

US Government Sues California Over Egg Farm Regulations

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The United States government has filed a major lawsuit against California, accusing the state of overstepping its authority by enforcing strict rules on how eggs are produced. According to the lawsuit, California's animal welfare laws are driving up egg prices for consumers across the country and creating unnecessary burdens for farmers.

The legal action, brought under President Donald Trump's administration, was filed on Wednesday in Los Angeles federal court. At the heart of the case is the Egg Products Inspection Act of 1970. This federal law assigns the United States Department of

Agriculture (USDA) the power to set nationwide standards for egg safety and handling. The law also requires uniform rules so that egg producers in different states don't have to follow conflicting regulations.

California, however, has passed several laws in recent decades to improve conditions for farm animals. In 2008 and 2018, state voters approved ballot measures banning the confinement of hens in cages so small they cannot lie down, stand up, extend their limbs, or turn around. Supporters say these measures are necessary to reduce animal cruelty and limit the risk of foodborne illnesses linked to intensive farming.

The U.S. government argues that while California can regulate farms within its borders, it cannot force egg producers in other states to meet these same standards just because their eggs are sold in California. Federal officials claim this approach has created costly red tape for out-of-state farmers and ultimately made eggs more expensive for everyone.

This is not the first time California's farm laws have faced legal challenges. In 2014, six states, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Alabama, Kentucky, and Iowa, sued California over its egg regulations. Those states also claimed the federal law should preempt California's rules. However, their case was dismissed by both a federal district court and the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld California's Proposition 12, which regulates space requirements for pigs and other farm animals. That decision was seen as a victory for animal welfare advocates.

California's attorney general has not yet commented on the new lawsuit. Meanwhile, farmers, animal rights groups, and consumers nationwide are watching closely, as the case could reshape how states set rules for food production in the future.

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