

2023-24 Annual Report

BUILDING THE WILL TO END FACTORY FARMING



FARMFORWARD



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Front cover photo by Jo-Anne McArthur | We Animals
Photo by Aitor Garmendia | We Animals

In my last dispatch, I wrote about Farm Forward’s ongoing commitment to holding the meat industry, retailers, and policymakers accountable to most Americans’ desire for a healthy and humane food system. We’ve always known that accountability for the meat industry will only be possible when a meaningful percentage of Americans not only recognize its harms, but also demand that institutions hold them accountable.

Building the will to end factory farming requires that we find ways to make issues of factory farming—which have historically been both physically and socially hidden from the public—inescapable. In this report, which covers Farm Forward’s successes in 2023 and 2024, I am pleased to share our unprecedented success in raising the public exposure of factory farming and its impacts on animals, the climate, public health, conscientious consumers, and more humane farmers.

Over the past two years, Farm Forward’s work has received the kind of strong media coverage that can truly change minds, including front-page coverage in the *New York Times* describing our investigation into how taxpayer money bails

out the meat companies that exacerbate pandemic risk, and an extensive feature on our humanewashing investigation in *The Atlantic* that became the most shared story on its homepage. These, along with dozens of other stories in mainstream outlets, demonstrate that we can make factory farming issues compelling to more and more of the American public. Along with much of our other work to build the will to end factory farming, these successes yielded both immediate results and contributed to growing energy to address the harms of industrial animal agriculture.

The most recent consumer research makes clear that the public can be—and in meaningful ways already is being—roused to action against factory farming. **This growing public opposition to industrial farming remains statistically small but it expands whenever people are exposed to compelling narratives about the true danger and squalor of factory farms.** To change policy as aggressively as is needed, we must stay the course and continue the successful but incomplete work of building a critical mass of public opposition to factory farming.

The urgency and saliency of the dangers factory farms pose shifted in 2023 and 2024 as a result of avian influenza. The simmering bird flu outbreak that first emerged in 2020 has now exploded into an ongoing crisis as the virus has unexpectedly infected dairy cows and farm workers in more than a dozen states. Big ag with help from the USDA has invested tremendous energy in underplaying the seriousness of the crisis. The continuing outbreak is a prime example of how risky industrial animal farming is for



Photo by Havva Zorlu | We Animals

both the stability of our food system and public health. The credible threat of another human pandemic posed by this outbreak is also an opportunity to reach Americans who can easily become concerned about the health implications of meat that comes from sick animals crowded into filthy buildings, but who are not yet motivated by farmed animal suffering. People don’t need to care about the plight of chickens to know that raising billions of genetically modified immunocompromised animals in close proximity to their own excrement is obviously a bad idea. Our task is in part to let people know that this is exactly what factory farming does.

And for those of us who do care deeply about animal suffering, it is important to remember that solving pandemic risk will also require changes to agricultural practices that will improve farmed animal well-being. Zoonotic pandemic-proofing animal farming will require things like reduced stocking density, improved genetics, reduced flock sizes, etc., all of which will benefit farmed animals. Reducing pandemic risk also goes hand in hand with reducing the overall numbers of animals raised.



Farm Forward will always advocate for incremental changes that deliver on **our twin bottom line of 1) immediately reducing animal suffering and carbon footprint while simultaneously 2) building support for food system transformation.**

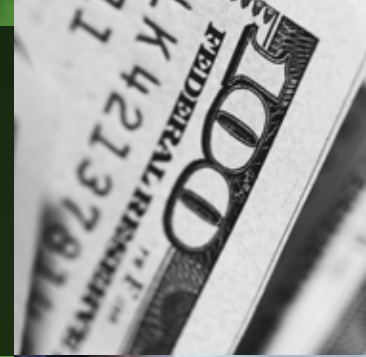
I’m proud of our work in 2023 and 2024 that you will read about in this report, and although the previous Trump administration brought some regulatory rollback and demanded hard work to preserve hard-won gains—and some of that work is likely ahead of us once more—I’m excited about what we can do together in 2025 to continue to build a world beyond factory farming. Forward!

Andrew deCoriolis
Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

CHANGING FARMING, NARRATIVE, & POLICY

**\$1.1
BILLION**



\$1.1 billion in food spend of 70+ institutions is annually impacted by GFPP, in 27 cities and counties, and now at the federal level. **Farm Forward led the coalition that developed the animal welfare and meat reduction standards** for GFPP Version 3.0 that launched in 2023.

**209K
VIEWS**



The number of views of our web pages almost doubled from 2023 to 2024, increasing 99 percent to 209K views—on topics such as **bird flu, humanewashing, antibiotics, USDA standards, animal welfare labels, dairy deception, and consumer fraud**—while our user base increased to 132K, an 86 percent jump from 2023 to 2024.

**525+
INSTITUTIONS**



525+ institutions, including Harvard Business School, Bon Appetit Management Company, and New York City Public Hospitals, have transformed their dining operations to serve more plant-based foods and/or fewer factory farmed products through Farm Forward's in-house and partner programs, including the Leadership Circle and the Better Food Foundation's DefaultVeg initiative.

**35+
VILLAGES**



35+ villages in India receive free and subsidized veterinary care and animal welfare education through Farm Forward's grant each year, improving the lives of 100s of farmers and 1000s of animals while providing invaluable information to Farm Forward about the methods factory farms use to propagate themselves globally.

**25+
MEDIA STORIES**



25+ prestige media stories in *The Atlantic*, *Forbes*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *The New Republic*, *the New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Politico*, *the Washington Post*, *Wired*, and more featuring Farm Forward's work, in combination with 50+ other media stories in 2023–4, reached millions of readers globally and built unprecedented public awareness about the role of industrial animal agriculture in drought, climate change, avian influenza, and the antimicrobial resistance crisis.

8

**CONGREGATIONAL
FOOD POLICIES**



8 congregational food policies: In 2024, Jewish congregations formed the first denominational cohort in the U.S. committed to adopting plant-forward food policies and utilizing plant-based defaults. Already, 8 institutions have created policies that aim to reduce the consumption of animal products, highlighting the power of faith communities to support food systems transformation.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023 and 2024, we drove national conversations around underreported topics including bird flu, animal welfare in “organic” and “humane” dairy, antimicrobial resistance, and industrial animal farming’s impact on climate change. The result? Some of the **highest-profile coverage of Farm Forward’s work in our history and new swaths of the American public confronting the reality of factory farming for the first time.**

“The news of a deeply serious human case of bird flu is a massive wake-up call that should immediately mobilize efforts to prevent another human pandemic,” said Andrew deCoriolis, executive director of Farm Forward, a nonprofit that promotes humane agricultural practices. “We could have prevented the spread of bird flu on poultry farms across America, and we didn’t. We could have prevented the spread of bird flu on dairy farms, and we didn’t.”

