



# United Egg Producers

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## **NEW RESEARCH SHOWS HEN HEALTH AND MORTALITY BETTER IN MODERN CAGE PRODUCTION**

**ATLANTA (February 9, 2009)** – According to new research conducted by the National Veterinary Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, hens housed in modern cage systems are at a lesser risk of mortality, cannibalism and disease than hens housed in free-range and cage-free systems. The study was conducted to identify causes for the increased deaths seen in flocks transitioning from modern cage housing to alternatives ahead of the European Union's 2012 ban of cage production.

From the study, bacterial diseases, viral diseases, parasitic diseases, and even cannibalism accounted for the increase in deaths of hens housed in free-range and cage-free systems. Researchers note that the study could have implications outside of Sweden given the housing systems used in the study are similar to those used throughout Europe and the United States.

“The results of the study are not surprising,” said Gene Gregory, president of the United Egg Producers. “The modern housing systems we use in the U.S. today are a result of decades of best farming practices and based on research designed to benefit the health and wellbeing of the hens as well as ensure the highest levels of food safety.”

“We are not opposed to cage-free egg production systems under the very best of management, but we do recognize that hen mortality is greater than in cage systems and are deeply concerned with the potential for more disease problems and therefore the need for drugs not used in cage systems,” added Gregory.

In contrast to the free-range and cage-free systems, modern cage systems include a significant reduction in the spread of disease and precise control of the quality of feed and environment. The large numbers of hens clustered together on the ground in alternative systems increased the incidence of aggressive behaviors and cannibalism as well as making it more difficult to inspect the birds. In modern cage housing a set amount of birds in one unit allows for greater management of hen health and food safety.

“The UEP Certified program uses the latest science-based guidelines to ensure that proper treatment of our hens is met,” said Gregory. “It is popular to think that the old ways of farming are best, but this study and our daily experiences in the hen houses prove that the advancements in egg farming based on science benefit both the hens and the consumer.”

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**About United Egg Producers**

*United Egg Producers (UEP) is the nation's leading farmer cooperative for U.S. egg farmers, representing 97 percent of U.S. egg farmers, whose members produce eggs including modern cage production, cage-free, free range, organic and other specialty eggs. UEP is based in Alpharetta, GA. To learn more about the egg industry visit [www.uepcertified.com](http://www.uepcertified.com).*