

Like a Duck to Water

Ducks are waterfowl. They evolved to eat, swim, play, and clean themselves in water. But on factory farms, they never even see it, except dribbling out of a pipe from which they are to drink.

Without water, ducks are deprived of their natural habitat. Denied this fundamental requirement, they can't preen properly and find it difficult to keep warm. Without water they may develop eye diseases that can result in blindness.

Ducks naturally keep themselves spotlessly clean. In the stinking sheds where they are forced to live, filth builds up on them and they are helpless to remove it.

Wild Ones

Although white in color, most farmed ducks are descended from Mallards - the beautiful, green-headed ducks we see on lakes and ponds in our parks.

Like these wild birds, farmed ducks would love to fly at 50 mph, choose a mate, and live for 15 years or more. Instead, many farmed birds can barely walk because of painful leg deformities caused by high body weight and the amount of time spent on hard floors, out of water. There is no mating, and life ends violently after seven weeks. Many will be fully conscious when their throats are cut.

Unlucky Ducks

Ducks, like other animals raised for food, are not protected by the Animal Welfare Act. Thousands are stocked in each factory unit. The filth often results in painful ammonia burns from rising urine levels. Most birds never feel the sun, wind, or rain on their backs - just artificial light.

Those kept on wire floors often suffer from untreated abrasions, bruises, and tears on their feet.

Unsurprisingly, many ducks become diseased and die.

No Dabbling!

Ducks eat by dabbling - straining plankton and other tasty morsels from the water through their bills.

This vital organ is as sensitive as human fingertips. To control feather pulling (a behavior caused by the unnatural environment on factory farms), some duck farmers shorten the upper bill by burning or cutting it off - without painkillers. This mutilation can lead to constant pain and makes eating difficult.



Starved for Profit

Breeding stock, which supply the eggs for hatching, are forced into molting through starvation. All feed is removed until the birds lose almost one-third of their body weight. About half will shed most of their primary feathers. Some will die. Designed to produce an extra egg-laying cycle, this cruelty is legal. Some farmers add a further twist - by removing all water for 24 hours at a time.

Boiled Alive?

Every year, about one million ducks are not stunned before their throats are cut.

Even those who are stunned may suffer. Rather than rendering them unconscious, stunning may inflict severe pain on ducks; they may still be aware, yet paralyzed. Thousands are still alive when they are submerged in scalding water to be de-feathered.

There appears to be no humane way to kill birds in the super-efficient, mass production poultry industry.

What Do the Producers Say?

Maple Leaf Farms is the largest duck producer in the United States, raising 15 million ducks a year. The company justifies factory farming by claiming their controlled environment is better for the ducks - in fact, they boast that their birds are not 'free range.'

Metzer Farms ships day-old hatchlings, boxed without food or water, through the U.S. Postal Service.

What Does Viva! Say?

Factory farming knows no limits! Beautiful birds driven by an instinctive desire to swim and live in the water are denied their freedom and enslaved in filthy indoor sheds, while those responsible for this cruel abuse brag about their profits.

