

# 2012

## YEAR IN REVIEW



MERCY FOR  
  
ANIMALS

# THANK YOU



Dear Friends,

**2012 was truly a groundbreaking year at Mercy For Animals.** In the last 12 months we have opened the hearts and minds of tens of millions of Americans to the plight of animals who suffer behind the closed doors of our nation's factory farms, livestock auctions, and slaughterhouses. Our undercover investigations have cast a bright light on abusive practices, and our legal advocacy efforts have led to arrests, prosecutions, and historic convictions of animal abusers.

Our brand new corporate outreach department is **giving animals a much-needed voice** in the boardrooms of some of the country's largest and most powerful companies. In the past year, MFA has pressured major corporations—including Costco, Kmart, and Kraft Foods—to implement new policies that will reduce the suffering of millions of pigs and cows.

MFA's educational outreach campaigns are helping consumers from coast to coast see farmed animals in a new light. Through

grassroots outreach events, humane education workshops, and compelling advertising campaigns, **MFA is inspiring a new generation to explore a vegan lifestyle.**

**Our efforts are having an impact**—exposing cruelty and motivating change. As public awareness continues to grow regarding factory farming, the demand for meat is finally on the decline, meaning that hundreds of millions of animals will be spared the horrors of industrial animal agriculture.

This hard-fought progress has been made possible because of you—MFA's cherished members. **Every day I am grateful to each of you for your generous and unwavering support.** Together we are truly building a kinder future for all creatures. Thank you for paving the way.

With gratitude,

Nathan Runkle  
Executive Director

## I AM MFA



It is my belief that, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, MFA does more to reduce suffering than any group out there by focusing exclusively on "food animals," then utilizing considerable volunteer labor and marshaling media attention to their investigations. As longtime donors, it is our honor to continue our support of their efforts. They bring meaning to our money.

The Nessel Family



Mercy For Animals are relentless crusaders in the fight for animal liberation. They will go down in the history books for changing the way people perceive animals, particularly animals raised for food. They are true freedom fighters.

Simone Reyes



MFA is the real deal. They are a group of people dedicated to helping animals by exposing farm animal cruelty. It is a small, effective group, producing very good results for the money given to them. I totally support what they do.