“Factory farms notorious for raising billions of sickly animals in filthy, cramped conditions provide a recipe for viruses like bird flu (H5N1) to emerge and spread ... We are now on the cusp of another pandemic and the agencies responsible for regulating farms and protecting public health are moving slower than the virus is spreading.”

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, NOVEMBER 13, 2024



In April 2024, our investigation revealing that USDA had spent at least \$750 million in taxpayer funds to bail out giant meat companies like Tyson after bird flu outbreaks resulted in a **front-page article in the *New York Times***. We continued to generate much needed attention around the bird flu outbreak, raising awareness about the connections between pandemics and industrial poultry farming in *Newsweek*, *Wired*, *The New Republic*, *GreenBiz*, and several other *NYT* pieces.

Before our involvement, most media coverage had downplayed concerns about the pandemic and its risk to public health, failing to point to industrial poultry farming as the original source of outbreaks. **Our efforts played a key role in shifting these narratives**, prompting coverage that has the critical effect of both linking factory farming and disease in the consumer’s mind and calling forth precisely the images of sick animals in crowded, filthy buildings that industry most wants to suppress.

The New York Times

“A Cruel Way to Control Bird Flu? Poultry Giants Cull and Cash In”

Forbes

“Why a ‘Humane’ Label on Meat and Eggs Means Very Little”

The Atlantic

“The Truth about Organic Dairy”

Newsweek

“The USDA Isn’t Inspiring Confidence With Its Bird Flu Response”

Los Angeles Times

“Canadian teenager infected with H5N1 bird flu in critical condition”

The Washington Post

“USDA Aims to Tighten ‘Humane,’ Antibiotic-Free Meat Labels”





Photo by Vince Penn / We Animals

Another high-profile media feature came when our investigation into animal abuse at Alexandre Dairy broke in The Atlantic. The article became the most shared story on their homepage and was selected by The Atlantic's editors for their "One Story to Read Today" newsletter. The author's post about the story on X (formerly Twitter) was seen by more than 1,000,000 people, and she was interviewed on the podcasts Food Matters with Mark Bittman, What's Next, and Search Engine (named one of the best podcasts of 2023 by Vulture, Time, Vogue, and The Economist). This coverage has helped deflate humanewashing narratives that have duped consumers into believing that factory farming can be resisted through simple consumer choices without policy change. Research shows that crucial to building the will to end factory farming is letting people know that factory farming is presently almost impossible to avoid.

Deceptive meat labels that trick consumers into believing that alternatives to the factory farm are easily available are not just a way to sell products at a premium price, but also crucial to how the factory farm continues to secure its public license to operate. The mere existence of unchallenged humanewashing reassures consumers that the situation can't be that bad and saps energy for the systemic change we need. For this reason, throughout 2023 and 2024, we intensified our work against misleading meat labeling. Our advocacy gained attention from the Washington Post, Forbes, Civil Eats, and Modern Farmer, spurring discussions around USDA's failure to regulate antibiotic-free claims. Our collaborative work with Senator Richard Blumenthal on a letter to USDA and a press event brought further attention to the deceptive nature of claims such as "antibiotic-free" and "humanely raised" labels. Politico reported on our joint research with Data for Progress, revealing that consumers lose trust in companies upon learning the truth about meat labeling practices.

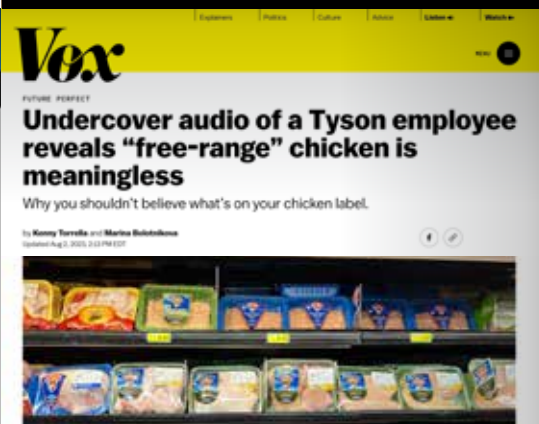
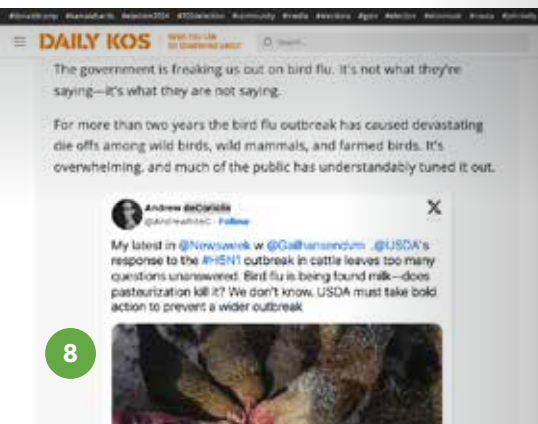




Photo by Jo-Anne McArthur | We Animals



Farm Forward also contributed an article to *Vox*'s high-profile 2024 series "How Factory Farming Ends," perhaps the largest and most significant media discussion of industrial animal farming of all time. Farm Forward's Founder and Board Chair, Dr. Aaron Gross, and Farm Forward board member, author Jonathan Safran Foer, contributed an article entitled "Ditching Factory Farming Can Help Prevent Another Pandemic," which argued for the need for **coalition-building among animal advocacy, environmental, and public health movements** to end factory farming. The article highlights recent initiatives, like those in 400+ U.S. college dining halls, where behavioral design increases plant-based food consumption without compromising diner satisfaction, demonstrating the potential for scalable interventions that do not rely on personal ethical shifts.

