

# “Don’t Just Switch from Beef to Chicken”

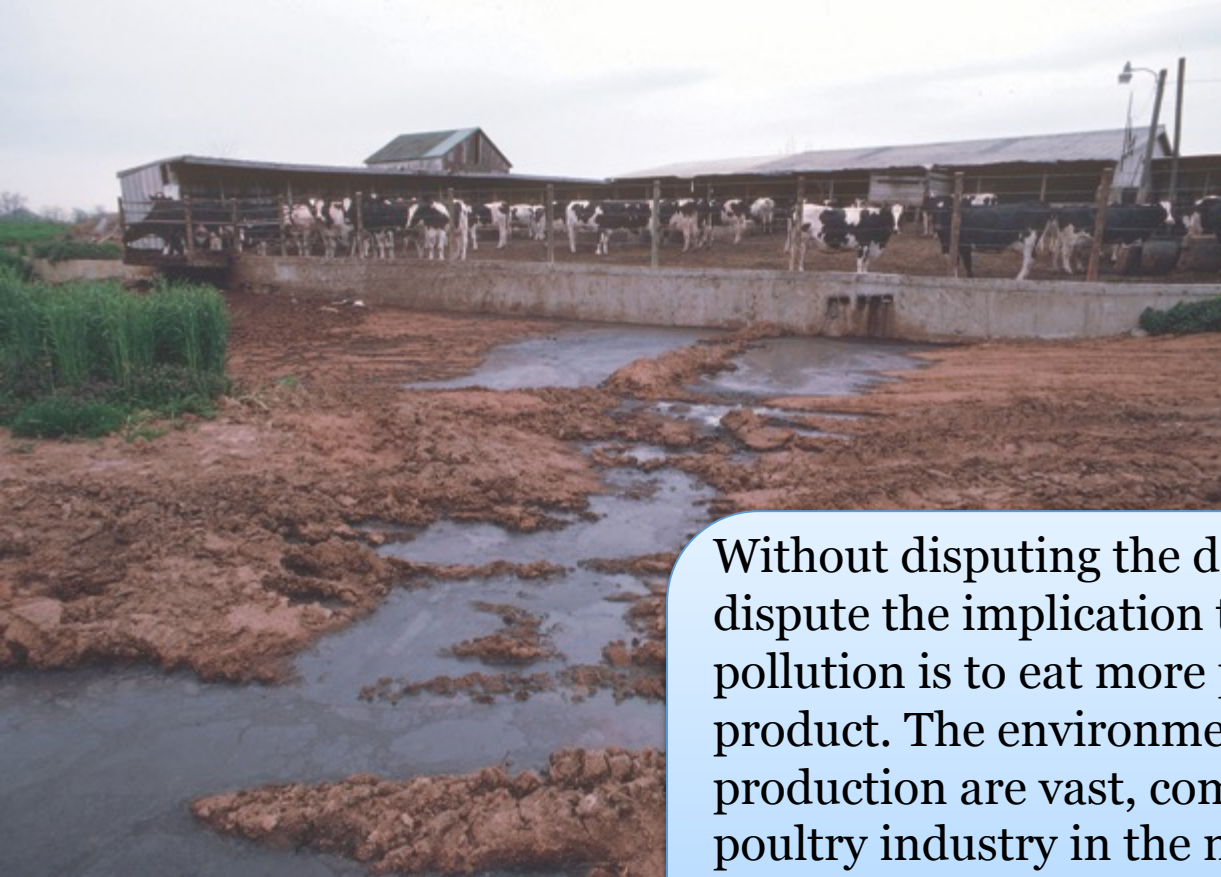
A Presentation by Karen Davis, PhD,  
President of United Poultry Concerns



*Photo by Frank Johnston,  
The Washington Post*

A study published in 2014 by the National Academy of Sciences, “Land, irrigation water, greenhouse gas, and reactive nitrogen burdens of meat, eggs, and dairy production in the United States,” says “beef” is worse for the environment than “chicken.”





Without disputing the data specific to this study, I do dispute the implication that the answer to cattle pollution is to eat more poultry or any other animal product. The environmental impacts of global animal production are vast, complicated, and worsening. The poultry industry in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States is a microcosm of the global expansion of the poultry industry and its baleful effect on land, air, water, and human and animal wellbeing.