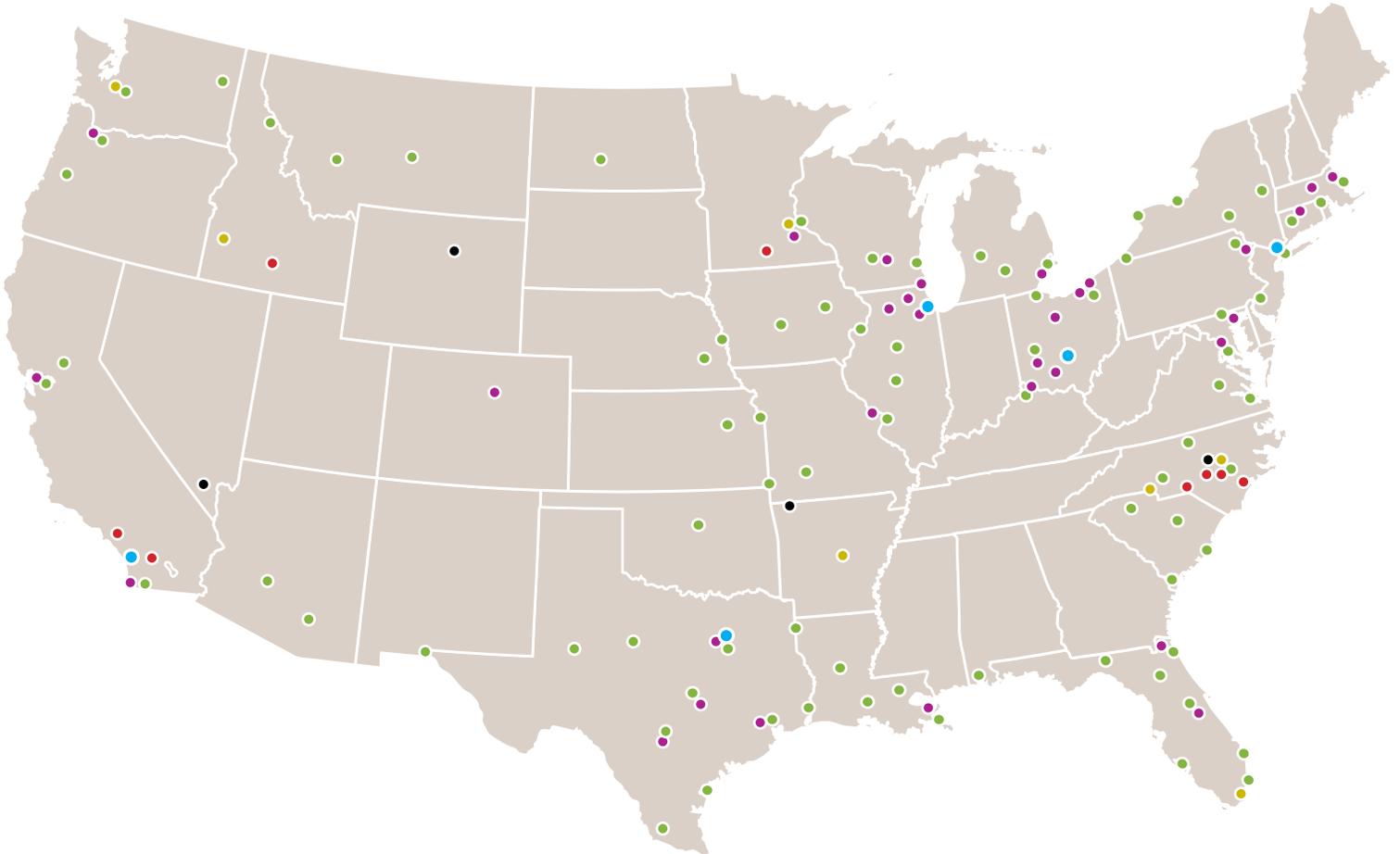
Ady Gil



We support MFA because of their tireless and effective work in giving farm animals a voice and in making sure that consumers know just how much these animals suffer to provide a food source that isn't even necessary for human health. The 21st century will certainly be remembered as one that greatly benefited animals, and MFA is a leader in making this happen.

Tom & Joan Lyon

# MAPPING COMPASSION



MFA Offices



Press Conferences



Investigations



Protests



Ad Campaigns



Educational Exhibits



## YEAR IN NUMBERS

In 2012, MFA boasted over **100,000** members, **15** full-time employees, **40** interns, **5** undercover investigations, **9,000,000** viewers reached by pro-veg advertisements, nearly **2,000** outreach events in over **150** cities, **1,000,000** pieces of literature distributed, **300** blog posts, **120,000** Facebook friends, **3,000,000** unique website visitors, and over **2,000** news stories worldwide about MFA's work.

And those numbers have led to demonstrable change—sparing real animals from lives of cruelty and neglect on factory farms. According to the USDA, per capita meat consumption and demand is anticipated to drop dramatically again in 2013! Americans are expected to eat an estimated **600 million** fewer chickens, at least **6 million** fewer cows, **12 million** fewer pigs, and **22 million** fewer turkeys.



# UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATIONS

I support Mercy For Animals because they are so very effective in their investigations of animal abuse. They have been responsible for arrests, prosecutions, and convictions. Anyone who contributes to Mercy For Animals can be sure that he or she will get their money's worth!

Bob Barker

Recent research shows that MFA's groundbreaking investigations are having a dramatic impact on American meat consumption through increased media exposure of animal welfare issues. According to a study conducted for the meat industry by livestock economists at Kansas State University and Purdue University, consumer demand for all types of meat is negatively impacted when media attention is given to farmed animal protection issues.

In 2012, MFA's hard-hitting undercover investigations exposing cruel and inhumane practices in the meat, dairy, and egg industries routinely received widespread media coverage, reaching millions of consumers around the world. MFA remains a major driving force behind the burgeoning awareness about factory farming issues and the dramatic shift in consumer attitudes and meat consumption.

## Butterball Busted – Again

Two MFA investigations inside Butterball turkey factory farms revealed workers violently kicking and stomping on turkeys, dragging them by their wings and necks, slamming them into transport crates, and leaving turkeys to suffer from serious untreated injuries and infections.

