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By Sara Wyant, Agri-Pulse Editor  
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## Humane Society prepares to wage another state petition battle

After waging successful “farm animal welfare” drives in Arizona and Florida, the Humane Society of the United States is now targeting California with a similar campaign. Their proposed **California Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act** will prevent the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens, swine gestation crates and veal crates. **The group is trying to collect the 650,000 signatures by February 28, 2008 in order to get the measure on the Nov. 4, 2008 ballot.** If approved, the proposal would take effect in 2015.

The *Sacramento Bee* reported Nov. 25 that the poultry industry is trying to be more proactive in combating the campaign. “In a rare move for an industry in which each visitor to a chicken house raises the chances of a ruinous disease outbreak, some farmers have opened their barns to reporters, an effort to demonstrate that while a caged life may not give a hen everything she wants, she's likely to be cleaner and healthier than her average cage-free counterpart.

Some animal-welfare experts say they have a point, the Bee reported.

"When you give a hen some of these behavioral freedoms, you increase health risks," said Joy Mench, a University of California, Davis, professor who has worked with both the Humane Society and mainstream egg producers to craft welfare standards for caged and cage-free hens.

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