Yes on Prop 2, for the Animals and For Ourselves

Before a man is killed on death row he is given a good meal and a chance to reconcile for his sins. If a man on death row is allowed all of this, then why can’t farm animals? Proposition 2 is the on the ballot to give certain farm animals the right to at least stretch and walk around before they’re killed. This is something that big businesses like ConAgra practice on a constant basis. To prove this the supporters against Prop 2 give plenty of evidence and there are many books that touch on the subject of animal cruelty, books like *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser. It’s bad enough that they were born for the purpose of being eaten but keeping them in small cages or pens is clearly inhumane.

Prop 2 protects animals from the inhumane treatment that they currently receive. They are trapped in pens and cages that are too small and they are given little to no room to move around in, therefore they are not as healthy as they could or should be. To remedy this problem the companies have to compensate for the unhealthy conditions in some other way. Vreni Gurd states, “Consequently, antibiotics and other drugs are used on an ongoing basis in an attempt to keep the animals healthy.” The companies that raise these poor birds are pumping them with antibiotics to try to keep them in the pink. Prop 2 targets three animals that are being horribly mistreated by the agribusiness system: pregnant pigs, calves raised for veal, and egg laying hens. These three animals have gone through horrendous treatment. The hens are packed together in cages with broken wires
that cut into them, the calves are tethered by their necks and can barely move, and the pigs bite the metal bars of their cages. Not only is the treatment of these animals inhumane but it is also unhealthy, not just to them but to us as well.

One would think that antibiotics are good for you. Too much however is not; it can be a lethal killer. “Every time you swallow antibiotics, you kill the beneficial bacteria within your intestines.” Antibiotics aren’t the only problems with the animals. Salmonella and mad cow disease can also become an issue, especially if the poor livestock continues to live in their current cramped conditions. But our health isn’t very important to agribusiness as long as they can make some money. That is another point in their argument against proposition two. They state that it will be too costly and they try to use economics to scare us into voting against it.

The opponents of prop 2 claim that the proposition will be unhealthy and costly for the consumer. The truth is it will only cost a penny more per egg, but it also doesn’t make sense to say that it will be more unsanitary than hens packed tightly together in small cages. The current system has the hens packed so tightly they are practically standing on top of each other, not only that but they also have open cuts and wounds and are surrounded by their own dead. Their argument doesn’t sound as believable when the consumer doesn’t have to pay too much for the change. Many agribusinesses would also have the public believe that free range hens will be more susceptible to disease, but there is proof that states otherwise. “Studies have also shown that free-range chickens are just as susceptible if not less to the same diseases as the ones in the cage.” If free range hens are not as dangerous as caged hens then why would they make such a statement? The
most likely answer is that they are trying to cover up for their own foul deeds. Covering
up for their problems is not all they do they also try to pass blame.

Agribusiness tries to pass off some of their mistakes as the government’s fault for
not having the right kind of regulations. “The government cannot order a meat packing
company to remove contaminated, potentially lethal ground beef from fast food kitchens
and super market shelves” (Schlosser 196). Meat isn’t just contaminated in the slaughter
houses. Contamination can start at the farms were the animals are raised, and the current
conditions of their habitat are a breeding ground for harmful diseases. While big
businesses pass blame to the government we have the power to do something about it. A
small change like what Prop 2 is trying to do can have a big affect on government policy
towards the meat packing and agribusiness industries. It may spark a trend in the same
way that Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle got the government involved when it first came out.

When Michael Vick was accused of holding illegal dog fights the American
public came down on him like a hurricane. It seemed no one could save him from the
torrent of malicious intent that flew towards him. Now if only we could apply that same
anger for something that is equally wrong. Why is it that the American public hasn’t
yelled at, shouted, or shamed big farming business for mistreating their farm animals?
Just because they aren’t dogs doesn’t mean they aren’t living beings, and should be
shown the same respect we give to our domestic pets. Prop 2 gives us a chance to make
up for what we’ve done to these poor animals all these years. It doesn’t cost much to the
consumer and it makes the living arrangements a little healthier for farm animals. What
reason could you possibly have to make life miserable for them?