

**Submission
No 54**

**INQUIRY INTO USE OF BATTERY CAGES FOR HENS IN
THE EGG PRODUCTION INDUSTRY**

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My submission is in relation to caged hens for the production of eggs. If you haven't already, I urge you to watch Dominion or to visit a caged egg farm so you can see first hand the physical and mental stress these conditions put on these birds. At what point as a society did we decide that our desire for certain pleasures and taste have more value than the suffering of a sentient being? I would love to see an end to all egg production but I know that won't happen anytime soon so I'll fight for better conditions until then.

Chickens are very sociable animals and can recognise up to 100 faces of members of their little communities. Within those communities Chickens know who's boss. Just like us, they form social structures, known as "pecking orders", and all chickens know their place on the ladder. It's only when they're packed into sheds on intensive farms with tens of thousands of other birds that their social hierarchy collapses and stress leads to feather-pecking and cannibalism.

Mother hens talk to their unborn babies, and they chirp back through their shells. Factory-farmed chicks never meet their parents because they are taken away as soon as they're laid.

They can navigate using the sun, which helps them find food and water and even know what time it is. Many chickens raised for meat or eggs, however, will never even see the sun from their dark, windowless sheds.

Chickens communicate with more than 24 vocalisations, each with a distinct meaning, including warning their friends about different types of predators or letting their mothers know whether they're comfortable.

Chickens have pain receptors, enabling them to feel pain and distress. Just imagine their agony, then, when they endure mutilations such as having the ends of their sensitive beaks cut off with an infra-red laser – with no painkillers.

Chickens dream just like we do. They experience REM (rapid eye movement) during sleep, indicating that their minds may be wandering far from the four walls of the factory farms where they are imprisoned.

So with all of that information and more readily available which I urge you to seek. How do we justify containing these animals to such small cages? There are better ways, please ask yourself: would you be content with being forced into these conditions?

Thank you.