



**Humane
World for
Animals™**

Formerly called the
Humane Society of the United States
and Humane Society International

Cage- and Crate-free Implementation Guide

A guide for medium- and large-scale companies



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Introduction

Humane World for Animals, formerly called Humane Society International and the Humane Society of the United States, is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that works with companies and producers around the world to address farm animal welfare as part of responsible sourcing initiatives. With our assistance, some of the largest companies and producers have made and implemented time-bound commitments to shift sourcing and production.

We provide a range of technical support to producers, facilitate engagement with experts and animal welfare certification bodies, and work with financial institutions to mitigate the risks associated with poor animal welfare and support and incentivize higher welfare practices. Additional support includes programs and resources such as one-on-one meetings, technical guidance and workshops, peer-to-peer learning, and ongoing updates on the global move to cage-free egg and crate-free pork production (see Annex 1).

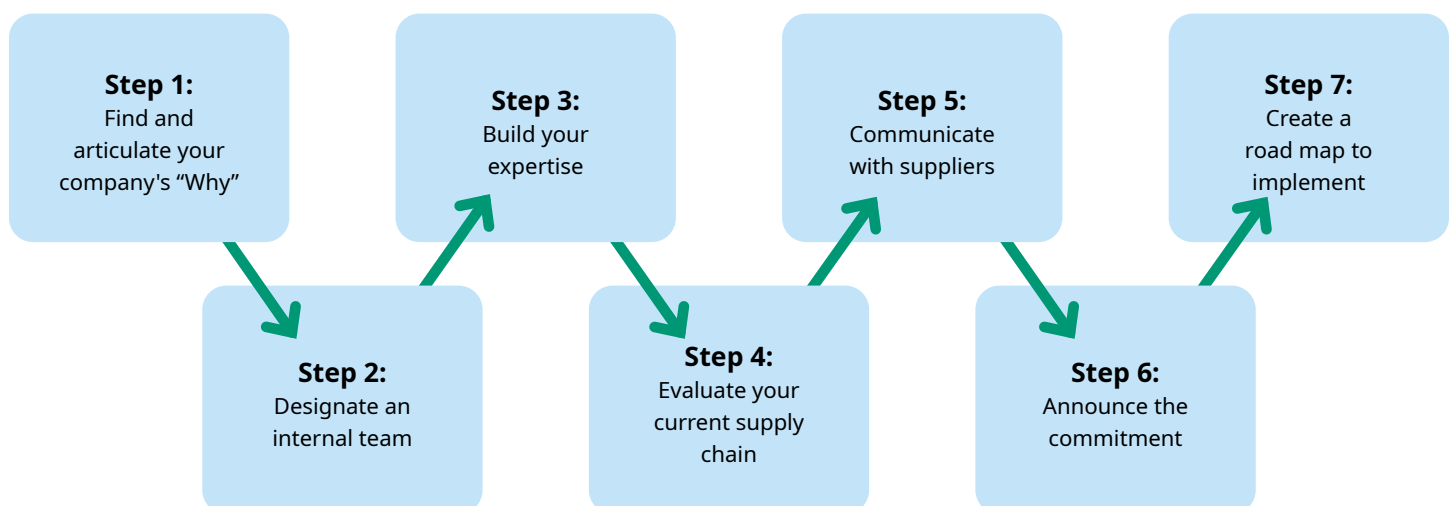


Transitioning to a cage- and crate-free supply chain

This guide provides step-by-step assistance for improving animal welfare in company supply chains. Responsible sourcing requires companies to balance multiple competing priorities, but addressing farm animal welfare will help to create positive brand reputation, mitigate risk and significantly reduce the suffering of hens and pigs. The Humane World for Animals Farm Animal Welfare and Protection team is committed to helping companies make this transition, from the very beginning to the end.

If your company already has a commitment, skip to the most relevant sections for your company's implementation based on the work you've done so far.

Steps for transitioning to a cage/crate-free supply chain



1. Find and articulate your company's “why” for improving animal welfare

Animal welfare is a crucial part of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework as well as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), hallmarks of modern business culture. Companies of all kinds are embracing the opportunity to be a force for good, changing the world by taking on a variety of challenging topics, from protecting the environment to ensuring equitable working conditions and fair labor practices. Through buying decisions, companies influence the production conditions of the products they source, including the conditions under which animals are bred, kept and killed for animal-derived products.

While many farming practices are concerning, intensive and prolonged cage confinement warrants top attention. Hens kept for egg production are typically confined to battery cages for nearly two years before being sent for slaughter. These small wire enclosures afford each bird less space than the area of a letter-sized sheet of paper. These active, curious, complex animals are prevented from performing their most basic behavioral needs, such as nesting, perching, dustbathing and foraging. Unable to walk, run or stretch their wings fully, hens in cages often suffer from bone loss from lack of movement¹ and plumage degradation from abrasion against the bars of the cage.

The welfare of pigs is no better. Sows (female pigs kept for breeding) are confined to metal stalls so narrow that they cannot even turn around or take more than a step forward or backward, for the entire length of their pregnancy, which is nearly four months (114 days). When denied the opportunity to root and

forage, these intelligent animals redirect their behavioral drives to the bars of their crates. Biting repetitively on the metal bars is a sign of frustration.² Just as it does for hens, continual confinement has a real, physical effect on sows' bodies, causing weakness from muscle and bone loss.³ Sows are continually bred and “crated” until they are sent to slaughter at 4 or 5 years old.

Intensive confinement operations arose from the ceaseless demand for inexpensive meat and eggs. Companies and producers aimed for quantity and efficiency, confining animals in increasingly smaller spaces to reduce production costs. More responsible businesses are reexamining their purchasing decisions and reshaping their supply chains to support farmers who are transitioning to improved cage- and crate-free housing systems that provide the animals with more freedom of movement.

There are successful cases in every geographical region of the world, most commonly driven by commercial-scale egg and pork buyers that have leveraged their purchasing to change the animal production industry. Enacting and implementing a cage- and/or crate-free purchasing commitment is one of the most important steps a company can take to improve the welfare of farm animals.

If animal products are part of a company's supply chain, it is essential to have a clear animal welfare policy, a public commitment to transition, an internal procurement policy distributed throughout the company, and a road map toward implementing and managing higher welfare practices.







