

CALIFORNIA COMPASSION:

Proposition 2 Passes!



 By Mat Thomas

Photo Courtesy of Farm Sanctuary

In the 2008 election, California made animal protection history by voting overwhelmingly in favor of Proposition 2, a landmark ballot measure that will effectively ban three of the cruelest factory farming confinement systems: battery cages for egg-laying hens, gestation crates for pregnant pigs and veal crates for calves. Proposition 2 will be enforced in the state by 2015 and will improve living conditions for 20 million farm animals in the nation's top agricultural state. Interestingly, dogs, and the people who love them, played a crucial role in helping to pass this groundbreaking new law.

Farm Sanctuary enthusiastically co-sponsored Proposition 2 (along with the Humane Society of the United States) because it is simply inhumane to deny animals any semblance of natural movement for virtually their entire lives. Anyone who kept a dog constantly locked in a cramped cage sitting in his own waste could be brought up on animal abuse charges, and rightly so. The more people appreciate their canine companions as unique individuals who deserve to be treated with dignity, the easier it is for them to extend their circle of concern beyond dogs to the welfare of *all* animals—including those raised for meat, milk and eggs.

Proposition 2 succeeded because thousands of dedicated volunteers participated in a massive statewide grassroots educational campaign to raise awareness and get the vote out. Canine companions were members of this team effort, proving themselves very effective and convincing advocates for change. Friendly dogs at outreach events

sparked people's innate sympathy for animals, making them more open to learning—often for the first time in their lives—about the horrible conditions pigs, chickens and calves are subjected to on factory farms.

In addition, millions of television viewers were informed about Proposition 2 through advertisements featuring veterinarians appearing with their dogs and voicing strong support for the measure, and encouraging voters to empathize with farm animals; more than 700 California veterinarians, as well as numerous veterinary medical associations, veterinary hospitals and clinics, officially endorsed Proposition 2.

Farm Sanctuary's shelters in New York and California provide lifelong refuge and care for hundreds of rescued farm animals, each one with a name and each special in his or her own way. The landslide victory of Proposition 2 gives me hope that someday, these animals will be accorded the same respect and understanding that we now extend to our beloved canine companions.

Gene Baur is the co-founder and president of Farm Sanctuary, the nation's leading farm animal protection organization, and author of the best-selling book Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food.

For more information visit: www.farmsanctuary.org