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Animal Protection Organization Alleges Cruelty to Chickens by Foster Farms; VIDEO

Undercover footage reveals Foster Farms' catch crew throwing, kicking, and running over chickens with forklifts, and animals trapped in cage doors, among other alleged violations.

October 7, 2024 - Los Angeles, CA. – Today, Animal Outlook, a national animal protection charity, released hidden camera footage it obtained at Foster Farms, the largest poultry producer in California. According to its website, Foster Farms supplies to major grocers including Walmart, Kroger, Target, and Albertsons.

The video, filmed by an Animal Outlook investigator who worked on a chicken catching crew for Foster Farms in June and July of this year, shows a pattern of what the organization determined to be animal cruelty under California law. Animal Outlook has delivered this evidence to and is urging the Fresno District Attorney's office to file charges against the perpetrators of the cruelty, including Foster Farms as a corporation. Video documentation reveals:

- Multiple instances of forklifts driving over or hitting live birds, running over them instead of avoiding them. In some instances, forklifts ripped feathers off the birds exposing flesh, but left the birds alive and suffering. Some forklift drivers reversed back over chickens to crush them a second time after running over them. Forklift drivers also loaded cages onto the forklifts and drove them into live animals. Workers and supervisors left these chickens to suffer instead of euthanizing them. Supervisors and workers stood by while this happened. In one instance, a driver crashed his forklift directly into a building.
- Foster Farms workers throwing birds across the room instead of carrying them, kicking them, and grabbing them by their wings. In some instances, they threw birds into cages from long distances, causing chickens to bounce off the cages and fall onto the floor. Workers also kicked large tubes at chickens, or kicked birds instead of picking them up.
- Many instances of chickens trapped with their heads or wings stuck between cage door frames. One chicken was pinned by the head under a transport cage.
- Chickens living on mud floors, in temperatures that reached up to 100°F, a pile of dead birds crawling with maggots, and other dirty and sickening conditions.

Foster Farms claims all of its chicken farms are American Humane Certified™, which American Humane advertises as demonstrating “continued commitment to animal welfare and creating a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for its animals.” Foster Farms’ website claims that the

chickens they raise enjoy the “five freedoms,” including “freedom from discomfort,” “freedom from injury, pain, and disease,” and “freedom from fear and distress.”

In contrast to this messaging, workers handled many animals at once, often for 18 hour and overnight shifts, forcing as many birds into the trucks as possible with no apparent regard for the animals’ lives. Even after a forklift crash, Foster Farms did not address the harm that forklift operation can and did cause countless animals.

“Foster Farms’ business style is focused on volume and profit over suffering and death, refusing to recognize these animals as living beings,” said Cheryl Leahy, Executive Director of Animal Outlook. “The reality is that cruelty is not the exception in animal agriculture; it is the rule. Foster Farms cannot continue inflicting egregious abuse on chickens as part of its day-to-day operations with impunity. We have asked for prosecution under the cruelty law. We also hope the exposure of this violence and callousness educates and inspires the public to use the power we all have to refuse to support with our dollars corporate operations like these that shock the conscience and go against our basic humanity. We can refuse to be complicit in animal cruelty by refusing to buy chicken and other animal products.”

This is Animal Outlook’s second investigation of Foster Farms. In 2015, an Animal Outlook investigation exposed extreme processing speeds, painful mutilations, birds ground up alive, and botched suffocation and gassing at a [Foster Farms turkey hatchery](#). In 2022, Animal Equality filed a [lawsuit](#) against Foster Farms following an undercover investigation revealing severe mistreatment of baby chicks, including crushing, drowning, and mutilation. This lawsuit seeks to stop these practices and implement protective measures.

In 2022, the California Labor Commissioner [fined Foster Farms](#) nearly \$3.8 million for failing to inform 3,476 temporary employees about Covid-19 paid sick leave, and in 2013, Foster Farms made national headlines when the USDA threatened to [shut down three Foster Farms facilities](#) due to a *Salmonella* outbreak affecting nearly 300 people in 17 states.

[Investigative footage](#) and [media B-Roll](#) available for download.

This investigation was sponsored by animal-protection charity [Legal Impact for Chickens](#).

ABOUT ANIMAL OUTLOOK

[Animal Outlook](#) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) animal advocacy organization. It is strategically challenging animal agribusiness through undercover investigations, legal advocacy, corporate and food system reform, and disseminating information about the many harms of animal agriculture, empowering everyone to choose vegan. <https://animaloutlook.org/>