“The new complex will include a processing plant, hatchery, feed mill and related operations.”



It isn't just a chicken house here, another one there. Instead you see five, ten or more long, low buildings, each housing thousands of unseen birds, lined up side by side along Route 50 and Route 13 and all over the back roads of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. North of us, on Route 13, a giant Perdue chicken slaughter plant ("processing complex") fronts the highway and a little farther on a Tyson complex. Every day truckloads of chickens travel these roads to the slaughter plants.

For decades a conflict has simmered between the environmentalists and the Delmarva poultry industry, periodically spawning reports by *The Washington Post* and other media about the burden of chicken manure and slaughterhouse waste on the Chesapeake Bay and the "legacy of lenience" that lets industry do as it pleases. A *Washington Post* article "An Unsavory Byproduct: Runoff and Pollution" offers this glimpse:

*From the air, the industry's true scale emerges: A massive operation, global in reach, it dominates the landscape. Chicken houses fill the horizons, nearly 6,000 in all, raising more than 600 million birds a year and turning out more than 750,000 tons of manure. Tractors rake it into soils as fertilizer, the winds carrying the smell of ammonia.*

*The impact of all that waste – more than produced by a city of 4 million people – is subtle but potent, as it washes off fields and seeps into groundwater. Decades of relentless growth have propelled the poultry industry into the primary source of pollution reaching key portions of the Chesapeake and coastal bays of Maryland, Virginia and Delaware.*



“On the Eastern Shore, Millsboro Delaware residents are continuing to deal with the aftermath of groundwater pollution linked to Mountaire Farms’ local processing plant after Mountaire provided bottled water along with holiday wishes to neighbors this past December 2017 without explanation. Mountaire Farms addressed Millsboro residents’ concerns over high nitrates in residential wells in a recent meeting while claiming the contaminated wells are not their fault.”

*Courtesy of Mountaire Farms*

# About Mountaire Farms

Welcome to Mountaire Farms.

Mountaire Farms is the seventh largest chicken producer, serving markets from Arizona to Asia, Miami to Moscow.

With operations in Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina and Arkansas, and products reaching markets regionally, nationally and internationally.

At Mountaire Farms, we believe that all animals raised for food should be treated with respect.





# Sustainability

At Mountaire Farms, sustainability not only means finding ways to utilize natural resources more efficiently, but it also means doing so in a way that protects land, water, and energy resources for future generations. Mountaire Farms is committed to the responsible production of food that is safe, affordable and abundant for consumers in the United States and around the world. To that end we continually strive to make all aspects of our business conform to the latest technologies in energy efficiency, agricultural innovation, water conservation, and resource recovery and utilization. Being good stewards is Mountaire's business!

***“To be good stewards of all the  
assets God has entrusted to us.”***

*(From the Mountaire Creed)*

# Inside the Chicken Houses



A look inside a chicken house affiliated with Tyson that has been charged with animal abuse in Temperanceville, Virginia.  
*2017 photo by Compassion Over Killing*



**Perdue chicken house in Delaware**

*Photo by: David Harp*

Michael Greger, MD describes the cesspool environments in which chickens are raised in *Bird Flu: A Virus of Our Own Hatching*: “Tens of thousands of chickens [are] crammed into a filthy, football field-sized shed, left to lie beak-to-beak in their own waste. The air is choked with moist fecal dust and ammonia, which irritates the birds’ respiratory passages, further increasing susceptibility in chickens already compromised by the stress of confinement. Since the birds are standing in their own excrement, the virus need not even develop true airborne transmission via nasal or respiratory secretions. Rather, the virus has an opportunity to be excreted in the feces and then inhaled or swallowed by the thousands of other birds confined in the shed, allowing the virus to rapidly and repeatedly circulate.”