Farm Forward's influence on media narratives also extended into climate coverage. In March 2023, we provided data and expert suggestions to a *New York Times* reporter, shaping a story about the water-intensive nature of cattle ranching and its contribution to drought in the Colorado River Basin. The resulting article appeared above the fold on NYT's home-page and became one of its top-shared stories of the week. Additionally, *Modern Farmer* highlighted the environmental fallout from flooding in California's Central Valley, in an article where we provided background info on CAFOs and were quoted on the significant role of CAFOs in driving the very climate change impacting them. *The New Lede* featured Farm Forward's critique of biogas, exposing how the oil and gas industries now use biogas as a greenwashing tool.

Coverage of chicken genetics was another significant highlight, with *Noema Magazine* and *Civil Eats* spotlighting our leadership in advocating for improved poultry welfare through genetics. These stories criticized companies like Perdue for failing to follow through on commitments to breed healthier birds, underscoring the urgent need for industry reform.



Our efforts to support diverse ethnic and religious communities in developing their own responses to factory farming also garnered media attention in 2023-4 through reporting on campaigns led by the Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA), an initiative incubated by Farm Forward. *Religion News* and *Jewish Journal* ran stories on JIFA's "Is this kosher?" billboard campaign on kosher humanewashing, and *Exploring Judaism* and *Times of Israel* ran op-eds by JIFA staff. **Big stories about the whole nation are not enough to build the will to end factory farming; people also need to learn about factory farming from people they trust in their own communities.**

Through all of this media engagement we've continued to shape public discourse. In the last two years Farm Forward has above all helped paint an honest picture of factory farming as a dirty business that poses both immediate risk (antibiotic resistance) and longitudinal risk (pandemics) to human health and well-being. Our focus has been on connecting farmed animal suffering with the harms factory farming causes to human well-being. Secondly, our anti-humanewashing messages have driven home the message that the factory farm cannot be defeated by simply buying the products that the factory farm itself dishonestly claims are better.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

"The Frightening Cost of Cheap Eggs"



"Do We Ask the Organic System to Do Too Much?"



"Is This Kosher? Jewish Billboards in LA Call for Humane Eating Practices."

The New York Times

"Scientists Fault Federal Response to Bird Flu Outbreaks on Dairy Farms"



Modern Farmer
"An Insane Amount of Water': What Climate Change Means for California's Biggest Dairy District"

THE NEW LEDE

"US Push to Turn Farm Manure into Renewable Energy Draws Concerns"

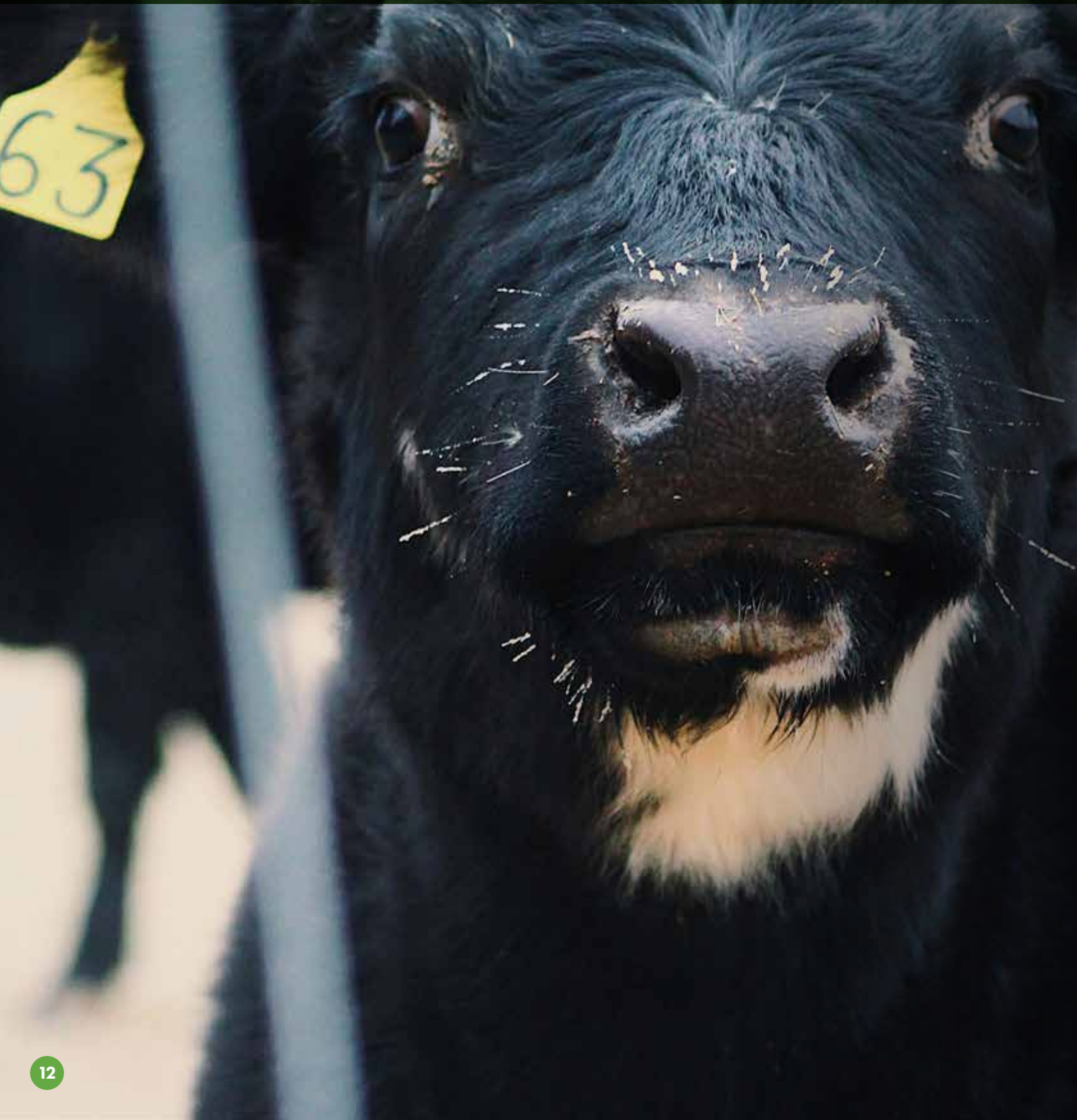
FEATURED CAMPAIGN

HUMANEWASHING

As Whole Foods case proceeds, USDA urges producers to verify claims through third-party certifications

Meat marketed as “antibiotic-free,” “sustainable,” “pasture-raised,” and “humanely raised” is one of the fastest growing sectors of the meat industry, so companies have strong financial incentives to market their products with these and other similar claims. **Humanewashing—marketing animal products with deceptive packaging and labels to promote the illusion of animal well-being while concealing the extent of animals’ illness and suffering—represents an existential threat to the growing movement to end factory farming.** The mere existence of deceptive labels claiming humane treatment saps the energy needed to motivate change. Increased scrutiny and transparency of meat label claims is a critical step to protect consumers, improve the lives of farmed animals, and build the will to more aggressively regulate factory farming.

