggs and dairy according to the U.S. Dept of Agriculture] will not respond to the usual treatments. Some cases may even resist all current drugs. This year, the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit group based in Cambridge, Mass., estimated that 26.6 million pounds of antibiotics are administered to farmed animals each year in the U.S., with only 2 million pounds used to treat active infections. The rest are used to prevent infection or promote artificial growth rates. About 11 million pounds of the total are used in poultry feed, 10 million pounds in pig feed, and 4 million pounds in cattle feed. By contrast, 3 million pounds of antibiotics are used in human medicine. In a recent study, twelve volunteers ingested antibiotic-resistant organisms from chicken or pork, and six ate antibiotic-susceptible strains from chicken. Afterward, the same strains were isolated from the volunteers' stools for up to 14 days, indicating that both the antibiotic-resistant and antibiotic-susceptible bacteria survived the trip through the digestive tract and were able to multiply there.

Government Shows Young Turkeys Sick with Virus Linked to Human Illness

A virus that infects young turkeys has been identified by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service. First seen in the southeastern United States poultry industry in the early 1990s, this "astrovirus" is now circulating throughout the United States. The virus, which is also associated with diarrhea outbreaks in humans and other animals, is linked to another widespread production disease in very young turkeys called Poult Enteritis Mortality Syndrome (PEMS). This highly infectious, transmissible disease causes severe diarrhea, stunted growth, high death rates, and lifelong harm to the turkey's immune system, and leaves the birds extremely susceptible to other infections. From USDA ARS News Service, October 11, 2001.
Videotapes Show Living Conditions of U.S. Laying Hens
For These Birds Every Day is a Terrorist Attack

"The investigation uncovered countless sick and injured hens suffering from raging eye and sinus infections, mechanical feather damage, pasteurellae, paralysis, vitamin deficiency, vent peritonitis, hernias, wing hematomas, and blindness." Mercy for Animals Press Release, October 17, 2001

In June, the Washington DC-based animal rights group Compassion Over Killing (COK) revealed at a press conference the horrible conditions their investigators surreptitiously videotaped earlier this year at a battery hen complex owned by ISE-America in Cecil County, Md. outside Washington, DC. (ISE-America, a subsidiary of the Japan-based agribusiness company ISE, is the 10th largest egg producer in the U.S.).

In October, an Ohio animal rights organization, Mercy for Animals (MFA), held a press conference in Columbus at which they presented the findings of their month-long investigation into the condition of hens at Buckeye Egg Farm and Daylay Egg Farm, Ohio's two largest egg producers.

What the investigations show is the horror that millions of hens are living through every single day in this country in order to produce eggs for human consumption—a product that nobody needs and that no informed humane person can justifiably buy or consume.

These and similar investigations in Colorado, Minnesota and elsewhere in the U.S. make it clear that it not just in "other countries" that modern egg production defies description it is so diabolical: close your eyes and pick any caged hen facility in the U.S., and there you'll find debeaked hens with tumors the size of your fist trapped in the wires of their cages, dead birds left to rot next to their cagemates, mounds of feces stretching as far as the eye can see, manure crawling with maggots, beetles and other insects, flies swarming everywhere, featherless hens starving in manure pits and stuck, half-dead, in rivers of manure molasses.

For more information about these investigations, availability of videos, and what you can do to help, please contact:

Paul Shapiro, Director
Compassion Over Killing
Phone/Fax: 301-891-2458. Email cokinfo@earthlink.net
www.cok-online.org

Nathan Runkle, Director
Mercy For Animals
Phone: 937-652-8258. Fax: 937-663-0617
Email: NathanR@bright.net
www.EggCruelty.com
ACTION ALERT

Protest to Burger King: "Slam the Bird Toy" Teaches Cruel Lessons to Children

Burger King has launched a new toy targeting children through its "Kids Meals" --a small plush toy bird called "Silly Slammer #5 Chirpy." Children are instructed to "slam" the bird for a desired chirping response. This toy encourages children to be cruel and to try forcing a similar response from live birds and other small animals by "slamming" or crushing them.

What Can I Do?

Tell Burger King to recall this irresponsible toy immediately. Request a written reply.
Contact:
Mr. John Dasburg, CEO
Burger King Corporation
17777 Old Cutler Road
Miami, FL 33157
Ph: 305-378-3535; fax: 7462

U.S. House of Representatives Deals Blow to Crow-Magnons

HELPFUL HINT: To learn who your House Representative and Senators are, call the 24-hour Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121. To contact your Senators: www.senate.gov/contacting/. To contact your Representative: www.house.gov/writerep/. For updates on bills: thomas.loc.gov.

In October the House of Representatives passed two amendments to the House Farm Bill to ban shipment of birds for cockfighting. The Anti-Cockfighting amendment bans the interstate shipment of game birds from states where cockfighting is illegal to any one of the three states (OK, LA, NM) where cockfighting is still legal. The Animal Fighting amendment bans exports of birds or dogs for fighting purposes to other countries and increases penalties for violations of the anti-fighting section of the Animal Welfare Act.

