

A conversation with Dr. Chetana Mirle and Elissa Lane, February 15, 2017

Participants

- Dr. Chetana Mirle – Director, Farm Animals, Humane Society International
- Elissa Lane – Deputy Director, Farm Animals, Humane Society International
- Nicole Ross – Research Analyst, Open Philanthropy Project
- Lewis Bollard – Program Officer, Farm Animal Welfare, Open Philanthropy Project

Note: These notes were compiled by the Open Philanthropy Project and give an overview of the major points made by Dr. Mirle and Ms. Lane.

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Dr. Mirle and Ms. Lane of Humane Society International (HSI; www.hsi.org). In August 2016, the Open Philanthropy Project granted HSI \$1 million over two years to support its international cage-free egg advocacy. Conversation topics included HSI's achievements, activities, and future plans in Latin America and Asia.

Latin America

HSI is focusing its Latin America cage-free efforts on Argentina, Chile, and Colombia.

Achievements

Work in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia has only just begun, but HSI previously won a number of global and regional victories that affect those countries. For example, cage-free pledges have recently been made by:

- Burger King.
- Arcos Dorados Holdings, the largest operator of McDonald's restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Alsea, a restaurant operator based in Mexico that runs a number of chains in the region, including Dominos and Archies (which has 41 restaurants in Colombia).
- AccorHotels, which has hotels in all three target countries.
- Sodexo and Compass Group, both leading food service providers in the region.

Discussions with a number of other companies about global reforms are in progress. In addition, positive changes by industry leaders in Brazil and Mexico are likely to influence food companies in other parts of Latin America.

Staff

Ignacia Uribe R joined HSI as its Latin America Campaign Manager about three weeks ago. She is based in Washington, DC, but will hopefully travel to the target countries every four to six weeks.

Ms. Lane is helping Ms. Uribe R daily with drafting emails, creating contact lists, following up with companies, planning trips, etc.

HSI has also hired a part-time (10-15 hours per week) public relations consultant for Argentina and Chile in order to gain more visibility for the cage-free issue. A consultant is currently being sought to play a similar role in Colombia.

In addition, activities will be supported by HSI's teams in Mexico and Washington, DC.

Activities

HSI is reaching out to all of the major manufacturers, producers, retailers, restaurants, and hotel chains in the target countries, and following up regularly. Ms. Uribe R is currently setting up initial meetings in March with companies in Chile and Argentina, for which she will be joined by Ms. Lane. Additional trips are planned for the next six months.

Ms. Lane is currently leading outreach in Colombia. She and Ms. Uribe R will both visit the country next week for follow-up meetings with a number of food leaders. Three further trips to each country are expected within six months.

Asia

Achievements

In addition to some recent successes within the region, HSI's global victories affect Asia and have raised the profile of the issue in the region.

Staff

HSI will hire a full-time Corporate Outreach Manager in March. There has never been anyone solely committed to corporate outreach or media relations in Asia outside of India, which has been a major barrier to progress.

Activities

HSI is now working with a number of large Asian companies, and several smaller ones contacted the organization to request assistance going cage-free. HSI believes it is building a reputation as a helper that is supportive of companies that wish to change.

HSI has also been providing technical trainings on the practicalities of transitioning to cage-free systems, as it has previously in Latin America. Some food companies

specifically requested these to help their suppliers understand how they could make the change while remaining profitable.

Other developments

Companies can see that the animal welfare movement is growing across Asia, partly as a result of HSI's work, and increasingly realize that they need to adopt cage-free standards in the long term to remain competitive with other multinationals. There are a growing number of third-party certifiers checking things like food safety and quality, and similar strategies can in principle be used for animal welfare. Food companies are also engaging more directly with their existing suppliers.

Plans

After hiring the Corporate Outreach Manager, HSI will expand dramatically, reaching out to around 100 companies in the next six months. Within 18 months, it expects to begin achieving public commitments to switch fully within eight years.

In March, HSI will host an animal welfare roundtable in Singapore, bringing together major food companies (both ones that have already committed to cage-free and ones that have not), suppliers, supply chain experts, and regional cage-free egg producers. The aim is to formulate a plan for converting the supply chain to 100% cage-free over the next 5-10 years.

HSI is hosting a workshop in May in Ukraine, which will be attended by egg producers, buyers, and suppliers of cage-free equipment. Presenters will include a producer of cage-free eggs in the U.S.

All Open Philanthropy Project conversations are available at <http://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/conversations>