EXPOSED
GROUNDBREAKING INVESTIGATIONS IN MEXICO GO VIRAL

CHAMPIONS FOR CHICKENS
MFA’S MISSION OF CHANGE FOR BILLIONS OF BIRDS
DEAR FRIENDS,

Something extraordinary is happening this year. Millions of people are marching in the streets and speaking up for causes they believe in. They are reaching out to their elected representatives, organizing their communities, and refusing to be silent.

The political climate has also inspired people to ask themselves how they can make a difference. Americans who had never before considered it are running for public office.

The energy for change, and the will to create a more compassionate world, is stronger than ever. And it reaches far beyond the United States.

More than 25 million people watched the footage from our first investigations in Mexico. Images of animals tortured at government-run slaughterhouses across the country broke their hearts, but not their spirits. Outraged by these once hidden horrors—pigs stabbed multiple times, cows shocked and beaten—viewers worldwide signed petitions, shared the videos, and vowed to go vegan.

These videos were MFA’s most viral ever, and their impact for animals will continue to grow as we work to introduce legislation in Mexico that outlaws these abuses.

As we strengthen our efforts in other countries, we’ll see resistance from people who want to continue hurting animals.

But they vastly underestimate us.

We were told the U.S. factory farming industry would never change. They were too powerful, their political influence too deep. We didn’t listen, and now an end to cruel cages for hens, mother pigs, and baby calves is in sight.

The largest food companies in the world have come to the table with us to set policies that will greatly reduce the suffering of millions of animals globally. Nestlé worked with MFA to implement meaningful changes for animals in farms across 90 countries.

Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly passed a ballot measure outlawing the most extreme forms of farmed animal confinement. Indeed, caring people everywhere are making kinder and more informed choices.

Together, we have built a movement, and we will not waver or give in.

Sincerely,

Nathan Runkle
President
@nathanrunkle

Mya is a Grammy Award-winning singer with a heart of gold. Inspired by her own vegan journey, she uses her influence to be a voice for animals—and to share the many benefits of going vegan.

What inspired you to live a vegan lifestyle?

As a beginner on my vegan journey, there were so many truths that resonated with my spirit: obviously health, my love of animals, and the shocking information about animal agriculture as the number one cause of global warming.

What are your favorite foods?

Hard question because my answer is everything! Veganism has been a playground for me. There are so many grains, seeds, nuts, and vegetables that I had no clue existed because I just wasn’t raised with them. I’ve been introduced to so many types of foods. I’m having a ball in the kitchen.

What part of MFA’s work most resonates with you?

Mercy For Animals is such an amazing organization. You have investigators putting their lives on the line. What they do is selfless. It’s an act of love, and it comes from that place of respecting another life. To capture the reality and the truth—and exposing them to the world—truly changes hearts, which then spreads awareness and education.

What words of advice would you offer anyone thinking about going vegan?

I promise you there are incredible rewards—physically, mentally, and spiritually. Veganism has changed my life.
01
Reduce Your Risk

A new paper published in Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics asserts that people who adopt a vegan diet can reduce their risk of diabetes by 62 percent, prostate cancer by 35 percent, heart disease by 29 percent, and other forms of cancer by 18 percent.

03
Slam Dunk

GQ magazine highlighted NBA star Wilson Chandler’s vegan diet. Chandler told GQ he stopped eating meat to improve his basketball performance. Indeed, The Denver Post called this NBA season the “season of Chandler’s renaissance.” After 10 years in the league, Chandler’s on track for his best season yet.

02
Positive Pigs

A recent study from the University of Lincoln in England is the first to demonstrate optimism and pessimism in nonhuman animals. Like humans, pigs can form an outlook on life that affects their behavior. This finding is not surprising. Pigs are complex creatures with higher IQs than dogs and chimpanzees.

04
More Veggie Grill, Please!

Big Macs are out. The plant-based Beyond Burger is in. Popular restaurant chain Veggie Grill, which partnered with the creator of the Beyond Burger to sell the patties at its locations nationwide, is rapidly expanding. After a recent $22 million bump from investors, the chain expects to double in size.

