

# the growing **CAGE-FREE EGG** trend



“ The food industry has its latest have-to-have it product: the cage-free egg. ”  
—*The New York Times*

Major restaurant chains, foodservice companies, universities, culinary academies, supermarkets and food manufacturers are all moving toward cage-free eggs in their kitchens and supply chains.

- Top chains including **Burger King, Cracker Barrel, Subway, Wendy's, Denny's, IHOP, Golden Corral, Sonic, Arby's, Starbucks, Red Robin, Carl's Jr., Hardee's & Quiznos** use cage-free eggs, as do countless chefs—such as **Wolfgang Puck**.
- **Compass Group** (the world's largest foodservice provider) has switched the 100 million whole eggs it uses each year to cage-free and many of its competitors (e.g. **ARAMARK, Sodexo, Guckenheimer, Guest Services, Seasons Culinary** and **Parkhurst**) have eliminated or reduced their use of battery cage eggs. **Sara Lee** and **Pepperidge Farm** are phasing cage-free eggs into their products, and **Hellmann's** mayonnaise recently announced that it will switch all 350 million eggs it uses each year to cage-free.
- Virtually all U.S. supermarkets now carry cage-free eggs. **Whole Foods** only sells cage-free eggs, while all private label eggs at **Wal-Mart, Costco** and **Trader Joe's** are cage-free. Other chains—like **Safeway, Harris Teeter** and **Winn-Dixie**—have all pledged to increased their cage-free egg sales.
- In a recent report from the prestigious Sustainable Endowments Institute, **64% of universities** polled reported using cage-free eggs. Culinary schools like **Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, International Culinary Schools at the Art Institutes, New England Culinary Institute** and **Natural Gourmet Cookery School** now use cage-free eggs. And many major corporate and government cafeterias – including the cafeterias at the **U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, NASA, the National Institutes of Health, Google, Yahoo!, Coca-Cola, Gap, IBM** and **Microsoft** – now use cage-free eggs.

"Hellmann's® understands that people are increasingly attuned to what's in their food...and that's why [we are] moving to 100% cage-free eggs."

—Unilever [press release](#)



“ [Burger King] pledges to use 100 percent cage-free eggs by 2017. ”

—*Burger King* [press release](#)

## Public Sentiment & Legislation Favor Cage-Free Egg Production:

California, Michigan and the European Union have passed laws to phase out the confinement of hens in battery cages and Ohio (the nation's second largest egg-producing state) has placed a moratorium on constructing any new cage layer facilities. California also passed a law to require that all shell (whole) eggs sold statewide—regardless where they are produced—by cage-free by 2015. These laws make sense considering the huge amount of public support for animal welfare. A study by the food industry consulting firm **Technomic** found that animal welfare is the *third most-important social issue* to American restaurant patrons and a **Parade** magazine study found that animal welfare is the fourth most-popular social cause in America. As Cardinal, Pope Benedict XVI called the cage confinement of hens a contraction of Biblical principles.

## Cage-Free Eggs are Better for Hens and for Consumers:

Battery cages restrict many natural behaviors that are critical to birds' welfare, including the ability to nest, perch and forage. In battery cages, hens aren't even able to fully extend their limbs.

The prestigious **Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production** [concluded](#) that battery cages should be eliminated. The Commission was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and included the former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

The [LayWel study](#) – which is the most extensive scientific study into laying hen welfare – concluded that battery cages are the only method of housing hens that, under no circumstances, can provide “satisfactory welfare” for animals. The LayWel study involved working groups in seven European countries, funding from the European Commission and data from 230 flocks of hens. The *Netherlands Journal of Agricultural Science* published a [study](#) that ranked 22 different methods of housing hens in terms of animal welfare on a zero-to-ten scale. **Battery cages ranked 0.0** (literally as low as possible). Typical U.S. cage-free egg production systems ranked significantly higher, around 5.9.

A 2002 prospective case-control study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* reported that people who recently ate eggs from caged hens had about 200% higher odds of being sickened by *Salmonella* compared to people who did not eat eggs from hens kept in cages. **The European Food Safety Authority** found that “Without exception...there was significantly higher risk of *Salmonella* infection in hens confined in cages.”

Consumer organizations such as **The Consumer Federation of America**, **Center for Food Safety** and **Center for Science in the Public Interest** have all supported a ban on battery cages and a move to cage-free egg production.

"Virtually all aspects of hen behavior are thwarted by battery cages. ...research has confirmed what common sense already knew — animals built to move must move."

— Dr. Bernard Rollin, Department of Animal Science, Colorado State



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## How to Source Cage-Free Eggs:

The largest egg producers all produce shell (whole) and liquid cage-free eggs, as do many local and regional egg producers. The Humane Society of the United States—the largest animal protection organization in the world with 11 million supporters—has helped countless companies transition to cage-free eggs.

For more information, please visit: [www.humanesociety.org/issues/confinement\\_farm/](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/confinement_farm/).



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