

Updated: August 2024

The 2024 Cage-Free

# EGGSPOSÉ

Special Restaurant Edition



# Nearly every major restaurant company in the US **HAS PUBLICLY PROMISED TO PHASE OUT CAGES BY 2025.**

In response to rising concern among consumers, nearly all major restaurant brands across the nation have promised to phase cruel “battery cages” out of their supply chains by 2025. As the months tick down closer and closer to the looming deadline, dozens of brands have shared great progress on how their transitions are going.

**BUT WHEN WE REACHED OUT TO RESTAURANTS THAT HAVEN'T REPORTED PROGRESS, WE HEARD SOMETHING ELSE:**



## ***RADIO SILENCE.***

Time is running out. The 2025 deadline companies set for themselves—the deadline they willingly told their customers—is right around the corner. Which begs the question: Should brands be allowed to claim “cage-free” if they can’t back it up?

**IT'S TIME FOR PERFORMANCE,  
NOT JUST PROMISES.**





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**2024 is the equivalent of ‘the witching hour’ for U.S. egg producers in the industry’s shift toward cage-free egg production.**

*–Egg Industry Special Report*

Cage-free commitments are an important first step. But without real change for animals, they’re meaningless. That’s why The Humane League publishes an annual Eggsposé calling on brands to publicly report their cage-free egg progress. Past editions called out companies that failed to meet their promised cage-free deadlines.



In “battery cages,” as many as 10 egg-laying hens can be packed together into a barren cage the size of a filing cabinet drawer. They spend their entire lives **unable to extend their wings** or even stand with their heads raised. Without any opportunity to engage in their most basic natural behaviors, they experience extreme physical and psychological distress.

**THIS YEAR IS DIFFERENT.**

2025 is almost here—and with it, the cage-free deadline for nearly the entire US restaurant sector. We’re calling on restaurants with 2025 and 2026 deadlines to transparently share their cage-free progress before time runs out.

Companies set their own cage-free deadlines. That’s all the more reason they should—and can—follow through. As an article in WATTPoultry pointed out in 2021:

“

**Companies still made the pledges to fully transition to a cage-free egg supply by their own choosing, and as those self-imposed deadlines draw nearer, there are companies that have yet to offer any updates on how the transition is going. I do think reporting on progress [...] might be the responsible thing for businesses to do.**

Consumers should be able to trust the brands they purchase from. For companies falling behind, and for the few that haven’t made any progress at all, this is the moment of truth. **The 2024 Eggsposé reveals which restaurants are transparently reporting their cage-free progress... and which brands risk losing the valuable trust of their customers.**

# All signs point to **A CAGE-FREE FUTURE**

## CONSUMERS

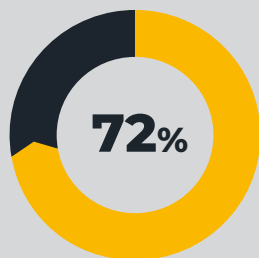
If consumer spending is any indication, cage-free is here to stay. A [recent study](#) by McKinsey & Company revealed a “clear and material link” between ESG-related claims like “cage-free” and consumer spending. The study concluded, “Creating such products turns out to be not just a moral imperative but also a solid business decision.”

But it's not just the cage-free label that counts. Customers are also demanding transparency, showing an uptick in interest about how their foods are produced. Restaurants have a unique opportunity to show customers they care—a chance to embrace their customers' changing needs and adapt accordingly.

## VOTERS & LAWMAKERS

Changing legislation also reflects the shift toward a cage-free future. Battery cages are so cruel that Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington have all passed laws regulating the production and/or the sale of “conventional” eggs (i.e. eggs from caged hens) in the state.

Public demand is the driving force behind these laws. Across states and countries, when given the opportunity, voters overwhelmingly support the welfare of farmed animals. According to [cagefreelaws.com](#), “[restaurants] operating in these states must be prepared to comply with these laws to avoid civil fines, criminal animal cruelty charges, and in some cases, jail time.”



