These defeated-looking partridges are being used by the shooting industry to produce offspring who will be fattened up, released into the countryside and shot for ‘sport’. The breeding pair themselves will spend weeks, maybe months, in this barren metal box. Then, when they are no longer profitable egg-producers, they too will be killed.
In 2010, a pheasant cage ban was just weeks away from being introduced by the outgoing Labour government, following a long campaign by Animal Aid. Frustratingly, the new coalition government ruled that the cages could stay as long as they are ‘enriched’. It is the sham of ‘enrichment’ that our filmed evidence has exposed.

We believe that the abolition of these cages – widely used across the industry – would be an important first step towards the ending of all ‘sport’ shooting.

Visit www.animalaid.org.uk/go/cages to see the latest information on how you can help

THE PLIGHT OF PHEASANTS

While egg-producing partridges are caged in pairs, pheasants are confined in larger groups — eight to ten females and one male to each cage. The pheasant units are as devoid of comfort as those used for partridges. Animal Aid filmed undercover at a huge pheasant farm in Wales. The cage floors and roofs were made from mesh. There were no nest boxes and no foraging materials — just a log on which one bird at a time could perch, and a small ‘privacy’ area that amounted to a barren space behind a plastic curtain.

Animal Aid’s undercover evidence indicates that the caged birds suffer from a high incidence of feather loss and back wounds — much of it from stress-induced aggression. In an attempt to limit the damage, restraining devices are often fitted over their beaks. Caged pheasants can also suffer head injuries as a result of repeatedly lunging at the cage roofs, hoping to escape. The resulting damage is known in industry circles as ‘scalping’.

If all that wasn’t bad enough, the cages are exposed to the elements, leaving the birds with little shelter from the wind, rain, cold and burning sun.

A YouGov opinion poll commissioned by Animal Aid in June 2014 found that 77% of respondents opposed the use of cages to breed partridges and pheasants for ‘sport’ shooting.

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