First things first—the commitment and policy

A meaningful commitment has three essential characteristics. It is specific, time bound and measurable. To write a commitment, consider the following questions:

Specific:

- What type, form and volume of eggs/pork will be covered by the commitment?
- What type of products will be covered?
The commitment should include all shell eggs as well as all liquid, powder and egg ingredients. However, a grocer with private-label brands may transition these first as an initial step. Whereas a packaged goods brand with many different products to transition may choose to use cage-free eggs in specific product lines first (see Case Study 1).
- Which geographic areas or outlets?

Time bound:

- By what date will the company achieve the transition?
Note: Most deadlines for cage- and crate-free are between one and four years, depending on size and region.
- What is the timeline, and what are the intermediate markers or milestones?

Measurable:

- How will the company track and publicly report progress in shifting to cage-free eggs and/or gestation-crate-free pork?

Commitments and procurement policies should apply to 100% of the eggs or pork procured and apply to all of the company's locations. If a company is making a gradual change for product lines or geographic regions, the company should include its timeline for a full transition in its policy and public commitment. For example:

"X company commits to source and exclusively use cage-free eggs, including shell and processed (liquid and powder) eggs, and products that contain any egg by DATE. This policy applies to all existing and future owned, managed, franchised locations. The implementation progress will be reported annually."

"X company commits to source and exclusively use crate-free pork, including in any processed products containing pork meat by DATE. This policy applies to all existing and future owned, managed, franchised locations. The implementation progress will be reported annually."

Box 1

Mondelēz International

In achieving its commitment to source 100% cage-free eggs, Mondelēz International in Viet Nam chose to transition one product line first, the eggs for its premium Solite Nature Fresh Brand. The packaging was beautifully designed to showcase the cage-free egg ingredients. In its product launch campaign, Mondelēz highlighted its bold move to be the first food industry company in Viet Nam to use the Certified Humane label seal issued by global animal welfare certifier Humane Farm Animal Care.



Case Study 1

2. Assembling an internal team

Convene internally and include other external advisers such as animal welfare NGOs to create an ambitious and achievable plan and timeline by which to improve animal welfare. Companies often have sustainability or corporate responsibility staff, but few have dedicated animal welfare expertise and may be unfamiliar with the issues and availability of support for implementing a cage- or crate-free policy. Working from the start alongside an NGO experienced with implementing farm animal welfare policies can help you identify the steps in the process and actions necessary to implement these measures. The Farm Animal Welfare and Protection program at Humane World for Animals is available to assist in an advisory role along every step of the journey.

Successful adoption and implementation of your new procurement policy or a provision in an ESG framework to improve animal welfare is often dependent on internal expertise and companywide buy-in. Success is more likely when senior management sets the tone and provides a clear and consistent narrative about the significance of animal welfare to the company's success. It may take the leadership, skill and expertise of a cross-functional team to shift supply chains and incorporate animal welfare into company policies. The senior leadership will help to ensure that the business is aligned around the transition to cage/ crate-free sourcing, and the cross-functional team can ensure that the policy aligns with existing procedures and practices.

Procurement and supply changes can be complicated, and staff may have many other demands to contend with. Therefore, it is critical to articulate the reason(s) for addressing animal welfare. Some of these include:

- Addressing and minimizing animal suffering.
- Aligning with other CSR or ESG policies.
- Protecting brand reputation.
- Strengthening consumer loyalty.
- Future-proofing supply chains.
- Supporting more responsible farming systems.
- Adding brand value.
- Achieving a competitive advantage.
- Providing a clear point of differentiation from other companies.
- Addressing investor concerns.
- Attracting conscientious consumers.
- Driving innovation in animal agriculture.
- Aligning with growing consumer demand for ethically sourced and sustainable products.

Depending on your company's size, structure, values and culture, the following departments may need to be included in the process:

- **Senior management:** Executive and board-level leadership can set a business culture that values social issues and champions animal welfare. Top managers can initiate, support

and approve proposed animal welfare policies, plans and associated costs.

- **Communications:** Public relations personnel may be the initial point of contact for external parties, and the communications department may have responsibility for translating any policy into business language for internal communication.
- **Corporate responsibility:** Sustainability teams often lead on animal welfare issues and may be charged with tracking and reporting on the company's broader commitments more publicly alongside the communications department. This group may contribute toward the alignment of CSR and sustainability policies and expertise on animal welfare and/or useful relationships with external stakeholders.
- **Governance:** Investor relations personnel will be key to gathering and providing feedback on the financial risks of sourcing from suppliers with poor welfare practices. Other governance activities could include lobbying for policies that support a company's transition to more responsible sourcing.
- **Compliance:** Legal or general counsel departments may play a role in reviewing the proposed policy, and auditing teams can verify compliance once the policy is adopted to ensure public claims are adequately substantiated.
- **Operations:** Senior management responsible for product safety and quality, procurement and logistics will need to identify and oversee sourcing changes. Procurement leads will be vital in directing purchases to cage- and crate-free suppliers.
- **Brand management:** Marketing teams will be responsible for promoting the cage- and crate-free policies in regional and national brands or products, and in company outlets.
- **Quality assurance:** Research and development will be responsible for testing new products and ensuring final product quality, including ingredients from new cage- and crate-free suppliers or the replacement of egg or pork ingredients with plant-based alternatives.

Where to focus

Many companies have started with a focus on eggs and ending the cage confinement of hens. Others have sought to end the monthslong confinement of mother pigs in the pork industry or have chosen to improve conditions for chickens kept for meat (aka "broiler chickens"). Humane World for Animals is able to assist with identifying or helping create a supply and providing technical support to producers for each of these types of farm animals.



Setting the tone from the top

Your company's chief executive officer can signal the company's commitment to cage-free sourcing in a variety of ways, including:

- Announcing the company's formal commitment internally first and then publicly.
- Issuing a public statement that describes the commitment and relationship to company values.
- Including the issue prominently in official communications such as quarterly and annual reporting to stakeholders.
- Ensuring effective board-level governance: giving at least one member of the board responsibility for this issue and/or appointing a board champion or a task force to coordinate with the senior management team.
- Allocating lead responsibility at senior management and operational levels and ensuring staff is equipped with knowledge and resources to drive the commitment to final implementation.

As with any project, once the decision to move forward has been made, it's important to put a team in place and assign roles. This includes designating a lead or project manager and clearly defining tasks and timelines.

