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Poultry Press

Promoting the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl

Celebrating 31 years of dedicated activism for domestic fowl

United Poultry Concerns

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**Tractor Supply Employee Exposes the Company's Cruelty to
Chicks and Ducklings as a Matter of Policy and Practice**

See story inside.

What Wings Are NOT For



UPC Photo of Daffodil and her baby by Karen Davis

A *Newsweek* article published April 28 about a current dearth of commercial chicken “wings” concludes the marketing account with the perspective of UPC’s President, Karen Davis in the following three paragraphs:

The demand for U.S. chicken abroad increases production at home, production which Karen Davis, president of United Poultry Concerns, said devastates its surrounding environment. In the United States, 8 billion chickens are consumed each year, and American chickens produce nearly 86 million tons of manure a year.

Davis says this manure does not just create toxic environments for the chickens, but it also presents major disposal problems. While some can be used for fertilizer, much ends up in runoff. According to a report by Environmental Integrity Project, the chicken industry contributes about 12 million pounds of nitrogen to the Chesapeake Bay each year. Today, 82% of the bay is partially or fully impaired by toxic contaminants, the Chesapeake Bay Program found.

“The environmental issue is very important, because the plight of the chickens again spills out into the larger environment,” Davis told *Newsweek*. “One of the effects of the chicken industry is the destruction of wildlife and wildlife habitat. It just ruins every place it opens for business.”



UPC photo taken outside a Perdue chicken house by Garrett Seivold

Hope for the Animals Podcast

In this lively new podcast series sponsored by United Poultry Concerns, UPC's Projects Manager Hope Bohanec covers a variety of farmed animal issues including the ethical, environmental, spiritual, heartbreaking and heartwarming aspects of fighting for farmed animals and living vegan. Each episode includes a very special guest. To listen to each prerecorded episode at any time, just visit www.hopefortheanimalspodcast.org. Tune in! You'll be glad you did!

"I love the Hope for the Animals podcast. Hope Bohanec has the absolutely most beautiful voice to listen to!"
 – *Marian Erikson, www.plantbasedbriefing.com*



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Do Chickens Mind Seeing Other Chickens Traumatized in Their Presence?

A perspective on chickens in honor of International Respect for Chickens Day, May 4/month of May

By Karen Davis, PhD, President, United Poultry Concerns

(This article was first posted April 27 on Animals 24-7.)

A fellow activist once asked me if I believed chickens don't mind watching and hearing other chickens being killed in their presence. He asked because a farmer had told him they don't. He questioned the credibility of this claim from a person who would do such a thing. Was it true?

Lest anyone think chickens don't mind seeing and hearing other chickens die violently in front of them, or be grabbed by a predator or otherwise traumatized, nothing could be further from the truth. As a chicken sanctuary director for more than three decades, I've witnessed the effect on chickens of a hawk or a fox and the terror these predators inspire in the birds, including the aftermath of trauma.

I learned the hard way back in the early days of keeping a few rescued chickens in an unfenced yard. (Those naïve days are long gone, and our 12,000 square-foot sanctuary is now fully predator-proof.) One of our chickens, Ethel Murmur, a Cornish-cross hen we rescued from a slaughter-bound truck spill in Northern Virginia, was in the yard one Saturday afternoon, next to the porch with her friend Bertha, when a fox stole Bertha and left her dead in the woods.

Before this, Ethel Murmur was so vigorous and full-throated that we named her after the famous Broadway singer Ethel Merman on account of her imposing character, ample physique, and big voice. Afterward, Ethel Murmur was

never the same. She stopped making a joyful noise, stopped yelling for attention, and could hardly walk anymore. Her whole body shriveled, and she died a week later. Although she herself had not been attacked, she had *watched* the attack on her friend, and could not recover.

Another situation arose one morning when I put our brown house hen, Alexandra, outside with her bantam rooster companion, Josie. It was spring and the kitchen door was open wide. Suddenly, Alexandra ran shrieking through the door into the house, jumped up on a table, and could not calm down. I cried, "Alexandra, what happened?" Panic stricken, I raced outside. Josie was nowhere. Once again – a fox.

As for chickens not minding watching members of their flock being killed by a farmer, a man once told me how a small flock of chickens he and some others were keeping on a commune he belonged to at the time were slaughtered in front of each other by a member of their group. Three hens and a rooster who were previously friendly fled the scene. They disappeared for more than two weeks, before reappearing, timidly, and never again trustingly. Their behavior following the slaughter was totally altered, the man sadly said.

In nature, chicken parents will confront a predator by first pushing their chicks into foliage for safety behind themselves. Puffing out their feathers and



UPC photo shows hens perching safely in our predator-proof sanctuary.

spreading their wings wide, they will charge the predator while sounding alarm calls. One May day, when a pair of our hens and roosters produced an unexpected family, the tiny chicks squeezed through the wire fence to the other side, then peeped piteously at being stuck there. Shrieking and dashing about, unable to reach her chicks, the frantic mother hen instinctively flew straight up into my face when I approached her. (I rescued all five chicks and sealed the openings.)

When questioning the emotional complexity of *farmed* animals, we need to remember that a farmed animal is essentially a *natural* animal in captivity. A chicken is a being whose physical environment and bodily deformations imposed by exploiters have not eliminated the fundamental instincts, sensitivities, emotions and intelligence in this bird whose evolutionary home is the tropical forest. Like their wild cousins of the tropics, domesticated chickens sensing a predatory threat in a yard during the day will typically react with choral uproar, fight, flight, and hide behavior.

Chickens in a state of abnormal, chronic fear and severe, inescapable captivity tend by contrast to become very still and quiet, evincing what psychologists call learned helplessness – behavior exhibited by individuals enduring repeated aversive stimuli beyond their control, even if their senses are on high alert. They may develop tonic immobility, a condition researchers call “a fear-potentiated response” to being restrained in a chicken who knows she or he is going to die.

I am confident that chickens are empathic creatures who are capable of experiencing not only the imminence of their own death, but the emotional tones of dread and dying in others trapped in a violent setting such as an industrial slaughterhouse, a live poultry market, or a cockfighting ring. I do not doubt that they sense when they themselves and their conspecifics are in mortal danger, as shown by their ready response to danger in diverse environments. My view is reflected in some preliminary scientific studies cited, for example, by evolutionary biologist Dr. Marc Bekoff in “Empathic chickens and cooperative elephants: Emotional intelligence expands its range again” in *Psychology Today*.

The day after Josie, our little rooster, was grabbed by a fox in front of Alexandra, I was filled with grief and guilt. “Why oh why did I let them outside yesterday morning unprotected?” I sat on the floor and could

not stop crying. Here then came big white billowy Sonia, whom we’d rescued with Josie and other chickens from a filthy shed in back of a shiny farmers market in Leesburg, Virginia, across the living room floor. She rested her head against me and began purring softly over and over. My sorrow deepened with love for this being, who maybe knew or did not know why I was weeping, but who sensed my sadness and rose from where she was sitting to plod across the floor to comfort me in this moment of empathy that we shared in the tragic world.

Tuesday, May 4th is International Respect for Chickens Day, and the entire month of May is International Respect for Chickens Month. During this month, we urge people to do a kind action for chickens that lets others know who these birds truly are and how we can help them by expanding our own empathy to include them. For ideas about what you can do, please visit www.upc-online.org/respect and Do a Kind Action for Chickens in May - and Every Day.