Subtherapeutic antibiotics are often given to farmed animals en masse to compensate for crowded, unsanitary conditions. **If a company labels their products antibiotic-free, the public expects that those products are tested to ensure that the labels are true, but there is no meaningful testing required.** Mandatory antibiotic testing of products labeled antibiotic-free would not only fulfill public expectations, but also push many companies to stop using antibiotics to compensate for overcrowded, filthy conditions. Companies would be forced either to drop “antibiotic-free” and similar labels, or to adopt conditions and practices improving welfare for millions or billions of animals, reducing animal agriculture’s staggering contribution to the antibiotic resistance crisis.





Pressure campaign results in new USDA guidelines, but more work needed

Farm Forward has long argued that USDA's failure to meaningfully regulate meat labels is at the heart of humanewashing. **In 2023 and 2024, Farm Forward achieved unprecedented progress toward new regulations for labels on meat products like “humanely raised,” “free-range,” “sustainable,” and “raised without antibiotics.”** For more than a year we regularly consulted with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) staff. We also worked with Senators Booker and Blumenthal, who sent a letter to USDA urging them to protect consumers from misleading labels.

After U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and undersecretary Sandra Eskin were made aware of our laboratory testing of misleadingly labeled “antibiotic-free” meat purchased from Whole Foods Market and the resulting 2023 humane-

USDA's research validated our own findings, confirming that a stunning 20 percent of cattle sampled tested positive for antibiotics—that is, a significant percentage of the “antibiotic-free” beef supply comes from animals who were illegally treated with antibiotics.



washing class-action lawsuit against the grocery chain, USDA announced a pilot study to understand the extent of mislabeling in the “antibiotic-free” beef market. USDA's research validated our own findings, confirming that a stunning **20 percent** of cattle sampled tested positive for antibiotics—that is, a significant percentage of the “antibiotic-free” beef supply comes from animals who were illegally treated with antibiotics. After years of advocacy by Farm Forward and other farmed animal protection groups, USDA issued new guidelines for meat companies labeling their products “humane,” “sustainable,” and “antibiotic-free.” Unfortunately, the new guidelines were disappointing. We don't yet have the kind of public commitment to ending factory farming that it would take to motivate more responsible government action. This is why Farm Forward remains so focused on building the will to end factory farming.



How the USDA guidelines fall far too short

Despite finding antibiotics in a significant percentage of “antibiotic-free” cattle, USDA failed to even require that meat companies conduct basic tests to demonstrate that their products are antibiotic-free. This is practically a USDA endorsement of blatant cheating. It is the equivalent of a teacher finding out that 20 percent of their students plagiarized their exam and responding by writing a gentle letter reprimanding the cheaters while assuring them that their cheating will not affect their good grades. USDA's anemic response guarantees that an emboldened industry will continue deceiving the public. By continuing to approve “antibiotic-free” labels for “antibiotic-free” meat that contains antibiotics, USDA is not only complicit in public deception, but also gives a liability shield to meat companies that makes it harder for consumers to sue them when fraud occurs.



The new USDA guidelines also fail to set specific husbandry standards for terms like “pasture-raised” or “humane.” The guidelines instead urge producers to verify those claims with third-party welfare certifications. The guidelines don't stipulate which certifications, and given the proliferation of industry-backed humanewashing certifications like American Humane Certified, without stronger guidelines it's clear that consumers will continue to be misled by many meat company claims.

The new guidelines and pilot were issued as a direct response to pressure that Farm Forward helped create. **The fact that USDA issued new guidance, and for the first time seemed willing to consider requiring antibiotic testing for meat companies who wish to label products “raised without antibiotics,” was a positive step in the right direction, but regulations stronger than mere guidelines are needed.** Farm Forward will continue to press for a rulemaking process requiring antibiotic testing and higher welfare standards for products labeled with claims like “humanely raised.”



Although weak, USDA's first steps achieve some initial results

Despite USDA's guidelines falling far short of consumer expectations, they are already having some positive impacts. As a result of USDA's announcement about potential testing, Tyson Foods, one of the largest sellers of "raised without antibiotics" chicken, announced that they would drop the label, and Panera Bread and Chick-Fil-A backpedaled on their "No Antibiotics Ever" claims. The changes were as good as admissions that those claims were likely untrue. Part of the task now is to make sure consumers know what those changes really mean.

Whole Foods case proceeds, may drive industry-wide changes

The ongoing consumer class action case against Whole Foods—now in the discovery phase in federal court, proceeding with claims of fraud, breach of warranty, and unjust enrichment—is one way we are keeping this important narrative of industry deception alive. If won, the lawsuit could have wide-ranging impacts for farmed animals, creating legal liability for retailers that fail to meaningfully verify their claims and mislead the public, and pushing meat companies to make husbandry and operational changes that would significantly improve conditions for animals. Ultimately, creating liability for companies that engage in humanewashing is essential to drive change in the industry. As we build more public support to end factory farming, these fledgling efforts to legally constrain factory farming can point the way towards more robust regulations.



Photo by Andrew Skowron | We Animals



Original research shows importance of consumer education

Alongside research firm Data for Progress, we published a [new report](#) showing that **when consumers learn what meat labels like "humanely raised" and "antibiotic-free" really mean, they lose trust in grocery stores and meat companies.** The report also exposed consumers to images of Animal Welfare Certified farms and found that conditions on those farms fell far short of consumer expectations for the label. The report earned press attention including a writeup in Politico.

Although our work with USDA and influential lawmakers has achieved meaningful steps toward regulating misleading labels, sprawling gaps in corporate accountability persist. By holding companies accountable, like in our class-action lawsuit against Whole Foods, we aim to shift the industry towards genuine transparency and better welfare practices for farmed animals. We continue to educate consumers about how little most meat label claims mean, including the leading animal welfare certifications. As public awareness grows, we press on with our advocacy for rigorous standards, accurate labeling, and an end to factory farming practices that compromise animal welfare.

