

2026 EGGSPÓSÉ REPORT

THE STATE of CAGE-FREE

in the US Foodservice Provider Industry

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Published annually, our Cage-Free Eggposé evaluates major food corporations on their progress toward transitioning to a 100% cage-free egg supply. This year, we're expanding our scope: for the first time, we're publishing three sector-specific reports to give each industry the focused scrutiny it deserves. This report evaluates the foodservice companies that feed millions of Americans every day in universities, hospitals, corporate cafeterias, stadiums, and beyond.

The foodservice provider sector is a multi-billion-dollar industry built on something most commercial restaurants don't have: predictability. FSPs operate on long-term institutional contracts with captive audiences—students, patients, employees, and fans. That stability is a structural advantage, and it **makes the cage-free transition more plannable here than almost anywhere else in the food industry.**

PROGRESS | Six of the top twenty FSPs have fulfilled their cage-free commitments, and the top five are all reporting strong, transparent progress.

CONTRACTS | Long-term cage-free supply contracts offer price stability that spot-market purchasing cannot. Companies that locked in contracts ahead of the 2022–2025 bird flu crisis were insulated from the worst volatility.

PRODUCERS | A survey of egg-laying hen farmers found that 63% support cage-free laws—and none opposed them.

The excuses that once gave companies cover for delaying their commitments—such as bird flu disruptions, supply shortages, and price volatility—have largely expired. As of Q1 2026, egg supply has recovered and prices have stabilized. The window to lock in favorable long-term cage-free contracts is open right now. Still, while much of the industry is stepping up, **there are a few notable companies failing to follow through on the commitments they made.**

The regulatory landscape is also shifting in ways that make delay increasingly costly. Cage-free laws are now in effect in 10 states, and the legislative momentum is moving in only one direction. FSPs operating across multiple states face compounding compliance risk every year they wait. Meanwhile, the clients these companies serve—universities, hospital systems, corporate campuses—are embedding animal welfare standards into their own procurement requirements. Companies that haven't acted may already be losing contracts.

This report names the leaders. It also names the companies that made public promises to their customers and have chosen, year after year, not to keep them.

Cover hen Photo: Andrew Skowron • Open Cages | Image is representative of factory farming