**Karen hugs Alice at United Poultry Concerns.
Photo by Karen Porreca**

KAREN DAVIS, PhD is the President and Founder of United Poultry Concerns, a nonprofit organization that promotes the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl including a sanctuary for chickens in Virginia. Inducted into the National Animal Rights Hall of Fame for Outstanding Contributions to Animal Liberation, Karen is the author of numerous books, essays, articles and campaigns. Her latest book is *For the Birds: From Exploitation to Liberation: Essays on Chickens, Turkeys, and Other Domesticated Fowl* (Lantern Books, 2019).

Breaking the Sound of Silence for Good

By Karen Davis, PhD,
President of United Poultry Concerns

“Regret for things we did is tempered by time. But regret for things we did not do is inconsolable.” – Allan McDonald, an engineer who spoke out against the Space Shuttle Challenger before it blew up in 1986.

It was maybe twenty years ago in an airport where a woman in a brazen fur jacket sat chatting with the man next to her and I sat across from them watching and waiting to intervene. In the end, I didn't. Instead of saying something about that fur, I shrank back until it was too late as they moved on and my anxiety about speaking turned to guilt and self-recrimination – feelings about the lost opportunity, including the “relief” I felt when it was “too late,” that I carry to this day.

In another airport at another time, I spoke to a couple sitting across from me in the gate area laughing and talking while dipping chicken nuggets in a cup of sauce. Actually, it was they who started the conversation prompted by the button I was wearing with a little yellow chick and the words “Stick Up For Chickens!”

“What does that mean?” they asked, and I said, “It means please be kind to chickens and don't eat them.” Having copies of our *Chickens* brochure with me, I dug in my bag and handed them one and we talked a little more about chickens and parted amiably.

Through the years I've had many conversations with strangers in airports and other places where my “Stick Up For Chickens” button or my Turkey button, “Don't Gobble Me,” sparked a question. Once while waiting to board a plane, a man asked what my “Stick Up For Chickens” button meant, and I told him about our chicken sanctuary and he went from seeming kind of sour to an animated account of a rooster he had once loved who followed him everywhere and how much he missed that rooster.

Many times through the years I've handed a brochure and spoken to a stranger unsolicited, and

rarely has the response been hostile. The most common experience I've had is surprise at how willing people are to engage when I say to them, brochure in hand, “Would you like to learn more about chickens and turkeys?” “Uh, okay, sure.”

So when one of our members, Barbara Moffit in Oklahoma, sent me a two-sided card she'd handmade and printed, featuring chickens “Dying for Dinner,” I was like, “Wow, this is great!” We quickly had these cards designed, printed, and ready for sale and distribution.

I carry a small packet of “Dying for Dinner” cards wherever I go, placing them here and there on store shelves and handing them directly to cashiers, receptionists, checkout people, wherever I happen to be. The image of the chickens on the front of the card and the words on the other side have a perceptible effect on the person receiving it. I watch them and say, “Please don't eat chickens. They suffer so much.”

The checkout person I handed a card to recently at our local supermarket said how sad it made her feel. We talked a little longer and I told her about all the chicken-free and other delicious vegan products the store now carries – a variety of Gardein, Morningstar Farms, Tofurky, Follow Your Heart, Lightlife, Boca burgers, “chik'n” nuggets, patties, and more – and she asked me to show her where in the store these products were located, which, of course, I eagerly did.

Next time I was at checkout, she came over and asked me to give a “Dying for Dinner” card to her fellow employee, saying again how sad she felt for the chickens and how she did not want to eat them anymore.

I think reading about how the chickens try to hide their heads and their poor little faces under the wing of the chicken next to them on the slaughter line, and how afraid they are, stirs a feeling in people who probably never considered the fear that the birds are feeling.

Once, I gave a talk at an event about chickens that caused some members in the audience to cry as I was speaking, and the moderator said, “Well, we certainly don't want to make anyone *cry*.”

Yes, we do. People should feel the sadness and experience sensations commensurate with the helpless terror of a poor little bird. Sadness, like guilt, lingers, and contrary to what is sometimes said, guilt about not speaking up when a chance arises, can motivate us to take advantage of the next opportunity to break

through the sound of silence. Speaking up benefits us psychologically, replacing guilt with gratitude, and our compassionate disruption penetrates the consciousness of the person or persons we approach. So let us not be afraid. There is much we can do in a little bit of time.

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(Front)

“We could no longer look at a piece of meat anymore without seeing the sad face of the suffering animal who had lived in it when the animal was still alive.” He told how, at the slaughter plant where he worked, “The chickens hang there and look at you while they are bleeding. They try to hide their head from you by sticking it under the wing of the chicken next to them on the slaughter line. You can tell by them looking at you, they’re scared to death.”

–Virgil Butler, Ex-Tyson Slaughterhouse
Voice for Chickens

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(Back)

“Scared of a Brochure!”

by pattrice jones

The Delmarva Chicken Festival was an annual event at which children petted baby chicks and then watched bird body parts sizzling in a giant frying pan, all under the guise of family fun. Karen Davis and United Poultry Concerns often showed up at those celebrations of cruelty, hoping to prompt festival-goers to truly *see* the birds as well as the violence visited upon them. Sometimes I tagged along.

One year, at a public park in Delaware, we protestors spread out with our signs and brochures. I positioned myself by the giant frying pan, silently holding a UPC placard that I hoped would inspire empathy. I tolerated the subsequent taunting until my tormentors summoned the police, at which point I went looking for the rest of the gang.

And so it came to be that I happened upon a scene I will never forget: a grown man literally fleeing from Karen Davis as she gave chase in low-heeled sandals and flowered dress, waving her leaflets in the air. “Scared of a brochure! Scared of a brochure!” Karen shouted so that all would hear, “This man is scared of a brochure!” She was right. He was. Perhaps he sensed, accurately, that Karen wanted to shake the very foundations of his identity as a male human at the apex of a hierarchy of hubris.

I have known Karen Davis since 2000, when she generously extended encouragement and assistance to what was then the new Eastern Shore Chicken Sanctuary and is now VINE Sanctuary. During the nine years before we relocated from Maryland to Vermont, I spent countless hours in conversation with Karen, frequently visited her at UPC, and sometimes participated in UPC events. We’ve been in less frequent contact in the years since but have continued to correspond and to see each other at events. I draw upon that rich relationship to write this afterword. I know that Karen would want you to evaluate her essays for yourself, so what I aim to do is to help you better understand their context.

Karen broke her own rules about leafleting that day in Delaware, but I’m glad she did because that moment encapsulates so much of what I appreciate about her. Karen insists that people see and think about

the violence and indignity inflicted on chickens, and she sometimes persists in that insistence past the point of politeness. She does so while not merely female but unabashedly feminine, which is why I mentioned what she was wearing that day. She has paid the price for this, enduring indignities herself on occasion, yet she continues to “stick up for chickens” whenever and however she can.

That said, Karen is one of the most highly respected and influential activists in the animal rights movement and one who has consistently garnered respectful and informative press coverage including prize-winning articles about her work.

The feminist proposition known as Standpoint Theory argues that what we can see depends on where we stand. Since she met Viva the hen in 1985, Karen Davis has stood with chickens, doing her best to simultaneously see the world from their perspectives and articulate what she sees from her own. Since founding United Poultry Concerns in 1990, she has done that from the grounds of a sanctuary located in a region dominated by the poultry industry, caring for chickens while forcing herself to see and contemplate and then try to find words to describe and analyze the unspeakable violence done to them.

In her germinal 1995 essay “Thinking Like a Chicken,” Karen Davis tells us that chickens became “the center of my personal and professional life” after getting to know two hens during a period of intense reflection. To truly understand the context of Karen’s thinking and writing, you must understand that is not a hyperbolic statement. Chickens *have been* at the very heart of Karen’s professional *and* personal life for all these years. She wakes up every morning and takes care of chickens; spends the day researching and writing or



planning for some event, periodically going out to check on the chickens; and then takes care of chickens each evening.