Corruption and consumer fraud at leading “Certified Humane” dairy raise questions about state of the U.S. dairy industry

In 2023–24, a Farm Forward [investigation](#) revealed ongoing and systematic animal abuse at the nation’s leading Organic, Certified Humane, and “regenerative” dairy, Alexandre Family Farm. Given Alexandre’s many accolades and certifications, **this is one of the most significant cases of humanewashing in the market today and suggests widespread problems throughout the dairy industry.** Our investigative report *Dairy Deception: Corruption and Consumer Fraud at Alexandre Family Farm* prompted an independent investigation by *The Atlantic*, published in April 2024, confirming many of Farm Forward’s findings.

Methods and findings

Partnering with rancher whistleblowers who alerted us to the abuses—all of whom worked closely with and around Alexandre—we conducted over a hundred hours of interviews, examined more than a thousand images and videos of cattle, and conducted our own in-person investigations of several sites associated with Alexandre. The severity and the variety of animal abuse we directly witnessed was shocking.



Calf whose head had been caught in a stanchion for three days, Alexandre Family Farm.

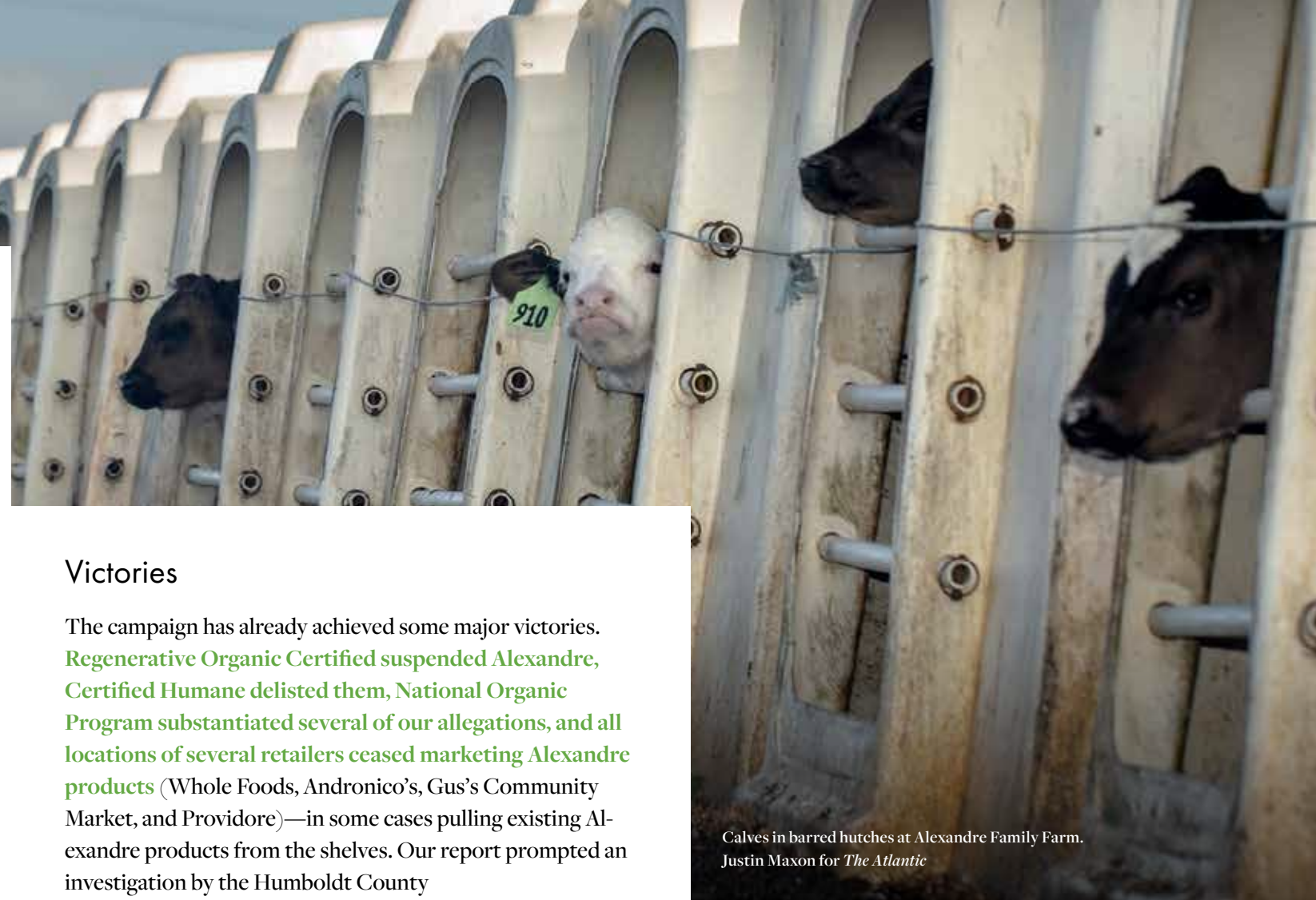
When Gail Hansen, DVM, former state epidemiologist and state public health veterinarian for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and former Veterinary Senior Officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts, saw our videos of calves in hundreds of small barred plastic hutches that prevented them from taking one step outside (where Alexandre keeps each calf isolated for up to 21 weeks without relief according to a whistleblower), she deemed those hutches not shelters but “cages ... a horrific perversion of use.” A dairy veterinarian who reviewed a sample of whistleblowers’ and our firsthand videos found Alexandre’s treatment of cows “absolutely not in keeping with ethical norms and recommendations set by the state of California,” and “unequivocally inhumane.”



Beyond Alexandre: The role of certifications and industry structure

We also documented how dairy abuses extend far beyond Alexandre. The structure of American dairy necessarily leads to animal suffering, through unhealthy genetics designed to maximize milk production, organic standards that financially incentivize not adequately treating sick and injured cows, and the appalling slaughter and death rate of American cows used for dairy: on average, one third of the herd each year.

After publishing the report, we pushed for change on a variety of fronts—encouraging retailers and food companies to improve their standards and to drop Alexandre products, working with certifiers to improve their programs, and pressuring the National Organic Program to close loopholes in the regulations that harm animals.



