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The Open Wing Alliance Calls on Unilever to Reinstate Its Global Cage-Free Egg Commitment

Unilever faces global pressure to reverse its cage-free rollback and align with an industry rapidly abandoning cages

(London — February 13, 2026)—The Open Wing Alliance (OWA), a coalition of 84 organizations working to end the abuse of chickens worldwide, calls on Unilever to reinstate its pledge to source 100% cage-free eggs worldwide and to publish a clear, time-bound action plan for achieving full cage-free sourcing across all markets.

Formerly an industry leader in animal welfare, Unilever quietly removed its global pledge in late 2025 following a period of corporate restructuring; a move that now poses growing brand and reputational risk as cage-free sourcing becomes the global standard across the food industry.

"Unilever's decision reflects a bet against the market," said Brooke Fane, Sr. Corporate Campaign Lead, at The Humane League. "In 2024, companies fulfilled roughly 92% of their cage-free commitments globally, while governments, including the UK, are advancing bans on cages. Cage-free sourcing is no longer aspirational; it's operational. Reversing course now puts Unilever on the wrong side of that shift."

Unilever first committed in March 2018 to sourcing only cage-free eggs across its global supply chain, a move that helped position the company as an industry leader on animal welfare. That commitment applied to all regions and markets. In a recent update to its website, however, Unilever removed its global cage-free pledge, limiting its commitment to Europe and North America and leaving millions of hens in other regions confined in cages.

Unilever operates in more than 190 countries and owns nearly 30 "Power Brands," supported by hundreds of sub-brands, including household names such as Hellmann's, Knorr, Seventh Generation, and Dove. As one of the world's largest food manufacturers, Unilever's egg sourcing

decisions affect an estimated 1.38 billion eggs — and nearly 5 million hens — every year, including more than 1.3 million hens in emerging markets where cage-free protections remain weakest.

While Unilever reports that it has achieved 100% cage-free sourcing in Europe and North America, advocates say limiting animal welfare protections to select regions creates a troubling double standard.

“When you’re a global company, cruelty anywhere is cruelty everywhere,” said Brooke Fane. “Consumers don’t expect animal welfare to stop at a border. Unilever’s personal care and household brands can’t credibly market themselves as ‘cruelty-free’ while their parent company retreats from one of its most basic animal welfare commitments.”

The call comes amid a broader industry shift away from cages. More than 2,800 companies globally — including over 180 major multinational corporations — have committed to cage-free egg sourcing, and cage-free production continues to expand rapidly worldwide. Companies such as Kellanova, General Mills, Kraft Heinz, Grupo Bimbo, and Nestlé have maintained global cage-free commitments.

For more information, please visit: https://openwingalliance.org/.

About the Open Wing Alliance (OWA)
Founded in 2016 by The Humane League, the Open Wing Alliance is a global coalition of nearly 84 animal protection organizations in over 72 countries across six continents. The OWA is changing the way the world’s biggest companies treat animals and setting a new standard for corporate farm animal welfare policies locally—in every major market—and globally. Through shared knowledge, resources, and people power, the OWA is united around their goal to end the abuse of chickens worldwide.

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