Wilson Chandler @wilsonchandler
WENT VEGAN AND HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK SINCE. SPIRIT DIET.
Lucas Alvarenga

Animals in Brazil have a steadfast champion in Lucas Alvarenga. As MFA's vice president in Brazil, Lucas has shaped MFA's initiatives in the country. He has organized thousands of volunteers, launched Portuguese pro-vegan resources, and laid the groundwork for large-scale reform.

Q: Which part of your work with MFA most inspires you?

When I look around and see so many passionate colleagues dedicating their lives to reducing the suffering of voiceless animals, this is priceless to me. I’m surrounded by true heroes every day. I say the same about our volunteers in Brazil. Since our volunteer program kicked off only six months ago, we’ve organized more than 100 outreach events around Brazil. Their tireless work toward a more compassionate world fills my heart with inspiration.

Q: Why was it critical that MFA expand to Brazil?

As a Portuguese-speaking country with a unique culture, Brazil needs a very specific strategy and approach regarding farmed animal issues. We are the third-largest meat-producing country in the world. Yet the people of Brazil have often felt left out because so many vegetarian campaigns focus on Spanish-speaking countries, and the messages didn't fit in Brazil.

When MFA decided to expand to Brazil, I knew how quickly support would grow. Brazilians were ready for an effective animal protection organization to bring the structure, data, and support needed to make large-scale changes. Our impact was swift. More than half a million Brazilians have pledged to go vegetarian, and 35 of the country’s major restaurant chains have committed to ditching cruel cages for hens.

Q: When you are not saving animals, where can we find you?

I always tell people that MFA is in my blood. I am always thinking about helping animals. However, sometimes to recharge, I like to watch Netflix or read with my girlfriend in a very calm place.

Q: What’s the most valuable advice you’ve received?

My mom always told me I should take care of myself before taking care of others. That’s a very important lesson. If we are not well ourselves, we will not be able to help others in a sustainable way. If you intend to do great things for other people or animals, you need to be very balanced yourself.

When you do feel ready to help others, start putting yourself in their shoes. We can only change someone’s perspective when we are able to picture ourselves in their world and understand what is reasonable for them in that moment. When you are able to understand where someone is coming from, you are able to change the world.
VIRTUAL REALITY
BREAKING DOWN WALLS

They built walls, so we built windows: virtual windows that allow the public to see inside factory farms and slaughterhouses. Starting this spring, MFA will visit 10 elite colleges in the U.S., impressing on our nation’s future leaders the importance of protecting animals. Equipped with virtual reality headsets, MFA college fellows at each stop will give viewers realistic 3-D tours of these facilities, revealing the unimaginably cruel conditions endured by farmed animals.

December 16 was a historic day for farmed animals. Chilliwack Cattle Sales—Canada’s largest dairy factory farm—and one of its owners were convicted on a total of four counts of animal cruelty. Each count brought the maximum monetary penalty of $75,000. Seven workers’ cases are pending. These landmark convictions stem from an MFA investigation showing cows kicked, punched, and beaten at the facility. This is the first time a factory farm and its owner have been convicted of animal cruelty for actions of their employees following an undercover investigation by an animal protection group.

MFA LAUNCHES
CONSCIOUS EATING CANADA

If something works, replicate it! After MFA launched a new program in Brazil aiming to reduce meat served in major institutions, a generous donor gave MFA the resources to undertake Conscious Eating Canada, a program with the same goal.

Armed with effective advocacy materials in English and Canadian French, MFA will meet with schools, hospitals, corporations, and more to reduce the meat they serve by 20 percent.
As a dietitian with more than a decade of experience, I must say that the bad rap carbohydrates have received over the years due to absurd fad diets is one of my biggest pet peeves. Essentially, carbohydrates have been equated with weight gain, and that is simply a faulty equation. To look at this rationally, we must step back. Proteins, fats, and carbohydrates are major nutrients (called macronutrients). All are essential to our well-being and have various functions within the body. The primary function of carbohydrates is to provide us with energy. We need carbs!

