

A conversation with The Humane League, February 28, 2017

Participants

- David Coman-Hidy – President, The Humane League (THL)
- Michelle Kucerak – Vice President, Development, THL
- Aaron Ross – Vice President, Policy & Strategy, THL
- Nicole Ross – Research Analyst, Open Philanthropy Project
- 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 THL.

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with THL. In February 2016, the Open Philanthropy Project granted THL \$1 million over two years to support its cage-free egg campaigns. Conversation topics included updates on THL's domestic and international cage-free efforts.

U.S. campaigns

Activities and achievements

Since August 2016 THL has had two wins: Performance Food Group, a dining company, and Eden Park, a caterer. However, THL has switched almost all of its resources towards its broiler campaign.

Plans

Very little is planned for THL's cage-free work due to the shift to broilers. When the broiler campaign reaches the same stage as cage-free is now, THL will shift to enforcement, i.e., ensuring commitments in both areas are adhered to.

Lessons learned

THL now believes it should have launched more campaigns early on. The speed of success was surprising; the more outreach and campaigning THL did, the more victories it achieved. THL also plans to campaign for fewer caveats and tighter commitment language in the future.

International campaigns

Recruitment

Since August 2016, THL has hired:

- Two staff for Latin America, based in Mexico. One of the new hires is a former journalist; the other worked in the media and volunteered for animal groups. It was not difficult to find suitable candidates.
- Two staff in Europe, for corporate outreach and campaigning. Again, there was a good pool of applicants, mostly from other animal groups.
- Two staff for Japan. THL reached out to its networks and existing animal groups, and advertised on Facebook and jobs boards. Finding strong applicants here was the biggest challenge of THL's international work so far, but it is very happy with the current hires: one is a Japanese native who has run an English language school and translated in business meetings; the other is a British woman who has lived in Japan for a long time and has experience working with Japanese companies. Both were found through THL's networks, and both seem like they will be good at bridging the culture gap. They are working part-time now while they complete their training in corporate relations and campaign tactics, but are expected to go full-time in April.

Total full-time corporate campaign staff numbers are now as follows:

- U.S.: 7 campaign staff, 2 outreach staff, plus communications and support staff. In addition, there is a grassroots team and a campus program that assist with campaigns when needed.
- UK/EU: 2
- Mexico: 3 (a fourth will be added soon)
- Japan: 2

Activities and achievements

Open Wing Alliance (OWA)

THL formed OWA, a coalition of groups around the world with the goal of eliminating the production of eggs using caged hens. It now has 28 member organizations in six continents.

OWA provides support to other groups to help replicate the successful U.S. cage-free campaigns. Last month, grants of up to \$20,000 were awarded to organizations in Denmark, Latvia, South Africa, Poland, and the Ukraine. Around 10-12 formal proposals were received, and grants were awarded based on two main criteria:

- The organization has a track record of success in campaigning, and high potential for impact.
- The grant constitutes a significant increase to the organization's budget.

Global campaigns

THL had previously secured global and regional cage-free policies from a large number of multinational companies, including Sodexo, Compass Group, Aldi, Lidl, AccorHotels, InterContinental Hotels, and Caesars Entertainment.

Europe

THL reports that efforts in the UK have gone well, even with just one person working on campaigns there.

THL worked closely with L214, a French group, to secure commitments from all major retailers in France. THL and L214 also collaborated on work with some other French companies, including some frozen food companies, and previously on the global policies of France-based Sodexo and AccorHotels.

THL granted Anima, a leading Danish animal rights organization, \$10,000 in 2016, and spent three days in Copenhagen training its campaign team. Within months, every Danish supermarket had made a 100% cage-free commitment.

Anima also recently assisted Netto in Poland to go cage-free. Netto is now one of the few supermarkets to be cage-free in every country in which it operates.

There have been some successes in Eastern Europe already, and there is a lot of potential for further progress in that region.

Mexico

The two largest egg purchasers in the country, Grupo Bimbo and Alsea, have already pledged to go cage-free, along with a number of small and medium-sized Mexican companies and several global companies that operate in Mexico.

Cultural and legal issues

Every region is a little different so THL relies heavily on input from local staff, and gets legal advice before any campaign. However, it also encourages local groups to try out the more aggressive tactics used in the U.S., which have so far worked well in every country they have been used.

In the UK, corporate culture is less antagonistic than in the U.S., so THL's methods are more shocking and have perhaps been even more effective.

So far, working in Mexico has been similar to working in the U.S., and there have been no major legal concerns.

Bridging the culture gap is likely to be a bigger challenge in Japan. A number of tactics will be tested to see what works best.

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