

## **FACTS ABOUT OUR FOOD**

### **~ FOIE GRAS ~**

***Foie Gras, which is French for “fatty liver”, is an inhumane “delicacy” produced by grossly enlarging the livers of male ducks and geese through force-feeding.***

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#### **OVERVIEW**

Ducks and geese force-fed to produce foie gras are compelled to consume much more high-energy food—mostly corn—than they would eat voluntarily. This enlarges and damages their liver, causes them much pain and suffering, and often kills them.

#### **WHAT IS FOIE GRAS?**

Foie gras is one of the world’s most expensive foods and is considered an elite “delicacy”. It is also one of the cruelest foods. Among all the cruel factory farming practices, it is the only system in which animals are purposefully raised to become deformed and diseased. Up to four pounds of food per day are pumped into the birds’ stomachs through long metal pipes which are shoved down their throats. This cruel procedure often causes severe injuries or death.

Force-feeding causes the ducks’ livers to swell up to 10 times their normal size, inducing a disease that veterinarians call "hepatic lipidosis." Many birds become too sick to stand up. When the birds are slaughtered, their fattened livers are sold for foie gras.

#### **LIFE SENTENCE ON THE FACTORY FARM**

Ducks comprise 90% of the birds kept for foie gras production because they are cheaper to keep and feed. Most foie gras production today, like other food animal production, is highly intensified. This means that both ducks and geese raised for foie gras are kept in individual tiny wire cages, prevented from performing any natural behaviours such as socializing, searching for food, preening and bathing. The cages are so restrictive the birds cannot turn around or clean their feathers. Only the neck protrudes from the cage, allowing the feeder to grab the bird’s head and force the beak open for feeding.



***Duck in vomit-covered cage***

***Photo courtesy of the Humane Society of the United States***

#### **PHYSICAL AILMENTS**

As a result of being force-fed with metal pipes, some birds experience torn necks and ruptured internal organs from the intense pressure of the feeding tubes. The cruel ordeal often causes severe injuries that make it painful or even impossible for the birds to drink. Some birds become too sick to walk and are reduced to pushing themselves across their cages with their wings. After just one week of force-feeding, many birds



develop acute enteritis (inflammation of the small intestine) and diarrhea. Their increasing weight causes their breasts to blister as they rub against the cage floor. The confinement can lead to lesions of the sternum and bone fractures, as well as foot injuries from the cage floors.

Ducks and geese are social animals who suffer when confined in individual cages. These birds suffer when they are not allowed enough water to swim and preen, which they do naturally in the wild.

### **FOIE GRAS PRODUCTION IN CANADA**

Several Quebec farms produce foie gras. At one such farm – Aux Champs d’Elise in Marieville, Quebec – 85,000 ducks are kept. In the two weeks prior to slaughter, the birds are kept caged and force-fed a mixture of corn and hot water twice per day. A gauged ration is increased each day until their livers are bloated and on the brink of lethal cirrhosis, at which time the organ is deemed perfect for foie gras. In 2004, the United States imported 2.5 million dollars worth of foie gras from Quebec.



*Duck being force-fed through metal tube  
Photo courtesy of PETA*

### **GLOBAL PROGRESS**

In recognition of the inherent cruelty of foie gras, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, and the U.K. have banned its production. The state of California also recently passed legislation that will ban the production and sale of foie gras beginning in 2012. As of April 2006, the city of Chicago prohibited the selling of foie gras within city limits. In addition, many restaurants, retailers and institutions, upon learning about the horrendous cruelty involved in foie gras production, have halted any promotion of foie gras and removed it from their menus.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Do not buy foie gras.
- Write to retailers and restaurants that sell foie gras. Let them know about the cruelty involved in its production and politely ask them to discontinue selling it.
- Speak to store managers of shops that sell foie gras and ask them to stop selling it.
- Write to your MP and MPP about banning the production and sale of foie gras in Canada.

### **For more information, please contact us.**

Mail: 213-33 Hazelton Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5R 2E3

Email: [info@humanefood.ca](mailto:info@humanefood.ca) Website at [www.humanefood.ca](http://www.humanefood.ca)