

# Ethical Issues in Production

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# Questions???

1. Is it ethical to cull birds by clubbing?
2. Is it ethical to practice on-farm depopulation of spent hens?
3. Is free-range poultry production ethical?
4. Is it ethical to ban cages?

# Clubbing?

- Used in initial H5N1 outbreaks in Asia



# Clubbing?



- What about routine culling of unfit birds?
- If done skillfully
  - Rapid
  - Irreversible
- Is it a “good” death?
- Unaesthetic
- Appears violent; lacking compassion
- Unacceptable to public?

# Culling

- Is the method reliably effective and fast?
- How are workers trained?
- Is there adequate oversight?
- What are the alternatives?
- Why are the birds unfit?

# Culling

- Why are some birds unfit?
- Should we only use slower growing genetic lines with limited appetites?



INRA 1998



Feed restriction of breeder pullets



Label Rouge

# Clubbing?



- Should clubbing be banned throughout (voluntary) poultry industry standards?
- Should it be banned through legislation?
- Should it be determined on a case by case basis in the courts?

# On-Farm Depopulation

- End-of-lay hens
- Loss of processors
- Long transport distances
- On-farm killing





# On-Farm Depopulation?

- Is it wasteful to send hens to renderer instead of processing for human food supply?



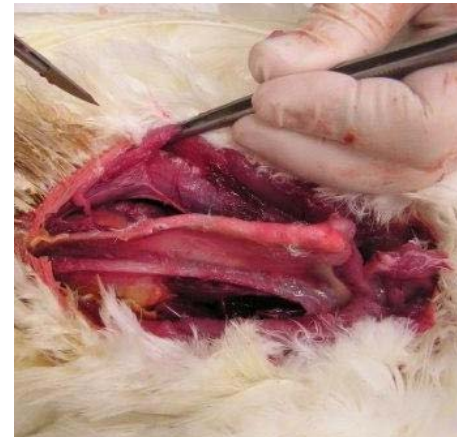
Courtesy of B. Webster



- Is it more humane than live transport if birds caught carefully and placed directly into a MAK cart?

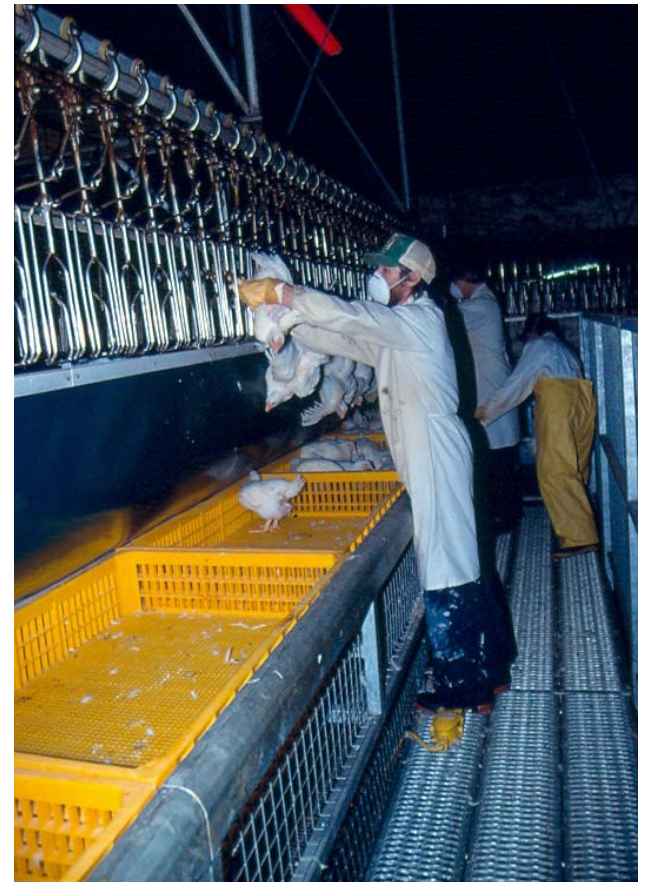
# On-Farm Depopulation?

