DEAR SUPPORTERS OF COMPASSIONATE ACTION FOR ANIMALS,

We’d like to thank our volunteers and donors for continuing to support us this past year. Despite the economy, 2008 was a good year for the animals and for CAA. More and more people believe that animals deserve respect and consideration and are taking action on that belief. Because of your support and the work of our volunteers and staff, CAA reached out to more people in 2008 than ever before. Of course, we still have a lot of work ahead of us, so don’t think we’re resting yet!

On the national front, we saw a huge victory with the passing of California’s Proposition 2. This ballot initiative, approved by an overwhelming 63% majority, created a new statute in California banning several forms of intense confinement for farmed animals. The ban prohibits veal crates, gestation crates for sows, and battery cages for hens. While gestation and veal crates have been banned in other states already, California is the first state in the country to ban battery cages. Clearly, we can see that mainstream America cares about animals and does not condone the horrible abuses that factory farming engenders.

The question is, then, how do we turn that concern into movement towards a vegan lifestyle? Our outreach and education work is a very effective means of doing so. Outreach and education expose people to the cruelties of factory farming, and are great ways to convert opposition to cruelty into real results for the animals.

For CAA, this past year was one of our best ever. We handed out huge numbers of leaflets, brought in Gowri Koneswaran and Jim Mason as speakers, and saw a record number of Veg Pledgers during the 2008 Veg Week. We also hosted our first-ever animal advocacy conference, Their Lives, Our Voices (TLOV), to great acclaim from attendees. We’re already planning our second TLOV conference, along with a
In 2008, Compassionate Action for Animals celebrated its tenth anniversary, marking the end of a decade and the first of many to come. The year was vital for the continued growth of our organization as we proceeded to engage the community and make change for them. We leafleted at dozens of concerts, events, and college campuses around Minnesota. In addition to staffing informational tables at a variety of high-traffic venues with information on food choices and factory farming. In doing so, we provided individuals with the chance to consider where the food that ends up on their plate comes from. Three outreach programs remain crucial not only to CAA, but for the animals that our organization serves to protect. By appealing to younger individuals on college campuses, we have seen a rise in interest in vegetarianism and animal protection. Leaflets provide that constant reminder of what goes on in factory farms, and the suffering caused by consumer demand. Using literature to spread awareness of these issues, CAA attempted to strengthen and grow public interest in vegetarianism and animal protection.

To get people started in their journey towards a more compassionate lifestyle, CAA received upwards of 7,000 requests for Vegetarian Starter Kits from all across the country. The starter kits discuss not only where animal products come from, but also how to stay healthy on plant-based diets and delicious animal-friendly recipes. Our VegGuide.Org website, which provides resources for veg-friendly dining throughout the world, received over 413,000 unique visitors, and 1.5 million page views from people interested in finding veg-friendly food. In addition, our resource-packed website, Exploring Veg.Org, received over 136,000 unique visitors, and 414,000 page views. The magnitude of this response demonstrates that there is a growing movement opposing the cruelty being committed toward vulnerable animals.

In addition to providing resources for potential vegetarians and vegans, CAA also helped broaden the movement’s impact on animal activists. We invited speakers, including Jim Mason and Geno Kssiwan, to provide free and informative presentations on how our food choices impact animals and our environment. We had dozens of other top speakers at our first annual “Their Lives, Our Voices” conference including Gene Baur, Colleen Patrick-Goudreau, and Paul Shapiro, who inspired the 180+ attendees. People from all over the country made time for animals and each other, and we are keen to believe that they went home to their communities refreshed, revived, and all the more ready to make a difference. Conference topics put emphasis on addressing the plight of farmed animals, in particular. Workshops considered the current issues associated with the growing movement opposing the cruelty being committed toward vulnerable animals.

In addition, we held three volunteer appreciation parties, a fundraiser banquet, a camping trip, and welcomed dozens of new volunteers and interns into CAA’s hosted twine-dine outs at veg-friendly restaurants throughout 2008 along with five potlucks, and two food giveaways. These functions brought thousands of community members and animal advocates together for the purpose of promoting compassionate vegetarian foods and protecting farm animals.

Veg Week, as usual, was a great success, and included a jam-packed schedule of events, including a cooking class, a vegan potluck, a screening of “Emotional World of Farm Animals,” a couple of dine-outs, a visit to Chicken Run Rescue sanctuary, and a special kick-off presentation with famed animal rights author Jim Mason, who spoke to an overlistening audience of over 400. The best news that came out of Veg Week was the over 780 people who pledged to go vegetarian or vegan for the week, almost 200 more than the previous year! In the precursor to Veg Week, almost 1,500 people enjoyed delicious samples of vegan foods at our annual Fall Vegan Food Showcase. Shortly after Veg Week, CAA held Outreach For Animals Week, kicking off in mid-October. This week, CAA readied more than $3,000 from generous donors and dozens of volunteers. CAA closed October and came out strong in November, creating a huge Turkey-free Thanksgiving Feast with over 200 attendees enjoying animal-friendly versions of traditional Thanksgiving fare. With November also came a CAA-inspired, campus-wide vegan dinner served by the residential centers at the University of Minnesota. Volunteers staffed informational tables and passed out leaflets and recipe booklets to patrons who enjoyed the meal.

In sum, 2008 represents another wonderful year in our ambitious goal of creating a compassionate and respectful world. The momentum, thanks to the efforts made by our many volunteers, has a broad range of support and is producing a strong community of conscientious eaters, which will make a brighter future for all. Based on previous years, and how our outreach has grown, we predict the next year, and the next decade, to be one full of possibilities, success, and concrete victories.
2008 by the Numbers

• Held our first-ever “Their Lives, Our Voices” animal advocacy conference. Over 170 participants engaged with prominent national speakers, enjoyed great vegan food, and met fellow activists.

• Introduced our message of compassion to 30,000 youth across Minnesota through leafleting and tabling.

• Organized over 22 community-building events, including potlucks, dine-outs, cooking classes, and celebrations for our volunteers and donors.

• Received 780 pledges during Veg Week from people committing to be vegetarian or vegan for a week.

• Had 400 people attend “The Ethics of What We Eat” lecture by Jim Mason, kicking off Veg Week.

• Mailed out over 7,000 vegetarian starter kits.

• Received over 1,130 unique visitors per day and 3,200 new entries on VegGuide.org.