

# See cockfighting at its finest

## Loos Tales



with  
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**I**SN'T it time to quit the political games of food labeling? They don't work. I don't think anyone would argue that our nation's population was leaner prior to 1974 than it has been since then.

In 1974, the government stepped in and allowed Voluntary Nutrition Labels on food. It would appear to me that since the inception of the Federal Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act in 1938, food labels have done nothing but confuse an over-"informed" society.

Case in point: We are a nation fighting obesity and chronic heart disease. At every opportunity, we seek to purchase 2% or skim milk because the label says it has less fat, yet research indicates that the fat found in whole milk promotes weight loss and improves general health.

How would you assess the general health of our nation since we began putting nutrition information on the label? Even if we do read it, we ignore it and do what we want anyway.

With that said, we continue to have a debate incubating over the proper care of animals and what should be on respective product labels.

Take, for example, the United Egg Producers and its Animal Care Certified program. By any logical person's standards, this is a tremendous thing. One cannot say that it has improved the care of hens on farms, but it has simply been a mechanism to document that the needs of the birds are being taken into consideration.

I can give you a list of the scientific research generated by land-grant universities in order to set the guidelines for the "Certified Care" stamp of approval, but even more important is what production of the hens tells us.

The hen performance and efficiency at what they do clearly states that these



animals are in the most stress-free conditions of any time in food production history.

Still, animal agriculture abolitionist group Compassion Over Killing and the Penn Law Animal Law Project recently filed a petition calling for the Food & Drug Administration to mandate full disclosure of production methods for eggs sold within the U.S. Given that, the following is what the label on a carton of eggs could look like in the near future.

**WARNING:** The hens that produced these eggs were cared for in the following production method:

- Housed in environmentally controlled facilities where they have never faced the true force of Mother Nature's extremes in temperature, rain, hail or a blizzard.

- Had shelter from natural predators and have not had to survive the wrath of a skunk, hawk, raccoon or other carnivorous enemy.

- Were fed a fortified, complete diet of an optimum nutritional balance and not forced to scavenge for grubs, insects, mysteriously dead black birds or carcasses of other animals killed by disease or passing motor vehicles.

- Under constant veterinary care with immunizations to protect the flock from

all potential diseases.

- Housed indoors, where the U.S. Department of Agriculture has indicated that if avian influenza actually reaches U.S. soil, these birds have the lowest risk of contracting the disease.

Who in their right mind would want to eat eggs from hens that have been so isolated from the "real world?" The answer is the 300 million Americans who care only about the fact that the reasonably priced food they buy is safe for their family to eat.

The recent, non-biased research conducted by food service individuals at the University of Notre Dame should be a great lesson to all of us (*Feedstuffs*, Sept. 4, or see [www.FeedstuffsFoodlink.com](http://www.FeedstuffsFoodlink.com) under the Cage-free vs. Caged Hens button).

We are fortunate to live where we have choices when it comes to our food supply. It is unfortunate that our food labeling dialogue has become a backyard cockfight that few truly care about instead of an educated and informed discussion that could lead to labels that might actually benefit the consumers.

Have you noticed that the same individuals who worked to make cockfighting illegal are the first ones to sharpen their talons?

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