

A conversation with Gauri Maulekhi, February 6, 2017

Participants

- Gauri Maulekhi — Trustee, People for Animals
- 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. Maulekhi.

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Gauri Maulekhi of People for Animals (PFA) for a six month grant update on the \$89,392 [grant](#) made to support advocacy to end the confinement of hens in battery cages in India.

Background

The last month has been tough because the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has been under attack nationally due to the Jallikattu controversy. This controversy is a very bad precedent that would potentially allow states to exempt battery cage confinement from the Act's legal protections.

PFA received the grant in October. There was a great transfer order in the battery cage case, with the Supreme Court transferring the case to the Delhi High Court.

There's another high court case that PFA filed. It's taking a different approach: a broader one including broiler chickens and layer hens. This means that the case won't be consolidated with the Delhi High Court litigation.

There's also a government organization that does work on environmental matters, the NEERI. PFA has requested them to do an environmental evaluation for poultry farms, including what housing standards could reduce pollution.

Progress since 6 months ago

In terms of policy, PFA is at the same place as six months. But in terms of litigation, Gauri can see light at the end of the tunnel.

In terms of corporate policy, Maneka Gandhi met with one of the higher-ups with McDonald's India, and asked them to change their policy in order to comply by the Indian Laws which do not allow intensive confinement of hens. McDonald's didn't do anything, so PFA is now going to launch a proper campaign against them.

National Green Tribunal cases

Two years ago PFA got 8-9 egg farms in Haryana checked out, and that resulted in ~30 farms being shut down by the Green Tribunal. PFA planned to go to four other states and try to do a similar thing.

High Court battery cage litigation

There were four High Courts approached with cases, and all were consolidated into the Delhi High Court by the Indian Supreme Court. So the Delhi High Court's ruling will have national effect. Means no point in going to other high courts generally.

The Competition Commission

PFA's draft complaint is ready; they're planning to file it this month with the Competition Commission. It was tricky to draft this because they needed to hire a specialist for help.

Coordination with the Bureau of Indian Standards

The Bureau of Indian Standards has been deliberating on the layer hen housing standards for a long time. They have created a subcommittee to come up with housing standards, but it doesn't seem to be going anywhere because the Bureau only operates on complete consensus and half the people on the committee are from the poultry industry, and they won't agree to new standards. The poultry federation is trying to get the old bad standard to be made applicable, so PFA is trying to stop that from happening.

Budget for the grant

It's 6M rupees totally for the project. PFA has an MOU with Humane Society International covering two years. In the first year PFA plans to spend 3M rupees. So far PFRA's main expenditures have been on the Uttarakhand litigation and the Delhi High Court work. PFA has spent about 1M so far.

What comes next

PFA thinks that it now needs to go more grassroots. In the next few months, PFA will start pushing McDonald's by going all out on social media. PFA will also file the Competition Commission case and hopefully that will be newsworthy. And Gauri hopes that the cases in Delhi will terminate in something good.

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