

This bag of bones is the most over-worked of farmed animals. Udders which should carry 2 litres of milk are distended by 20 litres

Crimes Against Cattle

Don't be fooled by the idyllic sight of grazing cows – their life is anything but idyllic. Over 80 per cent of cattle killed for meat are the calves of dairy cows, stolen away at a day or two old, causing huge grief to mother and calf.

Some are killed immediately for veal. Others live for a year but spend it in a shed, standing in their own excreta. They never get to graze. Others are allowed to graze but all beef cattle face painful mutilations – castration and dehorning, often without anaesthetics and usually without pain killers.

All face the terror of a barbaric slaughter. They are first stunned by having a steel bolt fired into their foreheads – sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. When it doesn't, the pain is excruciating. Death comes from having their throats cut.

A shame for sheep

The most free-range of farmed animals yet one of the most controlled. To get 'spring' lambs to market as early as possible, females (ewes) are manipulated into bearing too many lambs, too early in the year – often three instead of one and often in mid winter.

The death toll from cold, hunger and disease is enormous with over four million lambs dying every year – 20 per cent of the total.

With many flocks, conception is through artificial insemination. Rams are forcibly masturbated and the semen injected directly into the ewe's womb.



The close bond of mother and lamb about to be broken. Her lamb is sent for slaughter



Desperate to suckle, one separated calf seeks solace from another as they await slaughter

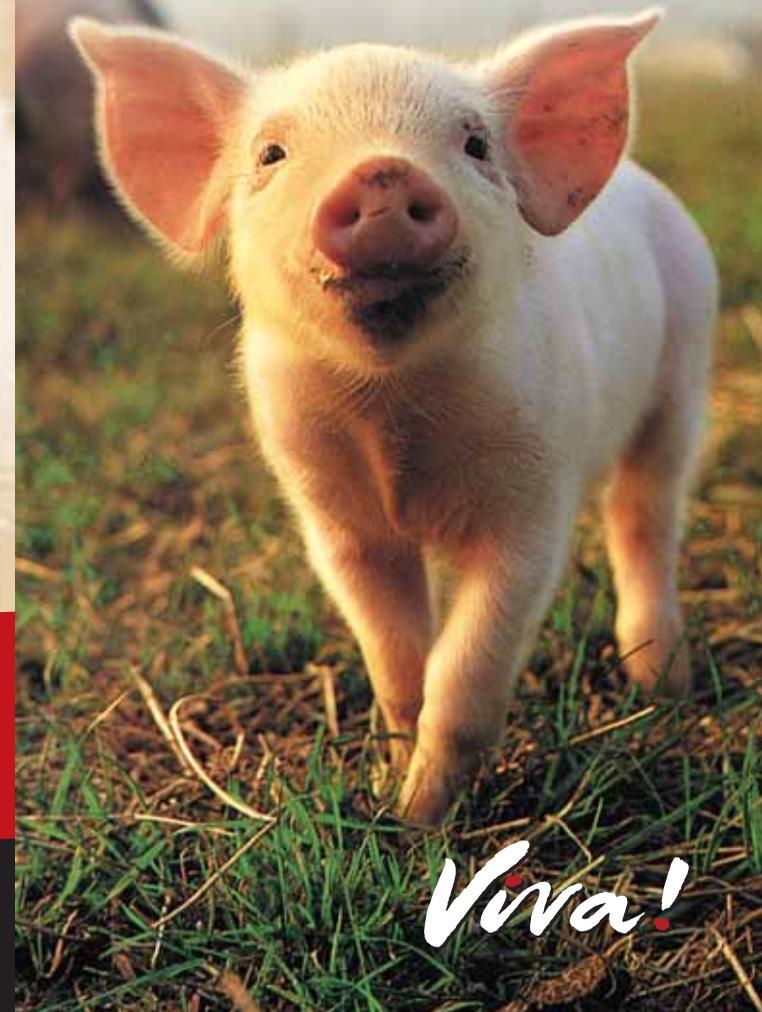
Viva! has been successful in ending some horrible abuses and improving standards. But still the only truly effective way to end the suffering of animals is to stop eating them.