80 percent of the world's protein-rich soy crop is not being fed to starving children, but to farmed animals, and most of this soy "is now grown on rainforest-cleared land." In 2004-2005 more than 2.9 million acres of rainforest were destroyed, "primarily to grow crops for chickens used by Kentucky Fried Chicken." – Richard Oppenlander, *Comfortably Unaware*

# Factory Farms vs. “Small Scale” Animal Farms

In *Comfortably Unaware: Global Depletion and Food Responsibility* (Langdon Street Press, 2011), Dr. Richard Oppenlander explains why “grass-fed, pastured” animal production is a false solution to factory farming, and why small-scale operations cannot sustainably meet the demands of billions of people wanting cheap, readily available meat, dairy and eggs.

Smaller farms don’t alter the amount of resources required to raise, transport, and slaughter billions of animals. Currently, 55 percent of our fresh water is given to animals raised for food, and 89,000 pounds of excrement are produced by farmed animals every second in the United States alone, according to Oppenlander. Moreover, what is fashionably called “humane” farming does not meet the behavioral and cognitive needs of, or show any genuine respect for, the animals trapped in our food production systems and belittling attitudes.

Anti-factory farming discussions that accurately depict aspects of standard industrial animal farming seldom include an equally scrupulous evocation of so-called alternative production practices – practices and attitudes that investigations and Internet blogs have often shown to be as callous and cruel as the “factory farming” of which they are, in fact, extensions.

# Whole Foods: The Lie

*Compassionate Carnage & Humane Horror*



# **Whole Foods: The Truth**

*“Certified Humane”: Undercover Investigation  
by Direct Action Everywhere*



# Environmentalism & Farmed Animals

Many environmentalists blame farmed animals for disrupting the natural environment. The U.S. poultry industry pollutes fields and streams with billions of pounds of manure and billions of gallons of waste water each year.

*"Thousands of poultry farms and processing factories churn out millions of birds everyday--along with carcasses and chemicals that contaminate the land and poison the water with toxic wastes." – "Fouling the Nest," Southern Exposure*

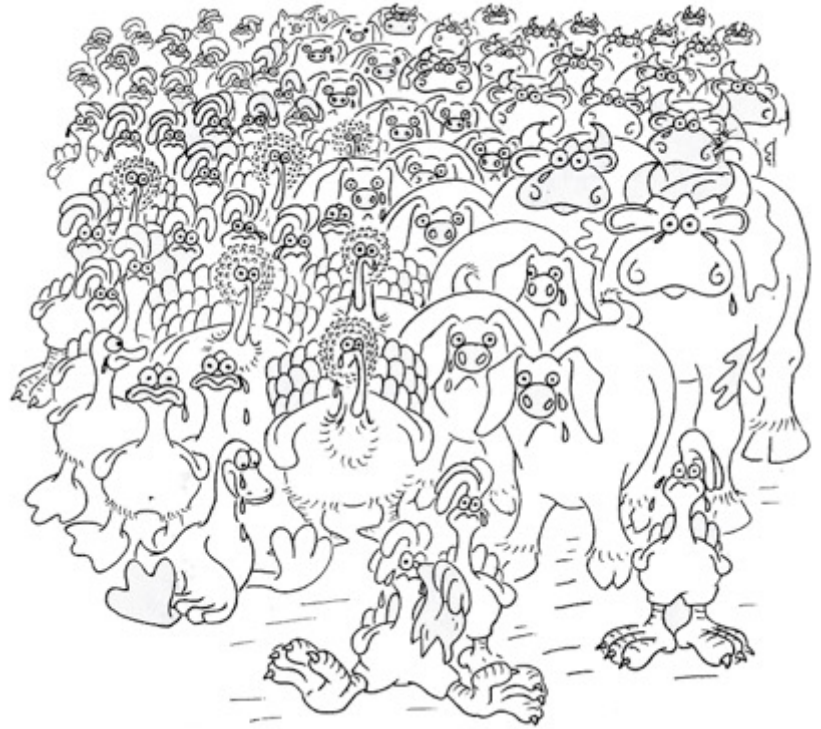
This is detestable, but it is not the birds' fault. It is ours.

Environmentalists also claim that farmed animals lack the behavioral repertoire and vitality of wild animals; ergo, farmed animals are disentitled to equal moral consideration with wild animals. Even if this were true, which it isn't, the blame is ours, not theirs. Morally, we owe them more, not less, for bungling their birthright.



