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Dear Sir or Madam,

We at The Humane Society of the United States appreciate your commitment to promoting sustainability, family farms and healthy food. To that end, on behalf of our nearly 1.3 million California supporters, we'd like to urge your adoption of a policy of prohibiting the sale of eggs from caged hens at your markets.

There is ample evidence that your shoppers assume the eggs sold at farmers' markets do not come from the same factory farming operations employing the same practices as farms involved in the recent egg recall. But throughout California many such producers are vendors at farmers markets.

These suppliers confine hens into cages so small they can't even spread their wings. These birds are unable to engage in many of their natural behaviors, including nesting, dust bathing, perching, and foraging, let alone roaming or walking comfortably.

Not only is this intensive confinement inhumane and unsustainable, it also poses a real threat to food safety. Cramming birds into cages exacerbates the risk of *Salmonella* contamination. In fact, every one of the last ten studies comparing cage and cage-free systems found higher *Salmonella* rates in cage systems, including a 2010 study that found 20 times greater odds of *Salmonella* infection in caged flocks.

In 2008, California voters overwhelmingly passed the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act (Prop 2) making it a criminal offense to confine hens in cages by 2015. California recently extended this requirement to all eggs sold in the state. Hundreds of California restaurants along with dozens of major companies like Burger King, Subway, and Hellmann's Mayonnaise are already using cage-free eggs. Furthermore, national and local retailers such as Whole Foods Market, Andronico's, New Leaf Markets, Jimbo's Naturally, Berkeley Bowl, and many others have made a commitment to only sell cage-free eggs in their stores.

To increase food safety and improve animal welfare, we hope you'll join this growing movement away from caged eggs by ensuring that your vendors are only selling cage-free or free-range eggs at your markets. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information that may be helpful as you look into this matter.

Best,

Jennifer Fearing
California Senior State Director