**72% of Gen Z consumers** say [animal welfare is a value](#) they look for when making a food purchase



**2/3 of consumers** describe transparency in animal protein as [“extremely” or “very” important](#)

**80% of likely voters**

said that preventing animal cruelty was a matter of [personal moral concern](#)

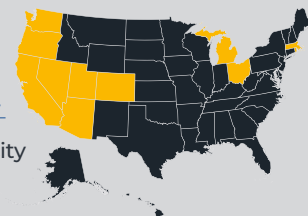


**82% agreed**

that companies should be [required to be transparent](#) about their animal protection measures

**11 US states**

have [banned battery cages](#) in some capacity



# All signs point to **A CAGE-FREE FUTURE**

## PRODUCERS

Despite the impacts of the ongoing avian influenza, major egg producers across the nation have embraced the cage-free transition and are expecting plentiful supply. In an exclusive survey of US egg producers, the January Egg Industry Special Report found that “most predict an ample supply of cage-free eggs in 2025-26, and any shortages will be brief.”

Producers have been anticipating the flood of demand from brands working to meet their 2025 cage-free commitments, and they’ve adapted accordingly. In short, cage-free isn’t a trend. It’s the industry standard, and egg producers are ready and waiting to support the widespread cage-free transition.



Photo: Andrew Skowron • Open Cages  
Image representative of a typical factory farm

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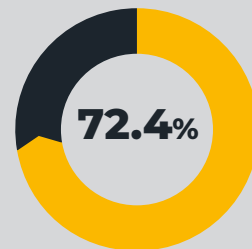
**In the case of animal welfare, failure to keep pace with changing consumer expectations and market opportunities could put companies and their investors at a competitive disadvantage.**

*–International Finance Corporation,  
a member of the World Bank Group*



**1/2 of all egg producers**

[closed or tore down cages](#) in 2023



**72.4% of producers surveyed**

plan to [add indoor cage-free](#)

[housing](#) in 2024



# Cage-free is the responsible thing to do— **AND A SMART BUSINESS DECISION**

“

**Holding businesses accountable for the promises they make isn't antibusiness; it's vital for marketplace trust.**

—[Mary K. Engle](#), EVP of Policy at the Better Business Bureau National Programs

This year, the restaurant sector is expected to reach [\\$1 trillion in sales](#) for the first time ever. Rebounding after the global pandemic, many of the nation's most successful restaurant chains are jumping on the chance to show leadership by completing their cage-free transitions. According to the [2023 Global Restaurant Report](#) released by the Open Wing Alliance—a coalition of ~100 member organizations in nearly 70 countries—many companies are already sourcing 100% cage-free eggs in the US, and they're now working to eliminate cages from their global supply chains.



*"We're proud to announce that McDonald's has met its goal of sourcing 100% cage-free eggs in the U.S. by 2025, two years ahead of our original timeline." —[McDonald's Cage-Free Policy](#)*

**FULFILLED ITS 100% CAGE-FREE  
COMMITMENT—TWO YEARS  
AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

*"When we committed to serving 100 percent whole cage-free eggs in all U.S. Taco Bell restaurants, we said we'd do it by the end of 2016. And we did, at record pace. We're proud that our eggs come from hens raised in an open environment where they can feel comfortable and display their natural behaviors." —[Taco Bell Cage-Free Policy](#)*



**SOURCING 100% CAGE-FREE EGGS  
SINCE 2016**

**Peet's Coffee & Tea™**

*"Serving cage-free eggs, with the cooperation of our supplier partners, is important to our customers and to us." —[Peet's Coffee Cage-Free Policy](#)*

**100% CAGE-FREE IN THE US  
AS OF JANUARY 2023**

# Panera BREAD<sup>®</sup>

"We remain committed to sourcing 100% cage-free eggs across all products by the end of 2025." —[Panera Cage-Free Policy](#)

**REPORTING 100% CAGE-FREE  
PRIMARY EGGS SINCE 2022**

"Animal welfare is important to Friday's and our guests and we believe this announcement reflects that commitment. Our company believes in operating responsibly in all aspects of our business, and ensuring a responsible supply chain is a way we can demonstrate that."

