

Governor Baldacci Signs Law Providing More Humane Treatment of Farm Animals

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Maine Becomes Sixth U.S. State to Ban Extreme Confinement of Animals in Small Crates and Cages on Industrial Factory Farms

Maine Governor John Baldacci signed landmark legislation preventing two controversial factory farm confinement methods. Effective January 1, 2011, the new law will prohibit gestation crates and veal crates—individual cages that virtually immobilize breeding pigs and veal calves for nearly their entire lives.

LD 1021 was sponsored by Senator John Nutting (D-Androscoggin County), Senate Chair of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. It passed the committee and both chambers unanimously. The Humane Society of the United States strongly backed the legislation.

"It's cruel and inhumane to confine animals in cages barely larger than their own bodies for months on end," stated Katie Lisnik, Maine state director of The HSUS. "We're grateful to Senator Nutting for his humane leadership on this important legislation and hope its enactment sends a message to other states that they should follow suit."

Californians overwhelmingly passed a similar measure, The Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, by ballot initiative last fall. In addition to California, four other states have passed similar reforms, including Colorado, Florida, Arizona and Oregon.

Major national retailers like Safeway and Burger King are increasingly phasing in crate-free and cage-free products due to consumer demand. And the top veal and pork producers in the country—such as Smithfield Foods, **Strauss Veal** and Marcho Farms—have begun to phase out crates and move toward group housing systems for pigs and calves.