Your team should review the company's cage- or crate-free public commitment against existing "big picture" sustainability and corporate responsibility policies. The team should align around a common vision of how the commitment, which addresses an important societal goal, contributes to advancing those larger goals. The commitment should reside within other long-term, public-facing policy documents, such as annual CSR or board reports or other permanent policy documents that will survive turnover and shifting company priorities. It should also be translated into supplier guidelines or qualifications, and linked to performance, quality or safety standards. These may be aligned with external certification standards.

Your company may also choose to require that producers obtain animal welfare certification. In many countries, there are no legal or regulatory standards pertaining to the welfare of animals in the food system or, where labeling guidance exists, it may be unclear or not enforced, creating confusion for procurement staff and consumers.

A meaningful animal welfare certification program is a tool for providing verification that a farm is cage- or crate-free and helps ensure a higher level of welfare for the animals (see *Annex 2*). A comprehensive certification program includes management criteria (i.e., handling, daily inspections, training, etc.); environmental conditions (lighting, air quality, space allowance, etc.); and basic husbandry (nutrition, veterinary care, etc.), in addition to mandating cage-free or crate-free. Humane World recommends that companies that require animal welfare certifications select those that conduct annual audits at a minimum.

3. Build your expertise

Below are some of the most important terms for navigating cage- and crate-free commitments.

Key terminology

Hens

Battery cage systems

Most egg-laying hens are confined in small, barren battery cages. These cages hold between five and 10 birds. A typical industrial egg farm contains thousands of cages, lined in multiple rows, stacked three to five tiers high. Industry guidelines stipulate that each caged hen may be afforded 432.3 cm² (67 in²) per bird,⁴ an amount of floor space equivalent to less than a single sheet of letter-sized paper. Cage-free commitments target use of these of these cruel confinement systems.

Combination systems

Combination systems for laying hens, also known as combi-cages, which are convertible housing systems, are a type of production system for laying hens that can be operated as either a cage- or cage-free system. They are similar in appearance to multitier aviary systems but have doors that can be closed to confine the hens within the tiers, temporarily or permanently. When operated with the doors in the closed position, these systems have negative impacts on hen welfare similar to caged production systems. Cage-free commitments exclude the use of combination systems.



Hens in a battery cage.

Enriched cages/colony cages

Enriched, colony or furnished cages are slightly larger cages that usually include a nesting area and perches, and more space than a battery cage. Because of the minimal increase in space, the lack of elevated perching and the problems associated with providing loose litter in a cage, these systems do not improve welfare to an acceptable level. Enriched/colony cages are not cage-free.

Cage-free systems

There are three main types of housing systems that are considered cage-free. They are barn or floor systems, aviaries and free range. Cage-free systems all provide more space for the birds as well as perches, nest boxes and loose litter. Additionally, some systems may use winter gardens or be organic.



Hens in a battery cage.

Single tier barn, deep litter or floor system

Hens are housed in a barn with litter bedding or on a partially or fully slatted floor. Depending on the size of the barn and the number of hens, the egg collection can be either manual (with eggs collected by hand every day from nest boxes) or automated, where eggs roll out the back of a sloped nestbox onto a conveyor belt. Feed and water can be supplied either manually or by automated feed and water lines.

Multitier or aviary system

Hens are in a barn with multiple levels (up to four) to increase usable space. Birds can roam freely horizontally and vertically within the barn. Automated belts behind the nests collect eggs and move them to the end of the barn for sorting and processing. There are also automated belts under each level to collect and remove manure.

Free-range system

Birds are housed in a barn or aviary where they eat, lay their eggs and roost at night and additionally, hens have daily outdoor access, ideally to pasture or range area with vegetation and cover for shade and protection.

Winter garden

Hens have access to a semi-enclosed, covered area next to the barn or aviary. These systems are especially useful in cold climates.

Organic

These systems must comply with organic certification program requirements, which generally include strict standards for feed and veterinary interventions. The requirements vary between countries and labels. Some organic standards include animal welfare requirements, but not all of them.



Hens in a single tier barn, deep litter or floor system.



Hens in a multi-tier or aviary system.



Hens outside in a free-range system.



Mother pigs, known as sows, in a gestation crate system.

Pigs

Gestation crate

A gestation crate is a narrow, metal stall used to house female breeding pigs (sows). In these production systems, sows are confined to crates for up to the length of each pregnancy, approximately 114 days, at least twice per year. These crates are typically just 0.6 meters (approximately 2 feet) wide by 2.1 meters (approximately 6.9 feet) long, barely larger than a sow's own body. This common housing system for pregnant sows is used worldwide and is subject to significant scrutiny. Crate-free commitments typically focus on gestation crate confinement. Many countries already use preimplantation group housing, including in the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands and New Zealand. In Germany, there is a gradual phaseout of gestation crates by 2029, and in Denmark by 2035. In the U.S., 11 states ban or restrict the use of gestation crates.

Additionally, in witnessing the global change to cage-free, the Australian pig industry committed to voluntarily phasing out gestation crates, also known as sow stalls, after five days by 2017.

Farrowing crate

A farrowing crate is different from a gestation crate. Farrowing crates confine sows shortly before birthing or "farrowing" their piglets and keep them enclosed until these newborn piglets are weaned. As industrial farming sought to increase litter size, thereby having many more, but smaller piglets, and also confine as many animals

as possible to as small a space possible, farrowing crates were the alternative to confining sows with their piglets in a cramped space, which could result in sows rolling over tiny piglets. However, there are alternatives to crate confinement that provide safeguards for the sow and her piglets. Alternatives include farrowing pens, where the sow can move, build a nest and better interact with her piglets. Providing sows and piglets with enough room to navigate is essential. These systems, like most others, are far better for the animals and require more skilled management personnel on the farm. Currently, most "crate-free" commitments do not apply to this type of crate. However, free-farrowing systems designed and produced in Britain are in use on operations in the UK, U.S. and Canada. Farrowing crates have already been banned or severely restricted in Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Austria and Germany.



A mother pig and her piglets in a farrowing crate.

Group housing

Group housing means the animals are not housed individually in crates. It is already standard for weaned, growing and finishing pigs, and is the alternative to gestation crate confinement for mother pigs in the breeding herd. In group housing, the number of animals in each pen varies depending on the management system in place, with pens holding as few as three sows or as many as 300 or more. Group housing for pregnant sows can offer the same or improved productivity as gestation crates.