— [TGI Fridays' 2015 cage-free commitment](#)

**SOURCING 100% CAGE-FREE EGGS  
SINCE 2019**



"We strive for continuous improvement in our animal welfare standards and the way we source food across markets and that includes our work on the important issue of cage-free eggs." — [Yum! Brands press release](#)

**REPORTING PROGRESS TOWARD  
GLOBAL 100% CAGE-FREE GOAL**

"We believe our guests care about how their food is sourced and so do we. The humane treatment of animals remains an important part of our brand's sourcing strategy, and our commitment to this transition underscores our confidence in the ethical evolution of supplier capabilities." — John Miller, former President and CEO, [Denny's](#)

**REPORTING PROGRESS TOWARD  
US 100% CAGE-FREE GOAL**





# OUR RESEARCH TEAM

We're a team of trusted consultants with a track record of partnering with companies as they phase cages out of their supply chains. Previously, we've collaborated with PepsiCo, CVS, Kellogg's, Yum! Brands, and more to report progress toward and/or complete successful cage-free transitions.

*Note: Prior to this report's publication, we reached out to each company at least several months in advance to provide clear notice of each brand's planned inclusion in the report. Our team followed up repeatedly with contacts who didn't respond. Each brand named in this report received multiple opportunities to partner with us on sharing progress toward its own cage-free deadline. Information in this report is current as of April 9, 2024.*



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# PERFORMANCE RATINGS

In the following pages, you will find a list of the leading [drive-thru](#) and [dine-in](#) restaurants rated by their progress on their 100% cage-free commitments—or lack thereof.

Following the performance ratings, the [Face-Off](#) section offers additional context to help diners make informed decisions about where to spend their hard-earned dollars.



 **DRIVE-THRU (1/3)**

**LEADERS**

**SOURCING 100% CAGE-FREE EGGS**



in the box<sup>®</sup>  
GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2026



GOAL: 2026



GOAL: 2020

Reported temporary caged egg use in last update.



GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2025



PLEDGED: 2012



PLEDGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2025



GOAL: 2025

**NEEDS IMPROVEMENT**



PLEDGED: 2015  
GOAL: 2025

Reporting progress for some egg use only.

# DRIVE-THRU (2/3)

## LAGGARDS

## NOT REPORTING PROGRESS



WHATABURGER

PLEGGED: 2011

# INSPIRE



SONIC

PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2025



BUFFALO  
WILD  
WINGS



JIMMY JOHN'S  
SANDWICHES



BR  
baskin  
robbins

PLEGGED: 2021  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2026



PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2026



PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2015  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025



PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2025



Wendy's

Pledged in 2016 to go cage-free by 2020, but only for some locations. Does not have a company-wide cage-free policy.



In 2017, parent Focus Brands (now GoTo Foods) pledged to go cage-free by 2026. In 2024, Focus Brands rebranded and removed its cage-free timeline.



McALISTER'S  
DELI



Schlotzsky's



MOE'S  
SOUTHWEST GRILL



Auntie Anne's



CINNABON



CARVEL  
THE ORIGINAL SOFT SERVE™



jamba

# DRIVE-THRU (3/3)

LAGGARDS

NO CAGE-FREE SOURCING POLICY



Photo: Andrew Skowron • Open Cages | Image representative of a typical factory farm



 **DINE-IN (1/3)**

**LEADERS** **SOURCING 100% CAGE-FREE EGGS**



**REPORTING PROGRESS**

 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2015 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025
 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	
 PLEDGED: 2017 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2017 GOAL: 2024	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	
 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2026	 PLEDGED: 2016 GOAL: 2025	 PLEDGED: 2020 GOAL: 2025	 ACQUIRED BY DINE BRANDS IN 2022 GOAL: 2025

# DINE-IN (2/3)

## NEEDS IMPROVEMENT



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2026**

Reporting slow progress; subsidiary Maple Street Biscuit Co. has no cage-free policy.



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**

Reporting slow progress. **Roadmap recommended.**



PLEDGED: 2017  
**GOAL: 2025**

Reduced policy scope from 100% of egg purchases to only a majority of egg purchases.

## LAGGARDS

## NOT REPORTING PROGRESS



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2017  
**GOAL: 2019**



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2017  
**GOAL: 2018**



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2006  
**GOAL: MISSED**

Missed goal; recommitted with 2024 goal but has since removed timeline, reduced policy scope, and made no progress since 2022.



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**

Accelerated goal from 2026 to 2025 but not reporting progress.



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2017  
**GOAL: 2025**



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2026**



PLEDGED: 2013  
**GOAL: 2017**

Missed goal, then pledged in 2021 to go cage-free by 2025.