Breaking the silence

Most of what we have written about is unseen because it takes place behind closed doors. Viva!'s undercover investigations shine a light into the dark corners of animal farming and almost always, whatever unit we investigate, reveal pain, suffering and neglect. Without us and others like us, this widespread abuse would remain a secret. We have been successful in ending some horrible abuses and improving standards. But still the only truly effective way to end the suffering of animals is to stop eating them. The bonus is, you will be healthier, help to end environmental degradation and play a part in reducing global impoverishment – all of which are linked to livestock production.

REASONS TO GO VEGGIE PART 1

FARMED animals



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Viva!

More than 50 billion animals are slaughtered annually across the world – more than one billion in the UK alone. Most of them know only the squalor and misery of factory farming. The scale of cruelty is almost overwhelming and claims such as ‘the best animal welfare in the world’ are a sick joke. Animal farming is inefficient, contributes to global starvation and is at the heart of most environmental problems. The way to end the cruelty and devastation is simple – stop eating animals. The bonus is that you and the planet will be healthier for it.

PIG SLUMS

Almost all the pork, bacon, ham, pepperoni and pork sausages sold in Britain come from pigs kept in factory farms. Yet according to researchers, pigs are one of nature's most intelligent animals – they can even play simple computer games.

Factory farming is the modern way of rearing animals. Large numbers are crammed into the smallest possible area to reduce costs. A large pig is officially entitled to less than a square metre of space.

Viva! has secretly filmed in dozens of factory farm pig units and they are all much alike – filthy, stinking, barren concrete cells covered in excreta. Bedding is a rarity and many pigs are forced to sleep on dirty, wet concrete.

Breeding females - sows - are put in metal-barred farrowing crates so small that they cannot walk and can never turn around.

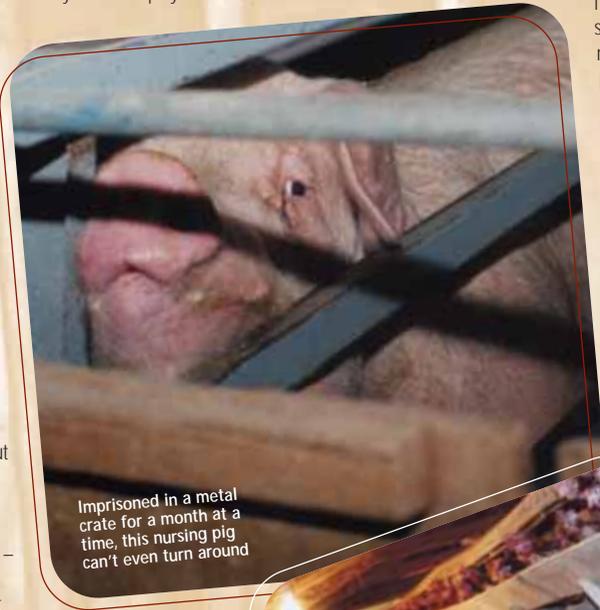
A sow cannot mother her young – she is simply a milk machine.

Her imprisonment lasts for about one month in every five - each time she gives birth. It ends when her piglets are taken away and forcibly weaned. Made pregnant again within days, the cycle is repeated over and over until after about four years, she is exhausted and is slaughtered for use in low-grade foods such as pies and pasties, stocks and sausage meat.

