

A conversation with Leah Garces and Dawn Rotheram, November 8, 2016

Participants

- Leah Garces – Executive Director of Compassion in World Farming USA (CIWF USA)
- Dawn Rotheram – Development Director, CIWF
- Lewis Bollard – Program Officer, Farm Animal Welfare, the Open Philanthropy Project

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

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Ms. Garces of CIWF USA for a six-month update on an Open Philanthropy Project grant for general support. The \$550,000 grant will be awarded over the course of two years, and CIWF USA received the first installment on April 20, 2016. Conversation topics included updates on CIWF USA's operations since receiving the grant, impact it was able to have as a result of the grant, and its plans for the future.

Staff and operations update

CIWF USA staff and operations before receiving the grant

At the time when CIWF USA received the first installment of the grant, it had a staff of three: Ms. Garces, US Food Business Manager Rachel Dreskin, and Public Engagement Manager Nina Farley. CIWF USA was actively engaging with companies but had more requests from them than it could meet. Ms. Garces was splitting her focus between operational tasks – e.g., compliance, taxes, payroll, impact reporting, etc. – and engaging with large corporations (including several major US producers, retailers, and food service companies). CIWF USA saw significant opportunities for enacting animal welfare policies at the corporate level, but it struggled to capitalize on them because of limited capacity.

Staff positions filled after the grant

CIWF USA has now filled all the additional staff roles that were funded by the grant:

- **Operations** – Hiring a dedicated “operational enabler,” David Soleil, was especially important for Ms. Garces because this allowed her to focus exclusively on strategic planning and engaging with corporations. This increased strategic capacity contributed to some of CIWF USA's recent successes in broiler welfare policy adoption. The operational enabler has also put new systems in place that have improved efficiency as CIWF USA has grown – e.g., using Concur reduced expense-reporting time from one day to one hour a month, and using Slack for internal communication reduced

internal email volumes by 50-70%. Lastly, the operational enabler helped secure a three-year lease – for less than originally budgeted – for CIWF USA’s first office. Having an office should reduce the cost of travel and renting spaces for staff to meet.

- **Public Engagement Manager** – CIWF USA hired Alison Spasser for this role. She supports CIWF USA’s market sensitization – i.e., leveraging public awareness to drive large companies to commit to animal welfare. She has freed up Ms. Farley to work on other metrics-oriented public engagement efforts and is facilitating significant cost-efficiencies.
- **Food Business Coordinator** – CIWF USA hired Katya Simkhovich for this role. She has enabled CIWF USA to enhance communication with many companies which allowed Ms. Garces and Ms. Dreskin to focus on senior-level industry engagement, fielding media inquiries, and responding to other issues. Ms. Simkhovich also provides other support, such as research to facilitate strategic planning.
- **Animal Welfare Scientist** – Doctorate candidate Monica List, has been hired for this role, which was the most difficult to fill. Ms. List is a veterinarian and PhD student in philosophy and food ethics. She has helped produce bespoke briefs and technical materials for companies that CIWF USA engages with – e.g., standards comparisons, expert guidance, technical briefings, and other tools– to assist companies to adopt higher welfare standards.

Budget

By the end of September 2016, CIWF USA had spent \$67,000 of its initial \$275,000 Open Philanthropy Project grant installment. It expects to spend a total of about \$203,000 by the end of the March, with about \$72,000 of this year’s installment carrying over to next year. The carry-over is due to the time it took to find and hire new staff.

Main expenses

- **Travel** – is the largest single expense for CIWF USA. Ms. Dreskin and Ms. Garces fly weekly and have spent approximately \$25,000 on travel in the last few months.
- **Better Chicken Leadership Forum** – CIWF USA spent about \$15,000 on this event.
- **Smaller expenses** – e.g., recruiting staff members and signing the lease on the new office.

CIWF USA’s impact since receiving the grant

In March 2016, when CIWF USA anticipated that it would receive the Open Philanthropy Project grant, it began planning to expand its message of animal welfare to more companies. That month, the Global Animal Partnership (GAP) and Whole Foods Market announced new broiler chicken welfare commitments. The timing of these announcements coinciding with the grant put CIWF USA in a good position to engage with more companies on broiler welfare policy.

