

# NEWS BEEF

By Mat Thomas

## Routinev.Humane

■ In a monumental legal victory for animals, the New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously struck down the state's Department of Agriculture (NJDA) claim that "routine husbandry practices" are "humane" simply because they are widely used within the factory-farming industry. In 1996, the New Jersey legislature ordered the NJDA to develop "humane" standards of farm-animal care. When the department announced eight years later that every practice (no matter how painful or cruel) is humane as long as it is broadly implemented, a coalition of animal advocates, led by Farm Sanctuary, filed a lawsuit charging that the NJDA had failed to comply with the legislature's directive. The State Supreme Court's precedent-setting ruling also condemned the practice of mutilating farm animals without anesthesia (such as tail-docking cattle), but failed to define gestation crates, veal crates, and the transport of downed cattle as inhumane, instead suggesting that the legislature address these controversial issues. [njfarms.org](http://njfarms.org)



## The DogsofSummer

■ When dignitaries and tourists from across the globe descended on China's capital for the Summer Olympics in Beijing, the government ordered restaurants and hotels not to serve dog during the international games in August to "respect the dining customs of different countries." The communiqué specifically targeted officially designated Olympic restaurants and those in "key control areas" along the route of the Olympic flame rally. Canine cuisine—whether roasted or stewed—is still popular in Asian countries like South Korea, Laos, and the Philippines. If visitors from these countries ordered dog meat, servers were advised to "avoid conflict" by politely suggesting another flesh-based dish. This is not the first time that a country has tried to hide the eating of dogs from prying Western sensibilities; in 1988, South Korea temporarily suspended the sale of dog meat during the Seoul Olympics due to criticism from animal-protection advocates. *San Francisco Chronicle*

## KentuckyFriedUn-Chicken

■ After five years of negative publicity stemming from an ongoing PETA campaign, Kentucky Fried Chicken Canada has agreed to institute basic animal-welfare reforms and introduce a meatless "chicken" sandwich to the menus of 465 Canadian KFC restaurants. During seven months of intense negotiations, PETA also convinced KFC Canada to form an animal-welfare advisory council, and to only purchase chickens from suppliers who use gas-based controlled-atmosphere killing (CAK). Compared to the common industry practice of passing birds' heads through a pool of electrified water—which often leaves them paralyzed but still conscious during slaughter—CAK is considered the least painful and most reliable way to ensure that animals are dead before processing. PETA is calling its KFC Canada victory the biggest in its 28-year history, measured by the number of animals affected. Until KFC makes the same changes worldwide, PETA plans to continue protests in the US and other countries. *The Globe and Mail*



# NoMeat Is“Happy” Meat

■ While PETA celebrates its settlement with KFC Canada, some animal advocates question whether praising “new and improved” methods of killing represents true progress for animals or merely collusion with an essentially violent industry. On their new website, [humanemyth.org](http://humanemyth.org), the filmmakers who brought you *Peaceable Kingdom* define the myth as “An idea being propagated by the animal-using industry and some animal-protection organizations that it is possible to use and kill animals in a manner that can be fairly described as respectful or humane.” Those who object to the humane myth also reject endorsement of foods containing animal products marketed as “humane,” “cruelty-free,” “free-range,” “cage-free,” or “compassionate,” contending that encouraging people to eat any kind of animal products only reinforces the commercial exploitation that is inherent to raising animals for food. Considered controversial by many advocates, the animal-abolition movement’s adherents nevertheless claim their values embody the central core of animal-rights philosophy. [humanemyth.org](http://humanemyth.org)



## Arresting Development

■ In the early-morning hours of May 21—the day before a major campaign advocating a constitutional amendment for animal protection was to be launched in Austria—a masked unit of heavily armed police officers stormed the homes of animal activists, confiscating computers, telephones, and other office equipment. Of the 10 incarcerated (as of this writing), many are leaders of mainstream animal-welfare non-profits that have been crucial to passing landmark reforms in Austria, including bans on battery cages, fur farms, wild-animal circuses, and medical experiments on great apes. In a decidedly Kafkaesque twist, authorities first ignored legal procedure by refusing to tell the prisoners the charges against them. Prosecutors then claimed that these individuals are heads of a “criminal organization” that has perpetrated every single animal-rights-related crime in the country over the last 11 years. No actual evidence substantiating these accusations has yet been presented. [evana.org](http://evana.org)

## SpinItLikeYouMeanIt

■ You’d think that a group named Californians for Safe Food would support statewide legislation to ban veal crates, battery cages for egg-laying hens, and gestation crates for pregnant pigs, but no. It is instead the official organization opposing Proposition 2, the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, which will be on the ballot in California this November. The group is composed of the state’s most powerful agribusiness conglomerates, who have spent months infusing massive amounts of cash into a campaign aimed at persuading the public that Prop. 2 would drastically raise consumer prices and financially devastate the egg industry. Contradicting this claim, research shows that it costs factory farms less than one penny extra per egg to raise hens without battery cages. With a recent poll showing that 63 percent of voters are in support of Prop. 2, and 24 percent are against it, the spinmeisters have their work cut out for them. [californiaprogressreport.com](http://californiaprogressreport.com)



