

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Undercover investigation inside multiple Kroger egg suppliers reveals death, disease, and disgust

Despite recent assurances from the nation's second-largest grocery company, an animal welfare organization released footage revealing repulsive, unsanitary conditions found last month at farms supplying eggs to Kroger supermarkets.



Above: Dead, injured hen stuck under metallic cage wire, laying next to two eggs in Automated Egg, a facility in North Manchester, Indiana supplying Kroger supermarkets. May 2026. © International Council for Animal Welfare

CINCINNATI, OHIO, June 24, 2026 – The **International Council for Animal Welfare (ICAW)** is releasing [video footage](#) and [photos](#) documenting highly unsanitary and abusive conditions at **three industrial egg farms in Ohio and Indiana that supply eggs to Kroger stores.**

Findings of the investigation include:

- Countless birds forced to live in **cramped cages** atop the **rotting, mummified carcasses** of their dead cage-mates.
- Birds so sick, injured, and diseased, they were **barely alive.**
- Widespread **rodent and insect infestations.**
- **Blood and feces-covered** eggs.
- **Dead birds in a watery pit** inside a facility housing live birds, so decayed that a jelly-like substance oozed from their bodies.
- Birds **drenched in feces** from those living in the cages above them.
- Birds with their **heads and wings painfully twisted up** in their wire cages, trapping them so they couldn't move.

Kroger is the **country's second-largest grocer**, operating nearly 2,800 stores in 35 states under two-dozen banners, including **Kroger, Fred Meyer, Harris Teeter, Smith's, Ralph's, Mariano's**, and more.

In 2016, **Kroger** [pledged](#) to eliminate the cage confinement of egg-laying hens by switching to an all cage-free egg supply. But **the company later broke that promise**, and now continues allowing extreme confinement that crams birds together so tightly, they spend their entire lives without enough room to even spread their wings.

Facing recent criticism over the decision, Kroger [released a statement](#) on May 13 claiming its suppliers "work hard to maintain a high standard of care for laying hens," but also stating that the company believes animals only need "food, water and air" to be healthy.

Investigative work into facilities supplying **Kroger** began shortly after that statement, with the footage taken between **May 18 and 25** at **Trillium Farms in Croton, Ohio; Automated Egg in North Manchester, Indiana; and Hi-Grade Egg Producers in Manchester, Indiana.**

Using **USDA packing codes**, eggs from these exact facilities were traced back to multiple **Kroger locations**, including a **Kroger store directly across the street from the company's corporate headquarters** in Cincinnati.

"This disturbing footage shows exactly what happens when a giant corporation believes animals only need food, water, and air to live a healthy life," said ICAW CEO Chrystine Liptrot. "It's such a ludicrous view, it'd be laughable if the consequences for consumers and chickens alike weren't so serious. **Everyone knows animals need more than food, water, and air to be healthy — except Kroger.**"



Above: Hens confined in overcrowded wire cages, with severe feather loss and visibly inflamed, swollen abdomens, in Hi-Grade Egg Producers in Manchester, Indiana, a facility supplying Kroger supermarkets. One bird appears to be suffering from a prolapse or untreated reproductive injury. May 2026. © International Council for Animal Welfare

Cage-free production is widely known to be less cruel and much cleaner. A 2023 [peer-reviewed study](#) conducted by North Carolina State University's Prestage Department of Poultry Science also found that housing environments (e.g. cage vs. cage-free) have a "highly significant" effect on **egg quality**, and that eggs from caged hens “**produce the worst-quality eggs** according to consumer and industry preferences.”

Unlike **Kroger**, other major egg buyers have already converted to 100% cage-free eggs, including **McDonald's, Burger King, Amazon**, and hundreds of other companies.

Ahold Delhaize, one of the country's largest retailers, published a [comprehensive plan](#) last March for eliminating cages from its egg supply. In April, **Target** [also published](#) a plan for switching entirely to cage-free eggs, including hundreds of Target stores switching to cage-free eggs by this October.

[Several states](#) have totally **outlawed the confinement of hens in cages** and/or the **sale of eggs from caged hens**. According to [USDA data](#), approximately 47% of eggs nationwide are now cage-free. **Kroger** is required by law to be cage-free in California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Michigan, and Nevada, yet continues to prop up the battery cage industry in other states it operates in.



*Above: Hens crowded into rusted wire cages alongside large accumulations of hardened waste, heavy feather debris, and what appears to be the remains of a deceased bird, indicating severely unsanitary living conditions.
Hi-Grade Egg Producers, Kroger supermarkets supplier, Manchester, Indiana, May 2026. © ICAW*

"People and animals both deserve far better than the disgusting conditions at Kroger's egg suppliers," added Liptrot.

In addition to its broken cage-free egg pledge, the company has also come under fire recently [for its role driving the national opioid crisis](#) and for admitting that it [price-gouged families on milk and eggs during the COVID-19 crisis](#) by raising prices beyond the cost of inflation.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA MATERIAL AVAILABLE:

- [Videos](#), including footage from each facility.
- [High-resolution photo gallery](#) (feel free to use them).
- Upon request, ICAW can provide **GPS coordinates** and other documentation proving the **location and dates** of the investigations, as well as **USDA packing codes linking eggs from all three facilities to Kroger stores**.

For more information and interview requests, reach out to our media contacts below.

PRESS CONTACT:

Chrystine Liptrot: cliptrot@i-caw.org 201-835-6362

Raphaëlle Martinez: rmartinez@i-caw.org 202-341-3611

ABOUT ICAW:

The International Council for Animal Welfare (ICAW) is a registered nonprofit born from a coalition of animal welfare advocacy professionals from around the globe. Our mission is to reduce as much animal suffering as possible through corporate campaigns targeting the world's largest food companies. ICAW focuses exclusively on issues that reduce a tremendous amount of suffering and impact a tremendous amount of animals, such as ending battery cages for egg-laying hens.



Above: Mouse running beside a hen lying motionless, with extensive feather loss and exposed skin. Hi-Grade Egg Producers in Manchester, Indiana, a facility supplying Kroger supermarkets. May 2026. © ICAW