HALL OF FAME

✓ Fulfilled

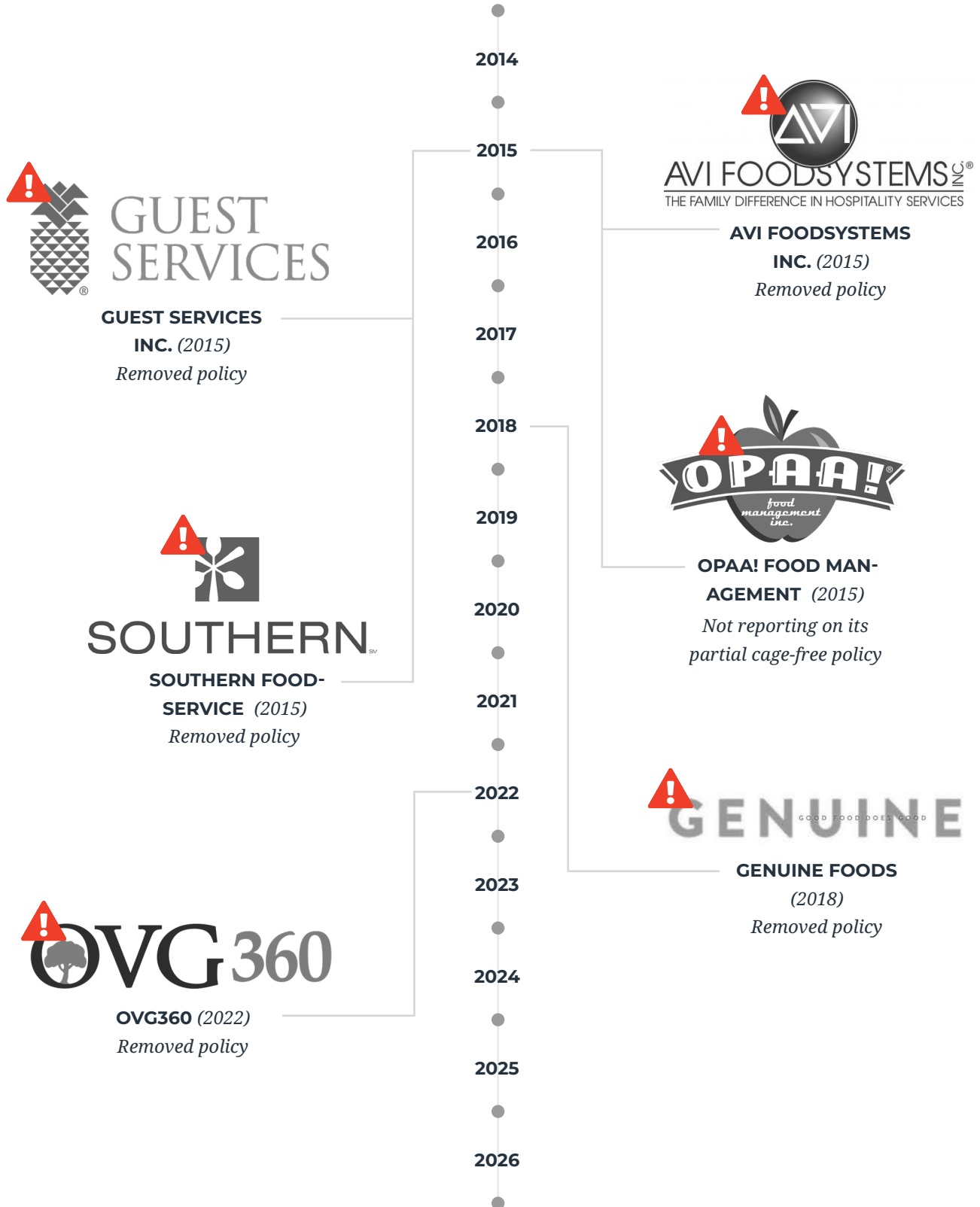
YEAR FULFILLED



HALL OF SHAME

! Broken promise

YEAR COMMITTED



THE **FUTURE** OF FOOD SERVICE



Liz Fergus

Sr. Corporate Relations Manager

The companies that will define the foodservice sector a decade from now are the ones making forward-looking sourcing decisions today—not the ones still looking for reasons to delay. For FSPs, embracing the cage-free transition isn't just the right thing to do; it's the obvious thing to do, given this sector's structural advantages. The only question is which companies will lead, and which will be left explaining why they didn't.

FSPs operate on multi-year institutional contracts with predictable volume. That's exactly the kind of demand signal that cage-free suppliers need to invest in infrastructure, plan production, and offer stable pricing. Unlike a fast-casual chain navigating daily fluctuations in consumer traffic, an FSP knows roughly how many meals it will serve next quarter, next year, and the year after. That predictability is a procurement advantage, and it's one that some industry laggards haven't fully leveraged.

BENEFITS OF CAGE-FREE CONTRACTS

Caged (or “conventional”) eggs are priced largely on spot-market supply and demand. That means that when something goes wrong—like a disease outbreak, a flood or weather event, or a supply disruption—buyers absorb the full shock. This became painfully visible during the 2022–2025 bird flu crisis, when egg prices skyrocketed and some companies struggled to find supply.

By design, cage-free cost-plus contracts insulate buyers from the kind of volatility that upended caged egg budgets during the outbreak. Companies that had locked in long-term cage-free contracts ahead of the crisis experienced greater stability. Sherman Miller of Cal-Maine Foods—the largest egg producer in the United States—spoke to the resilience benefits of cage-free investment during a recent financial review:



Customers consistently value consistency over spot pricing, and in an environment where volatility is the norm, reliability becomes a durable competitive advantage.

– ***Sherman Miller***, *President and CEO,*
Cal-Maine Foods

While spot-market purchasing exposes the buyer and seller to severe risk and price volatility, long-term cage-free contracts reduce the overall risk for both parties through predictability and security. And as of Q2 2026, now that egg supply has recovered and prices have normalized, this is the most favorable negotiating environment in recent years.