GAP and Whole Foods commitments

GAP has committed to introducing slower-growing broiler breeds over the next eight years, as well as focusing on bird health through, e.g., enrichment and natural light. Whole Foods Market committed to purchasing only broilers raised according to these standards.

This commitment was the first significant advancement in broiler welfare. It will affect approximately 245 million chickens per year by 2024, and its impact is likely to be even larger, due to the following:

- It is a precedent that CIWF USA can use to influence other companies to adopt broiler welfare policy.
- It presents an example of how a company can make this type of policy change.

Roundtables

CIWF USA worked to identify companies that would be most likely to engage on the subject of broiler welfare and held several roundtable gatherings.

1. In May, CIWF USA organized a roundtable in New York City, including four major global food companies (producers and food service) and approximately 12 investors. In this session, CIWF USA presented animal welfare as a risk. Investors discussed the fact that companies not working to manage this risk were being negative screened – e.g., avoided by investors. This was the first time that CIWF USA heard this message from investors. CIWF USA singled out broiler chickens as one of the most unmanaged risks in animal welfare, as well as the primary concern for both investors and animal activists.
2. CIWF USA also ran a daylong workshop with staff operating in a variety of roles at a key food service company. This included customer field representatives, marketing, finance, and communications staff, etc. CIWF USA provided detailed recommendations about the company’s welfare policy (a valuable foundation from which a specific policy on broilers can develop).

Perdue Farms announcement

Last year, CIWF USA – along with The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Mercy for Animals (MFA) – had been putting pressure on Perdue Farms about the accuracy of its broiler labeling. Engagement with Perdue has been ongoing through the year and culminated in the company’s commitment, in July 2016, to the most progressive broiler welfare policy to date for a poultry-raising company. Key wins in this announcement included Perdue Farms discussing the “five freedoms” of farm animal welfare and committing to Controlled Atmosphere Stunning for 100% of the broilers to be slaughtered.

Impact

The full details of this policy change are not yet known, and Perdue Farms has not yet announced a timetable for enacting the changes. However, it could potentially affect 680 million chickens per year – i.e., the number of chickens raised by Perdue Farms’ producers each year. Perdue Farms has committed to engaging with CIWF USA and will be reporting annually on their progress. CIWF USA sees this as an important foundational step for Perdue Farms.

Better Chicken Leadership Forum

In July 2016, CIWF USA organized a “Better Chicken Leadership Forum.” Representatives from 38 representatives from companies attended, surpassing expectations for participation. Many attendees were eager to learn about best practices from leaders in the space. This meeting spurred some companies to tour the facilities of their producers, which contributed to some of the recent commitments to broiler welfare. CIWF was also able to connect with new production companies.

Continued cage-free work

CIWF USA has also continued to engage with companies on cage-free egg commitments during this time. It worked to secure commitments from some of the remaining large companies:

- **Publix** – In July 2016, Publix committed to carrying only cage-free eggs by 2026. Publix is the sixth largest grocer in the US and the last of the 25 largest supermarkets in the US to go cage-free. CIWF USA ran a Change.org petition, supported a locally organized public awareness campaign in Orlando, wrote op-eds, and held protests in front of the company headquarters. HSUS, MFA, and The Humane League (THL) also participated in the campaign to get Publix to go cage-free. Though Publix did not disclose the number of animals that will be impacted by the change, CIWF USA estimates that it may be over 1 million hens per year.
- **Compass Group** – announced a policy to transition to cage-free eggs by 2025 globally. CIWF USA – along with Humane Society International, THL, and CIWF in the United Kingdom – contributed to this change. Compass Group did not disclose the number of animals impacted, but CIWF USA estimates that it may be in the millions.

Compass Group USA and Aramark broiler announcements

Together, the Compass Group USA and Aramark commitments to broiler welfare may impact more than 100 million animals a year. However, the impact is likely to be even larger, because these commitments will also put pressure on producers to adopt GAP standards for all their poultry.