That said, not all carbohydrate-rich foods are created equal: A delicious cream-filled donut from your favorite vegan bakery is not nutritionally similar to a tasty bowl of brown rice, lentils, and veggies. The latter choice certainly has more nutrients, including fiber, protein, and various vitamins and minerals, than a sugar-packed pastry. Whole-grain carbohydrate sources are much more nutritious than refined options like white bread. Refined carbohydrates are viewed as “empty-calorie foods” because of their lack of significant nutrients.

Fiber found in whole plant foods helps us feel full. Therefore, a diet rich in whole foods rather than refined carbohydrates is less likely to contribute to weight gain since you are more satiated. In fact, many studies show that folks following a whole-food vegan diet often have lower body mass indexes, not to mention decreased risk of chronic illnesses like cardiovascular disease.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned as a dietitian, it’s that our weight is influenced by so many variables. Our knowledge is constantly evolving. For instance, new research reveals our gut microbes could influence our ability to lose and gain weight. It isn’t as simple as calories in versus calories out. I say this because I feel food, including carbohydrate-rich foods like bread and potatoes, should be enjoyed. There is a place at the table for all plant-based foods.

Following a well-balanced vegan diet means making an effort to consume appropriate amounts of carbohydrate, protein, and fat. It means eating nuts and seeds, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and legumes—all of which contain varying amounts of carbohydrate. Some people fall into a rut when they switch to a vegan diet, depending too heavily on foods like bread, pasta, and rice. Again, all of these are fine, but it is important to add nutrient-rich choices to the meal.

I’ll never turn down a plate of pasta, but I’d prefer to emphasize the sauce loaded with veggies, not the noodles—although if a slice of garlic bread happens to make it onto my plate, I won’t say no.

Anya Todd is a registered, licensed dietitian specializing in vegan nutrition. Anya’s carb of choice is the almighty sweet potato. She resides in Cleveland, Ohio, which is becoming more veg-friendly by the day.

Visit AnyaTodd.com to learn more about Anya Todd and living a compassionate, healthy lifestyle!

Visit ChooseVeg.com for news, videos, vegan recipes, and more!
**Mollete**

4 bolillos or rolls  
8 teaspoons vegan margarine  
1 cup refried black beans  
1–1½ cups vegan chorizo, cooked  
½–1 cup vegan shredded white cheese

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut bolillos or rolls open. Spread 1 teaspoon margarine on each half. Place on baking sheet. Toast 5 minutes, or until edges are golden and crispy.

Spread 2 tablespoons beans over each half. Top with 2–3 tablespoons chorizo. Sprinkle 1–2 tablespoons cheese over each half. Place in oven 5 minutes, or until cheese has melted.

Garnish and serve. Serves 4.

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**Spicy Eggplant Barbacoa Tacos**

2 eggplants, shredded  
3 cups water  
Juice of 2 limes  
1¼ teaspoons salt, divided  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 medium white onion, diced and divided  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
1 fresh chile de árbol or serrano chile, seeded and minced  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon dark chili powder  
½ teaspoon dried Mexican oregano  
½ teaspoon chipotle powder  
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained  
8 corn tortillas  
¼ cup chopped cilantro  
2 limes, quartered

Soak eggplant in water with lime juice and 1 teaspoon salt 5–7 minutes. Drain. Squeeze out excess water.

Heat oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Sauté half the onion with garlic and chile de árbol 3–4 minutes. Add cumin, chili powder, oregano, chipotle powder, pepper, and remaining salt. Sauté 2 minutes.


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**OUR FAVE FOOD PICKS**

There’s something fishy about *Vegan Smoked Salmon by Sophie’s Kitchen*. It’s great with a bagel and vegan cream cheese.

Gardein’s breakfast breakthrough, the *Eggless Scramble Breakfast Pocket*, is perfect for busy vegans seeking a healthy start to the day.

Creamy and dreamy, *Daiya Blue Cheeze* and *Homestyle Ranch* dressings aren’t just for salad—dip in your favorite vegan snacks!
Crammed into a narrow factory farm hallway, dozens of frightened piglets scramble to dodge a factory worker’s brutal kicks. Only weeks old, the animals climb on top of others to avoid being trampled, squealing and thrashing into each other and walls. Most of them likely don’t know what they’re trying to escape, but they know they have to run.

