

Submission
No 60

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 26 June 2019

Partially
Confidential

Firstly can I say how gratifying it is that a Parliamentary Committee is finally giving consideration and - I hope - bringing forth to the public gaze, the horror that is the egg industry. It is past time that this industry and its vile practices should be brought into the public scrutiny and awareness so that the consumer is left in no doubt of the suffering brought to bear on these innocent beings.

Over the last five years I have been in a position to adopt hens who - at no more than 18 months of age - were on their way to slaughter because they were no longer commercially laying. They no longer produced eggs in sufficient number to satisfy the profit-driven motivation of the operators of these gulags. Due to the lawful interception of a rescue organisation, many of these hens were saved from slaughter and re-homed.

It has been my privilege to adopt a number of such hens who have lived with me for the remainder of their lives. This time has, in many cases, been short-lived due to largely reproductive issues they have suffered as a direct consequence of the genetic manipulation visited upon laying hens over many years in order that they should become merely egg producing machines.

The wild bird from which today's 'laying hen' can claim ancestry would have laid 12 - 20 eggs per annum for the sole purpose of reproduction. Today's hen lays an egg per day and the toll that this takes on their tiny bodies is excessive and cannot be sustained beyond a handful of months. The first sign of this point having been reached is, obviously, a reduction in the number of eggs produced and it is at this point that the hen - because she is seen and treated only as a unit of production - is consigned to slaughter. Her own worth as a living sentient being has been utterly disregarded and debased in the most inhumane way since the day she was born.

Of course her male counterparts have it no better. Male chicks hatched into the egg industry are considered of no financial worth and their tiny lives are dispatched heartlessly and grossly by either maceration or suffocation within hours of hatching.

I have spent thousands of dollars attempting to make the lives of those hens I have adopted as comfortable and healthy as possible for as long as possible. My vets and I have tried many different options in an attempt to ease their pain and suffering but ultimately the treatment these hens have suffered at the hands of profit-driven operators has resulted in bodily damage too excessive for even advanced veterinary science to heal.

One of my adopted hens suffered a broken leg quite early in her life (as verified by x-rays) and she must have suffered enormous pain throughout her egg laying life confined within a cage where she had no room to stretch her wings, relieve her aching leg, engage in the normal scratching and pecking habits of her kind and not even to be able to escape the aggression of the other frustrated hens surrounding her.

In all cases, my adopted hens have eventually succumbed to reproductive tumours and other malaise within their bodies which have arisen solely because of the insatiable demand of the industry for their secretions.

It has been four years since I last consumed an egg and I say with all certainty that I will never consume the egg of any animal during the rest of my life. I don't need to consume eggs; there is no imperative for any human being to consume the egg of any animal; there are no health giving properties within a chicken's egg that cannot be sourced more healthily from a plant based source. This industry exists solely because -

A. Consumers live in ignorance - of their own making but certainly perpetuated by the well hidden nature of the realities of this industry and the slick marketing of the industry;

B. For the financial gain of operators who - despite paying lip-service to the notion of animal welfare - will never consider a chicken's right to enjoy their own body and their own life as long as profit can be derived from her enslavement and mistreatment.

Animal welfare does not mean bigger cages.

Animals do not belong in cages.

Animals do not belong to us.

Animals are sentient beings who must be permitted the right to their own bodies and their own lives.