PLEDGED: 2016  
**GOAL: 2026**

# DINE-IN (3/3)

## NOT REPORTING PROGRESS

  
PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025

  
PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025  
Removed timeline.

  
PLEGGED: 2016  
GOAL: 2020

  
PLEGGED: 2017  
GOAL: 2025

  
PLEGGED: 2019  
GOAL: 2023

  
honeygrow  
*local city-grown food*  
PLEGGED: 2022  
GOAL: 2025

  
ANOTHER  
Broken Egg Cafe  
PLEGGED: 2019  
GOAL: 2026

## LAGGARDS

## NO CAGE-FREE SOURCING POLICY





## COFFEEHOUSE FACE-OFF



We applaud **Starbucks** on successfully completing its 100% cage-free transition. In 2015, a **Dunkin'** spokesperson [stated](#), "We have a responsibility to ensure the humane treatment of animals, an issue we know is also important to both our franchisee community and our loyal guests." **So why isn't dunkin' fully reporting progress toward its 2025 cage-free commitment?**



While **Krispy Kreme** reports good progress toward sourcing only cage-free egg ingredients, **Cinnabon's** parent company, **GoTo Foods**, refuses to disclose whether it's following through on its cage-free promise. **What is GoTo Foods hiding?**





## FAST FOOD FACE-OFF



In an exciting announcement in early 2024, **McDonald's** shared that it had successfully achieved 100% cage-free for all US locations—two years ahead of schedule. By contrast, **Restaurant Brands International (RBI)**, **Burger King's** parent company, is reporting just 3% cage-free progress in North America as of December 2022. **We recommend RBI publish annual benchmark goals for reaching 100% cage-free in the US by 2026.**



While **Dairy Queen** is reporting good progress on its cage-free commitment, **Wendy's** is lagging behind. The brand pledged in 2016 to go cage-free in some locations by 2020, but **Wendy's** has refused to transition the vast majority of its restaurants to cage-free. **When will Wendy's catch up to its peers and go cage-free across all locations?**



## FAST FOOD **FACE-OFF**



We applaud **Taco Bell** on sourcing 100% cage-free eggs since 2016. Meanwhile, **Taco John's** removed its 2025 cage-free commitment and is not reporting progress. **What is Taco John's hiding?**



## CALL-OUT: **CHICK-FIL-A**

The top brands in the drive-thru sector—including **McDonald's, Shake Shack, KFC, Taco Bell, Panera, Jack in the Box**, and more—have all fulfilled their cage-free commitments or are reporting progress.

So why isn't **Chick-Fil-A** being transparent about its 2026 cage-free commitment?



## DINER FACE-OFF



**IHOP** and **Denny's** are leading the sector, reporting their cage-free progress and sharing their annual benchmark goals to reach 100% cage-free. Cracker Barrel and Black Bear Diner have room for improvement—their progress is slow or their reporting is outdated. **Golden Corral**, **Bob Evans**, **Shari's**, and **Eat'n Park** are lagging significantly behind their peers. **When will they be transparent about their cage-free progress and plans?**





## CASUAL FACE-OFF

While many of the top brands in this segment are leading on cage-free progress and reporting, some brands are significantly behind. **Here's how the casual dine-in segment stacks up.**

A comparison graphic between Longhorn Steakhouse and Texas Roadhouse. The left side has a green background with the Longhorn Steakhouse logo and a thumbs-up icon. The right side has a red background with the Texas Roadhouse logo and a thumbs-down icon. A central circle contains the text "VS".

A comparison graphic between Applebee's and BJ's. The left side has a green background with the Applebee's logo and a thumbs-up icon. The right side has a red background with the BJ's logo and a thumbs-down icon. A central circle contains the text "VS".

A comparison graphic between Olive Garden and Red Lobster. The left side has a green background with the Olive Garden logo and a thumbs-up icon. The right side has a red background with the Red Lobster logo and a thumbs-down icon. A central circle contains the text "VS".





