EU Under Pressure as Footage Shows ‘Horrendous’ Polish Egg Farm

Thursday 28 September, 2023

Piles of dead hens, eggs covered in blood, twisted legs, pecked feathers – these are the images documented by workers employed on a poultry farm belonging to Fermy Drobiu Wo?niak – the largest egg producer in the European Union. Anima International is calling on the EU to not to its plans for a ban on cages for hens.

This summer, Oksana, together with her partner Sasha, were employed at a laying hen farm in the village of Wioska in central-west Poland. The poultry farm belongs to the largest egg producer in the European Union – Fermy Drobiu Wo?niak. Almost one million hens in cages and tens of thousands of hens in barns are reared on this farm. One in five laying hens in Poland lives on one of Wo?niak’s farms.

Oksana and Sasha documented their daily work for six weeks. One of their primary duties was to remove dead hens from their cages – the animals died due to the rearing conditions, were killed by other hens in the cages, or died as a result of getting stuck, for example under a perch. Every day, the workers collected dozens to hundreds of dead animals – some had been lying in the cages for several weeks and were already in a state of decomposition.

“Sometimes they were blue, and fluids leaked out of them,” says Sasha in the video.

The hens live in close confinement, resulting in aggression (including pecking each other to death) or acts of cannibalism. Numerous animals were in very poor physical condition – they were missing plumage, had deformed legs and wounds on their bodies, and some died of exhaustion. The film also shows cases of hens dying while laying more eggs, with eggs stuck in their cloaca.

A veterinary inspection carried out several weeks after the footage was collected validated the concerns documented by the investigative workers. Anima International has filed a notice to the prosecutor’s office in Poland on the grounds of potential animal abuse. The footage will serve as evidence in the proceedings.

A ban on cage farming is currently being considered at EU level as part of the revision of all EU animal welfare legislation. The European Citizens’ Initiative “End the Cage Age”, launched by Compassion in World Farming, has been signed by 1.4 million people. The European Commission is expected to present a legislative proposal on this issue this autumn.

But recent reports of the plans being dropped have raised alarm amongst campaigners. “Many countries are already transitioning away from caged farming systems for hens,” **says Kirsty Henderson, Executive Director of Anima International.** “The EU needs to follow through on its promises and do its part in eradicating animal suffering from our food system.”

Fermy Drobiu Wo?niak exports 70% of its production to 60 countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Every year, 300 million animals suffer in cages in the European Union, including on the farms owned by Fermy Drobiu Wo?niak.

- ENDS -

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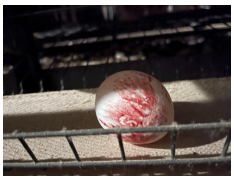
Still images from the investigation can be found here.

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EU :: Animal Welfare :: Factory Farming :: Ursula Von Der Leyen :: Farm To Fork :: End The Cage Age ::

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Drone images of the farm can be found here.

Images of the undercover workers can be found here.

Raw footage from the investigation can be found here.

Please credit Anima International for all.

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