

# Problem

Despite their vast numbers and the severity of abuse they suffer, farmed animals receive only minimal protections by our legal system, and the protections that exist are rarely enforced.

An estimated 9 billion animals are raised and killed for food every year in the United States. Many of these animals are subjected to near-unimaginable cruelty — much of which is perfectly legal under current law.

# Solution

The Animal Legal Defense Fund is fighting for stronger legal protections for farmed animals, and better enforcement of those laws. Farmed animals are capable of feeling pain and pleasure just like a cat, dog, or any animal, and deserve the same legal protections from neglect and abuse.



THE ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND  
ADVOCATES FOR THE PROTECTION OF  
FARMED ANIMALS IN MANY WAYS:

Overturing Ag-Gag laws which  
criminalize whistleblowing

Filing lawsuits to stop false advertising of  
cruelly-raised animal products as “humane”

Supporting legislation to outlaw cruel  
intensive confinement

Fighting to stop cruel high-speed pig slaughter

Urging enforcement of the  
Humane Methods of Slaughter Act

Training and supporting law enforcement  
and prosecutors in the handling of  
farmed animal cruelty cases



## How You Can Help

Sign up for the Animal Legal Defense Fund eNewsletter to receive alerts about legislation and litigation taking place in your state on behalf of farmed animals. Sign up at [aldf.org/signup](http://aldf.org/signup).

Let your federal, state, and local lawmakers know that you care about farmed animals, and want to see stronger laws to protect them, and better enforcement of those laws.

Go to [aldf.org/farmedanimals](http://aldf.org/farmedanimals) to learn about protective legislative measures you can fight for in your state.

Be vigilant of state laws that aim to protect cruel industry practices through “right to farm” or “Ag-Gag” laws. Learn more at [aldf.org/aggag](http://aldf.org/aggag).

Become a member of the Animal Legal Defense Fund and help us to continue to be the legal voice for farmed animals by going to [aldf.org/partner](http://aldf.org/partner).



**ANIMAL LEGAL  
DEFENSE FUND** EST. 1979

525 East Cotati Avenue  
Cotati, CA 94931 | [aldf.org](http://aldf.org)

Please see “copyright” link on [aldf.org](http://aldf.org) for trademark information.



**ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND**

# Farmed Animals & The Law

STRENGTHENING LEGAL PROTECTIONS  
AND ENFORCEMENT



**ALL OUR CLIENTS ARE INNOCENT**



Farmed animals are excluded from any federal laws while being raised for the vast majority of their short lives. The only federal oversight of their treatment comes during transportation and slaughter. This includes:

Male chicks are ground up alive or suffocated after being tossed into barrels, and piglets deemed too small are killed by slamming their heads on the ground.



**The 28 Hour Law** Requires vehicles transporting certain animals for slaughter to stop every 28 hours to allow the animals exercise, food, and water. The law does not apply if the vehicle in which animals are being transported contains access to food or water. This law goes virtually unenforced, failing to protect farmed animals from the stresses of long transport.

#### **The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act**

Requires that animals be stunned into unconsciousness before slaughter, and treated humanely while on slaughterhouse premises. Though chickens, turkeys and other birds feel pain just like other animals, the USDA claims poultry — who make up 95% of all land animals killed for food — are exempt from the law. Enforcement of this law has repeatedly been found by government oversight bodies to be “inconsistent.”

**State Law Exemptions** All 50 states have laws protecting animals from abuse, but most state anti-cruelty laws exempt animals in agriculture from their protections. The scope of the exemptions is often undefined or left up to the industry itself to determine. As a result, those states’ laws effectively permit the following:

Animals can have their testicles, tails, horns, beaks or toes removed without anesthesia.

Animals are intensively confined in spaces so small they can barely move.

Ducks are cruelly force-fed, to the point of organ failure, in the production of foie gras.

Male dairy calves – unable to produce milk – are taken away from their mothers mere moments after birth causing extraordinary distress for both. The calves are then slaughtered as a waste product.



Even when farmed animals are covered by state anti-cruelty laws, criminal prosecution for abuse is rare, due to factors like limited investigative resources and the fact that abuse often occurs behind closed doors at windowless facilities.

**State laws typically impose obstacles that make it very difficult for private citizens and organizations to stop animal abuse through the civil court system.**

**Positive Legislative Change** A number of states have adopted important measures to outlaw the “intensive confinement” of farmed animals. These measures are aimed at preventing mothering pigs, egg-laying hens, and calves raised for veal from being confined in cages and crates so small that the animals can’t turn around or fully lie down. Egg-laying hens are typically confined in battery cages so cramped the birds don’t even have room to stretch their wings.