Many of those chickens are the large white birds called “broilers” by the poultry industry, who Karen warned me in our very first conversation will “break your heart” because they die so young no matter what you do. If you really want to put Karen’s thinking and writing into context, then you must also try to imagine what it is like to love and lose a beloved bird over and over again more times than you can count, often wrapping your arms around them as they die, holding on tight through the death throes, but just as often turning a corner to find the dead body of a friend.

But in fact you cannot imagine this. I can *kinda* feel where Karen’s coming from, because I spent years on the Delmarva Peninsula, where the local poultry industry kills and cuts up more than a million chickens every day. Like Karen, I cared for the vulnerable escapees of that violence, trying my best to give each one as many good days as possible. For a couple of years, like Karen, I lived alone while doing so. It nearly wrecked me. I sincerely do not know how she is still standing.

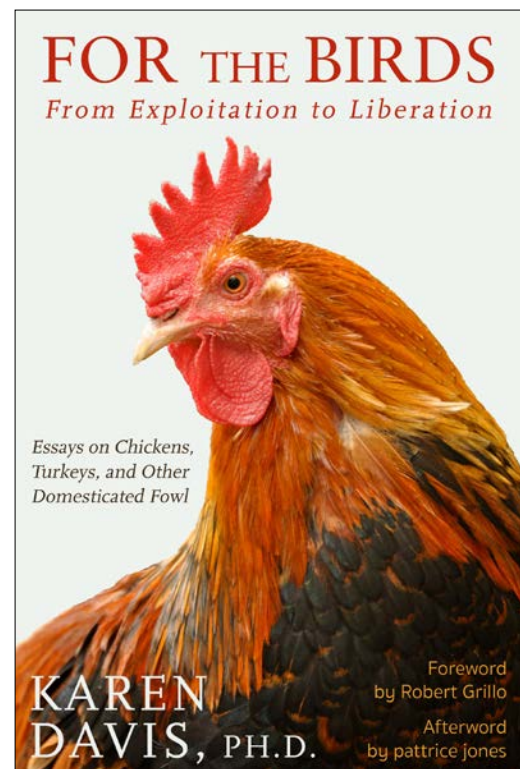
Sanctuary folk know sorrow, know compounded grief and impacted rage and how to soothe an agitated bird while feeling completely frazzled yourself. We all have faced the terrible reckoning of the realization that something you did or didn’t do hastened someone’s death. We know the literally deadly mistakes we ourselves have made, and so we do not expect people to be perfect. Maybe that’s why we are usually able to extend solidarity to each other even when we disagree.

The first time Karen Davis visited our then very new sanctuary, Miriam Jones and I were nervous. “It’s not an inspection,” Karen kept reassuring us, but we all knew it was. We passed! Karen became our biggest booster, even going so far as to ask one of her own donors to buy us a barn. Karen also used her clout in the movement to open up speaking and writing opportunities for me. She did this even though she did not always agree with me. Similarly, Karen has often invited people who disagree with her, and with each other, to share their views at UPC conferences. In so doing, she has done something it seems to be increasingly difficult to do: provoke people to consider perspectives other than their own. Now more than ever, when we are called upon to devise collective solutions to

devilishly difficult problems, that’s vital.

The problems faced by chickens in this world are as old as the first weapons used to kill them and as new as genetic engineering. Karen doesn’t have all the answers. None of us do, none of us could. What Karen has done consistently, as evidenced by these essays, is to generate ideas and analyses rooted in what she sees from her heartfelt hen-centric standpoint. Whether I agree or disagree, I always find it useful to think about what she has to say. So, the next time you see Karen coming, waving her latest essay, don’t be scared of a brochure.

This article was written by patrice jones as the AFTERWORD to Karen Davis’s book of essays For the Birds: From Exploitation to Liberation published by Lantern Books. In it, patrice describes Karen’s pursuit of people seeking to flee an encounter with a chicken rights activist in the 1990s.



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Freddaflower Memorial & Appreciation Fund

The pain of losing them is the price we pay for the privilege of knowing them and sharing their lives . . .

We thank those people who have contributed to our work with recent donations *In Loving Memory and in Honor and Appreciation* of the following beloved family members and friends, both those who have passed away and those who are with us.

I am honoring ZOE my Siamese mix cat for your Freddaflower Memorial Fund. Zoe has been a great source of comfort and love especially in the past two years. She was rescued by my son 16 years of age as a pretty little kitten. Zoe is a loyal and loving companion who loves to lie on me and rub her face against mine. She turned into a sweet personality. I am grateful for her love and devotion. – *Anita A. Garcia*

Dear Karen and UPC, because of your good work, because of your good heart, many have learned the beauty of a chicken. You helped me a long time ago when I had my very first rooster, Skippy. I have dearly loved every rooster I have had since then. My joy in life is holding the hens and hugging my roosters. Thank you. – *Melody Ann Wall*
(See her story on the following page.)

Dear Karen, I don't know if you remember, but I was a friend of Ron Scott from Garrison, New York. He's been gone a long time now but I still think of him. I knew Ron advocated for chickens and other animals, but back then I was young and I suppose disinterested in anything that didn't directly affect me. But now I'm older and wiser and I realize the importance of Ron's contribution to animal welfare, and yours too. I leave my copies of *Poultry Press* in coffee houses or other places where they might be read by those who otherwise wouldn't know the plight of poultry. Here is my donation in Ron's memory. – *Diane Maass*

In memory of my childhood dwarf chicken, and Cutie, Fritzie, Boomer and Stripes. – *Gundel Bhutani*



Photo by Karen Davis

Brandy Alexander

Such a beautiful bird – the picture of Brandy Alexander on the cover of *Poultry Press*, Spring 2021! And I loved your article on “meat” versus “animals.” You are doing wonderful work – keep it up! My contribution is in memory of Brandy Alexander. – *Dale Lichtblau*

My gift is in honor of Betty. – *Patrick McCarthy*

For Megan, for your new Chickens! Love always, Melonie. – *Melonie Kotchey*

Dear UPC, my donation is in honor of what you do for our feathered friends who are suffering so. The UPC magazine with all of its very informative information, articles and delicious vegan recipes is just great, as are the many emails you send out. Hopefully your mission of changing hearts and minds will continue towards a compassionate world. – *Wanda Wilcox*, grateful UPC member.

My donation is for *Hope for the Animals*, UPC's wonderful podcast created by Hope Bohanec. – *Judith Gottesman*

Enclosed is a donation in honor of my wife Jamie Kordack on the occasion of her 56th birthday on June 12th. Many thanks and keep up the good work. We enjoy reading your magazines when they arrive in the mail. – *Vincent M. Kordack*

In honor of International Respect for Chickens Day.
– Howard Schultz

Dear UPC, my gift is in memory and honor of your beloved turkey, Boris, who through his happy years living in your sanctuary, “Almost got to be the real turkey inside of me.” In our house, *Poultry Press* issues can be found everywhere, randomly in baskets, on tables, and in file cabinets. I met Boris in a *Poultry Press*, and his story still hurts my heart, but his spirit is always with me. Always for the animals. – Dianne (and Michael) Bahr

In honor of the charismatic Babyfat, a speckled Sussex hen who lived several years with my family but died in her sleep April 7th this year, a day after my birthday. – Emma Sjoblom.

In honor of Nero, Fredericka, Julie, Nathaniel, Leonard, and Bertha, remembered forever and sadly missed. – Paul Deane

My gift is in honor of All God’s Creatures. – Brien Comerford

Commanding Skippy

by Melody Wall

(Article first published in Summer 1992 *Poultry Press*.)