What Can I Do?

Please urge your two Senators to support S. 345 (the Senate version of the House Bill to ban interstate shipment of birds for cockfighting).
The Honorable ______
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Urge the ASPCA to Enforce the Law Regarding "Kapparot" Chickens

Kapparot is a Hasidic Jewish ritual in which chickens are sacrificed for Yom Kippur each year in September. In the ritual a live bird is held above the practitioner's head and swung in a circle three times. The idea is to pass punishments the person has earned into the innocent bird, who is subsequently slaughtered. Most Jews do not practice kapparot, but give money to the poor instead. While "chicken swinging" may be a protected religious practice in the United States at present, depriving the birds of food and water and forcing them to sit in crates in the streets for days, up to an entire week, is not.

Notwithstanding, thousands of chickens sat miserably in crates from September 21-September 27 in New York City this year without proper food, water, or shelter, even though the State of New York charges "peace officers" with enforcing its Anti-Cruelty Laws. In cases of animal cruelty and neglect, the primary peace officer agency handling this duty is the ASPCA.

However, this year as in years past, the ASPCA did not enforce the law when called upon to do so by distressed residents. A humane officer merely paid a token visit that "didn't substantiate anything that was a matter of cruelty." An ASPCA officer told UPC that he saw "hoses" but no water containers in the crates in which the chickens sat in the streets, and that he didn't know how, or whether, the birds were being fed; he merely saw some feed bags someplace. On being pressed for details, the officer told UPC that he had been sent to investigate a type of animal he knew little or nothing about and that the ASPCA could do nothing about water deprivation anyway unless it led to an "injury," which he defined as "the death of the animal." This "humane" officer told UPC: "Nobody is going to get seriously worked up over an animal that tomorrow is going to be somebody's dinner."

What Can I Do?

Please contact:
Larry M. Hawk, DVM
President, CEO
ASPCA
424 East 92nd Street
New York, NY 10128-6804

- Urge Dr. Hawk to use the time between now and next September to inform the Hasidic rabbis in writing that they must comply with the New York State Anti-Cruelty Law, Article 26, regarding the proper care and treatment of animals. Neither the U.S. Constitution nor the State of New York protects the mistreatment and neglect of the chickens prior to the ritual. Each individual bird must have adequate and accessible food and water, and protection from the elements at all times.

- In addition, urge Dr. Hawk to provide the ASPCA's humane officers with written guidelines and training regarding the humane care and treatment of chickens and other domestic fowl, so that an officer will recognize when these birds are being abused and neglected, even in the absence of cockfighting arsenal.

- Request a written response from Dr. Hawk, and ask that the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals show compassion for chickens no less than for dogs and cats.

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Karen Davis’ New Book
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More than a Meal
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"Karen Davis shines a new light on the unfortunate, much maligned bird that is the center of America's Thanksgiving ritual, and thereby illuminates the lies and hypocrisy that surround our eating habits and our attitudes to animals. More Than a Meal challenges all Americans to think about the values that they want their annual family ritual to embody."--Peter Singer, DeCamp Professor of Bioethics, Princeton University

"[A] thought-provoking book because we are taken on a journey to look at the unsightly corners of our attitudes and practices of past and present. . . . Can we read this rousing book without wishing to improve the lot of these magnificent birds?"--Gisela Kaplan, Full Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of New England, Armidale, Australia

"Serious but engaging. My advice to anyone who thinks that turkeys are stupid, unappealing birds would be to read this book."--Ian J.H. Duncan, Professor of Poultry Ethology, Chair in Animal Welfare, University of Guelph, Ontario

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SPECIAL FRIENDS

Kokun and Potpo

These two dear little chickens were rescued by a kind soul from a Tyson chicken house in Berlin, Maryland in mid-September, who noticed they had severe infections as newborn chicks. Kokun and Potpo were taken to the PETA office in Norfolk, Va. where they were successfully treated for mycoplasma (a kind of pneumonia), then brought to United Poultry Concerns to live permanently. Had they not died of their infections or been saved, Kokun and Potpo would have been slaughtered as 6-week old baby birds, still peeping, but pumped up to an abnormal size and weight with growth-promoting antibiotics, a filthy diet, and appetite stimulants. Instead of that, Kokun and Potpo are a happily bonded pair at United Poultry Concerns, full of energy and affection, who twitter, devour blades of grass, and sit on your knee with the sweetest expressions. We are pleased to report that UPC member Roseanne Smith in California is sponsoring Kokun and Potpo.

What Can I Do?

Would you like to sponsor a rescued UPC chicken 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 and if you prefer to sponsor a hen or a rooster or both. You may 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 chicken(s), and his, her, or their names. Thank you for helping us save and care for these wonderful birds.

