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## OFU President Calls For Negotiated Settlement, Not Ballot Initiative on HSUS

**COLUMBUS (June 10, 2009)** - Ohio Farmers Union President Roger Wise has issued the following statement regarding industrial livestock facilities handling practices:

“Over the past several years, interest groups such as The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) have been challenging the use of certain animal handling practices in industrial livestock facilities. Practices such as the use of ‘gestation crates’ in swine production, the use of ‘veal crates’ in veal production and ‘battery cages’ in poultry production, have been viewed as confinement measures that are too extreme. In several states, voters have weighed-in on the use of these practices via statewide ballot initiatives, each time siding with the interest groups thereby promoting more humane treatment of livestock and an eventual phase-out of these confinement practices. Legislative compromises have also been used to mandate the phase-out of these animal management techniques. Now it is Ohio’s turn to confront this issue.

“The Ohio Farmers Union is a steadfast advocate for responsible farming in which a family manages their land base, their cropping systems, and their livestock as an integrated system. Industrial farming has displaced this more natural management system through practices such as purchasing feed off-the-farm, contracting for off-the-farm manure distribution, and animal management practices that abandon any similarity to natural behavior. These practices do add to the productivity and profitability of large, industrial farms, but stretch the limits of public acceptance.

“A ballot initiative would be extremely divisive with the potential of disrupting the relationship between farmers and consumers.”

– Roger Wise

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## *HSUS, continued*

“As a general farm organization, we understand and appreciate both the sense of resentment felt by the livestock community and the sense of consumer outrage associated with these animal confinement practices. From observing the debate unfold in other states, we have learned that:

- a statewide ballot initiative would be extremely expensive for everyone involved;
- a ballot initiative would be extremely divisive with the potential of disrupting the relationship between farmers and consumers;
- in the end, the livestock industry is likely to lose the fight.

“Ohio Farmers Union is very adamant that a negotiated settlement is the best way to address this issue. We believe it is in the best interest of all parties to openly discuss the practicalities of these animal management systems and agree on a plan that the livestock industry, consumers, and interest groups can accept. This negotiation could then be used as the basis of legislation, rather than a costly and acrimonious ballot initiative.”

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