Roosters can sometimes be aggressive towards people making an otherwise fine feathered friend who needs a loving home, scary. Melody Wall of California explains how she met this problem.

The first 4 -5 months with Skippy, my white leghorn [“egg-type”] rooster, were easy. He didn’t crow and was as lovable as can be.

After that he started to become the proud rooster. I wasn’t prepared for his change. He crowed most of the day and became aggressive. I worried because I loved him and feared the possibility of parting from him. I also knew the odds of finding a kind home for a fierce rooster. People and stories come out of the woodwork about how impossible roosters can be! I was beside myself. Everyone was predicting doom.

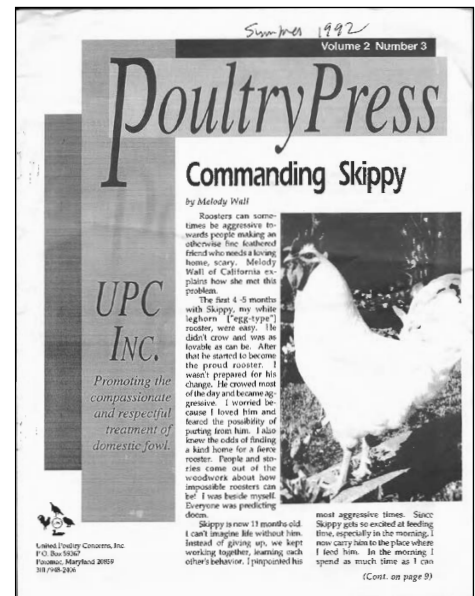
Skippy is now 11 months old. I can’t imagine life without him. Instead of giving up, we kept working together, learning each other’s behavior. I pinpointed his most aggressive times. Since Skippy gets so excited at feeding time, especially in the morning, I now carry him to the place where I feed him. In the morning I spend as much time as I can stroking him till he isn’t so keyed up.

However, Skippy is subject to these surprise charges, so I must stay alert. When I see him coming, I hold my hand up and out in front of me, and say, “Slow,

Skippy.” Of course, I have to do this while he’s still a little bit away. When he’s close, I snap my fingers and point to the nearest object for him to jump up on. He’s much easier to deal with if he’s higher and not around my legs. Fortunately he was held a lot

when he was little, so I do this often and it seems to soften his disposition. Because of these communications, we are totally fine together. I have no fear of him and he seems to understand my movements and gestures. Skippy is alert, affectionate, and full of personality. At first I kept him in a large pen where he crowed often. Gradually I let him out till now he is free-roaming in the fenced yard all day. His crowing is better and not really a problem.

In the morning Skippy is packed full of energy and crazy with excitement. At night he’s a gentle bird. He had an incredible variety of sounds. Many I understand, but many I don’t. Skippy sleeps in a cage that I cover with a dark blanket. When I turn the light out, I always say, “Good night, Skippy,” and he says goodnight back. I go to sleep feeling blessed.



Ducklings & Baby Chicks are NOT Easter Toys!

Take Action!

Tell People the Cruel Truth & Protest Tractor Supply

Each year, parents and others buy ducklings, baby chicks, rabbits, and goslings on impulse for Easter. Most of these animals are discarded once the charm of “oh, how cute” wears off. Often they are purchased as gifts for friends who never asked for them. Most people have no idea how to care for these fragile creatures, and few if any buyers spend money on veterinary care. Millions are dumped in the woods or near water, where they will not survive. Many are already sick, lame, malnourished, and dehydrated by the time they reach the store.

Bill Crain, cofounder of Safe Haven Farm Sanctuary in New York, writes this year:

March is coming and stores will be selling ducklings. Last spring, our farm sanctuary received an average of two or three calls a day from people who purchased ducklings but discovered they require more care than anticipated. We tried to tell them that people need to demonstrate responsibility for the animals they adopt. On occasion, the caller listened, but most did not listen.

When we told one man that his continued care for his ducklings, despite the trouble, would be a good model for his children, he changed his mind and said he would keep them. But the overwhelming majority of callers say it's too difficult.



Most of the ducklings are white Pekin ducks. The largest single seller in our area is Tractor Supply. Other feed stores sell them, too. People also order them online.

Some people just dump the unwanted ducks in parks or along roadsides. We get calls from people who see them wandering about, desperately trying to survive.

The problem extends beyond ducks and includes chickens. Tractor Supply and other commercial enterprises sell many chicks in batches that usually include roosters most people cannot keep. But last spring, ducks were the largest species in our area that people didn't want. The problem was much greater than in previous years. It was a crisis, and I fear it will continue to be one. – *Bill Crain, February 2021*

See “What Can I Can Do?” at end of next article.



Tractor Supply Employee Exposes the Company's Cruelty to Chicks and Ducklings as a Matter of Policy and Practice

Learning about our campaign to get Tractor Supply Company, with close to 2000 stores nationwide, to stop selling baby chicks and ducklings, an employee at a store in Washington State contacted United Poultry Concerns about Tractor Supply's inhumane policies and practices toward these birds.

“Instead of the warmth and comfort of their mother, they cower together in a transparent plastic tray, standing on a cold metal grate.”

Please read her statement denouncing Tractor Supply Company's mistreatment of the birds, and what you can do to help them.

– United Poultry Concerns

My Statement Regarding Tractor Supply Company

“Yes, Chick Days are annual and are expected to last another couple months. We still have many birds. I was told by a coworker that 32 ducklings died last shipment, only three survived.” – Tractor Supply employee to United Poultry Concerns, April 13, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I have been an employee at Tractor Supply Company for almost a year. I was hired because I love animals and am knowledgeable about them. I was happy working for the company until recent months when



These “display” trays are drawers stacked on top of each other in the shopping area.

we started our Chick Days promotion. Please read my Statement below to understand why.

Birds on the Sales Floor

My first day working “Chick Days” this year I was scheduled at 7am. I arrived to find **all of the birds cold, huddling in piles**. The ducklings were completely out of water. I asked my manager on duty why there was not any water and he looked at me pained and explained that they had been out every morning since the promotion started. He had felt bad for them, but **the way the displays are designed it is impossible to provide sufficient water for ducklings**. When I refilled the water, the ducklings were **climbing all over each other desperately** trying to get to the water. The smallest and weakest one even ended up in the water



(cont'd) Tractor Supply Employee Exposes the Company's Cruelty to Chicks and Ducklings as a Matter of Policy and Practice



trough because the other ducklings were pushing so hard.

The following mornings the birds were always **huddled up together because the new nationwide brooder/heater lamps inside are not warm enough for baby birds.** These are flat, panel-type heaters, and never once did I touch them and feel sufficient heat coming off of them on either setting. The displays are also difficult to keep clean so the birds were often lying in their own excrement. **Instead of the warmth and comfort of their mother, they cower together in a transparent plastic tray, standing on a cold metal grate.**

Since then, the Tractor Supply Company has received **many customer complaints about the new brooder displays.** Our location has since pulled them off the floor and is using a classic galvanized trough with brooder lamp instead. I am not sure if all locations have made this change or not. These default environments are better for the birds than the initial displays; however, **many birds still die on the sales floor.** Many customers, their children and their dogs

walk up to the displays to see the birds. As a result the birds are **subjected to loud noises, heavy foot traffic past their enclosures and frequent predator scares.** While these enclosures are easier to clean and maintain, the employees still do not clean them frequently enough and the birds often **live in their own excrement.**

Shipping/Receiving

When the birds arrive at the post office our manager is contacted to go pick them up. These **newborns are shipped across the country** from the East Coast/Midwest (we are located in WA state). Our first shipment was delayed because of the winter storms. Many of the birds showed up dead or died shortly after. This continues even as the weather warms. **Shipping live birds is detrimental to their health, especially paired with the lack of care they receive at arrival.**

Our inventory sheets are telling of TSC's attitude toward the chicks themselves. The **dead birds are written off as "junk" by the receiver.** They are put



Baby chick dies beneath the heat lamp in a tank at the back of the store.

in plastic bags and thrown in the dumpster like any other defective object we sell. I have pictures of some of the inventory sheets to give an example of how this is done. On a shipment day, we can see 30 or more dead birds. On a regular sales day I have seen around 20 of varied breeds listed.