This is just one of many violent experiences captured on an MFA undercover video released in January.

At a pig factory farm owned by The Maschhoffs—one of the largest U.S. pork producers and a supplier to Hormel Foods—MFA’s investigator discovered that baby pigs endure unrelenting abuse from the day they are born.

Mothers' Misery

Mothers to these piglets spend their entire lives in a gloomy indoor facility, confined to small, filthy gestation crates. Constricted by metal bars, the animals mostly sit or stand. Many search for a comfortable way to lie down. Others attempt to turn around. But there simply isn’t enough room.

Some pregnant pigs do nothing but stare ahead. Others chew incessantly on the bars—a serious sign of mental collapse.

When one of these pigs gives birth, she is moved to a farrowing crate. Treated as a mere nursing machine, she lies nearly immobile on metal grates and cannot lovingly interact with her piglets as she otherwise would.

Piglets’ Plight

As the piglet screamed, a worker held the animal upside down with his legs spread eagle. She made two incisions in his groin with a small blade. The piglet kicked, shrieked, and squirmed in her grasp. Without administering anesthesia or pain relief, she pulled out his testicles.

Next the worker clipped off the animal’s sensitive tail before throwing him back into a hard metal stall where piglets huddled together, bloodied and in enormous pain.
Gestation crates have already been banned in 10 U.S. states, Canada, and the entire European Union, and farrowing crates have been banned in Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway. These bans came about because hundreds of thousands of people like you organized and demanded them.

More than 60 major food providers, including McDonald’s, Burger King, Wendy’s, Chipotle, Safeway, Kroger, Costco, and Kmart, have answered consumers’ calls to do away with cruel gestation crates.

Companies are also moving away from the unconscionable practice of castrating piglets and cutting off their tails without painkillers. Following hard-fought campaigns by MFA and other leading animal protection groups, Walmart and Nestlé have required their suppliers to end these torturous mutilations.

All of these advancements came about because people like you spoke up—and never gave up.

Despite this momentum, Hormel continues to allow these blatant forms of animal abuse at its contract supplier farms.

MFA is calling on Hormel to immediately implement meaningful changes for these animals, including installing live-stream cameras to deter abuse; prohibiting the extreme confinement of pigs in gestation and farrowing crates; and ending painful and unnecessary mutilations, such as castration and tail docking, without pain relief.

HELP MFA PUSH HORMEL TO END THIS HEARTLESS ABUSE.
WITH YOU ON OUR SIDE, WE KNOW WE CAN.

Add your powerful voice: HormelHell.com
On a clear afternoon, Mark Devries parks on the side of a rural dirt road. He steps out and scans the area. There are no cars in sight, and a wall of trees conceals from drivers anything beyond 30 feet. Manure odor hangs intensely in the air. Mark opens the car trunk and begins unloading equipment: remote controls; cameras; and lastly, a black drone.
As MFA’s investigations and research associate, Mark travels across the U.S. to uncover what factory farms are desperate to hide.

**On-the-ground video footage can’t tell the whole story, so Mark has taken MFA investigations to the sky.**

He hooks a camera to a drone, and with remote in hand, guides that drone over a factory farm.

“**These farms will plant trees around their facilities. They will dig ditches, put up fences. They’ll take great measures to stay well hidden from public areas,**” said Mark. “If the public does see anything from a road or driveway, it’s often just like the tip of an iceberg—behind that view can be **over a mile of confined animals and gigantic polluted cesspools.**”

Through the use of drones, MFA has exposed the **true scale** of modern industrialized farming to the public. Footage from flyovers of feedlots and farms has the power to shatter false perceptions: Idyllic red barns and green pastures are nothing but a myth.

Recent MFA drone footage of a cattle feedlot reveals **miles of cows standing in dirt corrals.** They have no grass to graze on, no straw to lie on, and no protection from extreme weather. Hour after hour, day after day, these animals live on bare dirt, often standing in their own waste.