FSPs can secure cage-free contracts now, before the next supply disruption. Those that fail to act risk paying the price when supplies are constrained.

MANAGING LIABILITY AND RISK

Universities, hospital systems, and corporate dining clients are increasingly **embedding animal welfare standards** into their procurement requirements. That means FSPs without cage-free policies or demonstrated progress are at a growing disadvantage when competing for institutional contracts. Regulatory exposure compounds this liability. With cage-free laws now active in 10 states, FSPs sourcing caged eggs for operations in those states could face direct legal risk.

A full compliance risk matrix appears in full on pages 12-13—but the main takeaway is simple: the more states you operate in, the greater your exposure.



Photo: Tatu Yaris • Open Wing Alliance • We Animals
Image representative of factory farming

Hens confined in battery cages

PRODUCER PROGRESS



Michael Windsor

Sr. Director of Research & Insights

A persistent myth in the cage-free conversation is that farmers oppose the transition. But the data tells a different story. Not only are egg producers across the country adapting to cage-free systems; many are actively championing the policies that drive the transition.

Why? Especially for small and mid-size farmers, raising the minimum standard levels a playing field that has long been tilted toward large commercial operations willing to sacrifice animal welfare for aggressive pricing. Raising the “floor” means that small farmers don’t have to sacrifice their values about animal welfare in order to compete with multinational corporations.



The reality of the situation (is) we are fully cage-free here in Michigan, and yet our egg costs have remained low...

We spent more than a decade getting ready, converting barns, raising birds in the appropriate environment. We think it’s good for the birds. We think it’s working.

– Nancy Barr, Executive Director of Michigan Allied Poultry Industries

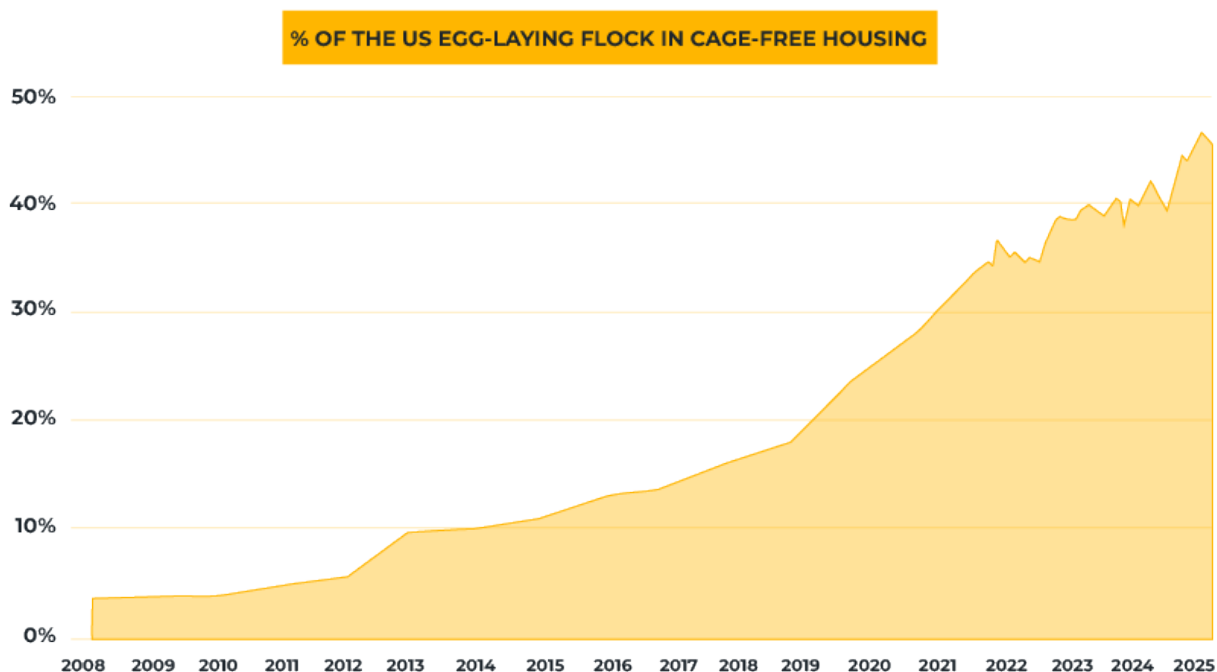


If our legislators, if our consumers want eggs like that, our producers will accommodate. We worked with the legislators on how to do it best.