Perhaps the saddest part is that we are not alone. I was told by a customer that they had to come to us because **our neighboring feed store lost thousands of birds in a shipment because the US Postal Service left them in a truck overnight in freezing temperatures.**

Employee Emotional Strain

Just about every employee I have spoken with at TSC has told me that they do not feel good about selling the birds. Both my management team and my fellow team members have expressed concern at the lack of care these birds receive. There is **no veterinary recourse for sick animals**, and the employees often feel powerless and saddened.

We are told to take sick birds off the floor and put them in the back under a heat lamp in a tank to die. This causes **unnecessary prolonged suffering.** Employees are not properly trained to handle healthy animals, much less the sick and dying ones. I and my fellow teammates have been told of a training video for these birds, but none of us have been directed to watch it. The store is perpetually understaffed, and managers cannot afford for their employees to spend time off the sales floor. Therefore, proper training is not possible.

When I asked a former employee how many birds died per shipment in the previous year's sales, they replied **"Sometimes it was all of them. I would cry like every day."**

Another employee told me, **"Every single time I have to bring a bird to the back who's dead or about to die, it breaks my heart. I hate that s****. I had to explain to a little girl the other day, who was crying, that we were taking the chick to the back to get better in our 'little hospital,' and that most of them 'get better' . . . but they don't."**

Employee and Customer Health

Outside of the ethical questions I have regarding the mistreatment of the birds, I also believe **it is incredibly irresponsible to be selling salmonella-carrying creatures during a devastating salmonella outbreak.** While the CDC has linked this mostly to the wild bird population, we do know that **songbirds often share space and water supplies with backyard chickens.** This outbreak has spread to people in my state and 8 others. People are being hospitalized. Tractor Supply is not being transparent about this with the public. We do not have information sheets on how to protect yourself from salmonella exposure or signage alerting the risks involved in handling the birds.

I hope that this information encourages people to **boycott Chick Days** and inspires people to **contact Tractor Supply corporate offices and urge them to stop selling birds.** I have given my notice with the company, as I cannot be around this kind of suffering or mentality any longer. Please share this information. I would prefer you do not use my real name until I have officially left the company. I have videos, pictures and other documents upon request.

Sincerely,
Anonymous for now.
April 9, 2021



(cont'd) Tractor Supply Employee Exposes the Company's Cruelty to Chicks and Ducklings as a Matter of Policy and Practice

What Can I Do?

- 🐔 Watch Video Denouncing “Tractor Supply’s AWFUL New Brooders”:
www.upc-online.org/tractorsupplyvideo
- 🐔 Urge Tractor Supply and other farm stores that sell these baby animals to stop. They are knowingly contributing to the suffering and death of countless creatures. They do not even provide proper care for them in their own stores. Like the customers they sell to, most store employees do not know, for example, that motherless baby animals need dark, quiet places to shelter in, and that being subjected to constant light and noise causes them great suffering and weakens their immune systems.
- 🐔 Sign and share our Change.org petition to Tractor Supply, which includes direct contact information for the company CEO Hal Lawton.
www.change.org/tractorsupply
- 🐔 Contact Mr. Lawton and tell him what you saw at your local store. Tell him the situation is inhumane and that you will not shop at Tractor Supply until it is rectified.
- 🐔 Speak to the local store manager and urge that the store provide proper bedding, sheltered resting areas and other comforts for these suffering chicks and ducklings.
- 🐔 Post a comment. Each Tractor Supply store appears to have its own local Facebook page where it is advertising baby birds for sale.
- 🐔 Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper(s) about this inhumane situation.
- 🐔 Alert your local humane society and urge them to intervene with the local Tractor Supply to help these birds.
- 🐔 Please print out and distribute “Are All Your Ducks In a Row? Did You Know?” (www.upc-online.org/ducksinarow) to libraries and elsewhere, including shopping centers and retailers like Tractor Supply, where baby animals are



sold at Easter. Those not sold are trashed. There is nothing cute, cuddly or kind about the business of “Easter” ducklings, chicks, rabbits, and baby geese.

Contact

- 🐔 Hal Lawton, CEO
Tractor Supply
5401 Virginia Way
Brentwood, TN 37027
Phone: 615-440-4600 extension 4601 it will go to voice mail
Website: www.tractorsupply.com
- 🐔 Customer Solutions:
1-877-718-6750
customersolutions@tractorsupply.com

Thank You for Taking Action!
– *United Poultry Concerns*

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United Poultry Concerns

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Please remember United Poultry Concerns through a provision in your will.
Please consider an enduring gift of behalf of the birds.

A legal bequest may be worded as follows:

I give, devise and bequeath to United Poultry Concerns, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the state of Maryland and located in the state of Virginia, the sum of \$_____ and/or (specifically designated property and/or stock contribution).

We welcome inquiries.

United Poultry Concerns, Inc.

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(757) 678-7875**



Karen & Mr. Frizzle ©2008 Davida G. Breier

Free Ways to Help United Poultry Concerns Raise Much-Needed Funds

Please make free fundraising a part of your online routine

Every time you shop at any of 1600+ online stores in the iGive network, a portion of the money you spend benefits United Poultry Concerns. It's a free service, and you'll never pay more when you reach a store through iGive. In fact, smart shoppers will enjoy iGive's repository of coupons, free shipping deals, and sales. To get started, just create your free iGive account. And when you search the web, do it through iSearchiGive.com where each search means a penny (or more!) for our cause!

Start iGiving at: www.iGive.com/UPC and help UPC get every possible donation when you shop or search online!



Vegan Recipe Corner

Texas Caviar

Recipe by JustaTaste.com, slightly modified

Ingredients

- 1 (15-oz.) can black-eyed peas
- 1 (15-oz.) can black beans
- 1 (15-oz.) can corn, drained
- 1/4 cup small diced jalapeño
- 1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 red or orange bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Instructions

1. Drain and rinse the black-eyed peas and black beans and combine them in a large bowl with the drained corn.
2. In a medium saucepan set over medium-low heat, whisk together the apple cider vinegar, vegetable oil, water, sugar, salt and pepper. Simmer the mixture for 3 minutes then remove it from the heat.
3. Add the jalapeño, red onion and chopped peppers to the bowl of beans and corn, then pour in the dressing and stir until well-combined.
4. Serve the Texas Caviar immediately or cover it with plastic wrap and refrigerate it for up to 24 hours before serving.

