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ARAMARK CASE STUDY

MOBILIZING STUDENTS FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED VICTORY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF CHICKENS

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

#AGONYATARAMARK



85,000
HITS



2,600
RETWEETS

2,900
LIKES

CHANGE.ORG PETITION



90,000
SIGNATURES

In mid-2016, virtually no U.S. food companies had welfare policies for chickens raised for meat. These animals suffer what could be considered some of the worst abuses in factory farming, due to both poor environmental conditions and the selective breeding that has caused them to grow to a grotesque size at an alarming rate. Despite the fact these chickens account for 88.7% of all farm animals in the United States — more than 8 billion are slaughtered each year — no federal laws are currently in place to protect them.

To address these issues, The Humane League launched an initiative to secure some of the first protections for these chickens in factory farms. Our initial campaign launched in 2016 against Aramark, the second largest food-service company in the United States. Aramark's clients include some of the country's largest universities, such as University of Central Florida, Arizona State University, and New York University, as well as national parks, prisons, hospitals, and more.

The campaign was the first from any American nonprofit to demand food companies release progressive welfare policies with public timelines to meaningfully address the worst abuses in chicken factory farming. After attempting to contact Aramark's leadership for six months, The Humane

League launched its official campaign when dozens gathered in Philadelphia to protest outside Aramark's headquarters. A giant billboard depicting an abused chicken circled the company's headquarters during the protest and for several days following. More than 90,000 people signed the campaign's Change.org petition, that was led by university student, Marissa Costner. Social media played a significant role; the hashtag #agonyataramark had over 85,000 hits on Facebook alone. Updates from The Humane League staff and its Fast Action Network (an online platform curated by The Humane League that includes over 3,800 advocates) fueled a consistent push on social media against Aramark-operated dining services at universities, hospitals, convention centers, and stadiums.

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Thousands of advocates joined with The Humane League to create meaningful change for tens of millions of chickens.

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DAVID COMAN-HIDY
Executive Director
The Humane League

Nationwide, The Humane League trained dozens of students at Aramark-operated universities to help them launch campaigns to remove Aramark because of the animal abuse in its supply chain. Students handed out thousands of leaflets to those entering dining halls, plastered hundreds of posters across campuses, and gathered thousands of signatures in an effort to raise awareness about Aramark’s support for animal abuse. Over 500 students were photographed holding posters that read “I want Aramark Kicked Off My Campus”, and the photos were consistently shared with Aramark and university leadership. Facebook ads targeting alumni of Aramark’s largest 20 university clients were run, asking viewers to pledge not to donate until Aramark was removed from campus. Off campus, strategic campaign tactics were used to sustain pressure nationally. Videos, websites, and petitions were created to target Aramark contracts where there were no student contacts, including hospitals, stadiums, arenas, and convention centers.



The Humane League launched its campaign at Aramark’s headquarters in Philadelphia on September 27, 2016.

Following this groundbreaking campaign by The Humane League, Aramark announced that it will end its support for some of the worst abuses against chickens by 2024. Feeling the pressure of the campaign against its competitor, Compass Group produced a similar policy on the same day. Together, these policies will affect approximately 100 million animals.

Details of Aramark’s policy include timelines to:

- Transition to breeds of birds that measurably improve welfare issues associated with fast growth rates per Global Animal Partnership’s (GAP) standards.
- Reduce maximum stocking density to equal to/less than 6 lbs./sq. ft. per GAP standards.
- Provide chickens with enriched environments including natural light, hay bales and perches that meet GAP standards.
- Evaluate with animal welfare organizations over the next year issues related to litter quality, lighting, air quality, and other environmental conditions.
- Render chickens unconscious prior to shackling using Controlled or Low Atmosphere Stunning.

The Humane League’s complex and strategic campaign against Aramark lasted just over four months, and resulted in an unprecedented policy that has set the benchmark for all commitments to follow. Our efforts to move Aramark included a focused, national campaign involving thousands of supporters and advocates. Grassroots pressure, social and traditional media, student organizing and more played major roles in securing this policy, our largest victory yet. Like with our cage-free victories against the foodservice industry in 2015 and 2016, The Humane League is building off of this momentum to secure policies from all of Aramark’s competitors, in addition to restaurants and retailers. This pioneer progress will bring swift, meaningful change for billions of chickens around the world.