– Bill Scebbi, Executive Director of the Colorado Egg Producers

And even at the largest scale, the industry’s direction is unmistakable. Egg producers stopped reporting new caged farm construction or expansion plans in 2021. They know where the market is going, and they’re building accordingly. If current progress continues—and producers’ own projections suggest it will—more than half of all hens in the US will be living cage-free by next year. That means FSPs that continue to delay their cage-free transitions will increasingly find themselves competing to source the eggs no one else wants. In short, supply-side resistance is simply not the barrier it’s often assumed to be.

BY THE NUMBERS



WHAT FARMERS ARE SAYING

According to a [survey](#) conducted by the cage-free policy tracking website [CageFreeLaws.com](#), a **majority of farmers support cage-free laws**. When asked whether they support cage-free laws like California's Prop 12 or Massachusetts' Question 3—which ban the sale and/or production of eggs from hens confined in cages—63% of respondents said yes. The remaining 38% preferred not to answer. Not one respondent said no.

“

Prop 12 has made our operation stronger, healthier, and more resilient — and it's been a lifeline for thousands of producers... We're selling into new markets and responding to our consumer demand. Consumers want to know their food aligns with their values.

— **Brent Hershey**, Pennsylvania farmer

CONSUMER AND CLIENT DEMAND



Julia Wisner

Director of Public Relations

Institutions like universities and hospitals are increasingly prioritizing healthier, allergen-free, plant-based, and responsibly sourced options like cage-free eggs—so that consumers don’t have to navigate these choices themselves, but can instead trust the standards of the institutions and foodservice providers serving them. The demand driving the cage-free transition is coming from FSPs’ own clients: universities, hospital systems, and corporate campuses.

“I’ve always believed that the places we trust—like our schools and hospitals—should partner with companies that actually have a conscience. It’s really disappointing to see these big food providers talk a big game about ‘ethics’ and ‘animal welfare’ only to go back on their word the second it’s convenient. We deserve better than empty promises and corporate excuses. If you give your word to do better, you should stick to it.”

– Elizabeth Collins

“CFG Arena hosts some of the biggest names that come to Baltimore, but I won’t be attending until they keep their promise and commit to less cruel animal welfare practices for the food they provide. They provide modern entertainment but **their animal welfare policies are stuck in the past.**”

– Laurie Elseroad



“I’ve been going to Islander games at UBS for a few years now, and as a fan, you expect the team to show up and give it their all. I expect the same from the people selling the food. It’s frustrating to find out they made public **promises to be more ethical, but are now just hoping we won’t notice they’re stalling...** I won’t go to the games and what’s more, I won’t go to other events UBS hosts.”

– Jennifer Valentine

“Vendor choices are values choices. When a stadium, school or workplace keeps working with **a foodservice provider that hasn’t honored animal welfare commitments, it reflects on the venue itself...** I wish food providers would do the right thing on their own, but if they won’t, we must put pressure on them to uphold their commitments for those who cannot speak.”

– Erica Jimenez

* Consumer quotes in this section were gathered through an outreach campaign conducted by The Humane League.

UNIVERSITY DINING & STUDENT PRESSURE

Universities respond to their student bodies—and today’s students are among the most vocal and organized consumers in the country when it comes to ethical sourcing. Student campaigns at universities from UMass to Georgia have [*pushed dining halls toward cage-free eggs*](#), gathering thousands of petition signatures in the process.

University dining programs are increasingly formalizing these expectations into procurement standards. Campus dining policies increasingly codify “humane” as a core purchasing value—Stanford University, for example, explicitly commits to food that is healthy, fair, humane, and sustainable in its [*Sustainable Food Ethos*](#).

HEALTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY

Hospitals’ motivation for responsible sourcing is rooted in patient care philosophy, staff wellness commitments, and the ESG reporting requirements that govern how large health systems operate and communicate with stakeholders. For FSPs serving healthcare clients, cage-free sourcing is becoming increasingly central to how those clients define the partnership.

One out of every three hospitals in the United States is part of the [*Health Care Without Harm network*](#), a group that has helped hundreds of facilities adopt pledges that prioritize sustainable and higher-welfare animal products.

Practice Greenhealth’s most recent [sustainability benchmark](#) data show that the vast majority of member hospitals are now actively working on healthier, lower-impact menus:

- ▶ **72%** are working to reduce the amount of animal products purchased
- ▶ **51%** purchased animal products that meet high animal welfare standards
- ▶ **63%** established specific procurement goals for environmentally sustainable purchasing
- ▶ **33%** established specific procurement goals for high animal welfare

RFP & PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

Client expectations are beginning to show up in formal procurement language—the RFPs and contract requirements that determine who wins institutional business and who doesn’t. Procurement standards that include animal welfare criteria are becoming more common, and the FSPs that aren’t prepared to meet them are narrowing their own competitive field.

STATE LAWS



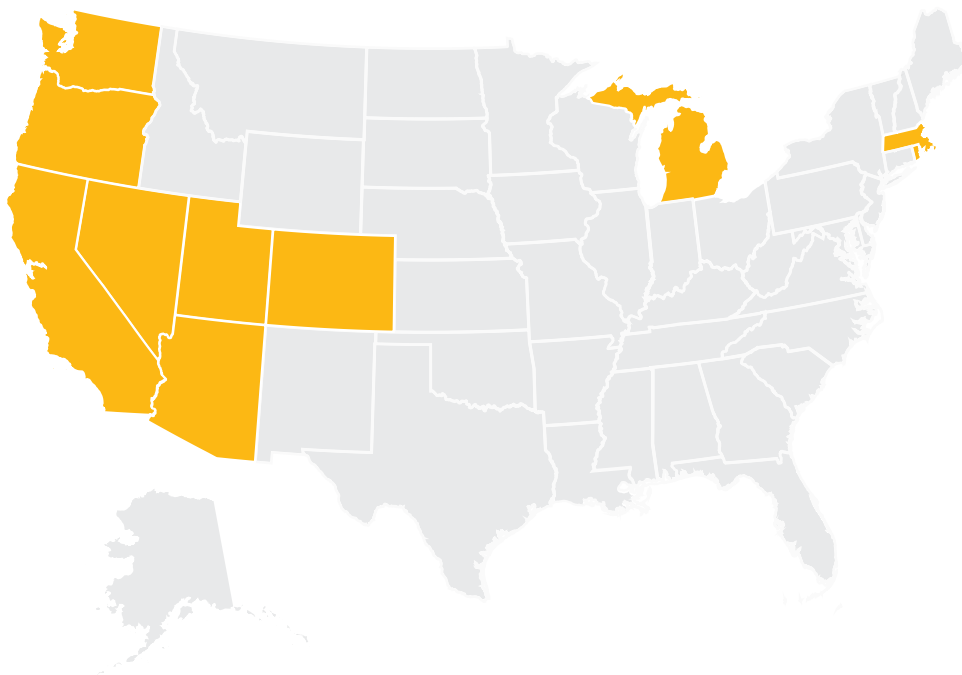
Gabriel Wildgen

Sr. Associate VP of Public Policy

Time and again, voters have demonstrated overwhelming support for legislation that improves conditions for farmed animals when given the opportunity. California's Proposition 12 and Massachusetts' Question 3—laws against extreme confinement of animals—both passed with over 60% voter approval. The cage-free movement is now mainstream policy, backed by public support.

As a result, the legal landscape for cage-free eggs in the United States has changed significantly in recent years, and that progress will only continue. For FSPs operating across multiple states, understanding current and pending cage-free laws is now a basic compliance requirement.

