

Submission
No 78

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 27 June 2019

Partially
Confidential

I am deeply concerned about the egg industry. I don't believe anyone would buy eggs if they knew what truly goes on and the truly horrendous life or lack thereof each hen suffers.

Caged hens lead a life where they are unable to stretch their wings, find a quiet place to lay an egg or feel the sunlight on their feathers. They have been standing on wire for up to 2 years, unable to scratch at the grass or to perch. Weaker hens who want to hide from their bossy companions have nowhere to go. They may try to scramble underneath other hens, but will not be able to get away.

They are debeaked as chicks and will be sent to slaughter when their egg production slows.

In this environment there is disease and this has the potential to be passed on to consumers and it is also an awful environment in which low socio-economic workers are forced to earn a living.

When they are no longer viable, hens are just killed or thrown aside without any care.

This suffering an inhumane treatment **MUST** stop.

One thing that all egg farms have in common is that they have to get their hens from somewhere.

Hatcheries breed chicks by the millions to supply egg farms. The eggs are hatched in incubators and once hatched the chicks are put onto a conveyor belt just as if they were a non-feeling plastic toy, rather than a living, feeling animal. Workers sort the chicks into male and female. The girls go on to be debeaked and enter the layer industry and since the boys are not suitable for meat they are killed.

The babies are either thrown into an industrial grinder where they will literally be ground up alive or tossed into large bin bags where they will either suffocate or be crushed to death.

Rescuers of hens see how they have been extremely traumatised by their time in the barn and that they are in a terrible state when they get out.

At between 18-24 months the hens are past their prime and will no longer be profitable to the farmer. This is when they will be sent to slaughter. The farmer will usually withhold food and water for 4 days before slaughter as it is not financially beneficial to continue feeding them.

On the day of slaughter, workers (catchers) will grab the hens by their legs or wings and throw them into crates to take to slaughter. The hens are often calcium deficient and their bones are brittle. It is common for hens to suffer broken bones during this process. The terrified hens often vomit as they are held upside down. You can hear the hens screaming during a clear out from a long way away.

The hens are packed into crates and loaded onto a truck so that they can be hauled to slaughter. Often the girls have never been outside before and they are terrified. They are exposed to the elements and may travel up to 12 hours without food or water.

When they finally arrive at the slaughter house or rendering plant the terror is only just beginning.

Slaughter workers tip the hens out of crates and grab them by their leg or wing. The hens are shackled, upside down, into leg holds that hang from a conveyor chain. The conveyor chain starts moving and the terrified hen is swung around towards an electric bath, which is designed to stun her. If the hen lifts her head whilst going over the bath she can miss it and go to the motorised blades fully conscious! The blades are designed to slit her throat, but flapping and wildly trying to escape death means that there are times when hens are able to dodge the blades. Due to the speed of the line the back up killer can also miss hens. This means there will be times when a hen will enter the boiling hot water of the scalding tank conscious.

Please do not allow this to continue. Hens are amazing, intelligent animals who deserve better.

Not acceptable. We rely on our Government representatives to ensure we do better by animals.

Please help the hens. People can not turn a blind eye to this any more.