

**Submission
No 401**

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

Organisation: World Animal Protection

Date Received: 24 July 2019

NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on
the Use of Battery Cages for Hens in the Egg
Production Industry
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW



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World Animal Protection submission to the NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on the Use of Battery Cages for Hens in the Egg Production Industry

Summary

World Animal Protection is an international animal welfare organisation that has offices in 15 countries and is active in 50. We have worked to end animal suffering for 50 years. A major focus of our work is improving the lives of farmed animals such as chickens. We welcome this Select Committee on the use of battery cages for layer hens, as the use of battery cages is an undeniably cruel practice and NSW has the majority of Australia's battery cage systems.

Based on global scientific evidence we recommend that NSW phase out the use of battery cages and supports a national update of the Australian Poultry Standards and Guidelines when reviewed later this year to include a national phase out.

The Evidence in detail

The use of battery cages for layer hens is an undeniably cruel practice that is out of step with consumer attitudes, international best practice and trends.

Currently, about two thirds of Australia's layer hens – more than 11 million hens - are kept in battery cages for their entire life. This is a life of suffering. Battery cages are barren and small with each hen having an amount of space equivalent only to an A4 sheet of paper. The hens do not have enough space to stretch or flap their wings and cannot express natural behaviours such as scratching (as the cages are wire), dust bathing, nesting, foraging and perching.

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The majority of published scientific research demonstrates that battery cages negatively impact hen welfare. This has led an increasing number of countries to ban or phase out the use of battery cages. The European Union and United Kingdom phased out battery cages in 2012 and they are currently being phased out in Canada and New Zealand. In the United States, California, (the largest egg-producing state in the US), Michigan and Ohio are also phasing out battery cages.

Globally, many major food brands are removing battery cage eggs from their supply chains. In 2017, the world's largest food company, Nestle, announced that it would phase out caged eggs by 2025. In Australia, major retailers have made commitments to phase out caged eggs for home-brand fresh eggs and in home-brand products in coming years.

This shift has been largely driven by changing consumer attitudes towards the use of battery cages, and animal welfare in general including greater public understanding and awareness of animal sentience. In recent years, sales of non-battery fresh eggs have increased dramatically as consumers become increasingly aware of the suffering of layer hens in battery systems.

Ultimately, the use of battery cages will continue to decline in coming years due to consumer and corporate demand. The NSW industry – the largest in the country – needs to prepare for this reality by instituting a near term phaseout of battery systems. This would also be in keeping with current scientific knowledge about the welfare needs of layer hens.

We would be happy to provide more information on request.

Sincerely,

Simone Clarke
Executive Director
Australia New Zealand

