



Legal Resource

How False Advertising Lawsuits Help Animals

As consumers become more aware of the cruelty in factory farming, more and more of them are seeking out and paying a premium for animal products produced in less abusive conditions. But some producers and retailers market their products in ways designed to trick consumers into believing that their products are “humane” even though they come from animals who suffer in industrialized factory farming facilities. This type of misleading labeling or advertising is sometimes referred to as “humane washing,” akin to the greenwashing of products to make them seem environmentally friendly.

When companies engage in humane washing, the Animal Legal Defense Fund files lawsuits to stop this misleading, illegal conduct — thereby protecting farmed animals and ensuring consumers can make choices based on truthful information.

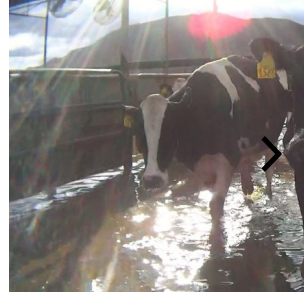


What is Humane Washing?

“Humane washing” is the practice of making a misleading claim about the treatment of animals or the conditions in which they are born, raised, or killed. Humane washing efforts can range from using terms like “natural” or “responsibly raised” on labels or in marketing, to the imagery on product labels or in video advertisements showing animals in picturesque green pastures (when they are actually warehoused in dark buildings) — to multimillion dollar, multi-platform marketing campaigns misrepresenting products from animals raised on large factory farms as “local” food coming from “family farms.”

Why is False Advertising Bad for Animals?

Even if companies don’t use false or misleading ads or packaging, almost all companies that raise and slaughter animals make statements on their websites about their “commitment” to “animal well-being” and animal care standards.



Banned for their cruelty in several states, gestation crates are metal crates only slightly larger than a pregnant pig's body – so small that the pig cannot turn around or lie down comfortably.

Most of these statements are purposefully vague and aspirational. They are also often deliberately misleading. They commandeer the concept of “animal welfare” as a term to describe adherence to inhumane standard industry practices, as opposed to the objectively higher standards consumers expect based on the company’s marketing.

Farmed animals raised throughout the meat, dairy, and egg industries are tragically exploited. Investigations and industry whistleblowers have revealed abuses on farms and in slaughterhouses so horrific that many people cannot even bear to witness them. While some malicious abuse violates the law, much of the cruelty consists of commonplace industry practices — such as physical mutilations without anesthesia and the use of body-gripping cages and crates — that, while imposing pain and suffering, are legally tolerated.

Many consumers want to avoid products from animals subjected to these cruel industry-standard conditions. Yet no federal law governs the conditions in which farmed animals are raised and most state anti-cruelty laws exempt standard agricultural practices. This sparse legal protection makes it especially easy to abuse animals raised for food and to conceal that abuse from consumers.

When companies misrepresent the way they raise and treat animals, it deprives consumers of the ability to drive the marketplace through informed purchasing decisions, and disadvantages competitors of more humanely produced food. False advertising allows “Big Ag” to maintain business as usual, preying on conscientious consumers with lies meant to conceal the factory farming origins of their meat, dairy, and eggs. This keeps more animals suffering in these facilities to meet the fraudulently inflated consumer demand. That’s why the Animal Legal Defense Fund works so hard to stop false advertising.

What You Can Do To Help

As consumers, you can question companies, demand truthful labeling and marketing, and become an informed consumer about what various labeling and marketing terms do and don’t mean. (One good tool is our [Egg Labeling Regulations Guide](#).)

As long as the law fails to meaningfully protect farmed animals, you can help reduce their suffering by adopting a plant-based diet. Let lawmakers know that legal protections for all animals are important and that you want stronger protections for farmed animals enacted and enforced.

FOCUS AREA

Farmed Animals ▸

Tags: [Chicken](#) | [Cow](#) | [Factory Farms](#) | [Goose](#) | [Pig](#)

RELATED

\$5,000 Reward for Information Regarding Six Killed and Mutilated Cows in Three Texas Counties →

Cows were killed in Madison, Brazos, and Robertson Counties, Texas.

May 3, 2023 | Press Release



NEPA Carveout for Medium-Sized CAFOs Struck Down by District Court →

Animal Legal Defense Fund lawsuit leads to rule revocation excepting medium-sized factory farms from environmental review before receiving federal funding

April 4, 2023 | News



Fourth Circuit Enjoins North Carolina Ag-Gag Law →

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit handed an important win to plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging North Carolina's Ag-Gag law, ruling that undercover investigations and whistleblowing are considered newsgathering activities protected by the First Amendment.

February 23, 2023 | Press Release

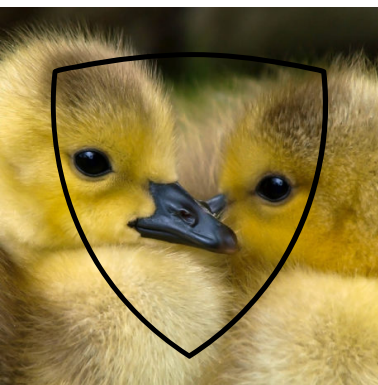


RESOURCES

- [Farmed Animals →](#)
- [Laws that Protect Animals →](#)

RELATED CONTENT

- [False Advertising: How to Protect Animals by Litigating for Consumers 2019 →](#)
Webinar
- [Egg Labeling Regulations Guide →](#)
Legal Resource



Donate to Protect Animals

Help animals win the legal protections they so desperately need and deserve, and ensure they have an advocate in courtrooms and legislatures across the country.

TAKE ACTION NOW →

name@example.com

SUBMIT

♥ DONATE

Follow Us.



Back to Top



The Animal Legal Defense Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our EIN number is 94-2681680. The Animal Legal Defense Fund is rated four-stars by Charity Navigator, is a Platinum Level GuideStar Exchange participant, a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity, and an Independent Charity Seal of Excellence awardee, ensuring that we meet the highest standards of accountability, efficiency, and impact. For intellectual property information and terms of use, visit our [Intellectual Property Terms of Use](#) page. For privacy policy and ad & cookie policy information, visit our [Privacy Policy](#) pages.

Animal Legal Defense Fund, National Headquarters
525 East Cotati Avenue, Cotati, CA 94931
(707) 795-2533 | info@aldf.org

To update your payment information, visit our [Member Center](#).