Calves in barred hutches at Alexandre Family Farm. Justin Maxon for *The Atlantic*

Victories

The campaign has already achieved some major victories. **Regenerative Organic Certified suspended Alexandre, Certified Humane delisted them, National Organic Program substantiated several of our allegations, and all locations of several retailers ceased marketing Alexandre products** (Whole Foods, Andronico’s, Gus’s Community Market, and Providore)—in some cases pulling existing Alexandre products from the shelves. Our report prompted an investigation by the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office that is now being reviewed by the District Attorney. In late 2024, a law firm filed a criminal complaint against Alexandre in Humboldt County, alleging numerous violations of California penal code 597, an animal cruelty statute that covers a range of animal abuses.

We continue to use the pressure created by the investigation to advocate for changes in certifications and labeling that will improve welfare and give consumers more reliable

information about their food. Coverage of our investigation of Alexandre and organic, “humane” dairy has opened up an important conversation with consumers about the dairy industry and pierced the bubble of the idea that you can avoid factory farmed products simply by looking for labels. This has motivated some conscientious consumers to swap out conventional dairy altogether for plant-based alternatives.

“What we uncovered was not only the egregious abuse of hundreds of Alexandre animals, but also how humane certifications, USDA Organic, and regulatory structures all failed to prevent the abuses. Alexandre exemplifies how many acute and chronic animal welfare problems result from the structure of the American dairy industry and even organic and ‘humane’ certifications. Most of the humane certifications are broken and cannot be trusted to indicate meaningful levels of welfare—at Alexandre or anywhere else.”



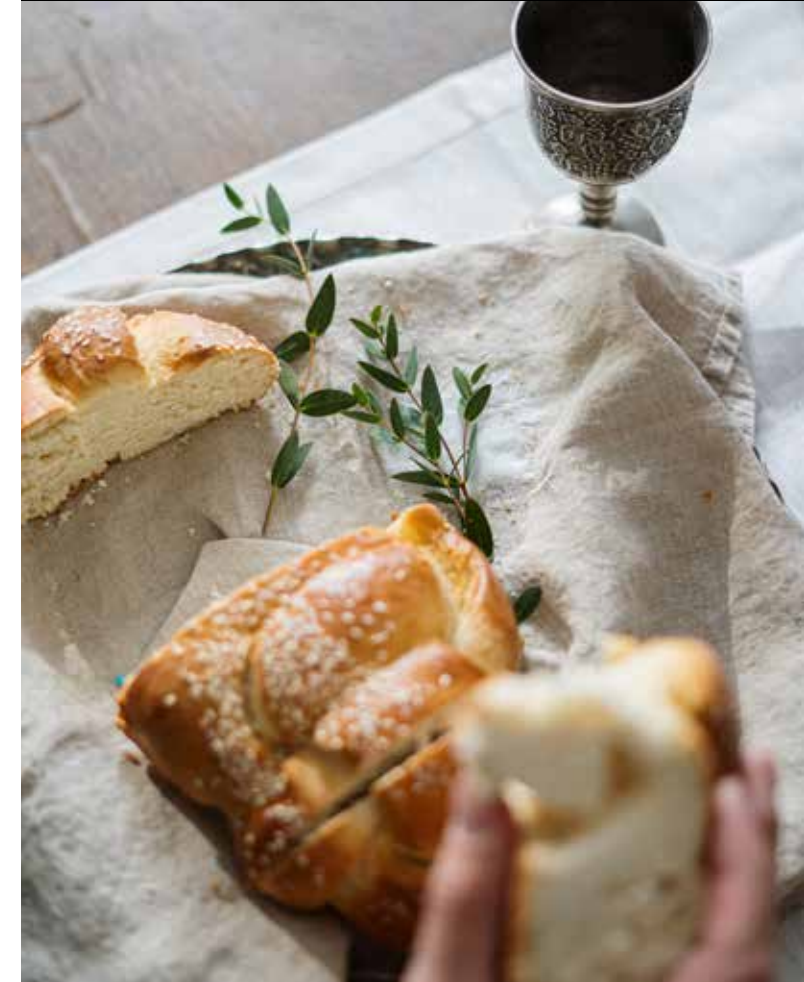
FARM FORWARD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION JOHN GIBB MILLSPAUGH, LEAD AUTHOR OF *DAIRY DECEPTION*



YEARS OF RELIGIOUS OUTREACH COME TO FRUITION

Since its founding in 2007, Farm Forward has invested in changing the public narrative about food and farming. Our theory of change assumes that advocates can be highly influential when they focus their advocacy within their own spheres of influence, and ground their objectives in the unique cultural, political, economic, and overlapping social justice concerns specific to those communities. In sum, changing a person's perspective on our food system is often only possible when it comes from someone they trust.

This strategy is quite distinct from campaigns run by national organizations where advocates target a particular population with the aim of mobilizing that demographic to support the culturally divergent agenda of the larger movement. Even when programmatic material is cosmetically diversified, this remains a one-size-fits-all approach and runs the risk of marginalizing or alienating those who don't fit the so-called mainstream norm. At worst this strategy can reinforce the belief that "plant-based diets and higher welfare animal products aren't for people like me." In contrast, **community-based campaigns that provide culturally appropriate and values-driven resources arising out of traditions and practices of living communities strengthen and sustain individual commitments to ethical food choices.** Community-based campaigns also generate unexpected insights that add strength to the entire movement to end factory farming and embrace a more plant-based future.



Our longstanding work with religious communities is critical to this culture change work, and in the past two years our long-term investment in Faith in Food has paid off substantially with

- the launch of the Center for Jewish Food Ethics
- an audience with the Pope and a speech at the Vatican
- a new covenant at the center of Unitarian Universalism
- the establishment of the Center for Food System Transformation at the University of San Diego, a private Catholic school.

Jewish Initiative for Animals Spins Off and Launches Center for Jewish Food Ethics



Farm Forward is proud to announce the launch of a new nonprofit, the Center for Jewish Food Ethics—the culmination of our eight years of incubation and support for farmed animal advocacy in the Jewish community.

