



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

January 29, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Kate O'Connor, Manager, Animal Care Services

Subject: Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution endorsing the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, a statewide ballot initiative requiring that calves used for veal, egg-laying hens and breeding pigs on industrialized factory farms have enough room to turn around and extend their limbs.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

There is no fiscal impact to the City. This measure is targeted at large factory farms that have displaced smaller, independent family farms. Not only will this effort prevent animal cruelty, it can help protect small farmers from massive animal factories. Furthermore, producers will have six years to phase out these cruelest confinement practices, allowing ample time for the transition.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Animal welfare charities, veterinarians, family farmers, conservation organizations, health professionals and concerned citizens have formed a coalition called Californians for Humane Farms to start gathering the 650,000 signatures needed to place this initiative on the November 2008 ballot through an all-volunteer effort.

If passed, this initiative will ban the use of veal crates for calves, battery cages for egg laying hens, and gestation crates for breeding pigs in the State of California (with a six year phase-in). The extreme overcrowded conditions that have become the norm in some sectors of animal agribusiness cause immense suffering for the animals while polluting the air, contaminating groundwater and threatening human health.

These intensive confinement practices are so cruel that they have been outlawed in several other countries. In Fact, Florida, Arizona, and Oregon have all banned gestation crates, with Arizona banning veal crates as well.

BACKGROUND

The veal crate is well known as one of the cruelest and deplorable farm animal confinement practices used today. Young calves are kept in tiny enclosures, purposely confined so intensively that they are not even able to turn around. Because they are so tightly confined, research has shown that these calves exhibit abnormal coping behaviors associated with fear and stress. These behaviors include head tossing, head shaking, kicking, scratching, and stereotypical chewing. After 16-20 weeks, these weak animals are sent to slaughter for veal.

California has approximately 19 million egg-laying hens. The vast majority of them are confined in barren battery cages that are so small they can barely move. In fact, each caged hen has less space than a sheet of letter-sized paper on which to live for more than a year before she is slaughtered. The birds can't even spread their wings, let alone nest, dust bathe, perch or walk. They endure lives filled with suffering.

Equally cruel and inhumane is the way the thousands of female breeding pigs are treated in California factory farms. Breeding sows are confined in barren metal cages for almost their entire lives. During their pregnancies, the sows are severely restricted in individual "gestation crates" measuring just two feet wide. Like the veal calves, they are unable to exercise or even turn around. After giving birth to an average of five or six litters of piglets in 4 years, the sows are sent to slaughter as well.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act will reduce the suffering of nearly 20 million animals confined on California Farms. The measure will also prevent other out of state factory farm operators from setting up shop in our state with veal crates, battery cages and gestation crates.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CONTACT PERSON

Kate O'Connor, Manager, Animal Care Services

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

-N.S.

ENDORING THE PREVENTION OF FARM ANIMAL CRUELTY ACT, A STATEWIDE BALLOT INITIATIVE REQUIRING THAT CALVES USED FOR VEAL, EGG-LAYING HENS AND BREEDING PIGS ON INDUSTRIALIZED FACTORY FARMS HAVE ENOUGH ROOM TO TURN AROUND AND EXTEND THEIR LIMBS.

WHEREAS, Animal welfare charities, veterinarians, family farmers, conservation organizations, health professionals and concerned citizens have formed a coalition called Californians for Humane Farms to start gathering the 650,000 signatures needed to place this initiative on the November 2008 ballot through an all-volunteer effort; and

WHEREAS, if passed, this initiative will ban the use of veal crates for calves, battery cages for egg laying hens, and gestation crates for breeding pigs in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the extreme overcrowded conditions that have become the norm in some sectors of animal agribusiness cause immense suffering for the animals while polluting the air, contaminating groundwater and threatening human health; and

WHEREAS, young calves are kept in tiny enclosures, purposely confined so intensively that they are not even able to turn around; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of egg-laying hens are confined in barren battery cages that are so small they can barely move; and

WHEREAS, during their pregnancies, the female breeding pigs are severely restricted in individual "gestation crates" measuring just two feet wide where they are unable to exercise or even turn around.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley endorses the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, a statewide ballot initiative requiring that calves used for veal, egg-laying hens and breeding pigs on industrialized factory farms have enough room to turn around and extend their limbs.