Types of group housing for pregnant sows

While group housing is the alternative to gestation crates, there are a number of ways to manage this system, each providing a different level of welfare. Sows are confined to a crate for the breeding process and then moved into group housing, but some producers wait as long as 28, 35 or even 42 days after breeding or pregnancy confirmation before transferring to group housing. Therefore, best practice for both the sows and the producers is to employ a “serve and let loose” or “preimplantation” management system, where sows are grouped directly after breeding. Continuing to confine sows for 28 days does not meet animal welfare expectations, and it’s important to ensure that producers are not using this type of group housing. Other terms that refer to “serve and let loose” systems include “preimplantation” and “early mixing.” The term “crate-free” can be used as shorthand for systems that only confine the sows for breeding, up to seven days, and this is how the term is used throughout this document.

Animal agriculture is a highly specialized, technical field that is further complicated by many different housing system options and management practices for hens and pigs. Humane World has materials and other resources to assist knowledge building (see *Annexes 1 and 3*) and can provide individualized training webinars and workshops for your team. This can be especially helpful for ensuring internal alignment around the topic and generating buy-in across departments. Farm tours are also key learning opportunities, and Humane World has helped many companies arrange site visits.

Tools for the team

- **Guide to Humane Washing** – This guide can help your marketing team and staff writing your company’s animal welfare policy to prevent inadvertently using deceptive language.
- **The Business case for preimplantation group housing systems** – This can help you make the case to the board and procurement managers that going crate-free isn’t only crucial for animal welfare, but can positively impact your company’s bottom line.
- **Producer Economic Survey: Guidance for companies seeking cage-free eggs** – A survey of cage-free producers in Asia and Latin America that will help your procurement and supply chain teams understand the economics of cage-free eggs and why they cost more.

Box 4



Mother pigs, known as sows, in a group housing system.



4. Evaluate your company's current supply chain

To implement a commitment to animal welfare, start by assessing your current supply chain to understand what changes are needed. Some companies may already be procuring cage-free eggs or crate-free pork in certain regions as part of their regular purchasing. To make a thorough assessment, procurement and supply chain teams should gather the following data:

- **Volume:** Determine the volume of eggs and pork purchased in each country, region or state.
- **Form:** Identify the form in which eggs are required (shell, liquid, powder) and the types of pork products used (bacon, full cuts, sausage). Note any regional differences.
- **Current sourcing:** Check if you are currently sourcing any cage-free eggs or crate-free pork.
- **Sources:** Identify where and from whom eggs and pork products are currently being sourced. Are they obtained directly from producers, or through suppliers or distributors?
- **Product inclusion:** List the products that include egg or pork ingredients in each location.
- **Quantities:** Determine the quantities needed in each location, region or country.
- **Product lines:** Identify any product lines that use the most eggs or pork.

Special Dog pet food company

When you start talking to your suppliers, you'll never know what you'll find! For example, when one of the largest Brazilian pet food companies in Brazil, Special Dog, reached out to its suppliers with the intention to switch to cage-free, it found that it was already buying 40% cage-free egg products. That meant that it was much easier to implement its commitment, and the company was able to switch the rest of its egg sourcing to cage-free in just 10 months. João Paulo Figueira, sustainable development manager for Special Dog, shared what motivated the company to adopt higher standards to guide its procurement practices: "Valuing animal welfare is the essence of our work, as we guarantee quality of life and longevity for more than 3 million dogs and cats that we feed daily. We understand that this care should fall on our supply chain as well, and with a lot of commitment, we completed the cage-free transition in less than a year."

5. Communicate with producers and suppliers

Once the internal team is established, the commitment is made and the policy is adopted, and the current purchasing is evaluated, it is time to begin collaborating with suppliers (including distributors, brokers and processors) to develop a realistic project plan for a smooth transition. Producers should hear of the company's decision from the company directly, and producers should be engaged early and often during the process.

Many companies prefer to purchase from their existing suppliers or primary producers through an established business relationship, to maintain trust and consistency. While companies have the option to switch producers or work with a new supplier, convincing current producers to transition from confinement systems to cage/crate-free has a more direct impact on the animals. The first step is to assess their capacity to meet your company's animal welfare requirements.

In the simplest scenario, your current suppliers/producers already offer cage- or crate-free products and can meet volume requirements quickly. Alternatively, a producer may need to increase production and/or add new cage-free or crate-free housing. This takes time and requires a coordinated plan. A broker or intermediary, such as a supplier or processor, may need to develop new business relationships with primary producers to source additional cage-free eggs or crate-free pork, or they may work with existing producers to increase the supply.

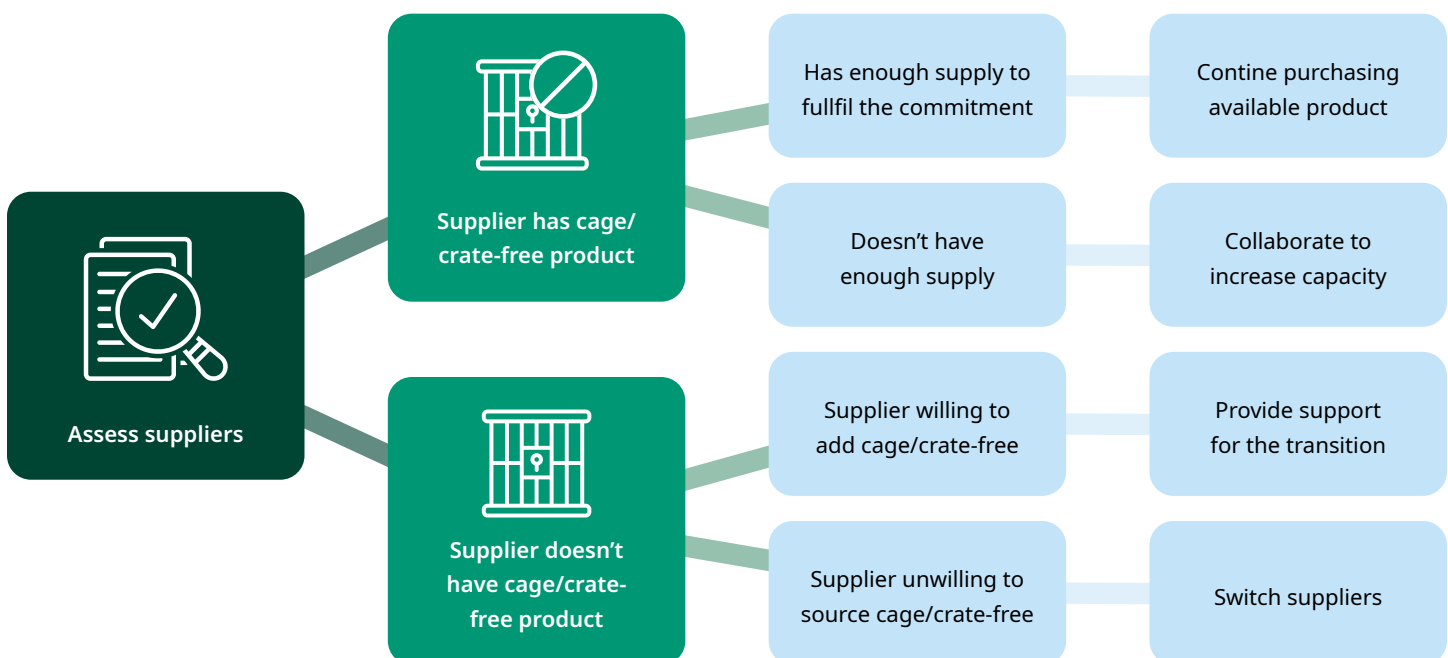
If an existing primary producer or supplier doesn't already have or have access to cage/crate-free offerings, companies may need to proactively support farmers to convert to cage- or