Pig farms **pack thousands of animals** into giant warehouse-like buildings. The pigs stand on concrete floors for their entire lives, their waste falling through slats on the floor to be flushed outdoors.

One of the most shocking aerial sights is the giant, **open-air cesspools.** Filled with **millions of gallons of pig feces and urine,** they often span the size of several football fields.

Mark has seen how these factory farms affect humans too. He’s talked to families who live nearby. They’ve told him how the stench of **sewage** from the farms can **make breathing difficult.** They worry about their health and the health of their kids and grandkids. Many families in these fenceline communities cannot afford to move, and their health concerns are ignored.

“When new sewage from underneath the pig pens is flushed into a manure lagoon, it disrupts the stagnant waste, creating an unbearable odor,” Mark explained.

When the lagoon levels need to be lowered, the **farms pump the waste out through sprayers onto their fields.** It comes out as a fine mist that can be carried into people’s homes and nearby schools.

Egg and broiler chicken farms look similar from the air. Footage shows shed after shed, but no chickens. It’s a haunting sight. Occasionally, large waste piles near the sheds evidence the animals’ presence. These piles reek, pollute the air, and emit ammonia that can soak into groundwater.

MFA’s drone investigations provide a nightmarish glimpse of factory farming’s devastating reach. We need to stand up to these industrial giants with a clear message that this is not the world we want for animals, our planet, or our children.
MFA’S GROUNDBREAKING INVESTIGATIONS IN MEXICO GO VIRAL
What happened at government-run slaughterhouses across Mexico was incomprehensible: pigs dragged to the killing floor and mercilessly stabbed over and over; and cows tied up, electrically shocked, and hit with sledgehammers.

An MFA investigator captured this ghastly carnage in heartbreaking footage released last year.

But the tide is turning in Mexico.

Major Mexican media outlets spread the videos, and national celebrity Eugenio Derbez lent his voice and star power to bring more attention to this heinous animal abuse. Narrating MFA’s third video from the country, he urged everyone to go vegetarian.

More than 25 million people around the world tuned in to MFA’s videos. Tears turned to outrage, and outrage turned to action. Hundreds of thousands signed Eugenio Derbez’s petition, which calls on the Mexican government to immediately strengthen animal cruelty laws and fully prosecute anyone who breaks them.

“I watched the video in horror as animals were tied up, shocked for no reason, brutally and repeatedly bludgeoned with sledgehammers, and then stabbed in the back of the head,” Derbez’s petition states.

“I accept Eugenio’s request to be a vegetarian,” another’s translated message said. “It’s time to become aware.”

MFA submitted a compelling legal complaint along with the footage to Mexico’s agricultural agency. MFA is urging the Federal Government of Mexico to toughen animal protection laws and ensure animals are rendered unconscious and insensible to pain before slaughter.

Prior to these investigations, no one heard the cries of suffering farmed animals in Mexico or demanded justice for the abusers.

Those days are over. The world is now watching.

But only because of your support. MFA’s dedicated staff on the ground in Mexico is fighting relentlessly for every single farmed animal in the country. We need you to keep standing with us as we bring mercy to animals who so desperately need it.

Overwhelmed viewers didn’t just look to the government for a solution. Many also looked to themselves.

“‘I’VE JUST CHANGED MY WAYS FROM WATCHING ONE OF THESE VIDEOS JUST FIVE DAYS AGO,’” WROTE A VIEWER ON MFA’S FACEBOOK PAGE. “THIS FOOTAGE WORKS. IT’S EFFECTIVE. PEOPLE NEED TO SEE.”

“As a Mexican citizen and animal advocate, I am outraged. If you help me, I believe we can end this horror.”
SIGHTS BELOW THE SURFACE

Scuba divers will tell you the underwater world is like another planet. It’s vastly different, but what humans and fish see below the surface is quite comparable. Humans and fish have remarkably similar vision. Most fish see a broad range of colors like humans but with one significant difference: Humans see red, blue, and green on the light spectrum while some species of fish see these and a fourth called ultraviolet light.