Cage-free laws are now in effect in 10 states, and the legislative momentum is moving in only one direction. No state has repealed a cage-free law, and proposals are advancing in additional states. Farmers, consumers, and (increasingly) food companies recognize that these laws *reflect the direction the market is already going*. Planning your supply chain around the current map is planning for yesterday.



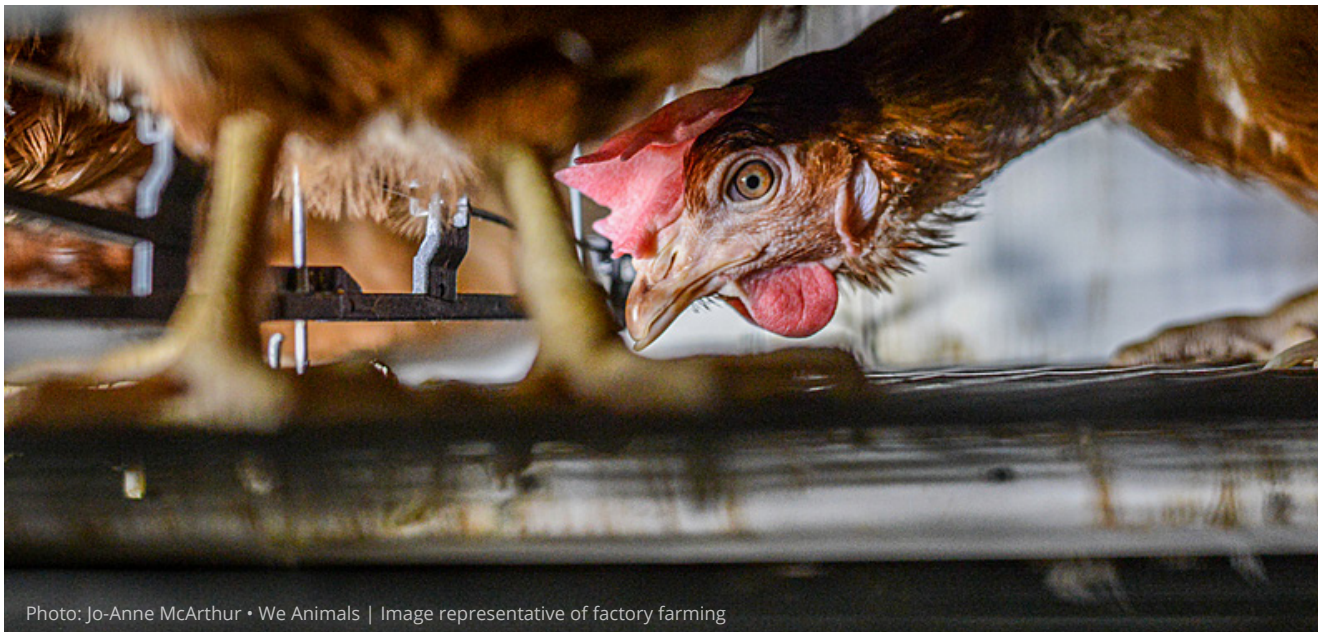
Arizona, California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington have all passed laws regulating the production and/or the sale of "conventional" eggs (eggs from caged hens).

COMPLIANCE RISK MATRIX

State	Law / ballot measure	What it covers	Effective date	Current status
California	Proposition 12 (2018)	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2022	In effect. Fully enforced.
Massachusetts	Question 3 (2016) / S.B. 2470	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2022	In effect. Fully enforced.
Washington	H.B. 2049 (2019)	Sale only	Jan. 1, 2023	In effect. Fully enforced.
Colorado	H.B. 1343 (2020)	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2023 (sale); Jan. 1, 2025 (production)	In effect. Fully enforced.
Oregon	S.B. 1019 (2019)	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2024	In effect. Fully enforced.
Michigan	S.B. 174 (2019)	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2025	In effect. Fully enforced.
Utah	S.B. 147 (2021)	Production only	Jan. 1, 2025	In effect. Fully enforced.
Rhode Island	H.B. 7456 (2018)	Production only	Jan. 1, 2026	In effect as of 2026. Fully enforced.