- What are the alternatives?
- Old fractures in 50-78% of non-cage hens at end-of-lay (Wilkins et al., 2004)
  - Furculum (10% of fractures)
  - Keel (90% of fractures)
- Genetic selection for stronger bones?
- Market birds younger?



# On-Farm Depopulation?

- If bone fragments in meat eliminated, would demand for processed hens return?



# Changing Attitudes



**Why Not?**  
You eat other animals,  
don't you?

**GO VEGETARIAN**



# Free Range?



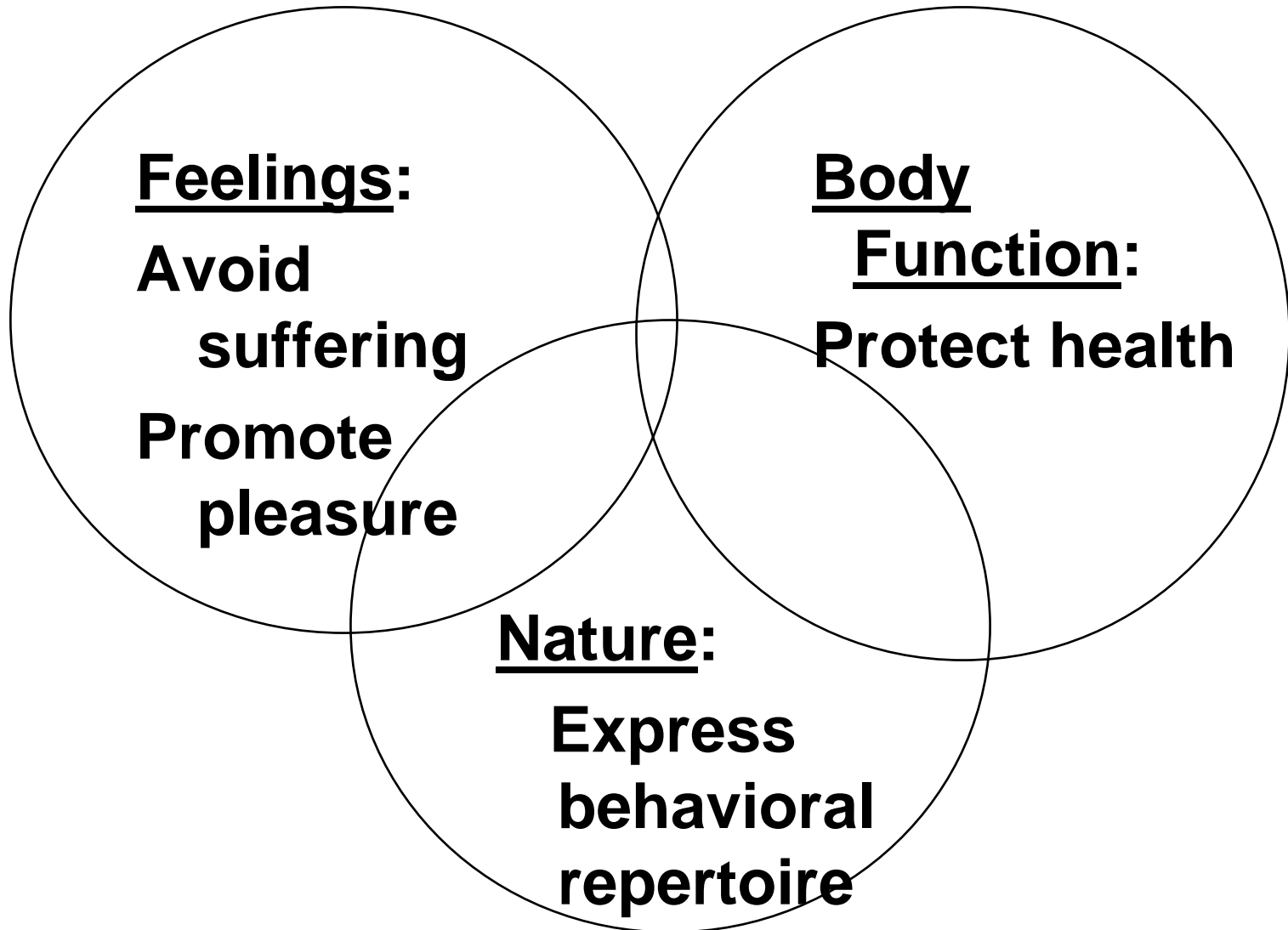
- How important is (greater) freedom?
- Should birds be able to express full natural behavior?
  - Sunbathing, sex
  - Exploring, foraging