*For more great recipes, go to
www.upc-online.org/recipes/!*



Photo by Liqin Cao

POSTCARDS

20 for \$4.00, 40 for \$7.50



"Love is Best"



"Peaceable Kingdom"



"Chickens - To Know Them is to Love Them"



"Misery is Not a Health Food"

FACT SHEETS

20 for \$3.00

- "Viva, the Chicken Hen / Chickens Raised for Meat"
- "Jane-one tiny chicken foot"
- "Starving Poultry for Profit" (forced molting)
- "Poultry Slaughter: The Need for Legislation"
- "The Rougher They Look, The Better They Lay" (free-range egg production)
- "Intensive Poultry Production: Fouling the Environment"
- "Philosophic Vegetarianism: Acting Affirmatively for Peace"
- "The Rhetoric of Apology in Animal Rights"
- "Providing a Good Home for Chickens"
- "Chicken Talk: The Language of Chickens"
- "Celebrate Easter Without Eggs"
- "Chicken for Dinner: It's Enough To Make You Sick"
- "Guide to Staffing Tables: Do's & Don'ts"
- "Henny's New Friends"
- "Avoiding Burnout"
- "The Life of One Battery Hen"
- "Bird Flu - What You Need to Know"
- "How I Learned the Truth About Eggs"

"Peeper the Turkey, a Story of Endless Love"

"Factory Farming vs. Alternative Farming: The Humane Hoax"

BROCHURES

20 for \$3.00

- "A Wing & A Prayer" (Kapparot ritual)
- "Don't Plants Have Feelings Too?"
- "Chickens"
- "The Battery Hen"
- "Turkeys"
- "Ostriches & Emus: Nowhere To Hide"
- "Japanese Quail"
- "The Use of Birds In Agricultural and Biomedical Research"
- "Free-Range' Poultry and Eggs: Not All They're Cracked Up to Be" - New & Revised!
- "Live Poultry Markets" (in English, Spanish, & Chinese)
- "Chicken-Flying Contests"

LEAFLETS (FLYERS)

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- "The 'Human' Nature of Pigeons"
- "The Truth about Feather Hair Extensions"
- "Birds Suffer Horribly for Pillows & Coats"

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Don't Just Switch from Beef to Chicken: Go Vegan.

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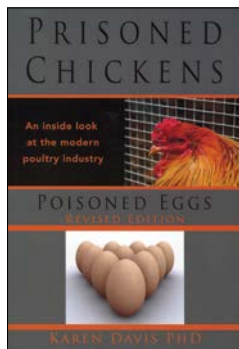
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BOOKS

Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry

By Karen Davis

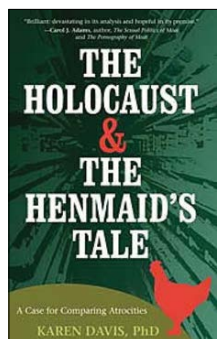
This newly revised edition of *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs* looks at avian influenza, food poisoning, chicken suffering, genetic engineering, and the growth of chicken rights activism since the 1990s. Presents a compelling argument for a compassionate plant-based cuisine. "Riveting . . . Brilliant." - *Choice magazine, American Library Association* \$14.95. 40% off bulk orders of 5 (\$8.97 each) = \$44.85 for 5.



The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities

By Karen Davis

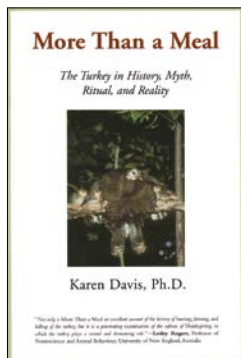
In this thoughtful and thought-provoking contribution to the study of animals and the Holocaust, Karen Davis makes the case that significant parallels can – and must – be drawn between the Holocaust and the institutionalized abuse of billions of animals on factory farms. "Compelling and convincing . . . this bold, brave book." - Charles Patterson, author of *Eternal Treblinka* \$14.95



More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality

By Karen Davis

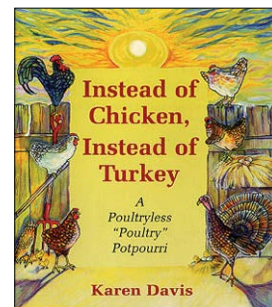
Karen Davis shows how turkeys in the wild have complex lives and family units, and how they were an integral part of Native American and continental cultures and landscape before the Europeans arrived, while drawing larger conclusions about our paradoxical relationship with turkeys, all birds and other animals including other human beings. "The turkey's historical disfigurement is starkly depicted by Karen Davis in 'More Than a Meal.'" - *The New Yorker* \$14.95



Instead of Chicken, Instead of Turkey: A Poultryless "Poultry" Potpourri

By Karen Davis

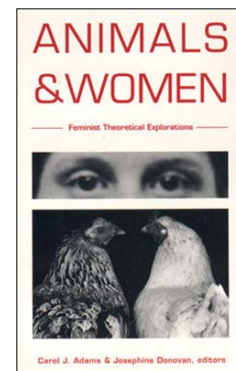
This delightful vegan cookbook by United Poultry Concerns features homestyle, ethnic, and exotic recipes that duplicate and convert a variety of poultry and egg dishes. Includes artwork, poems, and illuminating passages showing chickens and turkeys in an appreciative light. \$14.95



Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations

Edited by Carol J. Adams & Josephine Donovan

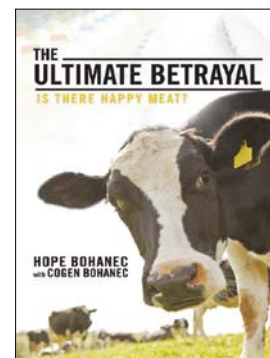
"Karen Davis's brilliant essay [Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and The Feminine Connection] brings together the book's central concepts, leading to conclusions that rightly should disturb feminists and animal advocates alike." - Review by Deborah Tanzer, Ph.D. in *The Animals' Agenda*. \$16.95



The Ultimate Betrayal: Is There Happy Meat?

By Hope Bohanec

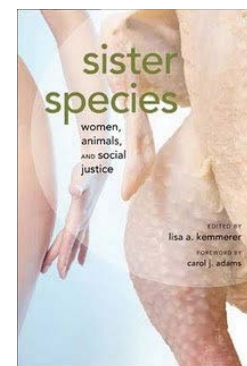
The Ultimate Betrayal lifts the veil of secrecy surrounding animal farming, offering a rare look inside the world of alternative animal agriculture. \$14.95



Sister Species: Women, Animals, and Social Justice

Edited by Lisa Kemmerer, Forward by Carol J. Adams

Sister Species presents the experiences of fourteen women activists who are working on behalf of non-human animals and a more just and compassionate world. \$14.95



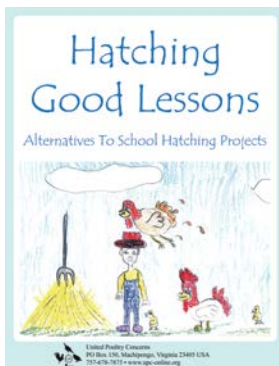
CHILDREN'S BOOKS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Hatching Good Lessons: Alternatives To School Hatching Projects

By *United Poultry Concerns*

A guide booklet for elementary school teachers and other educators including parents. 16 pages of information, storytelling, classroom activities & color photos. Grades K-6 (some activities are designed for K-12). \$2.50 per booklet. 5 for \$5. It can be viewed and printed out at

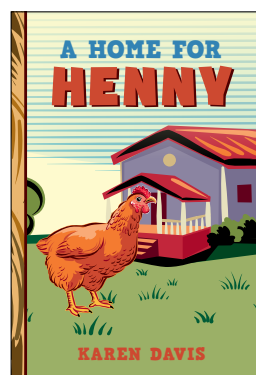
www.upc-online.org/hatching.