In 2016, Farm Forward received support from several Jewish philanthropies to launch the Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA) as the centerpiece of our larger efforts at religious outreach. JIFA's first-of-its-kind mission was to provide new ways for the Jewish community to bring its values of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* (compassion for animals) into its food practices and strengthen Jewish communities in the process. In the eight years since, JIFA has

- supported the first American Jewish organizations, including synagogues, in committing to serve plant-based foods by default at all of their events
- influenced the Rabbinical Assembly to pass a resolution stating that “shifts to our institutional food practices, such as reducing factory-farmed animal product consumption, would help us to better achieve our values,” resulting in the first-ever Jewish denominational cohort to establish plant-forward food policies
- led training programs for Hillel International—representing over 500 Jewish community campus centers globally—on serving plant-based food by default
- provided programming for 100+ Jewish camps, synagogues, youth groups, community centers, schools, college programs, affinity groups and conferences to spark inquiry into how Jewish values can influence how we treat animals
- designed the animal welfare audit of the Hazon Seal of Sustainability, a LEED-style certification with animal welfare provisions adopted by institutions serving 17,000 individuals and an additional 2,000 families

- developed educational materials such as the Jewish Animal Ethics Community Study Guide, *The Ark Project Service-Learning Workbook*, and many Jewish holiday resources
- presented on Jewish food justice to countless conferences, and shifted several of those conferences to serve higher welfare animal products and more plant-based foods
- supported online kosher meat businesses in transitioning from selling low-welfare, genetically modified chickens to sourcing non-factory farmed heritage chickens who are less prone to disease and capable of living robust lives on pasture
- provided educational resources used by 1,500+ educators and students, and delivered educational presentations to 5,000+ people
- placed content in leading Jewish publications including *The Forward*, *Jewish Journal*, *JWeekly*, *Tablet*, and *Times of Israel*, as well as major media outlets like *Religion News Service* and *The Washington Post*, on pandemic risk, sustainable food choices, and why kosher shouldn't be factory farmed
- launched the Jewish Leadership Circle, supporting and recognizing Jewish institutions (including Yale University's Hillel) switching to higher welfare animal products and reducing animal consumption
- inspired more than 250 rabbis and senior Jewish leaders and 20,000 individuals to call out kosher humanewashing of factory farmed animal products and urge institutions to adopt more sustainable food practices
- posted 11 billboards, and social media reaching hundreds of thousands, directing viewers to JIFA's “Is this Kosher?” website about kosher humanewashing

JIFA and its partner in this work, Jewish Veg, have now come together to create a new nonprofit to steward this work indefinitely. The result of their merger, the new Center for Jewish Food Ethics (CJFE), will continue to transform dining practices, and establish more sustainable and humane food sourcing as the norm in Jewish spaces.

CJFE will carry on JIFA's legacy of sparking inquiry into topics of food justice through the lens of long and evolving Jewish traditions and values, while strengthening communities in the process. Farm Forward celebrates that CJFE's three inaugural staff members are former JIFA (under the incubation of Farm Forward) staff, and Farm Forward's CEO and two former staff members will serve as three of CJFE's founding board members.

This is not the first time that Farm Forward has spun off a new nonprofit organization. If the wild success of Better Food Foundation and Greener by Default are any guides, CJFE will be a force to reckon with in the years to come.



Jonathan Safran Foer meets with Pope, speaks at Vatican



Pope Francis receives Spanish-language copies of Jonathan Safran Foer's *We are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast and Eating Animals* at the Vatican.

Diet change at the Vatican! In the Vatican gardens after a private audience with Pope Francis, author and Farm Forward founding board member Jonathan Safran Foer gave a keynote address responding to the pope's new Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudate Deum*, where Foer urged food systems reform and eating fewer animal products as powerful ways to respond to the pope's call to address climate change. Foer emphasized the need for policy-level change, and following Pope Francis's lead, argued that individual actions are often what motivate governmental action.

While *Laudate Deum* does not get into the specifics of how to respond to climate change, the pope laid a powerful moral basis for reducing and ultimately ending our dependence on cruel and unsustainable factory farms. By inviting Foer, who is known as a critic of factory farming and an advocate for reducing the consumption of animal products, to be among the first to interpret *Laudate Deum* publicly, the Vatican all but endorsed a critique of industrial animal agriculture. This could signal the emergence of an unexpected new ally in the fight against industrial agriculture and its destructive effects on climate.

“The most influential decisions will be at the policy level, shaping the practices of nations, but we also can make decisions in our own lives and local institutions that matter more than crude math might suggest ... reducing the consumption of animal products, especially meat ... can matter at the individual and the policy level. The power of food system change to alter the climate is ... only just beginning to be realized.”

FARM FORWARD BOARD MEMBER JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER, FROM HIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS IN THE VATICAN GARDENS AFTER A PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH POPE FRANCIS

A seismic shift in Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalism (UUism) is a centuries-old liberal religious movement that asserts no creed but emphasizes the quest for truth, meaning, and spiritual growth in pluralistic communities, heeding reason and science, and expressing ethics through actions. In 2017, the UU Animal Ministry (UUAM) asked Farm Forward's Director of Education, Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh, to serve as its leader. With Farm Forward's support, John has devoted some of his professional energies to UUAM since, and this year that decision paid off with a seismic shift.

In June 2024 a national gathering with representatives from most of the denomination's 1,000+ congregations voted overwhelmingly to revise the language most central to UUism—Article II of the Association's bylaws, commonly known as the UU “Principles and Sources.” The conference replaced covenantal but vague language about respecting “the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part” with language John wrote and organized national support for: **“As Unitarian Universalists...We covenant to protect ... all beings from exploitation,”** as well as language about animals John played a major role in shaping: “We will create and



nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice. We will work to repair harm and damaged relationships.”

That unprecedented UU promise to protect all beings from exploitation in covenantal language at the center of the faith is an extraordinary leap forward for nonhuman animals, and is already supporting advocates across the continent as a solid foundation on which they are building justice for animals in local congregations: at meals, in 40+ established and emerging UUAM local chapters, in social action projects, and in partnership with their larger communities.

Farm Forward's founder launches new Center for Food System Transformation at the University of San Diego



USD is consistently ranked in the top ten Catholic colleges in America. Its unique emphasis on social justice, commitment to Catholic social values like care for our common home, and location at an international border has made it an ideal location for a Center with the mission to support scholarship that advances food systems change that responds to climate change and other justice issues related to food. **Read more about the CFST in the section on University Partnerships below.**

These four momentous developments validate Farm Forward's commitment to movement building, and our approach to community-centered advocacy. These victories remind us that culture change remains possible and worth fighting for.



