Massachusetts

INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

2016 Ballot Questions

STATE ELECTION
Tuesday, November 8, 2016

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Published by
William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
This proposed law would prohibit any farm owner or operator from knowingly confining any breeding pig, calf raised for veal, or egg-laying hen in a way that prevents the animal from lying down, standing up, fully extending its limbs, or turning around freely. The proposed law would also prohibit any business owner or operator in Massachusetts from selling whole eggs intended for human consumption or any uncooked cut of veal or pork if the business owner or operator knows or should know that the hen, breeding pig, or veal calf that produced these products was confined in a manner prohibited by the proposed law. The proposed law would exempt sales of food products that combine veal or pork with other products, including soups, sandwiches, pizzas, hotdogs, or similar processed or prepared food items.

The proposed law’s confinement prohibitions would not apply during transportation; state and county fair exhibitions; 4-H programs; slaughter in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; medical research; veterinary exams, testing, treatment and operation if performed under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian; five days prior to a pregnant pig’s expected date of giving birth; any day that pig is nursing piglets; and for temporary periods for animal husbandry purposes not to exceed six hours in any twenty-four hour period.

The proposed law would create a civil penalty of up to $1,000 for each violation and would give the Attorney General the exclusive authority to enforce the law, and to issue regulations to implement it. As a defense to enforcement proceedings, the proposed law would allow a business owner or operator to rely in good faith upon a written certification or guarantee of compliance by a supplier.

The proposed law would be in addition to any other animal welfare laws and would not prohibit stricter local laws.

The proposed law would take effect on January 1, 2022. The proposed law states that if any of its parts were declared invalid, the other parts would stay in effect.
ARGUMENTS

IN FAVOR: A YES vote prevents cruel treatment of animals in Massachusetts by ending the practice of cramming farm animals into cages so small they can’t turn around or stretch their limbs, and will remove inhumane and unsafe products from the Massachusetts marketplace.

Endorsed by the MSPCA, Animal Rescue League of Boston, The Humane Society of the United States, and 400 Massachusetts veterinarians because no animal should be immobilized in a cramped cage.

Endorsed by the Center for Food Safety and Consumer Federation of America because cage confinement increases food safety risks, and a YES vote protects Massachusetts consumers.

Endorsed by Massachusetts family farmers and the United Farm Workers because proper treatment of animals is better for farmers. From McDonald’s to Walmart, retailers are switching to cage-free eggs—the right thing to do at the right cost.

Vote YES. Protect consumers. Prevent animal cruelty.

Authored by:
Stephanie Harris, Campaign Director
Citizens for Farm Animal Protection
PO Box 470857
Brookline, MA 02447
617-522-2016
www.citizensforfarmanimals.com

AGAINST: A NO vote is necessary to protect Massachusetts consumers’ right to choose from the variety of healthy foods available for purchase today.

Question 3 proposes to ban the sale of any veal, pork, and eggs from any state unless produced according to the wishes of the ballot promoters. A recent study undertaken at Cornell University estimates the cost to consumers—just on eggs—would be $70 a year for a family of five.

This study also notes that an increase in food prices “disproportionately harms lower income households” and can impact their ability to maintain a “healthy and adequate diet.”

Let the free marketplace respond to consumer concerns. The veal industry plans to be completely phased out of veal crates by the end of 2017. 175 food suppliers have already pledged to switch to cage free eggs. Others will follow.

This proposed government mandate is neither necessary nor wise.

Authored by:
William Bell
New England Brown Egg Council
97 A Exchange Street, Suite 305
Portland, Maine 04101
207-752-1392
www.newenglandbrownegg.com

FULL TEXT OF QUESTION

Be it enacted by the People, and by their authority:
Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act

SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to prevent animal cruelty by phasing out extreme methods of farm animal confinement, which also threaten the health and safety of Massachusetts consumers, increase the risk of foodborne illness, and have negative fiscal impacts on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, it shall be unlawful for a farm owner or operator within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to knowingly cause any covered animal to be confined in a cruel manner.

SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, it shall be unlawful for a business owner or operator to knowingly engage in the sale within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of any:

(A) Shell egg that the business owner or operator knows or should know is the product of a covered animal that was confined in a cruel manner.