Scientists theorize that fish use the reflection of ultraviolet light off other fish to help choose a mate, identify a predator, or communicate within species.

CHEMICAL CUES

Ostariophysan fish, a group that accounts for about 27 percent of all fish species, have special skin cells that release a chemical into the water when one of the fish is attacked. Nearby fish can sense it and protect themselves. They might school together for safety in numbers, camouflage themselves, or mimic the traits of a dangerous species. All of these strategies show just how much these animals want to live free from harm.

A FISH’S LIFE

Fish have called Earth home for hundreds of millions of years longer than humans have. They’ve survived ice ages, the dinosaurs’ extinction, and other massive asteroid hits.

It should come as no surprise that these vertebrates living in our oceans, lakes, and waterways are highly evolved. Their amazing senses often surpass those of humans, yet so little of a fish’s life is known to us.
SEEKING A SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Like humans, fish can be particular when choosing a mate. A female fish might examine a male’s color and size to gauge physical health. Incredibly, fish of some species are able to determine which potential mates have the best genes.

Female stickleback fish, for example, use sense of smell to choose males who will optimize their offspring’s immune systems through genes that most complement the female’s own genetic makeup.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM

A scientist at Ludwig Maximilians University Munich recently discovered cells in rainbow trout that contain magnetite, the most magnetic naturally occurring mineral on the planet. This may explain how a spawning trout finds her way back to her birthplace years after leaving. The findings also suggest trout can detect the North and sense variations in the planet’s magnetic field.

Fish can also create electricity. The elephantnose fish and knifefish emit bursts of electricity and use disruptions in the electrical field around them to navigate objects and detect movements of other animals.

How fish experience life is still mostly a mystery for scientists. But we still have a chance to dive deeper into their complexities—that is, if we leave them in the water and off our plates.

Friendliest FOOD on the Plate

Good food is kind to people, animals, the environment, and especially tastebuds. That’s exactly the kind of food we’ve been making at Tofurky for more than 35 years.
Got This!

Small online actions spark big changes
History books tell the stories of major changemakers—people who stood up and pushed social justice forward. You can listen to the speeches of these luminaries, read their inspiring words, and see photos of events they led. But what about the people who supported these leaders, people who took simple and seemingly small actions that combined forged progress?

There has long been a community of unsung heroes for animals, and with the reach of the internet, this community and its impact have grown exponentially.

Today’s superstar activists can make a difference by taking just a few minutes to sign petitions, post on social media, write to companies, complete business comment forms, or make phone calls.

The actions are quick, but their impact is substantial. Because of the actions of online activists, restaurants have introduced new vegan menu items, laws have passed to improve the lives of animals, and major corporations have come to the table with MFA to draft animal welfare policies.

MFA’s Hen Heroes, who have signed up to take frequent online actions for animals, are some of the most powerful voices out there, at more than 23,000 supporters strong. Here’s how it works: Almost every day, these supporters receive an MFA email outlining a few simple actions that call on companies to do something—like switch to 100 percent cage-free eggs or implement measures to reduce animal suffering in their supply chains.

These actions are always part of a larger MFA campaign and often the last tactic when a company refuses to budge. Sometimes the idea of online action alone motivates a company to act. Take the case of Pret A Manger, a United Kingdom-based restaurant chain with more than 70 locations in the United States. Shortly after discussions with MFA, Pret avoided a Hen Heroes campaign by pledging to end the worst forms of animal cruelty in its chicken supply chain.

Online actions also build public awareness. When MFA released heartbreaking video from inside Mexico’s slaughterhouses late last year, it was the likes, shares, retweets, and reposts from all of you that brought the footage to more than 25 million people and counting.

MFA needs your voice, and your actions. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat. Like, share, retweet, and repost! To receive emails of simple actions for animals, join MFA’s growing community of Hen Heroes: MercyForAnimals.org/Hen-Heroes.

“I have chosen to be a part of Hen Heroes because the actions, which may be done daily if one chooses, require no previous experience, may be quickly completed, are practical, and produce tangible results that benefit animals.”

