

Double standard in sustainability: the McCain case and the failure to meet Forno de Minas' cage-free commitment

1. Summary

McCain Foods, a Canadian multinational that claims to be globally [100% cage-free](#), is facing scrutiny for allowing its wholly owned subsidiary in Brazil, Forno de Minas, to fail to comply with a public animal welfare commitment made seven years ago.

Despite having directly participated in building this commitment, McCain:

- Did not ensure its implementation
- Did not ensure transparency regarding progress
- Allows the deadline to be postponed until 2030

The case raises concerns about a double standard in sustainability and inconsistency in the application of global policies.

2. The central contradiction

McCain communicates global progress in animal welfare and declares itself 100% cage-free in its 2025 sustainability report.

In Brazil, however:

- Its subsidiary, Forno de Minas, did not meet the commitment by 2025
- Does not disclose updated data
- Does not present a public transition plan

The contradiction is clear: a company that claims global leadership in sustainability does not apply the same standard to an operation it fully controls.

3. The unmet commitment

In 2018, Forno de Minas announced it would eliminate eggs from caged hens in its supply chain by 2025.

Seven years later:

- The deadline was not met;

- The only reported progress was 1% (2024);
- There is no public transition plan;
- Forno de Minas and McCain state the deadline is postponed to 2030.

The transition appears to have begun only in July 2025, in the final year of the deadline, and shortly after the launch of Animal Equality's campaign.

4. Timeline of the case

- **2017:** Animal Equality begins engagement with Forno de Minas.
- **July 2018:** McCain's participation (49%) is identified and direct engagement begins.
- **October 2018:** Meeting with McCain leads to concrete progress.
- **November 2018:** Cage-free commitment is published (deadline: 2025).
- **2018–2024:** Lack of consistent transparency.
- **2023:** McCain acquires 100% of Forno de Minas.
- **2024:** Only 1% progress disclosed.
- **May 2025:** Animal Equality launches campaign against Forno de Minas.
- **July 2025:** Late start of contracts with cage-free suppliers.
- **2025:** Deadline expires without compliance. Forno de Minas shifts deadline to 2030.
- **2025–2026:** Company refuses to disclose updated data.

5. Systemic lack of transparency

Over seven years, Forno de Minas:

- Never disclosed consistent progress reports;
- Never presented interim targets;
- Never published a transition plan;

After the deadline expired:

- There was no clear public communication;
- There was no accountability;
- There was no transparent definition of a new timeline.

6. Double standard and unequal treatment

While McCain in Canada:

- Publishes global reports with detailed data;

- Declares progress in animal welfare;
- Communicates targets and progress in other markets.

In Brazil:

- Claims it cannot disclose data;
- Does not present indicators;
- Does not follow the same transparency standards.

This constitutes a potential double standard in the application of ESG policies.

7. McCain's direct responsibility

McCain:

- Held a 49% stake in Forno de Minas in 2018;
- Directly influenced the creation of the commitment;
- Became the sole owner in 2023.

Therefore:

- It was aware of the commitment from its origin;
- It participated in its formalization;
- It is responsible for its implementation.

The responsibility is direct.

8. Attempts at dialogue and lack of response

After the deadline expired, Animal Equality intensified engagement with the company.

The following were requested:

- A detailed transition plan;
- A final deadline by 2027;
- Disclosure of the current cage-free percentage;
- Periodic public updates.

These requests were formally submitted in December 2025.

To date, no response has been received.

9. Conclusion

The McCain and Forno de Minas case is not merely an operational delay.

It is an example of:

- An unfulfilled public commitment
- Lack of transparency
- A potential double standard in sustainability

A company that positions itself as a global leader in sustainability cannot apply different standards across markets—especially when it has full control over the operation.