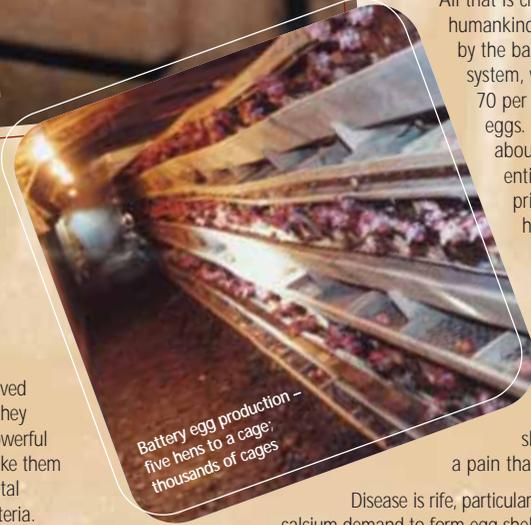
Piglets in pain

Piglets should remain with their mothers for months but are removed after three weeks. Because their digestive systems are immature, they develop diarrhoea - and so begins a lifetime of being force-fed powerful drugs – some to cure disease, some to prevent it and some to make them grow faster. This battery of chemicals has helped to produce hospital superbugs and deadly antibiotic-resistant strains of poisoning bacteria.

Painful mutilations are carried out without anaesthetics or painkillers – tails amputated, some teeth snapped off. It is to stop them savaging each other – an inevitable result of the appalling stress but which never happens in the wild.



Imprisoned in a metal crate for a month at a time, this nursing pig can't even turn around



Battery egg production – five hens to a cage; thousands of cages

Barbarity for Broilers

Chickens love their freedom. They strut and scratch, explore and dust-bathe. Chickens grown for meat experience none of these things.

Thirty thousand or more are crammed into a single, windowless shed and live for just six weeks. The soggy litter underfoot is not changed and the stench of ammonia from excreta is all pervasive. Through genetic selection, constant light and an unnatural diet, they grow to full size in this ridiculously short time. Bones break under their ballooning weight and diseased hearts struggle to pump enough blood around their monstrous bodies. Death rates are high.

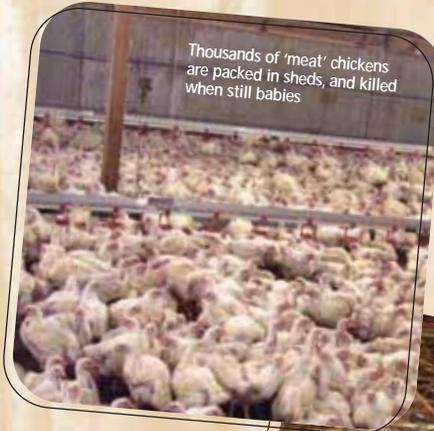
Life for turkeys and other poultry is much the same. Even ducks are not excused – aquatic birds who are allowed no water in which to swim, feed, preen or play.

Assault and Battery

All that is cruel about humankind is summed up by the battery cage system, which provides 70 per cent of the UK's eggs. Five birds crammed into a cage about the size of a microwave oven for their entire life of two years or less. In this tiny prison, not even a single bird could spread her wings fully let alone five.

Hens have to stand on wire mesh in a world devoid of everything natural and containing nothing of interest – row upon row, tier upon tier. They peck at each other so acute is their frustration. To limit the damage, the ends of their beaks are often sliced off with a red hot blade – a pain that can last for life.

Disease is rife, particularly brittle bones, because of the large calcium demand to form egg shells – 300 a year compared with her wild relatives' 20 or so. No wonder her bones can snap like dry twigs - and she has to live with the result, until killed for 'low-grade' meat.



Thousands of 'meat' chickens are packed in sheds, and killed when still babies



This duck is just a few weeks old, but filthy, crippled and dying



This is the result of two years in a battery cage

Fish in Freefall

Fish don't feel pain! A myth people rush to believe because it is convenient to do so. It justifies dragging billions of animals out of their natural environment to suffocate in an alien world. They have no protection, which is why many are gutted and filleted while still living.

All the world's oceans are exploited to the full and beyond, which devastates those animals who depend upon fish. Trawling destroys the sea bed and ensures that recovery never happens.

As wild stocks crash, fish farming booms but makes the problem worse as farmed fish are fed wild-caught fish - and so the rape of the oceans continues. Marine factory farms destroy the environment and spread diseases and parasites to wild fish, causing their numbers to crash.

So polluted with toxins are both farmed and wild-caught fish that they can pose a serious threat to human health.