—HOUSTON WONG
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH
CO-PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR PAUL DAVID KENNEMER JR.

EATING
YOU
ALIVE
It started as an experiment: Paul decided to give a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle a try. But his health changed remarkably, and he wanted everyone to know they could do this too. With co-producer Merrilee Jacobs, Paul created *Eating You Alive*, a gripping documentary featuring interviews with medical professionals and individuals whose lives have been transformed by plant-based eating. MFA was thrilled to talk to Paul about the film.

**Q** What inspired you to produce *Eating You Alive*?

In 2014 my co-producer and I were approached by a medical doctor about assisting him with some seminar materials. As I became familiar with the content (the health benefits of a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle), I felt strongly that I needed to give it a try. I was just beginning to understand, pronounce, and be scared of the word “vegan,” so of course this was a major lifestyle change. My family has a history of chronic diseases, and I assumed that to be my own helpless genetic destiny. Along with the rest of our production staff, however, I experienced dramatic results. In just six weeks I lost 45 pounds and resolved all tendonitis and rotator cuff issues. We determined that this health solution needed to be common knowledge.

**Q** What was the most interesting thing you learned while filming?

I’ve always heard there are two things you don’t discuss: religion and politics. But after beginning this lifestyle and being eager to share it, I have come to believe food could be the most controversial topic out there. I never realized just how emotional we are about our food choices. But because of the chemical process that takes place in our brains, it is a sad but true reality that most of us have an addictive relationship with much of what we eat.

**Q** If many chronic diseases are preventable through diet, why are their rates soaring?

I feel primarily that people are unaware of the level of connection between nutrition and health. And in the marketing industry there is a common phrase: “Good advertising doesn’t cost, it pays.” Dr. Andrew Saul states, “Good health makes a lot of sense, but not a lot of dollars.” As long as the food industry, pharmaceutical companies, and the medical industry are focused on the bottom line, and they have power to influence our federal government, things aren’t likely to change.

**Q** What impact do you hope this film will have?

For the general public, inspiration and hope through an awareness of the truth. For doctors, a reignition of the passion to help people heal and the drive to look beyond pills and procedures to a real and sustainable method of prevention, treatment, and reversal of chronic disease. For the small group of people who are in good health, I hope it provides the determination to stay strong.

Host a screening, find one in your area, or preorder the film at [EATINGYOUALIVE.COM](http://EATINGYOUALIVE.COM)
CHAMPIONS FOR CHICKENS

MFA’S MISSION OF CHANGE FOR BILLIONS OF BIRDS
Most factory-farmed chickens never see the sun or feel its warmth. Their toes never sink into soil, soft after a spring rain, and their sharp, curious minds never know the pleasure of discovering seeds in a field. Inside factory farms, their environment alternates between meager artificial lighting and short periods of complete darkness. Even in daytime, chickens are so deprived of light, they cannot identify their own flockmates.

Roughly 9 billion farmed chickens live and die in the United States every year. Each chicken is an individual who would spend most days out in nature, if allowed to, scratching dirt in a fulfilling quest for food.

These animals, who are so horribly abused during their short time on Earth, are afforded virtually no legal protections. The federal Humane Slaughter Act excludes chickens, although they make up more than 95 percent of land animals farmed and killed for food in the United States.

Their plight is urgent; however, there are simple steps companies and those who farm chickens can take to reduce the intensity of these birds’ suffering.

BRED TO SUFFER

From the moment they hatch, chickens raised for meat are condemned to a future riddled with pain and disease.

Multiple MFA investigations into two of the largest chicken producers in the United States—Tyson Foods and Perdue—have revealed birds unable to walk; many are crippled and others are afflicted with severe burns on their legs.

To increase profits and get more meat out of a single bird, companies have spent decades breeding chickens to grow to more than six times their natural weight at the moment of slaughter. A chicken’s young bones simply cannot develop fast enough to support the weight. Some birds die from heart failure because their hearts cannot supply their oversized bodies.

