

**Submission
No 133**

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

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Submission addressed to
**the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Use of Battery Cages
for Hens in the Egg Production Industry**

From: Ralph Graham

So much can be done to improve or remove the horrendous conditions animals find themselves in, at the hands of humans.

One area that is comparatively easy to address and long overdue is the hell that describes the lives of battery hens. How unnatural their conditions are is acknowledged by the farmers in that they cruelly cut the hens' beaks short because the stress of living so close leads them to peck each other causing much damage. This mutilation makes it very difficult for them to pick up seeds and other food and almost impossible for them to preen themselves, a natural behaviour for their well being, denied in hideously unnatural conditions.

Their feet are designed to walk on the ground, scratch for food and sit on a branch for sleeping. A chicken rescued from standing on wire mesh all day and night can often barely walk and only painfully. Many do not heal completely. They develop painful sores from standing against each other and numerous other conditions due to gross overcrowding.

FREE RANGE

Often claimed, but rarely actually practiced, free range conditions must allow hens to freely walk around, to preen themselves, to scratch the ground, dust bathe and socialise. Free range living must be the absolute bottom line for these animals who currently spend their whole lives in these cruel cages to be slaughtered at 12 months, less than a fifth of their natural life span. Free range conditions would obviate the need for de-beaking.

Increasingly, it is argued that animals should not be the tool or plaything of humans at all, but a meaningful and urgent step would be the abolition of battery cages at the first possible date.

Kind regards,
Ralph Graham