

## **A conversation with Carolina Macedo, April 14, 2017**

### **Participants**

- Carolina Macedo – Director of Farm Animal Campaigns, Fórum Nacional de Proteção e Defesa Animal (FNPDA)
- Lewis Bollard –Program Officer, Farm Animal Welfare, Open Philanthropy Project

**Note:** These notes were compiled by the Open Philanthropy Project and give an overview of the major points made by Ms. Macedo.

### **Summary**

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Ms. Macedo of FNPDA to get an update on our 2016 grant. Conversation topics included FNPDA's work on corporate cage-free campaigns, its coordination with other animal welfare groups, obstacles it has faced, and its budget and fundraising.

### **Corporate cage-free campaigns**

In the last six months, FNPDA has begun focusing cage-free campaigns on retailers, food manufacturers, and some foodservice companies. Its plan is to target the largest companies (in terms of market share) first and then work its way down the list.

### **Recent successes**

FNPDA has had a number of recent successes:

- International Meal Company, one of Brazil's largest food conglomerates which operates a number of restaurant chains, has pledged to phase out battery cages by 2022.
- Cargill, one of largest mayonnaise producers in Brazil, and Bunge, a large agribusiness company that also makes mayonnaise, have both pledged to go cage-free by 2025. (Unilever had already made a pledge, so now Brazil's top three mayonnaise producers have all made cage-free pledges.)
- Barilla, one of the world's largest pasta makers, has agreed to expand its global cage-free policy to Brazil by 2020.

### **Current campaigns**

FNPDA launched a cage-free campaign against Casa do Pão de Queijo, which makes a cheese bread product that contains a lot of eggs. Casa do Pão de Queijo has claimed it will announce a cage-free policy by end of May.

FNPDA has also launched a cage-free campaign against Sapore, the largest foodservice provider in Brazil. FNPDA is hoping Sapore will announce a cage-free pledge soon, at which point the three largest foodservice providers in Brazil will

have made cage-free pledges (since Sodexo and Compass Group have already adopted global cage-free policies).

There are a number of other companies in Brazil and elsewhere that FNPDA is working with to adopt cage-free policies and may potentially launch campaigns against.

### **Campaign activities**

FNPDA's campaigns include online petitions and/or letters to the company's CEO, with signatures from the public collected via the campaign's website and direct actions in front of offices or stores. FNPDA promotes its campaigns via sponsored Facebook posts and emails to its list of supporters. Facebook is FNPDA's main tool for campaigns. At the time of our grant, FNPDA had about 30,000 Facebook followers; it made efforts to grow its audience and now has about 100,000 followers. It has paused these efforts for now in order to make sure it has enough funds to put toward developing other campaign tools.

FNPDA has only used online tools for its cage-free campaigns so far. In the past, FNPDA has organized protests in front of companies' offices and stores, working with trained activists to ensure things go smoothly.

#### *Recent team expansion*

FNPDA has recently expanded and restructured its team working on cage-free campaigns, including bringing on a PhD in animal welfare as a consultant for its cage-free work in Brazil.

Another funder has provided funds for FNPDA to expand its cage-free work to other parts of Latin America. FNPDA has hired a cage-free consultant in Chile (who will also work with companies in Argentina), who started last week and is working on setting up a website. It also plans to hire a consultant in Colombia, whom it hopes will start within a month.

### **Obstacles**

#### *Lower engagement*

When FNPDA was working on gestation crates, levels of public engagement were higher and, e.g., getting lots of signatures for petitions was easier and less expensive. Consumer engagement has since dropped off significantly. People may be overwhelmed by the number of campaigns running at once. It's also possible that many people may care less about chickens than about mammals.

#### *Pushback from vegan groups*

FNPDA has faced some challenges due to undercover investigations by some groups that have shown bad conditions in cage-free farms (although these conditions are atypical). There is a small part of the vegan movement in Brazil that opposes incremental animal welfare reforms and is spreading the message that cage-free systems don't provide a significant welfare improvement for hens.

### *Criticism by Brazil's Minister of Agriculture*

The new Brazilian Minister of Agriculture has criticized the cage-free movement. For instance, he told *Valor Econômico*, Brazil's largest business newspaper, that cage-free systems are dangerous because all hens ought to be indoors to avoid spreading bird flu (in fact, Ms. Macedo says that cage-free systems can be contained by e.g. netting, and that there are studies suggesting the risk of contamination in cage-free systems is lower than in cage systems). FNPDA Education Director Elizabeth MacGregor plans to publish a piece in the Huffington Post rebutting that idea this week and to pass along this information to companies, which have been citing the Minister of Agriculture's views as a reason not to go cage-free.

Ms. Macedo thinks it's likely that the agricultural industry has helped promote this idea (the Minister of Agriculture's statement came after he met with an industry group). This is the only major industry pushback that Ms. Macedo is aware of.

### **Gestation crates**

FNPDA had stopped working on gestation crates for a while because funding constraints and its small team size made it difficult to run both gestation crate and battery cage campaigns. Now that its team is somewhat larger and more organized, it hopes to start working on gestation crate campaigns again. Brazil's three largest pork producers have already made gestation crate pledges, and FNPDA hopes to get pledges from the next five or six largest.

### **Coordination with other groups**

FNPDA's dialogue with other animal welfare groups in Brazil is going well.

FNPDA is considering joining the Open Wing Alliance.

### **Budget and fundraising**

FNPDA has spent less than half of Open Philanthropy's grant so far. Its other sources of revenue are small, and it has found fundraising in Brazil difficult.

FNPDA is considering running a crowdfunding campaign around vaquejada (a Brazilian rodeo-like sport that is very cruel to the animals involved).

FNPDA does fundraising every year on World Spay Day and transfers those funds to its member groups that do spaying and neutering activities.

It also has a small number of monthly donors.

*All Open Philanthropy Project conversations are available at <http://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/conversations>*