Freddaflower Memorial Fund

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

We thank those people who have contributed to our work with recent donations In Loving Memory of the following beloved companion animals:

*My friend Cheanie, a dear rooster. Cheanie followed me everywhere, and my cats adopted him too. He’d peck and stamp and rage against the setting sun until I could settle him to sleep in "his chair." Cheanie was so full of life. I miss him terribly, from Catherine Broadhead.

*My three rescued chickens, with thanks for your article about your dear rescued chicken, Katie, from Edith Mary Browning.

*My Dachshund, Max, who died October 23, 2001. I love the work you do to help poultry, from Bernard Caley.

*Pip, our cat for more than fifteen years. Pip had been abandoned in a box when he was 4 weeks old. He was small, but he became a leader, from Phyllis and Paul Deane.

*My little flock rescued from a Montessori School: Yoyo, Tink, Lolae Feet, Hanah Green, our hens, and Giles and Chacha, our roosters, from Sandy Kay.

*Boris, beloved UPC turkey, and Matilda, from Edna-Ann Senecal.

*Kubla Khan, from Marjorie Wahlstrom.

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Congress Passes Bill Allowing the US Postal Service to Force Airlines to Carry Chicks as Mail

Despite a national effort by animal advocates to stop it from happening, in November Congress voted to give the US Postal Service power to force the airlines to carry "day-old poultry" and other live animals as mail. This was a vote for one of the cruelest human enterprises on earth.

Chick hatcheries in the United States hatch millions of chickens, ducklings, quails, pheasants and other birds. They deliver boxes of the newborns to the Post Office. The Post Office delivers the chicks to an airport terminal to be airmailed to hunters, breeders, feed stores, pet stores, 4-H clubs, etc. The birds fly at the cheapest rate, there are no temperature regulations, and the boxes containing them are banged around like luggage and packages under the Postal Service heading of " perishable matter." When Northwest Airlines announced in August it would no longer carry chicks as mail, joining United Airlines and American Airlines in no longer shipping any animals as mail, the hatcheries and Postal Service launched a successful lobbying crusade to get Congress to force the airlines to carry newborn birds as airmail. Northwest Airlines has noted that up to 30% of the birds die en route, many birds are crushed, and employees have desperately tried to revive dying birds. Last June, for example, according to The Wall Street Journal (Nov. 7, 2001), "[r]oughly 300 chicks died en route to Ohio after being exposed to rain; they were discovered during a layover in Minneapolis, where Northwest has its headquarters. Airline employees made 'valiant efforts' to save the birds, using blankets and lamps," says Kurt Ebenhoch, a Northwest spokesman. "It's very upsetting," he says, adding that many Northwest employees are pet owners.

Please note: While the Postal Service and hatcheries say newborn chicks can go without food or water for 72 hours, in reality the birds are dehydrated and their yoke nutrients are nearly or completely depleted by 48 hours. When chicks are jostled, crushed or dropped their yolks can leak or rupture. Baby pheasants are being airmailed to hunters to be used as target practice, and the bill could provide a way to transport chickens for cockfighting purposes, even if Congress does pass legislation banning interstate transport of birds intended for cockfighting.

What Can I Do?

The provision of the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill allowing the Postal Service to force the airlines to carry live chicks as mail is expected to come up for review in June 2002. Please urge your two U.S. Senators and your House Representative to oppose this provision and any other effort to make the airlines carry chicks as mail. Letters and phone calls are critical: that's how the hatcheries won this round.

The Honorable _______
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable _______
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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 stock up to and including $10,000 to a nonprofit organization without imposing 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 Tal Ronnen
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A Boy, A Chicken and The Lion of Judah – How Ari Became a Vegetarian  
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Nature’s Chicken, The Story of Today’s Chicken Farms  
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With wry humor, this unique children’s story book traces the development of today’s chicken and egg factory farming in a perfect blend of entertainment and instruction. Wonderful illustrations. Promotes compassion and respect for chickens. $5.95
BOOKS

Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry
By Karen Davis
This book is a fully-documented source of up-to-the-minute information about chickens, including everything from how a chick develops inside an egg to the causes of salmonella, and much more. Provides a chilling account of the morally handicapped poultry & egg industry.
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Instead of Chicken, Instead of Turkey: A Poultryless “Poultry” Potpourri
By Karen Davis
This delightful vegan cookbook by United Poultry Concerns, Inc. features homestyle, ethnic, and exotic recipes that duplicate and convert a variety of poultry and egg dishes. Includes artwork, poems, and illuminating passages showing chickens and turkeys in an appreciative light.
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Edited by Carol J. Adams & Josephine Donovan
"Karen Davis’s brilliant essay [Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and The Feminine Connection] brings together the books’ central concepts, leading to conclusions that rightly should disturb feminists and animal advocates alike." – Review by Deborah Tanzer, Ph.D. in The Animals’ Agenda.
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