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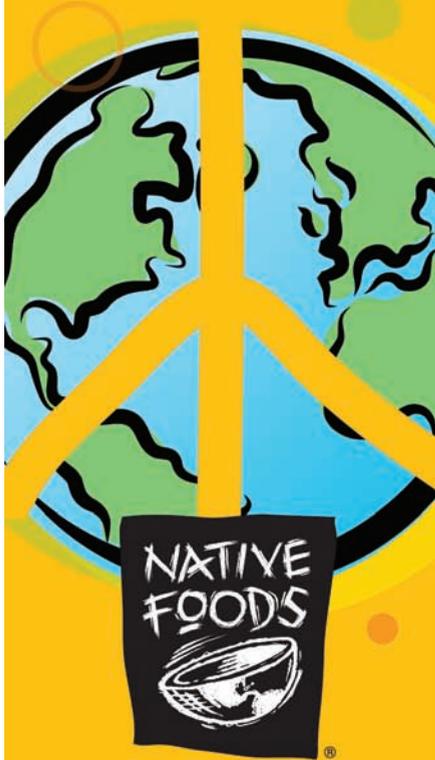
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## 1,000,000 Taiwanese Pledge Veg

■ **More than a million** Taiwanese citizens have agreed to combat climate change and global food shortages by committing to a vegetarian diet. The No Meat No Heat campaign also persuaded prominent government officials to go veg, including Taipei's and Kaohsiung's mayors, the environment minister, and the speaker of the House. The adoption of vegetarian values is aligned with Taiwan's long tradition of Buddhist culture, which espouses non-violence. With rising temperatures breaking records and more than 850 million people (mostly children) going hungry every year, one hopes that other countries will follow Taiwan's example. As the campaign's organizers point out, eating a plant-based diet will reduce a person's carbon footprint by 1.5 tons of carbon emissions a year, and growing vegetables is about 99 percent more resource-efficient than raising beef. *english.rti.org*

## Fastest Hen in the West

■ **For four months**, she stood boldly blocking the advancing line of cars at the Temecula, Calif., McDonald's drive-through during rush-hour lunch traffic, even as customers ordered and ate McNuggets and chicken sandwiches. No, this was not a persistent PETA protester, but a real, live chicken who had evaded interception by fast-food employees time and time again. Why couldn't anyone capture the bird? Restaurant manager Chona Cauley claims it was because "the chicken is too smart." Cauley originally planned to throw the hen "straight (into) the pot" following capture, but this fine feathered fugitive gained many fans (and feeders) among the establishment's clientele, and wound up getting a well-deserved reprieve when she was nabbed while sleeping atop the drive-through window one evening. "Adriana"—and her six chicks—are now safely ensconced as "family members" at the home of McDonald's employee Esmeralda Ruiz and her small flock of chickens. *Associated Press*



## Jewish Leaders Endorse Humane Campaign

■ **All Creatures Great and Small**, a campaign spearheaded by the Humane Society of the United States and the Jewish Vegetarians of North America, applies traditional religious values to the humane treatment of animals. The campaign is gaining some prominent converts in the Jewish community who say its message is consistent with scriptural teachings which prohibit causing unnecessary suffering to living beings. All Creatures Great and Small focuses on animals who endure excruciatingly painful lives on factory farms, noting that Judaic laws of kashrut slaughter require the killing of animals in the least traumatic way possible, but do not address the months or years of chronic stress and disease that animals are subjected to in battery cages and other forms of intensive confinement. The campaign asks people to practice compassion for animals by pledging to first buy only cage-free eggs, and eventually giving them up altogether. *humanesociety.org*



## Rights for Spain's Great Apes

■ Spain is on the cusp of becoming the first country in the world to proffer rights of personhood on a non-human species. The Spanish Parliament's environmental committee recently voted in favor of a resolution, which has majority support, urging the government to comply with the Great Ape Project. Founded by philosophers Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri in 1993, the project's goal is "to provide (great apes) with the right to life, the freedom of liberty, and protection from torture." In addition to banning experiments on primates, the law would also prohibit the use of primates in circuses, and require drastic improvements for more than 300 apes currently living in zoos. Spain's sea change could also have palpable benefits for primates around the world, raising the animal protection bar for other countries. Ultimately, Spain's stand may be a crucial step towards stemming the international bushmeat trade and averting the extinction of wild apes. *Reuters* **VN**

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