


CAGE-FREE EGGS

a brief primer



WHEN EGG-LAYING HENS ARE HOUSED IN CAGES, THEY SUFFER IMMENSELY

PACKED TOGETHER INTO BARREN CAGES THE SIZE OF FILING CABINET DRAWERS, THESE BIRDS SPEND THEIR LIVES UNABLE TO EXTEND THEIR WINGS OR EVEN STAND WITH THEIR HEADS RAISED. These caged systems are cruel, archaic, and unnecessary, and consumers are taking note. Now more than ever, consumers want to know how their food is produced, especially when it comes to animal welfare.



CUSTOMERS ARE DEMANDING AN END TO BATTERY CAGES...

Today's consumer climate demands transparency. Stakeholders—from customers to investors—expect corporate integrity.

Aside from just meeting customer demand, switching to cage-free eggs now can help your company future-proof its supply chain and reputation against future regulatory changes or discoveries that it hasn't been keeping its promises.

66%

of shoppers surveyed

would increase purchases from a company focused on improving animal welfare, according to research from Walmart¹

animal cruelty is the

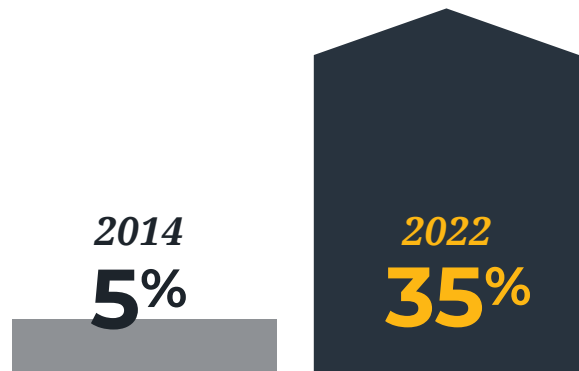
#1 CONCERN

among U.S. consumers, according to 2022 research from Innova Market Insights, followed by human exploitation and environmental concerns.

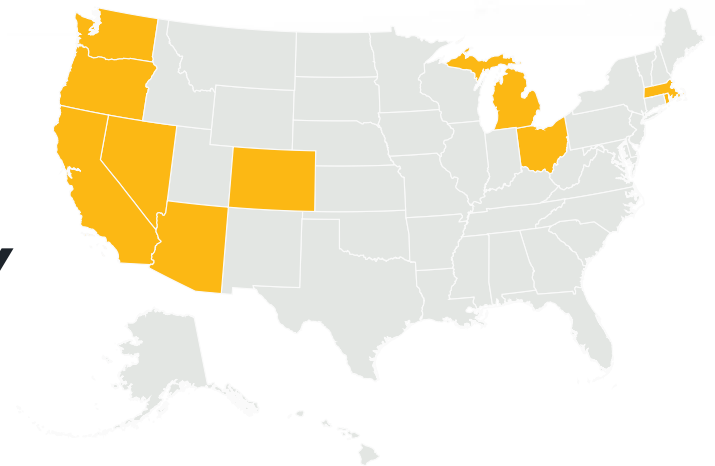
¹<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-walmart-20150601-story.html>

...AND FOOD COMPANIES ARE LISTENING

As food companies respond to consumer demand for cage-free eggs, the egg industry is shifting too. Since 2014, the US layer hen flock has grown from roughly 5% to over 35% cage-free, according to data from the USDA.² This means that tens of millions of hens in the US will never have to face a lifetime of confinement in a tiny cage.



THESE STATES HAVE ALREADY BANNED BATTERY CAGES⁵



⁵This map reflects housing bans on new and current battery-cage-equipped facilities, as well as sales bans on products derived from hens in battery cages. Source: <https://cagefreelaws.com>.

In 2022, the Wall Street Journal reported that Cal-Maine foods, the nation's largest egg producer, was investing an added \$82 million to support cage-free egg production in response to increased demand.³

“Our job is to produce what our customers—and our customers are retail customers—and what the ultimate consumer wants. And a lot of that is cage-free today.”

Max Bowman,
Chief Financial Officer, Cal-Maine Foods

²<https://osf.io/z2gxn/>
³<https://www.wsj.com/articles/cal-maine-steps-up-investment-to-meet-demand-for-cage-free-eggs-11649107116>

Walgreens

CVS/pharmacy[®]



**RITE
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all accelerated their commitments to cage-free, along with other brands like The Cheesecake Factory, Mandarin Oriental, and Conagra. Initially planning to make the switch by 2025, all three drug stores independently agreed to sell exclusively cage-free eggs by the end of 2022. Regarding the change, Walgreens said:

“We recognize that customers’ preferences are changing with improved customer access to sustainable and ethically sourced products in local communities”⁴

⁴<https://news.walgreens.com/press-center/walgreens-commitment-to-cage-free-eggs.htm>

some of the many companies
**REPORTING ON
CAGE-FREE PROGRESS**



GENERAL MILLS



McDonald's



some of the many companies
**REPORTING 100%
CAGE-FREE**



PEPSICO



THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE.

Food companies must follow through on their cage-free commitments. This begins with creating a roadmap of yearly progress goals. For example, General Mills and Target are among the many companies that have released cage-free roadmaps and report on their progress annually.

GENERAL MILLS⁶

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
60-65%	75-80%	80-85%	85-90%	100%

TARGET⁷

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
57%	75-80%	80-85%	85-90%	100%

CHANGE TAKES TIME. TRANSPARENCY DOES NOT.

Companies owe it to consumers and stakeholders to be open about their fulfillment of the public commitments they've made— especially when they directly impact millions of chickens' lives. Publicly sharing roadmaps and being transparent about progress are core components of Corporate Social Responsibility; this can be done through press releases, company websites, or annual sustainability and ESG reports.

⁶ https://globalresponsibility.generalmills.com/HTML1/general_mills-global_responsibility_2022_0042.htm

⁷ <https://corporate.target.com/sustainability-ESG/environment/animal-welfare/food-animal-welfare>