- How important is pleasure?
- If never know the outdoors, can they miss it?
- If used to going outdoors and then outdoor access denied, do they miss it?



# Poultry Welfare



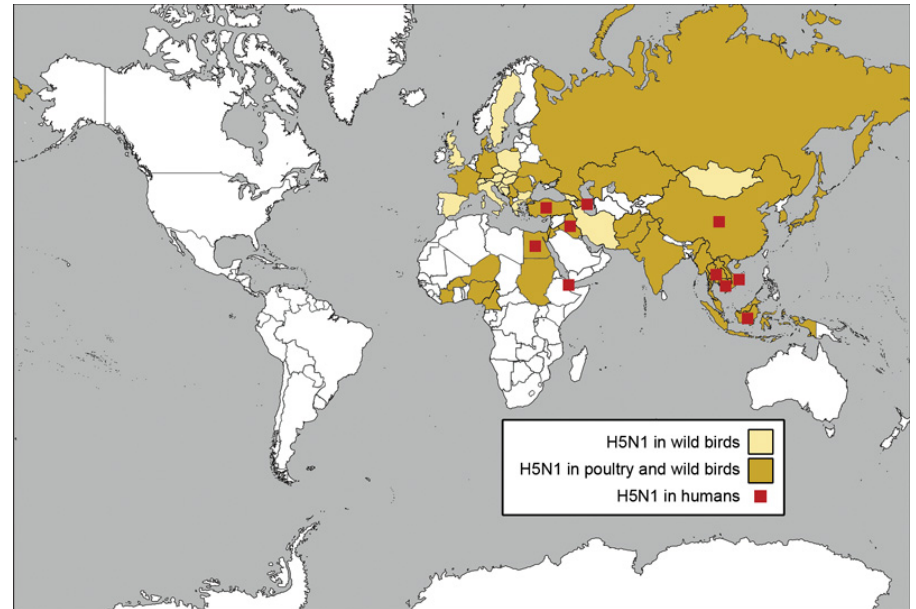
# Free-Range?

Implications  
for wildlife?



Tony Martin, Birdlife

**“Globalization has made the chicken the world’s number one migratory bird species”**



US Dept of Health & Human Services

**Nations with confirmed cases of H5N1 avian influenza (July 7, 2006)**



**Wondering  
What  
This Logo  
Means?**



# HSUS Campaign

- No battery eggs campaign
- Call for end of cage housing



*Battery cages prevent birds from engaging in many natural behaviors, including walking.*



