

Are Backyard Chickens the Solution?

Chickens make wonderful companions, and adopting birds from an animal shelter or farm sanctuary is a great way to help animals. But there are a number of problems with keeping chickens for the purpose of eating their eggs.

For starters, “laying hens” enter the world in bodies that have been selectively bred for maximum egg production. Unlike their wild ancestors, who laid about **24 eggs a year**, today’s hens have been manipulated to lay many more, **sometimes more than 300 eggs a year**.

This nonstop egg laying depletes hens of vital nutrients, leading to vitamin deficiencies. Neverending stress on their reproductive systems also makes them **susceptible to a number of painful and potentially fatal conditions**. Common ailments are impactions (eggs getting stuck in oviduct) and osteoporosis.

A seemingly “happy, healthy” backyard hen could actually be masking great distress.

Finally, backyard flocks are also **susceptible to diseases that can infect the eggs**. Free ranging chickens may consume contaminants that could make their eggs dangerous to consume.

So go ahead and adopt some chicken friends, but don’t treat them like a breakfast service. Their eggs belong to them.

If You Have Chickens

- Prevent nutrient deficiencies by feeding their eggs back to them. This may seem weird, but it is normal behavior in nature and can benefit hens greatly.
- Seek regular veterinary care for your chickens, and ask your veterinarian about options for reproductive relief.
- Protect chickens from harm just as you would your cat or dog. Electric fencing will keep them safe and also prevent predators from becoming your enemy.
- Check out **opensanctuary.org** — a great resource for chicken care guidance.

Easy Egg Swaps

If you’re looking to replace eggs in your diet:

- Try JUST Egg™ or Google tofu/chickpea egg recipes.
- Black salt (kala namak) adds an “eggy” flavor to dishes.
- For baking, many egg substitutes exist, including commercial products such as Bob’s Red Mill Egg Replacer.
- To quickly determine if a packaged food contains eggs, check the allergens statement on the Nutrition Facts label. Eggs are an allergen.

nhanimalrights.org



NH Animal Rights League

What’s Wrong with Eating Eggs?



Americans are devouring eggs in record numbers. Are hens paying the price?

America's Egg Habit

Eggs have infiltrated the American diet. Not only do they top the list of typical breakfast foods, eggs are often the main ingredient at lunch and dinner as well.

And when it comes to dessert, traditional recipes would have us believe that nothing besides the unfertilized embryo of a chicken could possibly hold the cake, brownies, or cookies together.

A quick Internet search for "vegan baking" proves this wrong, but most people just keep cracking the eggs — out of habit, and because it's not obvious how eating eggs causes chickens harm.

In truth, there is a great deal of suffering and death involved in producing eggs.



Don't Be Fooled by "Free-Range"

Some consumers, disturbed by the thought of chickens in "battery cages," will pay more for "free-range," "cage-free," or "pasture-raised" eggs, but these labels mean very little when it comes to knowing how the chickens are treated.

In New Hampshire, **Nellie's Free Range Eggs** (sold by Pete and Gerry's of Monroe, NH) was the target of an exposé and consequent **lawsuit brought by consumers who were duped** by pictures of hens in open green fields when the birds were actually crowded inside sheds.



Now, **Vital Farms** is the target of a **class action law suit for deceptive marketing**.



Customers pay as much as **\$8/dozen** for these eggs, believing that they are completely

humane. But after finding out that Vital Farms engages in the same **cruel industry-standard practices** as other egg producers, customers are angry and feel betrayed.

Whether raising caged or free-range hens, it is standard practice in the egg industry to:

- ☑ Obtain hens from hatcheries that **kill all male chicks at birth**. (All American hatcheries kill male chicks.)
- ☑ **Cut or burn off hens' sensitive beaks** to minimize how much they can damage themselves and others.
- ☑ Crowd "free-range" hens so densely **most never find their way outside**.
- ☑ **Send hens to slaughter** when their egg production decreases and the shells thin, around **age 7-12 months**.

Did You Know?  **UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

It's legal to ship baby chicks through the United States Postal Service, but it's *illegal* for a postal worker to tamper with the box, even if the animals are in distress!