crate-free systems. Producers may have to build new barns or retrofit old ones. Depending on the volume of product required and the size of the barns (and the number of animals they hold), a multiyear timeline may be needed. By agreeing on a transition timeline, in which producers convert or build one new barn at a time, the company can gradually reach 100% cage- or crate-free production.

In either case, a road map to implementation will be needed if your existing producers and suppliers are not initially able to meet the new demand for higher welfare products, (*see Step 7*).

In some cases, switching to a producer or supplier that is already aligned with the company's animal welfare policy may be a preferable option to working with an existing supplier or producer that needs to make changes. Companies can seek like-minded producers that embrace animal welfare and focus on improved practices. Humane World can often assist with locating these producers. In some cases, shifting to a new producer to start cage/crate-free procurement, even in small volumes, can motivate existing producers to begin changing their production systems too.

Some producers are initially hesitant to transition away from confinement systems. This is not unusual. Cages and crates are easier to manage, and changing production systems requires a learning period. Production costs will be higher, and capital investments are needed. Existing facilities may not have fully depreciated. Producers will be reluctant to invest in cage-/crate-free production in the absence of a guaranteed purchase.



To overcome the hesitation, producers need assurance there will be a consistent, long-term market. Your company can help alleviate concerns by signing a long-term contract, supporting producers with capital investment or working with financial institutions to set up favorable loan terms for your producers doing higher welfare transitions. Companies must also be ready to pay a fair price that reflects the investment, production and certification costs.

While it is no small task to build or retrofit barns and learn new management skills, Humane World has worked in multiple countries to support companies and producers through the process. It is successful when companies leverage their buying power and established business relationships to proactively work with their suppliers to establish the supply they need. Humane World is available to provide technical resources and guidance for producers interested in transitioning (*see Annex 1*).

Below are some key points to discuss with suppliers and direct producers:

- The animal welfare concern and broader reasons for the policy change
- The business opportunity
- The company's general timeline and sourcing needs
- The company's interest in and willingness to support producers through this transition, including through contractual terms and incentives that provide producers stability and a fair return on investment for remodeling or new construction

To give producers confidence to transition away from confinement systems, buyers must communicate their cage- and crate-free production goals. Public-facing communications, such as sustainability reports or policies on websites, are important for demonstrating the growing demand to producers and suppliers. Press and media coverage are even more influential.

The more that companies emphasize their intention to purchase cage-free eggs or crate-free pork, the more confident producers will be in investing in new animal housing. With growing competition, initial price increases will come down sooner. Like food safety, animal welfare is precompetitive, and multiple companies seeking to improve animal welfare simultaneously can change the industry for good.

One proven tactic for working with suppliers and producers is to bring them together and present the new policy at a formal event. The commitment to remove cages and crates from the company's supply chain can be explained as part of broader social responsibility initiatives. In this type of forum, the company can indicate its firmness and conviction in implementing a cage- and/or crate-free policy, while also showing support and understanding for producers who are responsible for making the transition. A sample meeting agenda can be found in Annex 4.

Working with producers to start cage- or crate-free production

If the company's relationship with producers or suppliers is purely price-driven, rather than multidimensional, it will be more difficult to engage producers effectively and adequately assess current sourcing patterns and opportunities. Suppliers and primary producers will want to be assured that the company understands and is prepared to adjust its purchasing practices to reflect the associated transition costs.

To help prepare for a successful conversation with producers and suppliers, consider the following actions:

Prior to the meeting, learn the difference between various animal housing systems, including free range, combination systems, barn systems, aviaries, group housing, pre-implantation systems, etc. Descriptions are provided in Step 3.

- Indicate your intention to work in collaboration and ask what they need to help make a transition. Emphasize the shared business interests and evolving company needs based on changing consumer expectations.
- Discuss cage- and crate-free momentum in your country and future-proofing businesses as more companies require higher welfare products and governments ban or restrict confinement of farmed animals.
- Offer long-term contracts or purchasing agreements with expected volumes to help a producer feel secure in making an investment.
- Create precompetitive communication channels with other businesses that may also be interested in higher welfare products. Pooling demand can create a larger market, giving producers more confidence to make the investment in new or renovated animal housing.
- Offer incentives to suppliers and primary producers who can meet the requirements of your animal welfare commitment.

Humane World offers suppliers free support and connections to additional buyers. We also can provide or facilitate expertise all over the world to help producers transition away from cages and crates.



6. Announce the commitment throughout your company and to the public

Begin communicating about the commitment, both internally and publicly. In internal communications and some external communications, consider messaging “Your company’s why” (see Step 1).

Internal communications

It’s important to communicate the animal welfare commitment throughout the company, from the people answering the phones to the CEO. Ensure that relevant staff from headquarters to in-store personnel are well trained about this change, given that they are effectively ambassadors for the company. This is an important decision for your company. Like other forward-thinking priorities, caring about animal welfare should become a part of your company’s DNA.

Multinational companies should publish the commitment in all languages in which they operate to make sure the commitment is socialized throughout the company. Without this, it may not be clear that the policy is universal and applies to all operations

beyond headquarters. Some companies have given awards and provided incentives for country and regional teams that make the most progress implementing the company’s cage- or crate-free policy. This can boost implementation speed and create momentum among widely dispersed teams.