A Boy, A Chicken and The Lion of Judah – How Ari Became a Vegetarian

By *Roberta Kalechofsky*

This wonderfully gifted children's story, set in modern Israel, is about a young boy's quest for moral independence. An intelligent book for all ages. Winner of the Fund for Animals "Kind Writers Make Kind Readers Award." \$10



A Home for Henny

By *Karen Davis*

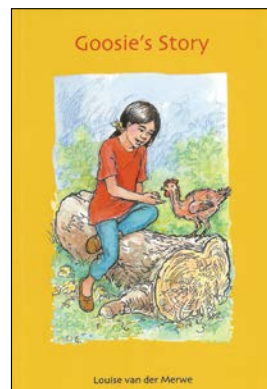
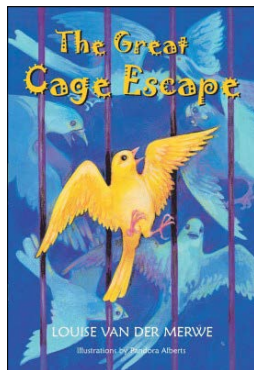
Melanie is a 3rd grader who is excited about a chick hatching project in her class at school. The project seemed like a good idea at first, but unexpected problems arise and the whole class learns a lesson in compassion. When the project is over, Melanie adopts one of the chicks she names Henny. *A Home for Henny* explores the challenges and concerns with school hatching projects

while evoking the lively personality of Henny and her loving relationship with Melanie. \$6.99

The Great Cage Escape

Grades 4-7. By *Louise Van Der Merwe*

The birds in a pet shop think they are happy until a brown box punched full of air holes is left overnight on their front door step. The creature inside looks very weird at first. But as his feathers begin to grow, his true identity becomes apparent, and the stories he tells inspire the pet shop birds to pull off a Great Cage Escape. This is a story that encourages respect for all forms of life and helps learners realize that heaven can be right here on earth if we choose to make it so. \$4.95



Goosie's Story

By *Louise Van Der Merwe*

A touching story about a "battery" hen who is given a chance to lead a normal life – a happy life. This moving book will be warmly welcomed and shared by children, parents and teachers, highlighting as it does the concern and compassion we ought to feel for all our feathered friends on this earth. \$4.95



Dave Loves Chickens

By *Carlos Patino*

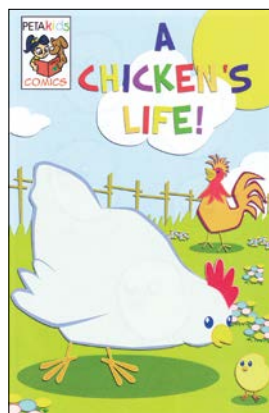
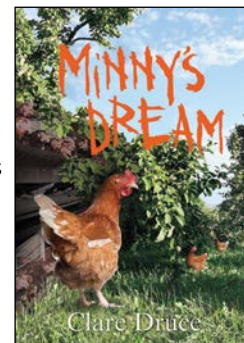
Dave is a quirky monster from another planet who loves chickens and all animals on Earth. He encourages people to share his love and not eat any

animals! Filled with fun and bold colors, this book is perfect for young children to learn compassion for chickens and all animals in a sweetly told, lovable story. \$10

Minnie's Dream

By *Clare Druce*

What happens when a young girl from the city discovers a battery-hen operation in the country? What happens when a "battery hen" named Minny speaks to her? What must she do when her friend Minny is going to be killed? This book is a must for the young person(s) in your life, age 8-14. \$10



A Chicken's Life!

Grades 4-6. *PETAkids Comics*

This cute comic book illustrates a group of children visiting an animal sanctuary where they meet a flock of chickens and learn all about them including the differences between Nature's Way and The Factory Farm Way. "Are these chickens really your friends?" they ask. "I've never met a chicken before." *A Chicken's Life* includes a puzzle for elementary school students to unscramble

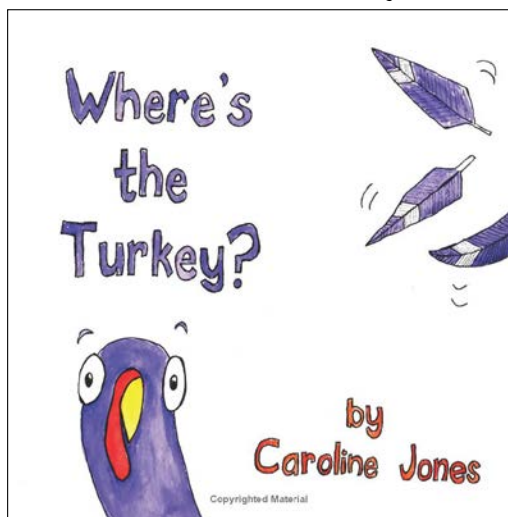
words including barn, beak, cluck, feathers, grass, hatch, peck, peep, wings, and lots more. \$1.50 each. 10 for \$10.

More Books, plus Videos available at upc-online.org/merchandise

(continued) CHILDREN’S BOOKS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Where’s the Turkey?, by Caroline Jones, is a charming and adorable book for young children. The child is engaged in a journey, with visual clues in the illustrations, toward discovering where the turkey is, which is not on the table. Young children love the “look-and-find” challenge page by page. I recommend this book most highly. It illustrates a Happy Thanksgiving with the whole family and a delicious Thanksgiving feast for which the turkeys themselves can give thanks for enjoying the day in their own happy “turkey” way. \$6.99

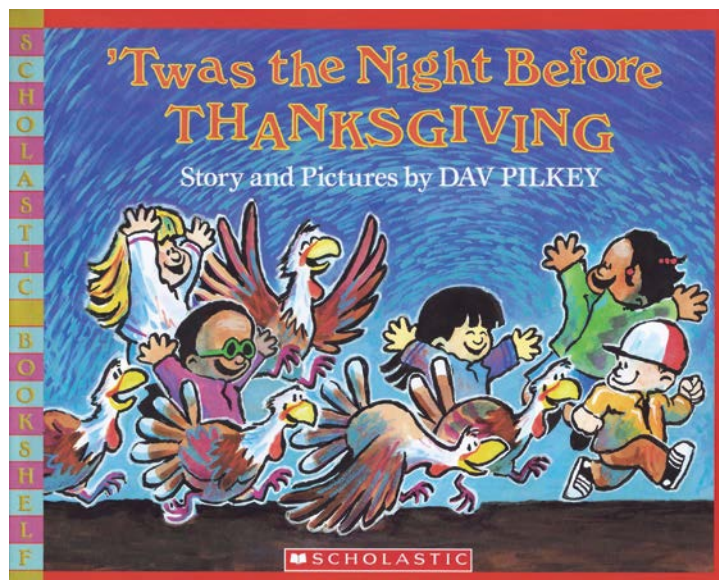
– Karen Davis, United Poultry Concerns



'Twas the Night Before THANKSGIVING

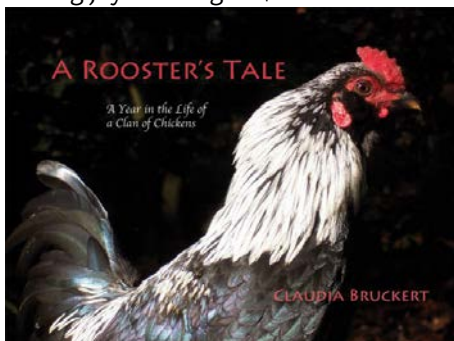
Story and Pictures by Dav Pilkey, Scholastic Book Shelf

Turkeys don’t usually celebrate Thanksgiving. And they wish we wouldn’t either! Here is a tale of eight children who meet eight turkeys who are in big trouble. Only the kids can keep the turkeys from meeting their Thanksgiving fate. But how will they save the turkeys? \$6.99



