

North American food retailers make progress for farmed animals

Progress toward improved conditions for farm animals is finally happening in North America. Many commitments by food retailers to phase out intensive confinement of breeding sows and egg-laying hens are the result of strong leadership from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Positive changes are happening in Canada, too.

Loblaw Co. Ltd.

Canada's largest grocer, Loblaw, is interested and active in farm animal welfare, with company personnel meeting with CCFA, animal welfare scientists and industry people. Last year Loblaw committed to ensuring all its President's Choice eggs are cage-free. Although they are not there yet due to supply problems, the commitment still stands.

In early May, a CCFA representative discussed farm animal welfare at the Loblaw annual shareholders meeting for the sixth year in a row.

Loblaw often leads the way among Canadian food retailers, then other retailers follow suit. This year Metro mentioned animal welfare in its corporate social responsibility report, but made no specific commitment to improvements for farm animals.

Safeway

Safeway – with stores in Western Canada and the U.S. – announced in May it intends to begin formulating a plan to have a gestation stall-free supply chain. Over the past several years, the company has substantially increased the quantity of pork it buys from

producers that have committed to decrease use of sow stalls.

Walmart and Costco

Walmart and Costco have transitioned their private-label eggs to 100 percent cage-free.

Tim Hortons

Thousands of Canadians signed a petition to Tim Hortons asking for improvements to farm animal welfare. Prior to the corporation's annual meeting, the company announced it would commit to 10% of the eggs it uses will come from hens in "enriched cages" (but not cage-free), with no time line for the change announced.

Tim Hortons also asked its pork suppliers to present their plans by year's end – to phase out gestation stalls.



This spring Tim Hortons released a Canadian YouTube video touting the company's care of laying hens, yet footage showed hens in battery cages, implying it was humane housing. CCFA wrote the president of the company about the conflicting and inaccurate messaging in the video.

McDonald's

McDonald's, the world's largest quick food retailer, will give the pork industry ten years to phase out sow gestation

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North American progress continued

crates for all the pork it buys. McDonald's is asking hog farms to make a commitment by 2017 that they will have their sows out of crates by 2022, a policy that only applies to U.S. outlets for now.

Burger King

Burger King announced **all** its eggs and pork will come from cage-free chickens and pigs by 2017. The decision by the world's second-largest fast-food restaurant raises the bar for other companies seeking to appeal to the rising consumer demand for more humanely produced fare.

The decision by Burger King, which uses hundreds of millions of eggs and tens of millions of pounds of pork annually, could represent a game-change in the egg and pork supply business as a huge new market has opened up for humanely raised farmed animals. Currently nine percent of the company's eggs and 20 percent of its pork are cage-free in U.S. outlets

Wendy's

In April, Wendy's announced it is working with its U.S. and Canadian pork suppliers to eliminate the use of sow gestation stalls over time. Since 2007, Wendy's has given preferential buying to suppliers who adopt an ongoing plan to phase out gestation stalls. As a result, a steadily increasing portion of the company's pork supply has come from sows not kept in gestation stalls.

Corporate Social Responsibility targets for animal welfare in 2012 - Loblaw Co. Ltd.

- Collaborate with vendors, industry associations, animal welfare experts and multi-stakeholder forums such as National Animal Care Council (NAACC).
- Support industry sectors in the development of animal welfare standards and encourage the use of emerging alternative practices, particularly alternatives to gestation crates.
- Encourage industry associations to further research and evolve hen welfare and housing systems
- Continue to work with industry to transition all *PC* eggs to cage-free.



sows in gestation crates

"You'd have to have rocks in your head to build a new sow barn with gestating sow stalls."

From *Western Producer*, June 1, 2012

<http://www.producer.com/2012/06/consider-risks-involved-in-building-sow-stall-barn/>