SUPPORTING FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA



Farm Forward has long argued that India, now the most populated country on earth, will play a particularly decisive role in the future of factory farming. Since 2012, Farm Forward has helped fund grassroots Indian groups that are immediately improving animal welfare while also building local resistance to destructive industrial farms and providing invaluable insights into the tactics factory farms use to open new markets. Our grants to grassroots organizations aim to empower India's hundreds of millions of farmers to find their own unique path to resist factory farming, preserve rural life, enhance community health, and create animal agriculture systems that are both productive and more humane.

In addition, in 2023 and 2024, Farm Forward provided financial support for Samayu, an India-based national nonprofit working to coordinate and scale up local efforts to create a truly humane and sustainable future for Indian agriculture. Employing the One Health framework, Samayu advocates for the integrated health of animals, humans, and the environment in Indian agriculture. Through evidence-based legislative policy advocacy, cross-sectoral collaboration, and producer and consumer outreach, Samayu works to integrate animal interests into broader societal challenges like climate change. Samayu's recent policy work has focused on improving the living conditions of poultry and farmed fishes by banning non-clinical, growth-oriented misuse of antibiotics in both sectors.



Farm Forward supported Samayu's 2024 work to engage animal farmers, veterinary professionals, and Members of the Legislative Assembly in their efforts to improve health and welfare in the poultry and aquaculture sectors.



COLLABORATION LEADS TO UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Academic institutions shape the values and norms of generations of future leaders. Increasing the visibility of farmed animals and food ethics in undergraduate and graduate education via academic programs, professional trainings, professorships, and Centers will contribute to the long-term success of the farmed animal protection movement.

Farm Forward partners with Yale Law School

In mid-2023, Farm Forward announced a **new collaboration with Yale Law School's Climate, Animal, Food, and Environmental Law and Policy Lab and other NGOs to develop innovative policy approaches that can be enacted at the state and municipal level to challenge factory farming practices.** Farm Forward is now helping lead a group of cross-sector advocacy organizations working with law and graduate students from Yale and Denver University. This cohort is researching and developing strategies to overcome modern legal and policy challenges in a wide range of projects, from values based procurement to leveraging executive climate action at the state level.

A critical feature of this work is the theory of change under which we operate: the complex problem of industrial animal farming will require a collective, diverse, and intersectional method of policy decision-making and reform, and no single justice area (e.g., environmental justice, labor rights, animal protection, or farmer advocacy) should be advanced at the sacrifice of another.

The insights and findings generated by the students have already begun to complement and support existing policy efforts, providing valuable resources for activists, citizens, and policymakers at the state and local levels. State legislation piloted in the Lab is expected to be introduced in 2025.





New Center on Food System Transformation at the University of San Diego

In Fall 2024, Farm Forward Founder and University of San Diego Professor, Dr. Aaron S. Gross, launched and became the first Director of the [University of San Diego's new Center for Food System Transformation \(CFST\)](#). Ranked among the nation's top 50 universities by the *Wall Street Journal*, USD is a private Catholic research university whose mission commits it to "preparing compassionate and ethical leaders." Fully aligned with Farm Forward's long-standing goal of replacing factory farms with more humane and sustainable alternatives, the CFST will support scholarship to advance national and global food systems transformation. CFST is focused on research, education, and facilitation of access to policy-relevant insights from leading scholars.

The CFST's two priority areas are "[Sustainable Diets Through Behavior Architecture](#)," which highlights how plant-based diets can be a solution to climate change, and "[One Health as a Guide to Food Transformation](#)," which will address concerns with how factory farms aggravate antibiotic resistance and pandemic risk. In its first months the CFST has hosted a national conference engaging with plant-based defaults as a vehicle to fight climate change, facilitated a donor education session for a national charity, hosted a networking session at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), and held an intensive series of events at the USD campus supporting reconsideration of how food is served on campus.

The CFST is now actively establishing formal research partnerships and other alliances with a range of stakeholders, including nonprofits like Farm Forward. Farm Forward has long recognized the importance of scholarship not only in producing scientific facts about the harms of industrial agriculture and charting new agricultural solutions, but in shaping the national narrative about food and farming. Stay tuned for this promising new chapter in Farm Forward's efforts to build the will to end factory farming and transform our food system in partnership with institutions of higher education.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



Photo by Jo-Anne McArthur / We Animals

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Farm Forward is proud to be supported by Dr. Bronner's, a company that not only makes grants to anti-factory-farming groups like Farm Forward, but also lives out our values in their business practices, from what they serve in their cafeteria to how they source products ethically in their supply chains.



DR. BRONNER'S
ALL-ONE!

Thank you for standing by us in 2023 and 2024, as we've worked to hold the animal agriculture industry accountable to the values that most Americans, across the political spectrum, share about how we should treat animals and what it means to have a safe, sustainable and humane food system.



Photo by Andrew Skowron / We Animals

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2023 EXPENSES



MOVEMENT BUILDING	44% \$349,946
ADMINISTRATIVE	8% \$64,793
FAITH IN FOOD	4% \$30,660
PUBLIC EDUCATION	11% \$85,508
INDIA	5% \$42,237
HUMANEWASHING	12% \$95,844
POLICY	14% \$109,034
FUNDRAISING	2% \$15,025

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES
\$713,230

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$793,047

2023 INCOME



CONSULTING, INTEREST & IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS	2% \$13,605
GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS	8% \$64,644

FOUNDATIONS
85% \$662,004

INDIVIDUALS
5% \$40,811

TOTAL INCOME
\$781,064

2024 EXPENSES



OTHER	1% \$14,903
MOVEMENT BUILDING	46% \$470,830
ADMINISTRATIVE	8% \$82,432
FAITH IN FOOD	4% \$7,606
PUBLIC EDUCATION	10% \$97,686
INDIA	5% \$46,827
HUMANEWASHING	15% \$158,528
POLICY	10% \$102,150
FUNDRAISING	1% \$13,676

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES
\$928,530

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$1,024,639

2024 INCOME



INTEREST
.2% \$1,802

FOUNDATIONS
98.0% \$1,091,019

INDIVIDUALS
1.9% \$20,803

TOTAL INCOME
\$1,113,624

WE ARE A TEAM OF STRATEGISTS,
CAMPAIGNERS, AND THOUGHT LEADERS
GUIDING THE MOVEMENT TO CHANGE
THE WAY OUR WORLD EATS AND FARMS.

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FARMFORWARD

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