

Submission
No 226

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Use of Battery Cages for Hens in the Egg Production Industry

Good evening,

Battery cages are a cruel option for hens which mislead Australia consumers into believing that their food is cruelty-free.

According to the RSPCA attachment, battery hens live most of their life on A4 sized enclosures and can barely stretch out their wings which inhibits natural hen behaviour.

Animal welfare in battery cages is abhorring, as the restricted movement of the minuscule environment results in hens regularly suffering from broken or brittle bones, feather loss and even stress-related liver rupture and inevitably, death.

Furthermore, the stacked battery cages on top of each other allow fecal matter to build up and causes noxious fumes of ammonia to even poison Australian workers. In fact, 'poultry dust', which are mixtures of chicken feces, soil and bedding can lead to high rates of asthma or respiratory failure as seen in the attachment of a statement of evidence submitted by the Health and Safety Executive in the United Kingdom. This document entailed that approximately 15% of poultry workers in the United Kingdom suffered chronic bronchitis, a clear indication that battery cages are not humane for the hens or workers alike. According to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, they defined poultry dust as a 'hazardous substance' and I can only imagine what the consequences are for our Australian farmers.

Australian consumers want and demand this change, with free-range eggs. Seven out of 10 Australians prefer cage-free eggs which is a clear indication with the shifting trend away from battery cages and towards more compassionate options of free-range or barn laid. In fact, free-range eggs are the highest value product to the egg industry, in terms of grocery sales.

Battery cages have already been phased out by the UK and its time we did the same. In fact, the cheapest free-range eggs cost approximately 4 cents more per egg than cage eggs, meaning Australian consumers and farmers will virtually experience no economic difference. Supermarkets such as Coles, Aldi and Woolworths are all taking the lead by phasing out cage-eggs and its time our government did too.

Australia is a progressive country that is able to unite as we have with the phase-out of sow stalls and I believe that this is our next step in the right direction for humane animal agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.