Establish clear criteria that define cage- and crate-free, along with requirements for the procurement and sourcing teams. Guidance should be specific and reference any certification requirements. Humane World can provide lists of cage-free suppliers by country and help facilitate connections based on volume requirements.

External communications

Companies can engage customers by promoting higher animal welfare products. Surveys around the world resoundingly indicate that consumers want better treatment for farmed animals (see Box 7).

Offering and promoting cage- and crate-free products, especially from a trusted brand, improves understanding about farm animal welfare as well as support sales. In turn, increased consumer purchasing patterns can help drive changes on additional farms.

While people generally care about animal welfare, busy grocery shoppers are balancing priorities, such as convenience, price and taste. Remind them that they care directly at the point of sale, with packaging, shelf signage, promotional banners and other means.

Customers may not be fully familiar with how the cage- or crate-free policy relates to the company’s broader mission and values. Communicating this widely can help ensure customer support and drive wider culture change.

Franchised and licensed businesses

Some of the largest franchised brands, including Subway, Yum! Brands and Marriott International, have cage-free policies. The best way to share your business’ cage-free policy to its franchisees and licensees is through updated brand standards. Animal welfare standards can be a requirement just like the colors of uniforms, layout of a restaurant and pricing.



People around the world care about animal welfare

A 2022 study⁵ asked consumers questions about cages and farm animal welfare. Below are the responses to certain statements.

“It matters to me that chickens producing eggs do not suffer”

	% of consumers
Australia	93.2
Bangladesh	45.5
Brazil	96.3
Chile	96.7
China	72.3
India	71.9
Malaysia	73.3
Nigeria	77.9
Pakistan	93.6
Philippines	77.1
Sudan	73.4
Thailand	77.7
United Kingdom	88.2
United States	73.8

“I would prefer to buy eggs from chickens that have not been kept in cages”

	% of consumers
Australia	93.6
Bangladesh	46.2
Brazil	92.1
Chile	94.1
China	65.5
India	64.0
Malaysia	69.31
Nigeria	31.6
Pakistan	89.9
Philippines	71.9
Sudan	58.4
Thailand	68.6
United Kingdom	90.2
United States	77.3

The “Rule of 7” marketing concept says that a potential customer needs to see or hear a marketing message at least seven times before taking an action such as making a purchase. Repetition builds familiarity and trust, which is why it is important to advertise your company’s commitment to higher animal welfare. Consider the following ways to communicate your change:

- Package design and labeling, co-branding with farmers, use of certification logos, or farm photographs that *accurately* depict the housing conditions for the animals
- In-store marketing, such as point-of-sale displays, dedicated shelf space, storytelling with featured farmers, live demonstrations and videos, and staff trained to engage and respond to customer questions
- Signage in buffet lines, on menus or in window displays; fliers, handouts, banners and other signage in restaurants, hotels and food service lines
- Ongoing promotion, advertising and marketing; new product launch events
- Dedicated portals for consumer feedback or periodic surveys to provide a continuous reminder and basis for ongoing conversations

- Established company channels, such as the website, CEO and senior executive and board public remarks and appearances; regular annual/ESG/sustainability reporting; press releases, newsletters, television and print media; and corporate events/awards/special activities
- Coordinated messaging, strategies and outreach events with cage/crate-free farmers
- Social media engagement, starting with publicizing the commitment and communicating the company’s values and attentiveness to animal welfare

Communication about animal welfare requirements should be ongoing. By showing pride and differentiating your company from competitors, you can be seen as a leader.

Consumer surveys and market research will help to determine what level of awareness exists and what types of messaging and approaches will be most effective. Animal welfare concerns are universal, but they may be expressed and understood differently in each market, reflecting differences in age, socioeconomic status, education, culture, urban or rural lifestyle, etc. Similarly, translate the science behind cage/crate-free production into terminology that is readily understood by every type of consumer targeted.



7. Create a road map to implement

Implementing the animal welfare policy can begin before, after or in tandem with making a public announcement. Each company's experiences and hurdles are different, but the key steps are similar.

1. Create a road map for meeting the policy deadline.
2. Decide whether to require animal welfare certification in the procurement policy.
3. Report progress annually until the commitment is implemented.

Road maps, or glidepaths, help companies plan their transition and progress toward their goals. Your road map can be relatively simple or complex, depending on the supply chain and your company's style. However, there are a few key steps you will want to include.

- Set the deadline: Work directly with your internal team, as well as suppliers and producers, to set an ambitious but

reasonable deadline by which the supply chain will be 100% cage/crate-free.

- Set milestones: Producers will need time to make the transition, and the road map should include critical steps toward that transition, such as when barns or equipment will be installed, or when hens will begin laying eggs.
- The geographic phase-in: Decide which regions will be the first to transition. One strategy is to start with the operations that require the largest procurement, since the transition may take more time. Alternatively, begin work where it is easiest, to demonstrate progress quickly and build momentum.
- Project planning per location: Work with the people on the ground to complete project plans in each of your different locations, as the local people are often in the best position to provide information about potential opportunities or challenges in their region. This may further provide valuable insights about standout staff who can lead on projects.

Below are road map examples for planning transitions:

Product	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Liquid/Processed Egg	5%	15%	65%	80%	100%
Shell Eggs	25%	50%	80%	100%	100%
Whole Cuts (pork)	15%	30%	45%	70%	100%
Processed meats (bacon, sausage, etc.)	5%	20%	60%	80%	100%

Implementation Road Map

ABC Company has committed to source 100% cage-free eggs for its global/national operations, by 2025, in recognition of the importance of hen welfare. *To achieve this goal, we have adopted the following timetable:*



We will report progress on our commitment in our annual sustainability report as well as on this dedicated webpage.

8. Publish progress—why, how, what and where to report

Why report?

Once the road map is set, internal teams are on board and the producers and suppliers have been identified, you can start implementing and provide public-facing updates about your progress. This is an often forgotten but critical step in the process, which has many benefits, including:

- Incentivizing your teams to meet deadlines and prioritize cage- and crate-free transitions due to public pressure to show significant progress.
- Growing the market of producers using cage- and crate-free production systems by demonstrating demand.
- Holding interested parties, including producers, to a timeline seen by all. Transitions can take time, and a deadline of three years or more in the future can be easy to put off for the next year.
- Boosting investor confidence by demonstrating that your company is focused on the future and aware of public trends, global standards and evolving legislation—in short, future-proofing your business.
- Showing customers that your company's commitment isn't just a statement for the future but is something upon which you are currently working.