Garnering headlines across the country, from CNN, FOX, NBC, and CBS, to news giants United Press International, The Associated Press, Reuters, and *USA Today*, MFA's Butterball investigations exposed **millions of American consumers to the criminal cruelty to animals that runs rampant behind the closed doors of Butterball's factory farms.**

In a *Los Angeles Times* online poll, the majority of respondents said that **these investigations would lead them to push their shopping carts past the Butterball turkeys for Thanksgiving.**

## California Auction Atrocities Exposed

After MFA exposed workers throwing, beating, stomping on, and kicking animals at Ontario Livestock Sales, one of the oldest and largest livestock auctions in southern California, **the city of Ontario's mayor and a senior councilmember declared the abuse "shocking" and called for the owner and employees to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.** "Downed" animals—those too sick or injured to walk—were documented being sold, transported, and left to slowly suffer and die in clear violation of California law.

## Walmart's Crated Cruelty

An MFA investigation into Christensen Farms—a **Walmart pork supplier and one of the country's largest pork producers**—documented thousands of pregnant pigs confined to filthy, metal gestation crates so small they were unable to even turn around for nearly their entire lives. Covert footage caught workers slamming piglets headfirst into the ground, ripping out their testicles, and cutting off their tails without painkillers.

Coupled with a public pressure campaign aimed at encouraging Walmart to end the use of gestation crates in its pork supply chain, this hard-hitting investigation captured headlines across the country and **inspired some of Hollywood's leading stars to speak out**, including Emmy Award-winning host of *The Price Is Right* Bob Barker, who narrated the investigation video and encouraged Walmart to follow the lead of Safeway, Kroger, and its other competitors in taking a stand against cruel gestation crates.

## The Dark Side of Dairy

Hidden-camera video footage secretly recorded by an MFA undercover investigator at Bettencourt Dairies— one of the largest dairy factory farms in the United States—exposed sick or injured cows suffering from open wounds, broken bones, and infected udders left to languish without veterinary care, and workers viciously beating and shocking cows, violently twisting their tails in order to deliberately inflict pain, and dragging a downed cow by her neck using a chain attached to a tractor.

In a joint statement, Dr. Bernard Rollin, a distinguished professor of animal sciences at Colorado State University, and William Wailes, a dairy specialist and head of the Department of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University, declared: **"Of the dozens of such videos that we have watched, this one was the most horrific and the most upsetting.** ... Never have we seen such outright sadistic pleasure taken by workers in animal suffering."





# LEGAL ADVOCACY

Mercy For Animals are my heroes. I am proud to be an active member of their compassionate army.

Russell Simmons

In 2012, MFA established a legal advocacy department to strengthen its efforts on behalf of farmed animals by: pushing for enforcement of animal protection laws; outlawing cruel factory farming practices; using civil litigation as an advocacy tool for punishing factory farms' fraudulent, deceptive, and often illegal conduct; and holding the government accountable for its charge of regulating the agricultural industry.

This year, MFA's legal advocacy work has led to a staggering number of animal cruelty arrests and convictions, sending a clear message to the meat, dairy, and egg industries that animal abuse will not be tolerated.

## Historic Criminal Convictions

In a move virtually unprecedented in the nation, law enforcement in Hoke County, NC, conducted a **two-day raid of a Butterball turkey facility** in Shannon, NC, following MFA's investigation. Subsequently, **five Butterball employees were arrested** and charged with criminal cruelty to animals. These prosecutions led to a monumental victory: the **first-ever felony conviction for cruelty to factory-farmed poultry in US history**.

MFA's investigation also helped to uncover shocking government corruption in North Carolina. A **top-level state Department of Agriculture employee pled guilty** to two misdemeanor offenses for tipping off Butterball before the raid and then lying to law enforcement about her actions.

## Slaughterer Jailed – Animals Rescued

Roberto Celedon ran an **illegal slaughter operation in Los Angeles** until he was brought to justice.

The undercover footage—some of the most gruesome evidence of animal abuse to be obtained by MFA—prompted LA County **animal control officers to raid Celedon's facility and seize dozens of sick and injured animals**. While those animals have been given a second chance at life at a farmed animal sanctuary, **Celedon was convicted of felony cruelty to animals and sentenced to ninety days in county jail** and five years of probation. He was also ordered to pay fines in excess of \$4,000, complete 48 animal cruelty classes, and **refrain from owning any animals**.

## Livestock Auction Goes Down

MFA's investigation of **Ontario Livestock Sales** was a wake-up call to the world that farmed animal cruelty doesn't just occur in factory farms and slaughterhouses. At this Ontario, CA-based auction, MFA documented heartbreaking abuse of animals, many of whom were too sick to stand up or walk on their own.

