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I am a veterinarian employed as a professor of shelter medicine at the University of California, Davis. I received my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from UC Davis in 1999, a Master's degree in Preventive Veterinary Medicine from UC Davis in 2003, and completed three years of residency training in Shelter Medicine at UC Davis in 2004.

The images shown in the Mercy For Animals video of Norco ranch powerfully underscore the urgent need for Proposition 2, an initiative on the November ballot that would prevent the worst abuses associated with factory farming. I have nearly ten years of experience and advanced training in small animal population health care, and as such I am intimately familiar with the principles of herd health management. The practices and conditions depicted in the Norco video do not reasonably fall anywhere within the bounds of acceptable herd health care.

Battery cage systems can not provide humane conditions under the best of circumstances: suffering is inevitable when hens are so restricted that they can not take even a few steps or stretch their wings without running into wire cage walls or another bird. The Norco video starkly demonstrates that the suffering, injuries, disease and death associated with battery cage systems extend far beyond restriction of movement and prevention of normal behaviors.

Birds trapped and slowly dying from untreated illness, injuries, or dehydration clearly constitutes outright cruelty, and must be condemned in any context. We do not condone these conditions in animal shelters, veterinary clinics or research laboratories, and industrial farms should be no exception.

The term "euthanasia" certainly can not be applied to hens violently spun by the neck and then discarded, still moving, with no certainty that death, or even unconsciousness, has been induced.

In defiance of scientific studies showing increased risk of Salmonella and other threats to human health associated with intensively housed animals, proponents of these systems maintain that food safety is a paramount concern. These claims are clearly belied by the conditions depicted in the video. Food should not be produced in an environment littered with dying animals and rotting corpses.

The practices and conditions depicted in this video can not be justified or even tolerated on the grounds of food safety or animal welfare – allowing them to continue in the name of maintaining higher profit margins for egg producers defies both compassion and reason.



Kate Hurley