COMPLIANCE RISK MATRIX

State	Law / ballot measure	What it covers	Effective date	Current status
Arizona	Dept. of Agriculture rule (adopted 2023)	Sale + production (farms 20,000+ hens)	Originally Jan. 1, 2026	Delayed. Governor Katie Hobbs directed the Dept. of Agriculture in March 2025 to undertake rulemaking to delay implementation by seven years, citing bird flu and egg prices.
Nevada	A.B. 399 (2021)	Sale + production	Jan. 1, 2025	After a temporary suspension, the law is now back in effect. Fully enforced.
Maryland	S.B. 806 / H.B. 834 (2025)	Sale + production	Pending	Introduced in the 2025 regular session; received hearings in both chambers. Did not pass in 2025, but legislative momentum is building.



OUR **METHODOLOGY** AND RESEARCH TEAM

RATING PROCESS

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.

THE 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 **Restaurant Brands International**, **Starbucks**, **Dairy Queen**, **Walgreen's**, **7-Eleven**, and many more to report progress toward and/or complete successful cage-free transitions.



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THE FINAL RANKINGS

THE RESULTS ARE IN

Rating	Company	Public policy?	Status	Pledge year	Deadline
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2020	2021
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2020
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2017
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2017	2017
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2017	2017
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2019
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2020
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2024
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2020
👍👍		Yes	Fulfilled	2015	2017
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2015	2026
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2016	2025
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2014	2025
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2018	2025
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2016	2026
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2015	2027
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2015	2027
👍		Yes	Reporting progress	2015	2027

Rating	Company	Public policy?	Status	Pledge year	Deadline
	 EPICUREANFEAST Cafes	Yes	Outdated reporting	2015	2025
	 aramark	Yes	No new timeline or benchmark goals	2017	2025
	 elior NORTH AMERICA	Yes	Making slow progress	2016	2028
	 PARKHURST DINING	Yes	Incomplete reporting	2015	2024
	 Healthcare SERVICES GROUP	Yes	Not reporting	2022	2025
	 POMPTONIAN FOOD SERVICE	Yes	Not reporting	2021	2024
	 OVG Hospitality	Removed	Not reporting	2022	2025
	 GUEST SERVICES	Removed	Not reporting	2015	2025
	 ZEST CULINARY SERVICES	Removed	Not reporting	2015	2024
	 GENUINE	Removed	Not reporting	2018	2021
	 AVI FOODSYSTEMS® THE FAMILY DIFFERENCE IN HOSPITALITY SERVICES	Removed	Not reporting	2015	2024
	 OPAA!	Partial policy only	Not reporting	2015	2020
	 TAHER INC.	Removed	Not reporting	2015	2018
	 SOUTHERN	Removed	Not reporting	2015	2020

The company ratings are informed by publicly viewable cage-free progress updates published by each respective company.



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The foodservice provider sector has the scale, the structural advantages, and—as the leaders in this report demonstrate—the proven ability to make the cage-free transition work. The transparency and follow-through shown by industry leaders set the standard for what’s possible.

For companies still lagging behind, there are no excuses left. Bird flu disruptions have eased, prices have stabilized, and cage-free supply only continues to grow. The window for a successful transition, is open right now. Companies have had years—in some cases, more than a decade—to make good on commitments they made publicly.

So what’s next for **companies ready to make good** on their cage-free commitments—or to make one for the first time?

1. The first step is **reaching out to our team**. We’ve worked with numerous corporations to plan and execute successful cage-free transitions. Not only is it possible—it can be seamless with the right plan in place.
2. We’ll work together to **develop an achievable timeline** and sourcing strategy, help you navigate supply chain complexities, and provide guidance on how to communicate your progress transparently to the clients and consumers who are paying attention.
3. The companies that act now—rather than waiting to be poorly rated again next year—are the ones that will **define what responsible sourcing** means in this sector for the decade ahead.

Reach out to our team to discuss your cage-free transition.

Contact us

corporaterelations@thehumaneleague.org

THE HUMANE LEAGUE 

Photo: Jo-Anne McArthur • We Animals