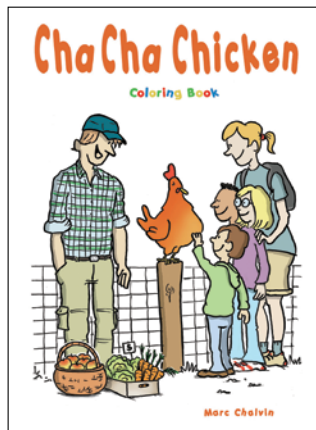
A Rooster’s Tale: A Year in the Life of a Clan of Chickens, by Claudia Bruckert,

transports readers to the fascinating world of Change, who tells the real life story of his chicken family during his first year of life. Enchanting experiences and intriguing facts, chronicled and photographed beautifully over the course of one year, convey deep insights into the daily life of chickens. Grades 3-12 and a reading joy for all ages. \$20



Cha Cha Chicken Coloring Book By Marc Chalvin

Narrated by Cha Cha the hen, this book invites children to visit Green Farm sanctuary and learn about the happy animals who live there. Written by Marian Hailey-Moss and illustrated by Marc Chalvin, Cha Cha shows children that chickens are people too and invites them to color their world beautiful! *Cha Cha Chicken Coloring Book* is a delightful gift for children K-3. \$10



Chickens at Play

By United Poultry Concerns

This vibrant video shows chickens at the United Poultry Concerns sanctuary accompanied by lively music, with brief explanations of what the chickens are doing throughout their daily activities into the evening as, one by one, they hop up to their perches for the night. Narrated by a young child. 10:04 minutes. DVD. \$5. \$12.50 for 5. Watch: <http://vimeo.com/13210456>



More books and videos available at upc-online.org/merchandise

Stickers Send a message with your mail! Order our eye-catching color stickers! 100 stickers for \$10.



With Heart and Voice - a Beautiful Greeting Card from UPC \$19.95 for 20 cards. \$38.95 for 40 cards, envelopes included. Single card & envelope \$1.00.



POSTERS



International Respect for Chickens Day

Celebrate 12.5" x 17" Wings 12" x 16"



A Heart Beats in Us the Same as in You

Photo by PeTA. Full-color poster vividly captures the truth about factory chickens for the public. Vegetarian message. 18"x22".



Today's chickens are forced to grow too big too fast. They're forced to live in filth. They go to slaughter with yellow pus, harmful bacteria, heart and lung disease, tumors, crippled legs, sick immune systems, and more. Millions of dollars are spent hiding these facts.

Friends, Not Food

Photo by Franklin Wade. Liqin Cao & FreddaFlower. Full color 19"x27" poster.



WHAT WINGS ARE FOR



CHICKS NEED THEIR MOTHERS

Photos by Jim Robertson & Karen Davis. Great educational tool. Full color 11-1/2"x16" poster.

Walking to Freedom After a Year in Cages

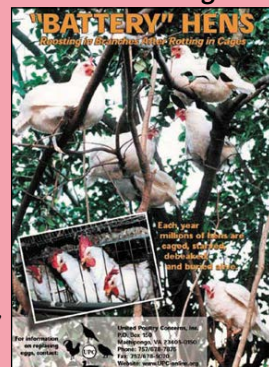
Photo by Dave Clegg. Full color, 18"x22" poster.



"Battery" Hens

Roosting in Branches After Rotting in Cages

Photo by Susan Rayfield. This beautiful color poster shows the rescued Cypress hens at UPC. Perfect for your office, your home, your school. 11.5"x16".



Great Turkeys Poster!

Photos by Barbara Davidson & Susan Rayfield. The posters are in color, and come in two sizes: 11.5" x 16", and 18" x 27".

UPC posters in any mix: One for \$4. Two for \$5. Three for \$7.

UNITED POULTRY CONCERNS, INC.



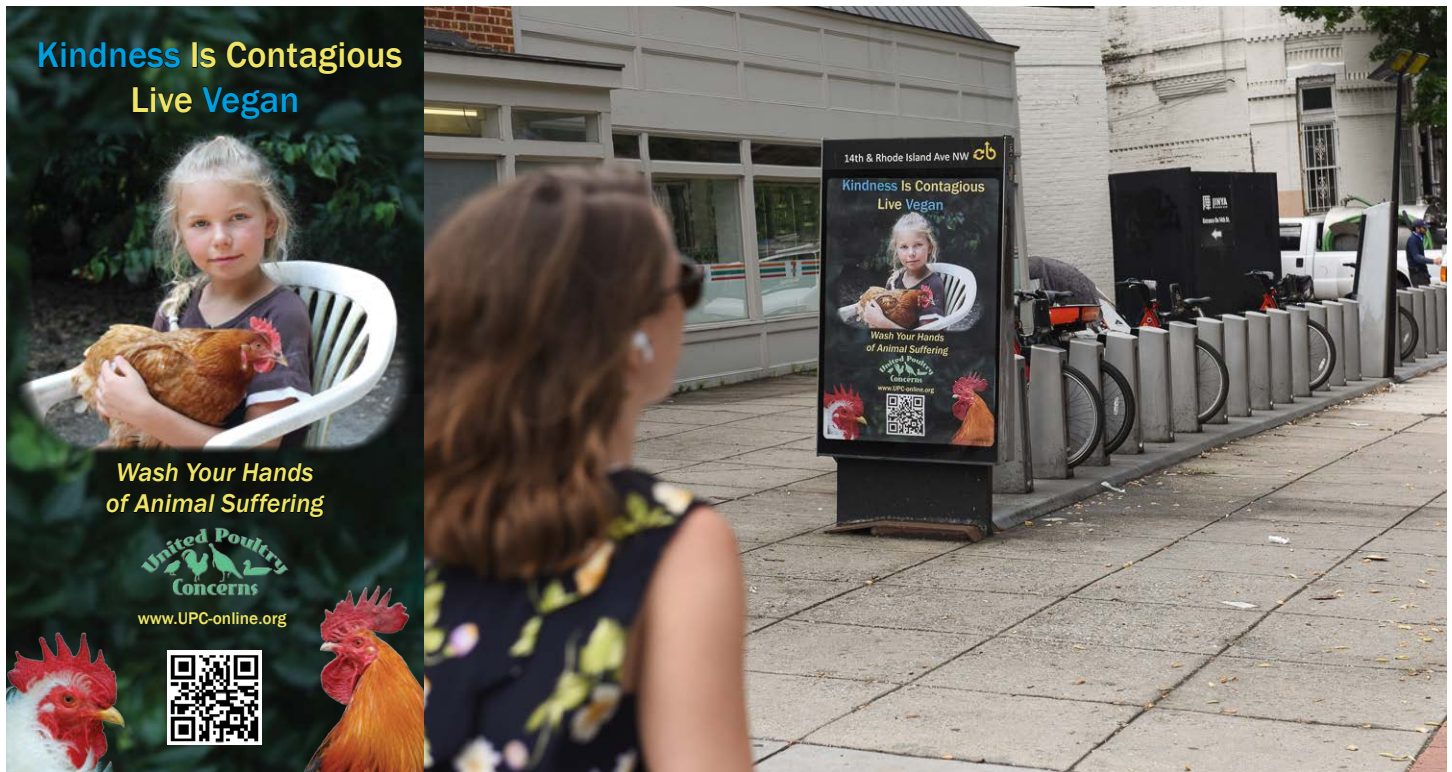
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INSIDE

Tractor Supply Cruelty Exposed
Seeing Other Chickens Traumatized
Breaking the Sound of Silence for Good
"Scared of a Brochure!"
Freddaflower Fund
Commanding Skippy
What Wings Are NOT For
Recipe Corner & More!

*Wishing You a Safe & Happy Summer!
Please renew your membership for 2021*



Kindness Is Contagious!

For International Respect for Chickens Day, our compassionate ads have hit the streets of Washington DC! For the month of May, our eye-catching "Kindness is Contagious" ads remind DC commuters that you can wash your hands of animal suffering by living vegan.