The birds’ legs often bow in or out and break easily, causing tremendous pain. Many chickens sit all day and night, and if their litter isn’t changed frequently, they languish in their own excrement. The ammonia in it burns away at their sensitive skin. The high levels of ammonia in the air also make it hard for animals to breathe.

Chickens are drugged to reduce their disease rates and keep them alive in conditions that would otherwise kill them.

Despite their unnaturally large size, the birds are mere babies—only six weeks old—at slaughter.

FARmed ANIMALs SLAUGHTered IN THe uNITED States (2016)

**CATTLE** 30.6 MILLion

**PIGS** 118.2 MILLion

**TURKEYS** 243.3 MILLion

**CHICKENS** 8.9 BILLion

More than 95% of land animals farmed and killed for food are CHICKENS.
LOOSE AND SHOCKED ON THE LINE

At slaughterhouses that use conventional live-shackle slaughter, conscious birds are ripped from their transport crates by workers and thrust upside down into shackles on a slaughter line. The birds hang from their feet, their lungs compressed by their other organs, and many birds struggle to breathe. Some suffer broken bones in the shackling process.

Next the chickens are painfully shocked with electricity meant to render them unconscious. Often this fails, and the birds’ throats are sliced open by a mechanical blade while the animals are still able to feel pain.

A slight misalignment can cause chickens to miss the blade and enter a vat of boiling water alive. The USDA estimates that about 1 million birds a year are scalded to death.

“THE CHICKENS ARE PAINFULLY SHOCKED WITH ELECTRICITY MEANT TO RENDER THEM UNCONSCIOUS. OFTEN THIS FAILS, AND THE BIRDS’ THROATS ARE SLICED OPEN BY A MECHANICAL BLADE WHILE THE ANIMALS ARE STILL ABLE TO FEEL PAIN.”

SETTING THE STANDARD

Last year, Perdue’s leadership met with MFA to discuss how to improve the lives of chickens on company-owned and contract farms. Shortly thereafter, the company announced a far-reaching animal welfare commitment that will brighten the future for nearly 680 million birds a year.

Emphasizing the universally recognized “Five Freedoms” for animals, Perdue’s policy outlines efforts to end live-shackle slaughter, address the unnaturally rapid growth of chickens, provide an environment where birds can spread their wings and perch, and ensure compliance with the new standards via third-party audits.

MFA is already leveraging this progress by urging restaurants and foodservice companies to meet welfare certification standards created by Global Animal Partnership (GAP) with input from leading animal protection organizations, including MFA.

To attain GAP certification, producers will have to transition to higher-welfare breeds of birds with lower rates of disease, injury, and mortality. GAP’s standards also require producers to give birds enough space, provide better lighting, and properly manage litter to ensure it is waste absorbent and suitable for dustbathing (a natural self-cleaning behavior for chickens).

Additionally, GAP requires proof of compliance with the standards through independent third-party auditing.
POTENT PROGRESS

Perdue’s groundbreaking policy set a path for other chicken producers and increased confidence among restaurant chains, several of which have already taken the lead in ending the cruelest factory farming practices.

Following discussions with MFA, Pret A Manger became the first restaurant chain in the world to adopt a comprehensive animal welfare policy addressing the worst abuses inflicted on chickens raised for meat. The company, with more than 70 locations across the United States, committed to using only chicken that meets GAP standards. Representatives from Chipotle also met with MFA and soon thereafter announced the chain’s own commitment to following GAP standards.

Starbucks, Shake Shack, Le Pain Quotidien, and Panera Bread have also pledged to alleviate much of the suffering in their chicken supply chains—and more companies are expected to follow.

BE HEARD

Moving more restaurants and chicken producers to change will continue to take large-scale, determined actions. We know such change is possible, however, because you’ve already made it happen. Thanks to you, battery cages for hens in the United States will soon be a disgraceful relic of history. Now it’s time to apply that same unwavering dedication to helping chickens raised for meat.

Join MFA’s online activist group, Hen Heroes, and receive daily emails with simple actions you can take to help us persuade companies to meet with us and treat all chickens better.

There are billions of chickens who need you, and there is still so much to be done—but together, we will move mountains.