

Conversation with Leah Garces of Compassion in World Farming, February 26, 2014

Participants

- Leah Garces – USA Director, Compassion in World Farming
- Eliza Scheffler – Research Analyst, GiveWell

Note: This set of notes was compiled by GiveWell and gives an overview of the major points made by Ms. Garces.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Ms. Garces about Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), which opened a dedicated US office in 2011 that Ms. Garces directs. CIWF's work in the US focuses on corporate engagement, specifically through its Good Farm Animal Welfare awards program. CIWF USA is also working to draw greater attention to the problems of the broiler chicken industry. In the conversation, Ms. Garces also commented on the role of other organizations in the farm animal welfare field and about CIWF's work in China.

About Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) was started in the 1960s by a farmer named Peter Roberts. CIWF is not anti-agriculture; it is anti-cruelty and anti-unsustainability. CIWF's main focus is to improve the lives of farm animals, but it is motivated by more than animal welfare. CIWF is also motivated by the negative impacts that industrial agriculture has on poverty, food sovereignty, environment, health, rural livelihoods, and the treatment of farm laborers.

CIWF is headquartered in the UK, but works in multiple countries, including the US and China. It has been at the forefront of farm animal legislation in Europe, which is the most advanced of anywhere in the world. The US is important because many of its companies have global presences, so it is critical in raising the standard for animal welfare in the private sector.

Priorities of CIWF USA

Identified gap: broiler chickens

When CIWF's USA office started in 2011, Ms. Garces conducted a landscape analysis to determine what its priorities should be. The major gap in the field at that point was that there weren't any groups prioritizing broiler chickens (chickens farmed for meat), despite that they make up 95% of the more than 9 billion animals killed for food in the US every year, and that there are a total of 55 billion broiler chickens killed yearly worldwide. Within the little federal legislation that exists for farm animals, chickens are completely absent.

It is conceptually easier to convince people to remove farm animals from close confinement systems, such as pigs from gestation crates or hens from battery cages. However, broiler chickens are not normally raised in cages. Improving the lives of broiler chickens involves enrichment, increasing the space per chicken in a facility, and reducing their growth rates. These are more challenging to communicate about and to legislate on. There is also a higher cost differential for making these changes than for removing cages and crates in a facility.

Since CIWF conducted its landscape analysis and identified the gap around broiler chickens, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) started working on this issue as well. For two years now, the ASPCA has had a campaign called "The Truth About Chicken." CIWF received a \$47,000 grant from the ASPCA to prepare much of the market research that guided the development of this campaign. CIWF has continued to collaborate with the ASPCA.

In April 2014, CIWF is launching a public outreach campaign called the Better Chicken Initiative (www.better-chicken.org). This campaign has a website, video, and Change.org petition addressed to producers of broiler chickens. CIWF USA decided to launch the Better Chicken Initiative in response to companies saying that they were not going to move forward with improving welfare for broiler chickens until there was more public awareness around it. This is the first opportunity that CIWF USA has had to integrate its corporate and public engagement work (comparable to the way in which it operates in Europe).

Main strategy: corporate engagement

CIWF started working on corporate engagement in 2001. Today, the US office prioritizes corporate engagement, after seeing a strong positive response to its efforts in this area early on. The corporate world is competitive and can move very quickly, which is the opposite of legislation, and makes it a promising approach for achieving gains at scale for farm animals.

In the field of farm animal welfare, corporate engagement is the strategy that could most productively use additional funding. CIWF, Mercy for Animals and the Humane Society of the US are the main organizations working on corporate engagement.

CIWF's awards programs

CIWF's first corporate engagement project involved ranking supermarkets based on responses they submitted to a survey about their policies regarding animal welfare. It turned out that supermarkets really didn't like to be at the bottom of the ranking, and this was enough to motivate them to improve their policies. The Supermarket Survey is now used as a confidential gap analysis tool for companies without the public ranking as a useful benchmark to see anonymously where they sit compared with other companies that participated. Based on this response, CIWF started the Good Egg Award for companies that made a commitment to go 100% cage free with all of the eggs in their supply chain. Hellman's in the UK was one of the first winners of the Good Egg Award and launched an advertising campaign promoting the message "only good eggs get the Good Egg Award." This earned media was a huge win for CIWF and for laying hens - a global company advertising about welfare for egg-laying hens with CIWF's award. Since 2005, Unilever, Hellman's parent company, has made farm animal welfare one of their core sustainable agriculture indicators. After this early success, CIWF began shifting its resources more and more towards corporate engagement, because it was a way to quickly improve the lives of farm animals and CIWF could calculate the number of animals affected through its awards programs.