# Ban Cages!

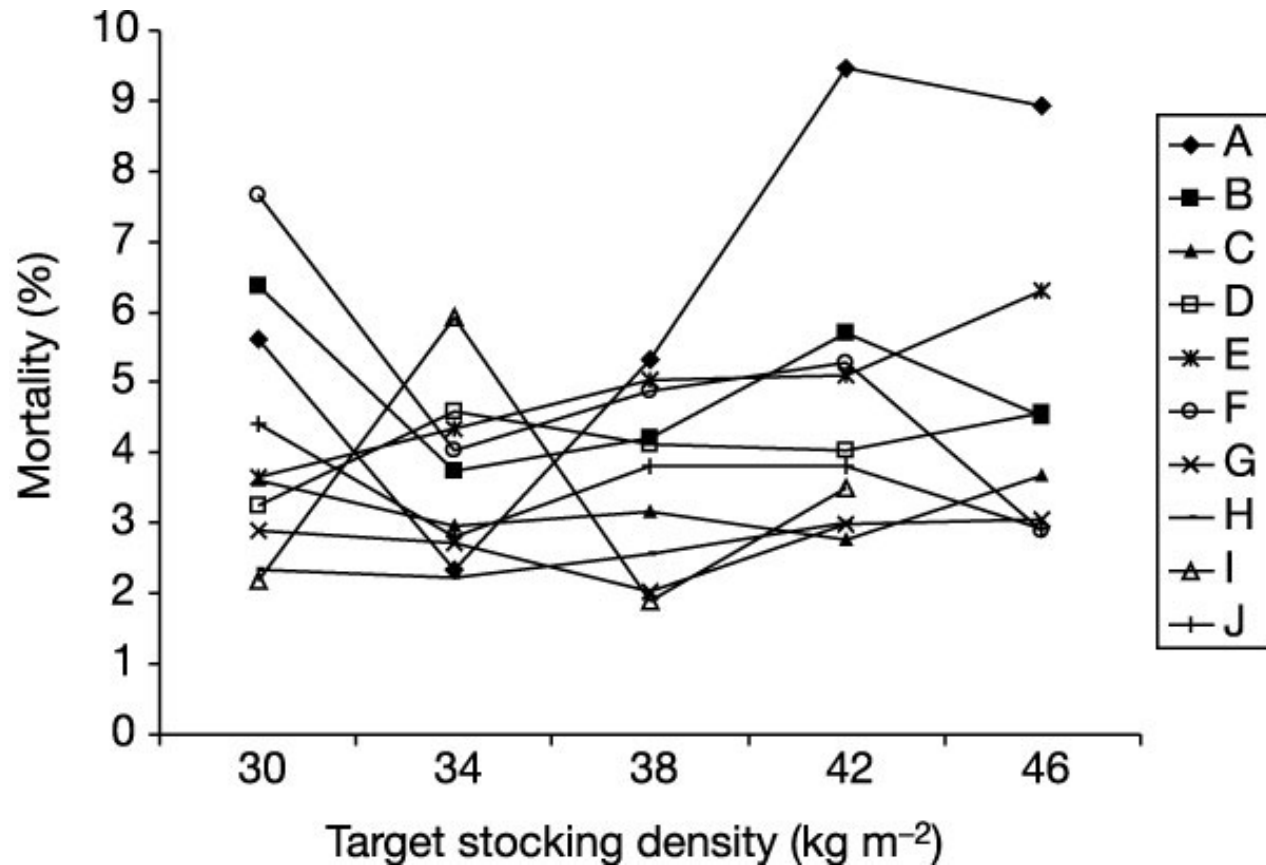
- Assumption:
  - Bird welfare better in non-cage systems
- Is it? Considerations:
  - Genetics
  - Rearing
  - Management



# Ban Cadavers

- Management skills variable
- Legislate to force change?
- Voluntary industry standards?
- Let consumers chose?

Differences between companies have greater impact on broiler mortality than stocking density



Dawkins et al. (2004), Nature

# Ban Cages

- Considerations:

- Egg production in non-cage systems less efficient
- Eggs more costly
- Likely impact of cage ban is reduced consumption of eggs
- Impact on economy, health, environment?



Wikipedia (2007) - Kullu, India

# What about enriched cages?



- Provide areas for nesting, perching and scratching
- Eggs cost more
- Consumers not willing to pay extra for eggs from enriched vs regular cages

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