

Example by StudyDriver

Source: <https://studydriver.com/egg-facts-in-the-united-states/>

Egg Facts in the United States Example

The largest number of egg-laying hens in the United States are kept in battery cages. Battery cages are a housing system used for various animal production and containment methods, but mostly for egg-laying hens. Typically, each caged laying hen is given just 67 square inches of cage space which is less area than a single paper envelope on which to live her whole life. The caged hens are not able to move their wings or move freely and are one of the most extremely restricted animals in the livestock industry. Caged hens also are restricted from some physical behaviors, nesting, perching, and dust bathing, all critical for hen's overall health. Many scientists and experts (PDF) have talked clearly about these animal welfare issues with battery cages. Nobel Prize winner Dr. Konrad Lorenz, stated:

"Battery cages present inherent animal welfare problems, most notably by their small size and barren conditions. Hens are unable to act in many of their natural behaviors and are put through high levels of stress and frustration. Cage-free egg production, while not perfect, does not include such animal welfare disadvantages and is a very good step in the right direction for the egg industry".

Cage-free hens are saved from several severe cruelties that are the cause of battery cage. But it would most

definitely be an understatement to consider cage-free facilities to be "cruelty-free." Here are some of the more typical sources of animal suffering with both types of egg production:

Caged: Hens are confined to cages with a 67-square inch space each. The hens never get to see daylight and are fed a mixture of corn or soy diet. Over 90 percent of eggs in the U.S. come from hens that have lived in cages for their entire lives. These eggs don't say "caged" of course?—they're just not labeled with anything special.

A large number of egg-laying hens are grown in battery cages —tiny wire cages just size of an iPad, which makes up their "house" for the time of their lives. From hatchery to a massacre, these egg-laying hens are killed by mutilation: Egg-laying hens have part of their beaks burnt off with a warm arm (known as debeaking) without anesthetic.

In battery cage and free-range egg production, less desirable male chicks are killed at birth during the process to make sure that a good generation of egg-laying hens is secured. [1]

Unlike battery hens, cage-free hens are fully able to move around, they are able to move their wings, as well as put their eggs in nests, physical behaviors that are not allowed to hens bound in cages. Most cage-free hens sleep in very large flocks that may number in thousands of hens who still live in a facility and never see the outside world. A large number of cage-free hens reside on farms that are 3rd-party owned by certificate programmes that suggest perching and dust-bathing fields. These rewards are important to the animals health.

Effective 1 January 2012, the European Union banned conventional battery cages for egg-laying hens, as outlined in EU Directive 1999/74/EC. [2] The EU permits the use of "enriched" furnished cages that must meet certain space and amenity requirements. Egg producers in many member states have disagreed to the new quality standards while in some countries even furnished cages and family cages are soon to be banned as well. The production standard of the eggs is visible on the mandatory egg marking where the EU egg code begins with 3 for caged chicken to 1 for free-range eggs and 0 for organic egg production.

Companies all around the world are moving more towards cage-free eggs as the health and treatment of egg-laying hens becomes increasingly more of a public issue. Wendy's restaurants said it would begin using cage-free eggs for 2 percent of its egg purchases. Other fast-food restaurants chains, including Burger King and Quizno's, also get a portion of their eggs from cage-free farms. Battery cages, one of the most used forms of housing egg-laying hens, is under attack by animal rights groups and many consumers.

Each system was rated on 25 different points, creating a zero through ten rating system. Results demonstrate that cage systems ranked a zero, while the 12-hen system scored a 10. Cage-free rated in the middle at 5.8. Free-range eggs rated at 6.1. A variety of retailers and food service chains have made cage-free eggs standard. And just to note, starting in 2015, all eggs sold in California by law must be cage-free.[3]

A "cage-free" claim on an egg carton label means that the hens were not kept in cages. It does not mean that the hens had access to the outdoors. Hen houses that keep their laying hens in small cages have been the number one method of housing in the egg industry since the 1960s. In a caged housing system, laying hens are given just enough space to stand upright, but not enough space to stretch wings or move around.

Oregon SB 805 also banned battery cages and put into play a plan of enriched colony cages, doubling the space per egg-laying hen. [4] [5] This law served as the example for a national agreement between the Humane Society of the United States and the United Egg Producers. [6]As the name suggests, chickens that produce caged eggs are kept in cages. Of course, farms always confined livestock to some extent (a field that is fenced) but it is the size of the cages and the stocking numbers that makes cage egg production such a concern. The average chicken in a cage egg system has no more space to stand than a piece of paper and must live in close quarters with many other chickens.