

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to ask your organization to consider an endorsement of the YES! on 10 Campaign, a statewide ballot initiative to ban the cruel and unnecessary confinement of pigs on industrialized factory farms.

After attempting to pass this popular issue through the legislature, animal protection groups, conservation organizations and concerned citizens formed a coalition called Floridians for Humane Farms. This massive coalition of volunteers gathered over a half a million signatures to place this initiative on the November 2002 ballot. The initiative, which seeks to codify a basic humane standard, would add a simple provision to Florida's 38,000-word constitution that already contains provisions dealing with the lottery, fish and wildlife protection, and mass transit, in order to ban the use of "gestation crates" in the state of Florida.

Measured just in sheer numbers, the abuse of animals on "factory farms" dwarfs the exploitation of animals used in other animal industries. Every year, billions of animals are reared and confined on factory farms and then sent to slaughterhouses. Small family farms have been supplanted by corporate animal factories, which treat animals as nothing more than unfeeling commodities. Thousands of animals are crowded on factory farms, causing misery for the animals while putrefying the air, contaminating groundwater and threatening human health. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, livestock waste has polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated groundwater in 17 states.

It is well known that the veal crate is among the most cruel and deplorable animal husbandry technique: young veal calves are kept in tiny stalls for their short 16-week lives confined so intensely that they cannot even move. Perhaps less known, but even more cruel and inhumane due to the length of the confinement, is the way female breeding pigs are treated on factory farms.

Pregnant sows whose intelligence is comparable to dogs are confined in barren metal cages – measuring just two feet wide – for almost their entire lives. These enclosures are called gestation crates, which are not to be confused with "farrowing crates" that are used for the period immediately before the birth of the piglets through the time that they are weaned.

Pigs are confined in gestation crates for almost the entire three months and three weeks of their pregnancy. They cannot exercise or even turn around and are prevented from engaging in natural behaviors or from satisfying basic psychological needs. After they produce a litter of piglets, the mother pig is impregnated again and returned to the miserable life of a gestation crate. This cycle is repeated for up to 10 pregnancies for a total of roughly four years.

Pigs in gestation crates suffer from an array of physical ailments such as joint disorders and lameness, and psychological maladies including chronic stress and depression. The pigs have sores on their bodies from constantly rubbing against the bars of their enclosures. Confined pigs routinely exhibit neurotic coping behaviors, which include repetitive bar biting and head waving.

Gestation crates are so cruel that they have been outlawed in other countries, but, tragically, they remain common in the United States. The practice of keeping a female pig in a constant state of

pregnancy and confined in a tiny crate for her entire life should be illegal. Polls indicate that a significant majority of Floridians, both rural and urban, would vote to restrict the use of gestation crates. With your help, we can ban the use of the gestation crates here in Florida.

Enclosed please find a copy of the initiative wording on the petition, an endorsement form, a list of frequently asked questions and an article that ran on the cover on the Washington Post. If your organization is interested in endorsing, please send the enclosed self-addressed endorsement form to our campaign headquarters.

Feel free to call 954.946.1691 with any questions or comments. We will gladly provide you with more information or provide a spokesperson to speak at one of your meetings. An endorsement from your organization would be beneficial in ensuring that this important initiative passes in November. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Frye & Martin Linney  
Campaign Managers