

**Submission  
No 354**

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

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I regard the current welfare standards for chickens too low. Animals confined in cages and overcrowded conditions cause unacceptable mental & physical suffering to the hens. I have chickens that spent their first 18 months in the egg industry. It was distressing to see the condition in which they were released. De-beaked (some so short they struggled to drink from a water bowl), bald & two of the birds smelt like death (like you smell when you drive past an animal dead on the side of the road). The happiness I saw in them free range in my backyard was something special. Over time their feathers regrew and their neurotic behaviours (including pecking at each other) stopped as they realised there was ample food, space & water for all. They are now much loved members of our family and two years on are even still laying eggs. The thought of the sheer numbers of hens still locked in inhumane conditions is sickening. Please consider the phase out of cages & reducing flock sizes to a level that allows for the birds to live in relative comfort. Consumer education reducing the overconsumption of chicken products should also be considered. Mass production of animal products should be phased down to ethical levels. Higher prices are necessary to support farmers in maintaining animal welfare standards. Historically people did not consume eggs & chicken meat at the rates they do now. It is too cheap at the cost of the welfare of the birds.