CIWF now has four awards, the: Good Egg, Good Chicken, Good Dairy, and Good Pig Award. The goal of these awards is to raise baseline standards, it is not about achieving the ideal. For example, the Good Egg Award requires that hens are out of cages, but not that they are pasture-raised. The standards for each award are available on CIWF's Food Business website (<http://www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/awards/>).

Engagement

CIWF looks to engage large global companies ("superconsumers") for its awards – retailers, manufacturers, brands and food service companies. If these companies adopt higher welfare farm animal welfare policies, producers must comply in order to retain their business. With gestation crates, after McDonalds made an announcement that it would phase them out of its supply chain, 30 other companies followed within 6 months. This encouraged producers like Smithfields and Tyson to move away from gestation crates. CIWF feels that a key pressure point is on superconsumers, which is why it focuses most of its efforts on corporate engagement.

Approach

The awards enable CIWF to approach companies positively rather than negatively. CIWF lays out the changes that would be necessary in a company's supply chain to earn an award and typically works in partnership with them to build a roadmap to make these changes. CIWF also emphasizes that companies will receive positive publicity for raising their farm animal welfare standards. Most companies are excited when they are engaged this way.

CIWF provides many types of support to companies aiming to improve their farm animal welfare standards: it supports and guides companies on writing general farm animal welfare policies and implementing changes, helps companies find the right suppliers, advises them on species-specific policies, and assists with communications about any changes and the award. While many companies in the US have a long way to go before they can achieve an award, they do want help getting there eventually. Companies often approach CIWF saying that they have no expertise on farm animal welfare and ask for help in learning and developing an overarching strategy. In these cases, CIWF will help companies write farm animal welfare policies, using templates that CIWF has created. These are a stepping stones towards policies which may, in time, achieve the standards of the awards. CIWF offers workshops and supports companies to help integrate farm animal welfare into their corporate culture.

CIWF's awards require that a company commit to meeting the prescribed criteria within 5 years. This commitment can not just be a media release, it must be a permanent policy change that receives sign-off from the company's executive board. This is to ensure that the company is invested and that its commitment garners real change.

Follow up

CIWF continues to engage and work with companies that win awards to follow up on their progress. As part of the awards process CIWF understands how companies are meeting the criteria with regard to their standards and auditing; CIWF does not audit companies' suppliers. When companies make media announcements that generate positive attention from the public, they tend to be self-policing about implementation. In addition, the companies that earn CIWF's awards have not been forced to reform their policies, they have chosen to do so and decisions are therefore more deeply rooted in the company. CIWF is working to ensure that farm animal welfare sits at the heart of the industry.

There have only been two companies that have had their awards revoked by CIWF due to renegeing on their commitments. In addition to the ongoing engagement with

companies, there is enough traceability and transparency in the industry that CIWF is likely to find out if a company has defaulted on its commitments.

Counterfactual

Ms. Garces has seen some of the farm animal welfare policies that companies wrote on their own, without the support of an organization like CIWF. These policies tend to be very unclear, such that producers would not know what changes they are required to implement.

Budget for CIWF USA

CIWF USA requires a minimum investment of approximately \$1 million over the next 3 years to support its current operation. However, such is the interest in CIWF's corporate engagement work, that it would need to expand in order to meet demand from industry for its expert, technical input.

How CIWF USA would use additional funds

The objective for the CIWF's US operation is to become self-financing within a 3 year period. Ms. Garces said that what CIWF USA needs right now is 3-4 more corporate engagement staff and technical staff to support them. In one month alone, CIWF USA was approached by 3 multinational companies to conduct workshops with their whole supply chains and help them write farm animal welfare policies. These partnerships are resource-intensive requiring significant staff time and knowledge. The same trend is occurring at the global level, in countries where CIWF works such as China, Poland, Netherlands, France, and Italy. Demand for CIWF's expertise is outstripping its capacity.

