

Submission
No 389

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 23 July 2019

Partially
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important Inquiry.

As a concerned member of the general public, I strongly believe that the production and sale of cage eggs should be phased out as soon as possible.

I think that this method of egg production is cruel. I believe it is inhumane for hens to be confined to cages with less space per bird than an A4 sized piece of paper. This does not even give them enough space to stretch their wings, exercise or express natural behaviours. Further, they have no access to daylight until their final day of life when they are trucked to slaughter at just 18 months of age. Hens are forced to stand on wire floors for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for their entire lives, with no access to basic needs such as a nest or perch. Lack of exercise and calcium depletion from constant egg laying can cause weakened and brittle bones, and this can lead to painful breaks. Further, newborn hens are debeaked without pain relief, despite the fact that their beaks contain sensitive nerve endings and so this procedure is painful.

I do not believe it is acceptable for us to treat living creatures this way and I feel that this situation needs to be addressed urgently, by phasing out cage egg production completely.

I would also like to see an overall review of cruel practices used across the whole range of egg production systems, including the following:

1. Day old male chicks are currently treated as waste products and are either gassed to death or ground up alive – this is the case for all commercial egg production systems.
2. Hens are sent to slaughter when their egg production wanes at about 18 months of age when in fact their natural lifespan is around 10 years - again, this is the case for all commercial egg production systems.
3. The painful debeaking practice mentioned earlier for cage eggs, is also conducted in the barn laid system and in some free range systems.
4. The denial of hens to see daylight, mentioned earlier for cage eggs, is also true for the barn laid production system.

I believe that all of these cruel practices need to be reviewed across all egg production systems as soon as possible and amendments made to improve animal welfare, including a complete phase out of cage eggs.

Finally, I feel that consumers deserve to know how their food is produced, and it appears to me that the cruelties involved in egg production are currently kept hidden. I believe that NSW and indeed Australian consumers deserve better.

Thank you for considering my submission and I look forward to hearing the outcome of the Inquiry. I hope this Inquiry will result in much needed improvements to the welfare of chickens in egg production systems.