

# American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals

## (ASPCA) Congressional Toolkit

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#### ASPCA Government Relations Intern Program

##### What is the ASPCA?

- Non-profit organization
- Known for their advocacy to end animal cruelty
- Community outreach and assistance, government advocating / lobbying, fundraising and other similar activities.

##### What does an internship at ASPCA look like?

The ASPCA Government Relations Intern is

- Remote
- Approximately 20 hours / week
- Specifically focusing on identifying policy barriers and working with legislators on a federal level
- Land advocate to local government officials regarding bills for stronger animal welfare standards
  - Ex) I met with Rhode Island's staffer for Rep. David Cicilline, which resulted in Mr. Cicilline cosponsoring the PUPP Act

##### What did the Capstone project at the ASPCA entail?

For my Capstone, I created a Congressional Toolkit meant to summarize ASPCA's survey findings conducted on U.S. Consumers. U.S. consumers were asked about their thoughts and opinions regarding the farming industry and agricultural animal welfare. Throughout my presentation, I highlighted key findings. This congressional toolkit will later be sent to congressmen to allow further understanding of ASPCA's mission.

#### Research

##### How was this research conducted?

ASPCA research format:

- Online surveys
- 1,000-2,000 people residing in the United States
- Between years 2012 – 2021
- Asked varying questions all regarding consumer perception of farming practices (how farming is conducted, animal welfare standards in farming, what it means to have an organic label)

My job post research:

- Gather the results
- Emphasize major consumer beliefs
- Create visually appealing "Congressional Toolkit", that members of congress could reference when taking note of consumer concerns about their food systems

## Consumer's Concerns: Agricultural Animal Welfare

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#### Major Findings

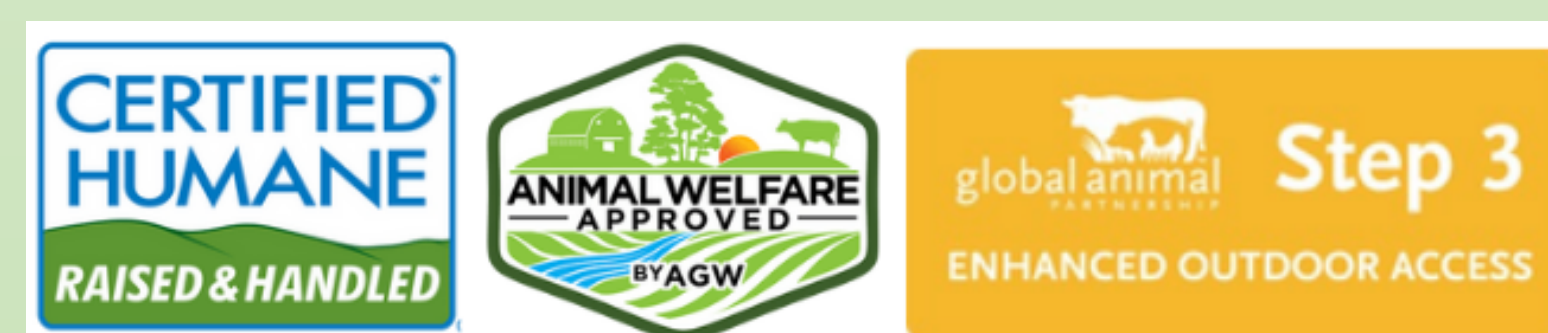
A large focus of the data collection focused on the **organic consumer**, the reason for this being that the typical organic consumer has an increased interest in agriculture animal welfare standards.

Through synthesizing the studies, there was a common theme that an average organic consumer perceived their organic producer to have conducted higher animal welfare practices during the production period than they actually did.

Organic consumers were asked where confusion occurs when pertaining to organic labeling. The chart below (reference Figure 1) condenses where the misconception can be created.

Figure 1: A 2014 survey conducted on 1,000 consumers nationwide, displays the consumer expectations and USDA requirements for the National Organic Program (NOP). There is a large gap in what the consumer expects, and actual welfare requirements through NOP (Figure 1)

	Assumption	% Who Believe True	NOP Requirement
Outdoor Access	All animals have access to outdoor pasture and fresh air throughout the day	68%	<b>No clear requirement:</b> The type and length of outdoor access required contain numerous loopholes and varies
Space	Animals have significantly more space to move than non-organic farms	67%	<b>No clear requirement:</b> NOP standards do not require a numerically expressed minimum space per animal
Genetic Engineering	Animals are not bred to grow so fast they have trouble moving and standing	60%	<b>No cap on growth rates:</b> NOP standards do not cap growth or production rates. Breeds designed for maximums
Physical Alterations	Animals do not have their beaks and tails cut off	49%	<b>Allowed:</b> According to NOP, physical alterations can still be practiced



The image to the left represents a variety of ASPCA recommended welfare certification labels.

**Overall Findings:** Essentially, after gathering a variety of surveys, it can be noted that there are 5 major consumer concerns when it comes to farm animal welfare. They are as follows:



#### What Next?

##### What can be done with the information gathered?

The next steps that go into processing this research is presenting it government officials. The information needs to be clear, concise, and easy to digest. Without presenting it in such manner, messaging can get lost in translation and become difficult to emphasize the desired outcome. It is hoped that congress will take consumer perception of farm animal welfare into deeper consideration when creating labelling and promoting products to the consumer. This will cause stronger animal welfare standards. The consumer deserves to know what is going into their product, without having to do vast amounts of research and investigation. This information should be easily accessible for all, and emphasized to those in charge of making said standards and regulations.