



## Be a Good Egg

These eggs might look identical, but their cartons tell a different story. ↓



The United States produces more than 87 billion eggs for sale each year. Some egg-laying chickens live on small, family farms. Most, however, are kept in huge buildings containing *thousands* of cages.



Here's how most modern egg farms differ from old-fashioned farms.



In modern egg-producing factories, hens are kept in battery cages. Three to ten hens are crowded together in each one. Part of their beaks are cut off to keep them from hurting each other. Cages have wire floors that slope down so that eggs can be collected. That makes it hard for hens to stand comfortably. The cages are small and stacked on top of each other. Hens have no room to clean their feathers, turn around, or flap their wings. Each hen lives in an

area smaller than this sheet of paper.

Battery cages cause many health problems for hens, including weak bones, liver problems, foot damage, and feather loss. The hens cannot exercise, socialize, or take a dustbath. They never get to see sunlight.

After their first laying cycle, hens are starved for 10 to 14 days. That causes them to start producing eggs again. Each bird is made to produce about 260 eggs a year.



Now let's look at certified humane, free-farmed, and certified organic farming. Hens are not put in cages. Many are fed natural grains without drugs. They lay their eggs on a bed of straw instead of a wire floor. Barns and chicken coops provide shelter and protection, and hens may be allowed to roam outdoors. They can peck and scratch at the ground. They can fluff their feathers, perch, dustbathe, and spread their wings. They make nests and socialize with

their flock. These are natural behaviors that chickens enjoy.

Decide whether the following statements are **facts (F)** or **opinions (O)**. If you circle O, explain briefly why you agree or disagree.

F / O In battery cages, hens are crowded together.

F / O Cage-free hens are allowed to roam freely.

F / O Cage-free eggs are better.