# What Can I Do?

- Don't blame the chickens or the cows! They are the victims, not the makers, of the problem.
- Be vegan. When we eat animal products, we consume many more plants indirectly than when we eat those plants directly.
- The billions of bushels of high-protein soybeans produced each year to feed chickens and turkeys can be harvested directly for human consumption. As long as humans are on the planet, food will have to be produced and someone will have to produce it. It's not about "cows" versus "chickens."



*Illustration from Nature's Chicken  
by Nigel Burroughs*

**It's about  
choosing  
to Be  
Animal-Free!**



*Illustration from Nature's Chicken  
by Nigel Burroughs*

# FREE!

*UPC sanctuary photo by  
Davida G. Breier*



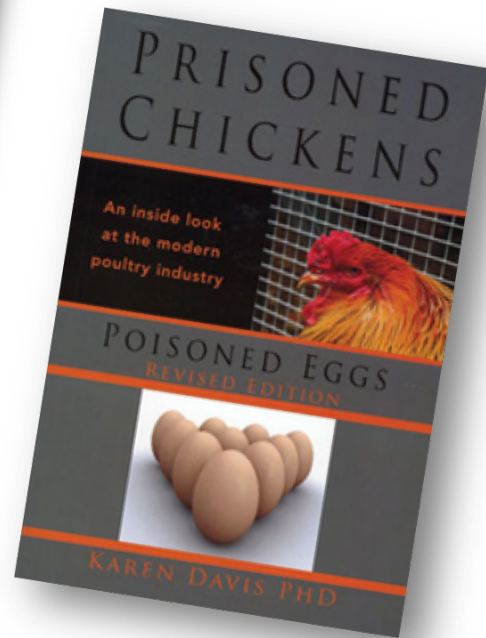
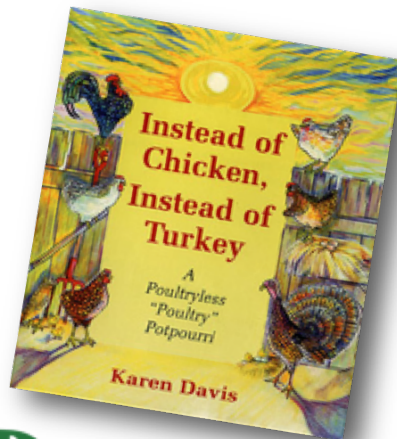
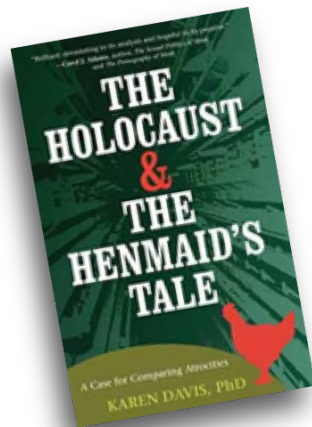
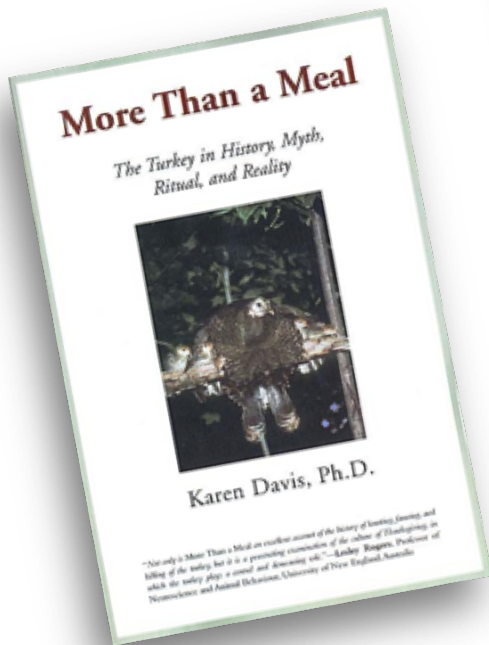
**“Don’t Gobble Me!”**

# Karen Davis with UPC Sanctuary Chickens

*Photo by Frank Johnston, The Washington Post*



# For more information, visit



**United Poultry  
Concerns**

[www.upc-online.org](http://www.upc-online.org)

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