# CASUAL FACE-OFF



Ruby Tuesday



The Cheesecake Factory



P.F. CHANG'S  
CHINA BISTRO

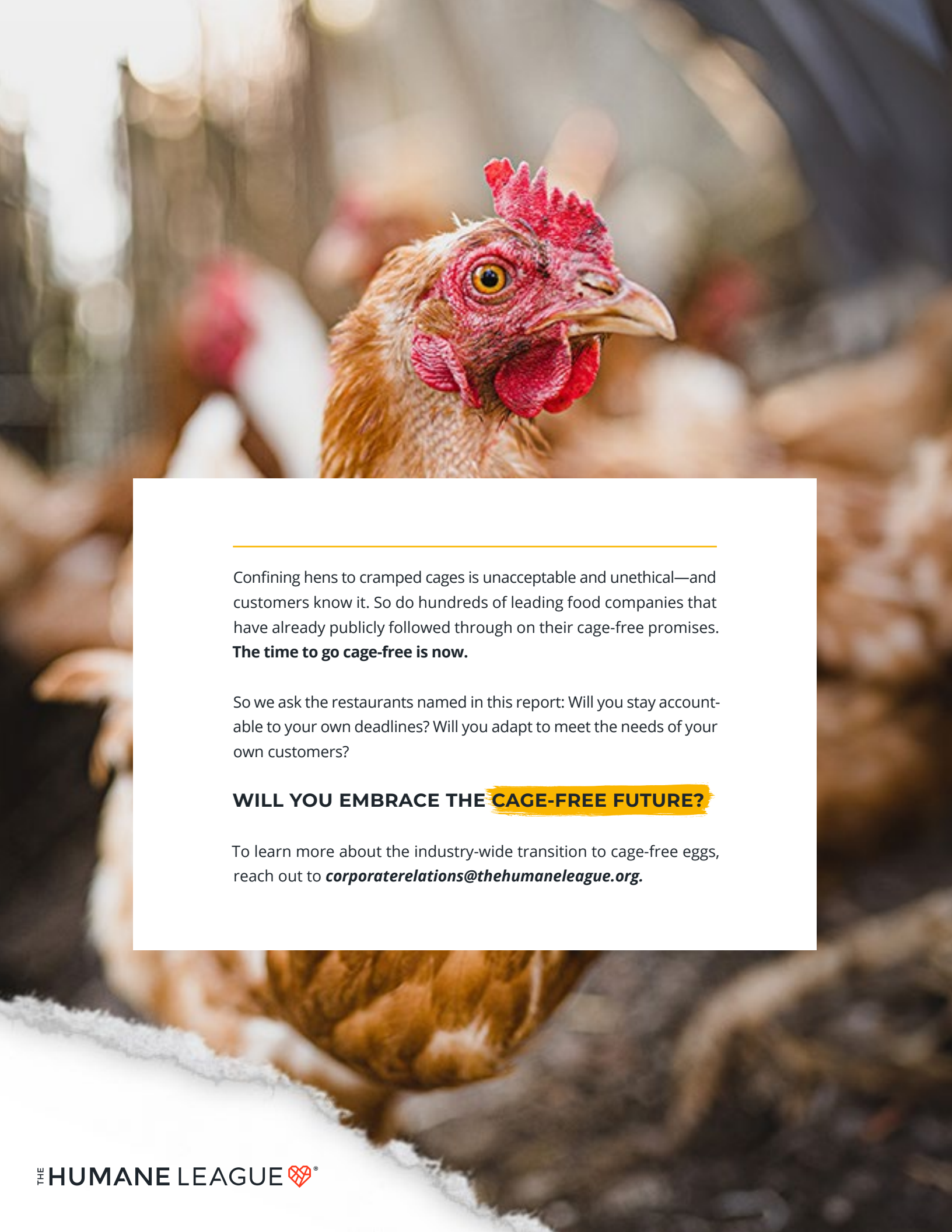


THE  
CAPITAL  
G · R · I · L · L · E



FOGO  
DE  
CHÃO





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Confining hens to cramped cages is unacceptable and unethical—and customers know it. So do hundreds of leading food companies that have already publicly followed through on their cage-free promises. **The time to go cage-free is now.**

So we ask the restaurants named in this report: Will you stay accountable to your own deadlines? Will you adapt to meet the needs of your own customers?

### **WILL YOU EMBRACE THE **CAGE-FREE FUTURE?****

To learn more about the industry-wide transition to cage-free eggs, reach out to [\*\*corporaterelations@thehumaneleague.org\*\*](mailto:corporaterelations@thehumaneleague.org).