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Humpty Dumpty Had A Great Fall

By: Hesh Goldstein

In a previous article that I wrote and in talks that I give, I mentioned that the whites of eggs are used in aircraft paint because it enables the paint to not crack under extreme temperatures. I received an email from someone asking me what was wrong with that.

After thinking about that for a while I came to the conclusion that most people are brain dead or really close to it. So, rather than getting into what's wrong with putting a substance into your body that does not crack under extreme temperatures, I decided to deal with this from another angle. That angle being, does everyone have a right to life? And if so, do they have a right to a humane way of life, or doesn't it matter if someone endures massive suffering to satisfy the craving that one's tongue demands?

In the United States, more than 300 million laying hens produce eggs. The majority of these hens live in small, wire cages affectionately referred to in the industry as “battery cages”.

The “battery” hen's life starts in a commercial hatchery where thousands of chicks are “hatched” in industrial incubators. Since the male offers no dollar value to the egg producer, they are killed right after birth. This “procedure” is usually done by gassing, suffocation, or being crushed by machines or the boots of the workers, should they fall off the conveyor belt of death.

The females, or the profit making commodity, have parts of their beaks burned off with a hot blade without any pain killers being administered. Does anyone care that the chickens have pain receptors in their beaks and experience intense pain from the procedure? Of course not! These are food animals, not pets. So, who cares?

Well, after this “cosmetic” trimming the little baby chicks are taken to indoor egg, if you will pardon the expression, farms and placed in the above mentioned battery cages.

This baby chick hotel room, which is a wire cage, normally houses three to ten hens and the typical U.S. egg concentration camp contains thousands of these cages that provide these three to ten chicks that will turn into hens with a total of 59 square inches of space per bird. Or, to put it another way, a space just a bit larger than half a sheet of letter-sized typing paper.

Hens need an average of 72 square inches just to stand upright, 178 square inches to preen (all chicks like to look pretty), 197 square inches to turn around, and 291 square inches to flap their wings. But, what the heck, they aren't creatures of nature, they are dollar bills. So, why would they need space?

In addition, these battery cages contribute to many health problems like their uteruses being pushed outside of their bodies, foot problems due to the slanted wire floors of the cages, osteoporosis, due to the fact that they get no exercise and that a large amount of calcium goes into egg production, and fatty livers. Pate' anyone?

In a chicken's normal cycle of life, they shed their feathers. This is called “molting”. So, to help these dollar bills in their normal cycle of life, they are false molted at the end of their laying cycles or purposely starved for 10 to 14 days to induce another laying cycle.

This forced molting can double their mortality and create great suffering. And, after the second laying cycle these battery hens are gathered and transported to slaughter plants where they are shackled by their legs and hung upside-down on a long conveyor belt. By this time, the dollar bills have already had their fragile legs broken by the shackles and by the time of death close to half of them have suffered broken bones.

Now comes the mercy. These hens are then submerged into an electrified water bath, which is supposed to make them unconscious. Whether or not this happens is irrelevant and their throats are slit whether conscious or unconscious. You see, birds are not protected by the federal Humane Methods Of Slaughter Act and as such are not “required” to be unconscious before being killed.

If anti-cruelty laws applied to farmed animals, this treatment would be illegal. But since profits take precedence over welfare, kindness, and people having a heart, no one cares.

So, the next time you eat an egg or a piece of chicken you need to look into your heart and your consciousness and realize, beyond a shadow of doubt, that you are a part of all of this. If that does not bother you, so be it. If it does, even slightly, then there is hope for you and the fact that someday you may actually have a soft heart and you will be conscious of how your “food” got to you.

Aloha!