Once again, based on the compelling evidence and legal research presented by MFA, law enforcement was quick to respond. **The owner of the auction and seven of his employees** were charged with a staggering **twenty-one counts of animal cruelty**.

## Charges Filed in Idaho Dairy Case

MFA's undercover investigation of the largest dairy producer in Idaho revealed such shocking and unspeakable cruelty that officials at the Idaho Department of Agriculture referred the case to the local district attorney for criminal prosecution.

Law enforcement immediately issued **arrest warrants for three Bettencourt Dairies employees**—an unprecedented move in the nation's third-largest dairy-producing state. The case is ongoing.

## Ag-Gag Fight Heats Up

In response to MFA's increasing successes at exposing its dirty deeds, the agricultural industry is taking desperate measures to hide its cruel practices from public view. In 2012, **ten states introduced so-called "ag-gag" legislation**, aimed at criminalizing undercover investigations. Thanks in major part to the efforts of MFA and our supporters, **seven of these ag-gag bills were defeated**. Three passed.

MFA is aggressively working to file lawsuits to challenge these ag-gag laws. Our fight against the oppressive legislation has helped generate national media exposure and interest in farmed animal protection issues, including **in-depth profile pieces on ABC's Nightline, in Time magazine, and on CNN**.



# CORPORATE OUTREACH



Mercy For Animals investigations are making headlines and changing the way people think about food, and forcing big companies to change their ways through public pressure.

Emily Deschanel

In 2012, MFA launched its corporate outreach department with the aim of working with the largest corporations in the country in order to effect the most positive change for the greatest number of farmed animals. In just six months, our efforts have already led to historic announcements and meaningful policy changes by some of the nation's largest food retailers.

## Grocers Ditch Gestation Crates

After months of behind-the-scenes discussions with MFA regarding the inherent cruelty of gestation crates, **Sears/Kmart**, the third-largest discount retailer in the world, and **Costco Wholesale**, the second-largest retailer in the US, **committed to completely eliminating the use of these abusive crates in their pork supply chains.** MFA was also instrumental in convincing **Safeway**, the second-largest supermarket chain in the US, to become **the first supermarket chain to announce its plan to phase out gestation crates.**

Thanks to these commitments by **Safeway, Costco, and other retail giants**, it is now clear to the pork industry that **it's only a matter of time before gestation crates are eliminated nationwide.** According to Andy Vance, an agriculture journalist with the *Angle*, "The controversy over sow stalls rages on, but for all intents and purposes, the train has left the station, and one could argue that time, effort and money spent fighting a move away from gestation stalls is wasted." The *Western Producer*, another agriculture publication agreed, stating in June: "You'd have to have rocks in your head to build a new sow barn with gestating sow stalls."

## Walmart Cruelty Campaign Takes Off

While the nation's largest food retailers increasingly pledge to eliminate cruel gestation crates from their pork supply chains, **Walmart—the world's largest retailer—continues to support this blatant form of animal abuse.** After months of negotiations and discussions with the mega-corporation failed to yield meaningful progress, MFA released a shocking undercover investigation exposing animal abuse at a Walmart pork supplier. The investigation video, narrated by Bob Barker and aired nationwide by leading media outlets, encourages Walmart to follow the lead of its competitors in taking a stand against gestation crates.

Following the investigation, MFA launched an aggressive nationwide campaign. More than 80,000 people have since signed MFA's petition to Walmart's top executives. As part of the grassroots campaign against Walmart, **MFA launched a nationwide, 67-city, three-month protest tour**—featuring a 10-foot-tall bloody replica pig in a gestation crate. The events drew hundreds of advocates and massive media attention to the plight of animals killed for Walmart's pork.

To literally drive home the campaign's message to Walmart's top executives, **MFA unveiled a mobile billboard that circled the company's corporate headquarters.** The billboard featured heartbreaking photos of sows confined to gestation crates and read, "Walmart: Stop Torturing Pigs."