Compass Group USA

On November 3, 2016, Compass Group USA announced a commitment to broiler welfare that may affect approximately 60 million chickens per year. According to the

Huffington Post, it “may be the most sweeping set of animal welfare protections ever announced” in the US. CIWF USA worked with GAP and HSUS on forging this commitment.

Compass Group USA has committed to fully adopting GAP standards for the broilers it purchases by 2024. It will require its producers to provide more space, enrichment, and natural light for broilers. It has also committed to purchasing healthier, slower-growing strains of birds and requires that the birds be stunned prior to shackling using a method of Controlled Atmosphere Stunning (CAS). The specific strains of birds are still pending approval by GAP, and the approved list will not be finalized until 2017.

Aramark

On the same day as the Compass Group USA announcement, Aramark made a separate pledge that matches Compass Group USA’s commitment. While Aramark did not sign a partnership agreement with GAP, CIWF USA will continue to engage to secure this. Aramark has not disclosed the number of animals impacted. However, as the second-largest food service company in the country, CIWF USA expects at least 50 million chickens per year will be impacted.

Market sensitization

CIWF USA has seen a number of successes in this area:

- CIWF USA’s email subscribers list increase by 113% after the Pilgrim’s Pride Corporation expose in April.
- New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof covered CIWF USA’s Pilgrim’s Pride Corporation expose. This column is one of the most popular in the country and reaches approximately 2 million people.
- CIWF USA worked with *Harry Potter* actress Evanna Lynch to show the transformation of a factory chicken farm into a GAP level four farm. The video received approximately 90,000 views and attracted engagement from a younger audience when Ms. Lynch shared it on Instagram.

Through all the media coverage CIWF USA has had in the past six months, it estimates that its message of broiler and poultry welfare had a potential-to-reach – e.g., the cumulative maximum possible reach – of over 417 million people.

Future plans

CIWF USA’s main focus for the future is improving the welfare of broiler chickens in the US.

Encouraging other companies to adopt the new broiler welfare standards

Since the Compass Group USA and Aramark announcements, other companies are contacting CIWF USA for advice on how to proceed. CIWF USA anticipates that in these next few months, the market will quickly move toward embracing the new standards. To facilitate this process, CIWF USA will:

- Persuade as many other companies as possible to make equally strong public commitments to broiler welfare – including deadlines and numbers of animals impacted, so that the impact of CIWF USA’s work is made clear. CIWF USA will pursue opportunities in this area both strategically and opportunistically. This includes engaging with several US food giants of companies and providing guidance and technical support where opportunities have been created to drive them toward broiler welfare policies.
- Work with companies that have made commitments to ensure that they meet these commitments as soon as possible. Some companies may be able to meet them sooner than planned.

It is likely that food service will be the first sector to adopt broiler welfare policy, and other sectors will follow.

Expanding broiler welfare globally

CIWF USA is interested in leveraging the success of broiler welfare policy adoption in the US to improve broiler welfare globally.

It is possible that some US producers may raise chickens for the domestic market according to the new welfare standards but will not follow the same standards for chickens sold in foreign markets, e.g., Mexico. To prevent this, CIWF USA will be seeking global broiler welfare commitments.

If CIWF USA is able to secure a critical mass of commitments within the US in the next year, it will look to expand globally – e.g., potentially into Latin America and other places in which CIWF does not yet have a formal presence. It will also continue to work and reciprocate learnings with CIWF teams in Europe and Asia to advance farm animal welfare in all territories.

Raising standards

In addition to ensuring that more companies adopt the new broiler welfare standards, CIWF USA is also continuing to push to see incremental improvements to baseline welfare standards.

Continuing market sensitization

Market sensitization is an important part of CIWF USA’s future strategy. It will seek as many opportunities as possible to raise public awareness on the issue of broiler welfare – through traditional and social media, petitions, etc. Whilst public awareness puts pressure on investors and companies to improve animal welfare provisions, the potential to attract positive media attention may also incentivize more companies to adopt welfare policies.

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