Planning for producer transition time

Farmers usually need at least six months to transition from cages to a barn system, and larger capital investments such as aviaries can take even longer. When removing gestation crates, the company needs to choose new feeding systems and train staff on proper animal management. The sooner a producer knows that you are serious about transitioning, the sooner they can start planning to transition, approach banks for loans and come up with a plan.

What to report?

Depending on your company's size and procurement procedures, you may have robust and clear data available, and this reporting is something that you will have included in your initial rollout of the implementation plan. If you come to the process later, conduct research and gather information as accurately as possible. If needed, include the steps that you are taking to develop a new and more accurate tracking system in your reporting.

There are a few key things to include in public reporting:

- Current implementation percentages.
- A glide path to show how your company plans to meet 100% of its goals. This can be a simplified version of a more comprehensive transition plan that you have already created internally.
- A narrative about your company's progress and why animal welfare is a priority. Some companies incorporate information about the number of hens who are no

longer in cages to remind people about the real impact of implementation percentages.

For national companies:

If your company is national, the expectation is that you would report for your brand on its overall progress. If you are having challenges in a particular region of that country, this could be an opportunity to share that cage- or crate-free producers are needed in order to meet the goal.

For multinational companies:

The expectation is that public reporting will include the following:

- **Global progress**

This is the total amount of all the eggs or pork that the company procured last year that was cage- or gestation-crate-free. It is preferable to use the actual amount instead of by spend, since cage- and crate-free products are more expensive, and that can be confusing for consumers. Reporting by spend can be interpreted as deceptive to those familiar with the industry, such as investors, ESG ratings agencies and animal protection NGOs. This number is helpful to understand the full picture but doesn't tell a complete story. If a company is at 100% in Europe and 0% in Africa, technically it has implemented by 50%. Without more context, it is difficult for interested parties to understand where it has been successful and where more work needs to be done.

- **Regional progress**

Most multinational companies already break their companies into regions and are tracking data by region. Common regions include Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe (includes the UK), Latin America, the Middle East, North America (usually excludes Mexico) and Oceania. Reporting by region gives interested parties a much clearer picture of where progress has been made and where it is still needed.

- **Country progress**

Publishing data at the country level. Reporting at the country level is a key tool for your company's collaborators and potential partners. Releasing this data can stimulate work with new producers, distributors, animal welfare consultants and more. When people can see where your company is doing well and where it is struggling, it creates opportunities for external support.

For parent companies or groups:

Similar to multinationals, it is expected for parent companies or company groups to report on each brand at all applicable levels (above), based on the size and number of countries in which it operates.

How to report?

The reporting in an annual report typically aligns with reporting deadlines and can be based on either the fiscal or calendar year. It aligns with other ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting that the company may already be preparing. While most companies opt to report annually, some publish reports biannually and may also leverage social media to celebrate their achievements alongside formal reporting.

Humane World may be available to review any reports in advance of publication to ensure the inclusion of relevant data and alignment with the formal reporting expectations of the animal protection movement. Collaborating with your internal media teams to highlight company progress in press releases about the release of your ESG report can be highly beneficial.

Companies choose to report in a variety of ways, including:

- Posting a document or updating percentages on an animal welfare page on the company's website.
- Including the percentage of implementation in sustainability or ESG reports that track priorities for the company.
- Releasing a press release to highlight the company's progress toward the goal. This is more press worthy when a company hits a major milestone, releases a product line or completes implementation in a country or region.

Continues Box 7

What if your company hasn't made any significant progress?

Be honest in your reporting and provide a plan for how the implementation process will get back on track. This can include more personalized examples of the work to help the public understand the challenges, while also providing a realistic timeline. For instance, companies may highlight the work they are doing with a new cage- or crate-free producer, how they are pooling demand with other companies, or their investment in supporting a transition on the ground. When companies don't report anything, it leads to people assuming the worst: that animal welfare is not a priority for your company.



Box 9



Common concerns

Cost

To fulfill animal welfare commitments, companies should plan to increase their budget for purchasing departments to account for the gradual phase-in of cage-free eggs and/or crate-free pork. Costs are slightly higher, especially at the onset of implementation, due to capital costs and because providing animals with more space can translate to fewer animals overall in production. To make up for this, companies have employed an assortment of strategies.

Surveys consistently show that most consumers care about animal welfare (*see Box 7*) and are willing to pay more for cage-free eggs. Therefore, some companies have supported the transition by passing along a marginal increase in price to the customer and have designed marketing strategies focused on socially conscious consumers. The increase is usually quite small because customers purchase relatively small quantities in one grocery shopping trip, in one product or at one restaurant meal. But the retail markup should be kept to a minimum, especially for retailers.

Some companies have chosen to initially offer cage-free eggs at the same price as those from caged hens, while educating customers about the difference and developing greater brand awareness. Some grocers consider animal welfare a common social good and have kept higher welfare product prices consistent while increasing the retail costs of luxury items instead. Still others have found creative ways to offset this temporary cost increase while also contributing to their climate and sustainability goals by changing recipes to use fewer eggs and/or pork products or include plant-based ingredients.

Meeting supply needs

Large corporations, particularly multinational companies purchasing several million shell eggs or processed eggs annually, need to focus on finding adequate supplies to meet their cage-free commitment. The good news is that large companies have substantial influence on their producers, who have a business interest in continuing to supply the company. Large buyers can help convince, work with and support producers who abandon cages or crates and start higher welfare production. While this requires more time and ongoing communication, it also creates a more reliable business relationship, and the two can determine a phase-in period that works for both for either cage-free eggs or crate-free pork (*see Box 4*).

Conversely, smaller companies may not feel they have enough influence to convince a producer to change or to get their supplier to offer cage- or crate-free products. In these cases, it may be more efficient to switch suppliers. Humane World can help locate primary producers that better match volume needs or could grow to meet the needs (*see Annex 1*). Humane World has also facilitated partnerships with multiple companies to pool their collective demand, enabling them to use one primary producer to meet all of their needs. This may also be achieved with crate-free pork.



Conclusions

Animal welfare has never been a more significant concern for businesses than it is now. As consumer awareness grows, so does consumer demand. More than 2,000 major food companies, including McDonald's, Marriott International, Conagra, Compass Group and Aramark, have pledged to eliminate eggs and/or pork from caged animals in their supply chains. As of 2023, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines now call on enterprises to respect animal welfare standards.⁶

Further, public policy is catching up with public will toward improving the welfare of farmed animals.