(B) Whole veal meat that the business owner or operator knows or should know is the meat of a covered animal that was confined in a cruel manner.

(C) Whole pork meat that the business owner or operator knows or should know is the meat of a covered animal that was confined in a cruel manner, or is the meat of the immediate offspring of a covered animal that was confined in a cruel manner.

SECTION 4. For the purposes of this Act, a covered animal shall not be deemed to be “confined in a cruel manner” during:

(A) Transportation.

(B) State or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and similar exhibitions.

(C) Slaughter in accordance with any applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

(D) Medical research.
QUESTION 3: Law Proposed by Initiative Petition

FULL TEXT OF QUESTION (continued)

... of usable floor space per hen.

(K) “Person” means any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, limited liability corporation, estate, trust, receiver, syndicate, association, or other legal entity.

(L) “Pork meat” means meat, as defined in 105 CMR 531.012 as of June 1, 2015, of a pig of the porcine species, intended for use as human food.

(M) “Sale” means a commercial sale by a business that sells any item covered by Section 3, but does not include any sale undertaken at an establishment at which inspection is provided under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. For purposes of this section, a sale shall be deemed to occur at the location where the buyer takes physical possession of an item covered by Section 3.

(N) “Shell egg” means a whole egg of an egg-laying hen in its shell form, intended for use as human food.

(O) “Turning around freely” means turning in a complete circle without any impediment, including a tether, and without touching the side of an enclosure or another animal.

(P) “Uncooked” means requiring cooking prior to human consumption.

(Q) “Usable floor space” means the total square footage of floor space provided to each hen, as calculated by dividing the total square footage of floor space provided to hens in an enclosure (including both ground space and elevated flat platforms) by the number of hens in that enclosure.

(R) “Veal meat” means meat, as defined in 105 CMR 531.012 as of June 1, 2015, of a calf raised for veal, intended for use as human food.

(S) “Whole pork meat” means any uncooked cut of pork (including bacon, ham, chop, ribs, riblet, loin, shank, leg, roast, brisket, steak, sirloin or cutlet) that is comprised entirely of pork meat, except for seasoning, curing agents, coloring, flavoring, preservatives and similar meat additives. Whole pork meat does not include combination food products (including soups, sandwiches, pizzas, hot dogs, or similar processed or prepared food products) that are comprised of more than pork meat, seasoning, curing agents, coloring, flavoring, preservatives and similar meat additives.

(T) “Whole veal meat” means any uncooked cut of veal (including chop, ribs, riblet, loin, shank, leg, roast, brisket, steak, sirloin or cutlet) that is comprised entirely of veal meat, except for seasoning, curing agents, coloring, flavoring, preservatives and similar meat additives. Whole veal meat does not include combination food products.
(including soups, sandwiches, pizzas, hot dogs, or similar processed or prepared food products) that are comprised of more than veal meat, seasoning, curing agents, coloring, flavoring, preservatives and similar meat additives.

SECTION 6. The Attorney General shall have exclusive authority to enforce the provisions of this Act. Each violation of this Act shall be punished by a civil fine not to exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000). The Attorney General may also seek injunctive relief to prevent further violations of this Act.

SECTION 7. It shall be a defense to any action to enforce this Act that a business owner or operator relied in good faith upon a written certification or guarantee by the supplier that the shell egg, whole pork meat, or whole veal meat at issue was not derived from a covered animal that was confined in a cruel manner, or from the immediate offspring of a female pig that was confined in a cruel manner.

SECTION 8. The provisions of this Act are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other laws protecting animal welfare. This Act is not intended, and should not be construed to limit any other state law or rules protecting the welfare of animals or to prevent a local governing body from adopting and enforcing its own animal welfare laws and regulations that are more stringent than this section.

SECTION 9. The provisions of this Act are severable and if any clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this Act, or an application thereof, shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, section or application adjudged invalid.

SECTION 10. The Attorney General shall promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act on or before January 1, 2020.

SECTION 11. Sections 2-7 of this Act shall take effect on January 1, 2022.