Roles of other organizations and strategies

It is important for companies to feel pressure to change from multiple angles. Organizations such as Compassion Over Killing and Mercy For Animals apply pressure through exposing cruelty to animals on factory farms through undercover investigations. CIWF has invested in its own Investigations team (UK-based but operating globally). Without these, companies might not even know that these problems exist and might not be motivated to improve their policies. Shareholder resolutions are also critical because they force companies to be more transparent and improve their policies. Without these pressures, companies might not come to CIWF for support in addressing farm animal welfare.

CIWF regularly reaches out to other farm animal welfare groups. Ms. Garces said that the groups in the US work very collaboratively and positively together. Attention on the broiler chicken issue seems to have increased somewhat over the past few years, and CIWF's Better Chicken Initiative aims to continue to raise it, which could get other organizations involved. Ms. Garces predicted that within 5 years, broiler chickens will become more of a priority in the farm animal welfare scene, and that there will be even better communication with consumers about welfare standards for these animals.

In the US, there are only 7 groups other than CIWF that consistently work on farm animal issues: HSUS, Farm Sanctuary, Mercy for Animals, Compassion Over Killing, Farm Forward, ASPCA, and the Animal Welfare Institute. Of these, HSUS has the largest team, leading the work on crates and cages. There are also groups that work on factory farming, though not specifically from an animal welfare perspective. The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), for example, is campaigning against the use of non-therapeutic antibiotics in farm animals. Food and Water Watch takes a more holistic approach to the problems of factory farming, and is very data-driven and research-based. Food and Water Watch is a strong and knowledgeable organization, and even though it is not specifically focused on farm animal welfare, its long term goal is the same as what CIWF wants: a more humane, sustainable, and fair farming system that is better for animals, people, and the environment.

CIWF in China

CIWF has one staff person in China, supported and augmented by a broader HQ staff team. China is one of the world's fastest growing major economies and the scale of China's farm animal industry makes it critically important; China has the largest hog population in the world.

CIWF's approach is to find where it can make measurable improvements, so in countries that present a greater challenge, it will narrow its focus rather than trying to take on the whole system. In China, CIWF decided to focus primarily on corporate engagement and an education program to improve the welfare of pigs on farms. The education program will build knowledge and understanding of animal welfare in China and develop a network of leadership farms for pig welfare.

CIWF launched the Good Pig Award in China in fall of 2013, followed by an official media launch in February 2014 of the Good Pig Production Award. The Good Pig Production Award aims to improve both food safety and the welfare standards for pigs in China. It is a certificate-based award given to Chinese pig producers that take steps to improve their farming facilities and implement welfare friendly practices. In partnership, CIWF and the International Cooperation Committee of Animal Welfare

(ICCAW) are acting as Chinese administrators of the award. CIWF hopes the Good Pig Production Award will create momentum amongst the pig industry, and lead to brands across the food industry applying for Good Pig Awards in China, as more companies commit to higher welfare standards for pigs in their supply chains.

ICCAW is a non-governmental organization approved by the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China, and registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2013. It is affiliated to the China Association for the Promotion of International Agricultural Cooperation (CAPIAC). ICCAW aims to promote animal welfare in China by implementing efficient and welfare-friendly farming systems to improve the quality and safety of animal products.

The Good Pig Award and Good Pig Production Award have been welcomed by the Chinese government and by groups in the private sector. This is key to affecting industry in China, because the government wants to attract business from global corporations.

About Leah Garces

Ms. Garces currently serves as Director of the US office of CIWF, which she helped launch in 2011. Ms. Garces holds a master's degree in Environment and Development from King's College in London and a bachelor's degree in Zoology from the University of Florida. Prior to her current role, she ran the global campaigns and programs of the World Society for the Protection of Animals and served as CIWF's International Campaign Manager.

While at the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Ms. Garces worked to make farm animals a priority in its global campaigns, especially in China and Brazil, because the FAO had predicted that these countries would make up an increasingly larger share of global farm animal production as factory farms moved away from the restrictive policies being passed in the EU. Despite their increasing importance, there was no activism on behalf of farm animals in China and Brazil at the time that the World Society for the Protection of Animals started working there. Ms. Garces said that it is difficult to know whether one's work is having an impact when operating at a global scale, which is part of what motivated her to return to CIWF and work in the US.

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