This hard-hitting campaign has not only captured headlines across the country, it has inspired some of Hollywood's leading stars to speak out against Walmart's cruelty to pigs. **A-list celebrities**, including **Ryan Gosling, Kristen Bell, and Zoey Deschanel**, all joined MFA and signed an open letter that was delivered directly to **Walmart's CEO.**

## Kraft Cracks Down on Tail Docking

Following discussions with MFA and the release of our undercover investigation at one of the company's major dairy suppliers, **Kraft Foods made the historic commitment to require all of its dairy suppliers to phase out the cruel practice of tail docking cattle.** As the largest food and beverage company in North America, Kraft's announcement to ban the tail docking of cows in its supply chain sent shock waves throughout the dairy industry and could finally put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

## Laying the Foundation for Progress

MFA's corporate outreach department is currently corresponding with more than 100 grocery stores, fast-food restaurants, manufacturers and other major food companies about the elimination of cruel gestation crates and veal crates, the implementation of dairy cattle care standards, and other important issues that will continue to lead to corporate policy changes and significant reductions in farmed animal suffering.





# EDUCATION

When I donate to MFA, I know it's money well spent. Smart, savvy, and effective, they educate millions, spread compassion, and evoke change. I love Mercy For Animals!

Rory Freedman

MFA's education department had a groundbreaking year—reaching more people than ever before with information on the cruelty animals face on factory farms. Our efforts inspired legions of people to adopt a vegan diet, sparing countless animals lives of pain, deprivation, and misery. Spearheaded by our grassroots coordinators, volunteers, and interns working diligently in our New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Columbus, and Dallas offices, MFA held thousands of educational outreach events, humane education lectures, video screenings, and other grassroots events to inform and inspire. Our media and advertising campaigns also reached millions of Americans.

## Taking It to the Streets

In 2012, MFA conducted nearly 2,000 outreach events across the country, distributing close to one million pieces of pro-vegan literature at college campuses, festivals, and Earth Day events, inspiring many of tomorrow's leaders to transition to vegan lifestyles.

## The Power of Paid-Per-View

MFA's advocacy centers nationwide pursued an innovative outreach approach: paying potential vegans \$1 to watch a 4-minute version of our hard-hitting documentary *Farm to Fridge*. Our team held over 50 Paid-Per-View events across the country and reached over 5,000 people with a message of compassion—many of whom pledged to give up meat on the spot.

## Celebrating Compassion and Diversity

For the seventh consecutive year, MFA took a stand for kindness and justice for all, marching in pride parades in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, Houston, Cleveland, and Columbus, OH. Marchers distributed tens of thousands of pro-vegan leaflets to the huge crowds of social justice-minded parade-goers. Marching behind a banner declaring, "No one is free when others are oppressed," hundreds of dedicated MFA volunteers displayed their commitment to creating a kinder world for all beings.

## National Puppy Burger Tour

Mercy For Animals held 32 head-turning demonstrations in 14 states, asking the public why we call some animals "pets" and others "dinner." Our "Why Love One but Eat the Other?" tour, featuring MFA's newest pro-vegetarian mascot—a 10-foot-long inflatable puppy crammed inside a bun—generated dozens of media stories across the country and caught the attention of countless passersby. The tour culminated in a 4th of July protest at the annual Nathan's Famous International Hot Dog Eating Contest, a barbaric display of gluttony that draws nearly 50,000 live spectators and over 2 million ESPN viewers worldwide.

## MFA Expands TV Ad Campaign

MFA expanded our provocative pro-vegan television ad campaign, which had already reached millions of teens and young adults from coast to coast on MTV, to include even more channels, including Bravo, VH1, Oxygen, E!, and more. The spots have also gone viral on YouTube, generating hundreds of thousands of additional views online.

## Education for a Kinder Tomorrow

Utilizing our skilled team of humane educators, MFA presented over 100 inspiring educational programs at high schools, colleges, conferences, corporate forums, and more, informing thousands of inquiring minds about how our food choices affect the environment, human health, and billions of farmed animals.

## Vegan Thanksgiving Campaign

On the heels of MFA's investigation into Butterball, we launched a powerful new television ad campaign leading up to Thanksgiving Day, providing an important consumer warning to nearly one million viewers about Butterball employees' criminal animal cruelty convictions. The poignant ad, which aired on MTV, Food Network, and E! in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Raleigh-Durham, NC—home to Butterball's headquarters—also marked the launch of MFA's new Thanksgiving website, [PardonATurkey.com](http://PardonATurkey.com). The site is packed with scrumptious vegan holiday recipes, fascinating facts about turkeys, and a pledge to "pardon a turkey" and enjoy a delicious vegetarian Thanksgiving this year.



THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

MERCY FOR



ANIMALS

Dedicated to preventing cruelty to farmed animals and promoting compassionate food choices and policies.