The European Union, the United Kingdom, Australia, Bhutan, Norway and Switzerland, and 11 states of the United States, have banned or are phasing out battery cages. Globally, efforts are underway to phase out enriched cages as well, which were a shortsighted midpoint. There is momentum in the lending practices of some of the biggest financial institutions globally to end the most abusive practices in animal agriculture. Companies should expect cage- and crate-free production to become the norm. Going cage- and crate-free requires time and attention but creates a meaningful improvement for billions of animals, and now is the time for this transition.

About Humane World for Animals, formerly called Humane Society International

For over 70 years, Humane World for Animals, formerly called the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International, has worked around the globe to tackle the root causes of animal cruelty and suffering to create permanent change. Driving toward the greatest global impact, we aim to achieve the vision behind our name: a more humane world.

With millions of supporters and work happening in over 50 countries, we address the most deeply entrenched forms of animal cruelty and suffering, by working on the biggest problems and creating long-term solutions for lasting change. We tackle the root causes of animal cruelty by shifting human behavior and advocating for policy change, making change at scale. We work across borders, bringing diverse expertise to the most complex issues, and doing it all with a compassionate and welcoming approach. As the leading voice in the animal protection space, we work to end the cruelest practices, care for animals in crisis and build a stronger animal protection movement.

Humane World for Animals' Farm Animal Welfare and Protection program supports companies in incorporating animal welfare policies in their business operations and implementing animal welfare requirements throughout the supply chain.

Please contact us at: Farmanimals@humaneworld.org



Annexes

Annex 1: Assistance available from Humane World for Animals

Company commitment

We work with companies, free of charge, to develop, implement and communicate animal welfare policies and commitments by way of:

- One-on-one and small team consultations.
- Customized internal corporate trainings.
- Webinars.
- Customized transition plans.
- Round table events or peer-to-peer learnings (virtual or in person).
- Animal welfare certification contacts and program guidance.
- Green financing contacts and information.
- Customized workshops.
- Cage/crate-free farm educational tours.
- Regular updates on the global cage-free movement.
- Press releases and social media posts to celebrate key milestones such as publishing a commitment or reaching 100% implementation.

Producer engagement

Humane World for Animals can assist companies and their producers by way of:

- Technical advice and support.
- Country-specific lists of cage/crate-free producers.
- Management guides and fact sheets.
- Consultations with producers.
- Animal welfare certification contacts and program guidance.
- Technical workshops and training for producers.
- Cage/crate-free farm educational tours.
- Peer-to-peer learning.

Marketing and customer engagement

We assist companies with effective customer engagement by way of:

- One-on-one consultations for company staff, producers and partners.
- Marketing examples and illustrations.
- Educational materials for use with consumers.

If your company needs something not on this list, please ask. Our goal is to improve the welfare of animals in farming, and Humane World for Animals will provide support as needed. Please contact us at: Farmanimals@humaneworld.org

Annex 2: Certification programs

While not all cage-free producers are certified, many companies seek to ensure the highest possible standards of welfare and prefer to source cage-free eggs from producers that have been certified by a meaningful program, with a complete set of animal housing and care requirements. A good animal welfare certification program will not only ensure the eggs or pork originate from cage/crate-free facilities, but also covers a variety of other requirements, providing greater assurance that the hens and sows have good welfare. Programs that cover food safety or product quality often do not include animal welfare.

There are two animal welfare certification programs with meaningful animal welfare requirements that are available globally, and several others in Europe, Brazil, the United States and Australia.

These include:

- **Global Animal Partnership (Animal Welfare Certified)**

[Website link](#)

Available globally

- **Humane Farm Animal Care (Certified Humane)**

[Website link](#)

Available globally

- **RSPCA Assured**

[Website link](#)

Available in Europe

- **Beter Leven**

[Website link](#)

Available in Europe

- **A Greener World (Animal Welfare Approved)**

[Website link](#)

Available in the U.S.

- **Produtor do Bem**

[Website link](#)

Available in Brazil

Annex 3: Written resources available from Humane World for Animals

- *Management Guide for the Care and Housing of Cage-Free Egg Laying Hens in Tropical Climates* – Provides detailed management information and cage-free housing designs
- *Ten steps for a for a successful transition to cage-free housing* – A tool to help your company work with its suppliers to transition to cage-free
- *The Business case for preimplantation group housing systems* – A complete review of scientific data and industry experience on gestation crate-free housing for pregnant sows
- *Producer Economic Survey: Guidance for companies seeking cage-free eggs* – A survey of cage-free producers in Asia and Latin America
- *Combination housing systems for egg-laying hens* – A short issue briefing on combination systems
- *Welfare issues with furnished cages for egg-laying hens* – A comprehensive white paper reviewing the science on enriched/colony/furnished cages with a companion summary
- *Environmental enrichment for farmed pigs* – A guide for producers to enhance group housing systems and other pig production facilities
- *Norsk Kylling: A Case Study for the Future of Broiler Chicken Production* – The story of one chicken producer meeting all requirements of the Better Chicken Commitment
- *Guide to humane washing* – A resource to support financial institutions in assessing companies' public-facing farm animal welfare policies
- Country-specific lists of cage free egg producers

All resources are available from Humane World for Animals upon request.

Annex 4: Example Producer/Supplier Forum Agenda

To ensure a purposeful conversation about the company's requirements, and to establish a foundation for ongoing engagement, companies can assemble their current and potential suppliers and primary producers at an informational event. This provides a platform for the company to announce the commitment and sourcing needs and expectations. This type of forum gathers interested parties together to hear directly from the company about why the commitment is important for overall sustainability or responsible sourcing objectives.

Agenda

Time	Activities
9:00–9:15	Welcome message
9:15–9:30	Provide COMPANY overview and values
9:30–10:00	Introduce COMPANY's purchasing policies
10:00–10:20	Presentation from Humane World for Animals about the importance of farm animal welfare and why cage/crate-free matters
10:20–10:40	Presentation from a local cage- or crate-free producer association or certification program
10:40–11:00	Break
11:00–11:30	Q&A about purchasing policy
11:30–12:00	Field visit (e.g., COMPANY factory, store front, dining area, production site, etc.)
12:00–13:00	Lunch and networking
13:00–13:15	Conclusion and finish





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Our mission

**Together, we tackle the root causes
of animal cruelty and suffering to
create permanent change.**



**Humane
World for
Animals™**

humaneworld.org

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