

Submission  
No 423

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

**Organisation:** National Farmers' Federation

**Date Received:** 25 July 2019

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The Director  
Select Committee on the use of battery cages for hens in the egg production industry  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email: [egg.industry@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:egg.industry@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Director,

**Re: Inquiry into the use of battery cages for hens in the egg production industry**

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the *Inquiry into the use of battery cages for hens in the egg production industry*.

The NFF was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing farmers and the agriculture sector more broadly across Australia. The NFF's membership comprises all of Australia's major agricultural commodities across the breadth and the length of the supply chain. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF.

The NFF and its members are committed to continuous improvement in animal welfare, and to working in partnership with governments to ensure best practice animal welfare outcomes that meet the expectations of the community. Animal welfare is a fundamental part of farming, and all livestock farmers – including egg farmers – understand the responsibility they have for the animals in their care. Good animal welfare also makes business sense.

The Australian egg industry adheres to strong animal welfare guidelines that ensure the best animal welfare outcomes are upheld in all egg production systems, including caged, barn laid and free range. The industry supports the rights of consumers to choose their preferred production system through clear labelling at the retail level. Purchasing patterns suggest that the community supports all systems operating in Australia, including cage eggs, which accounted for 44 per cent of supermarket sales in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

The egg industry is conscious of community concerns around farming practices and is working proactively to address those concerns through the Australian Egg Industry Sustainability Framework. The framework was developed to facilitate community and

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Egg Sustainability Framework Report 2019, pp 11. Available at: <https://www.australianeggs.org.au/what-we-do/sustainable-production/sustainability-report/>

industry engagement, and was informed by an extensive research program led by CSIRO to understand community attitudes to the egg industry and identify pathways to build greater community trust. Implementation of the framework is ongoing and is a great example of an industry-led initiative driving continuous improvement informed by community engagement.

The terms of reference for this inquiry cover a range of issues related to cage egg production, including animal welfare, consumer demand for eggs from different production systems, protection of consumer rights and the potential economic and social effects of banning the use of battery cages. NSW Farmers, a member of the NFF, has provided a detailed submission in response to the terms of reference. The NFF supports the NSW Farmers submission in full, including the four specific recommendations:

1. That NSW Government support for all egg production systems currently operating in NSW is maintained.
2. That the NSW Government supports the continued use of conventional cages as a production system option for hens in the egg production industry.
3. That the NSW Government supports the adoption of the Poultry Standards and Guidelines as drafted and include a regulatory cap on current conventional cage egg production capacity, restricting additional conventional cage infrastructure being developed.
4. That the NSW Government does not support any legislative measures on cage egg production, either to phase out conventional cages or demand changes to specifications of conventional cages.

The NFF understands the complexity of welfare considerations surrounding different egg production systems. We strongly support finalisation and implementation of the national Poultry Standards and Guidelines as the best regulatory mechanism for driving continual welfare improvements in the egg production industry.

Should you require any further information, please contact Adrienne Ryan, General Manager Rural Affairs, on

Yours sincerely,

**TONY MAHAR**  
**Chief Executive Officer**