

Submission
No 461

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

The case for caged egg systems

Animal welfare certification and egg product labelling is very effective in promoting the expansion of higher welfare egg production in Australia – may it continue

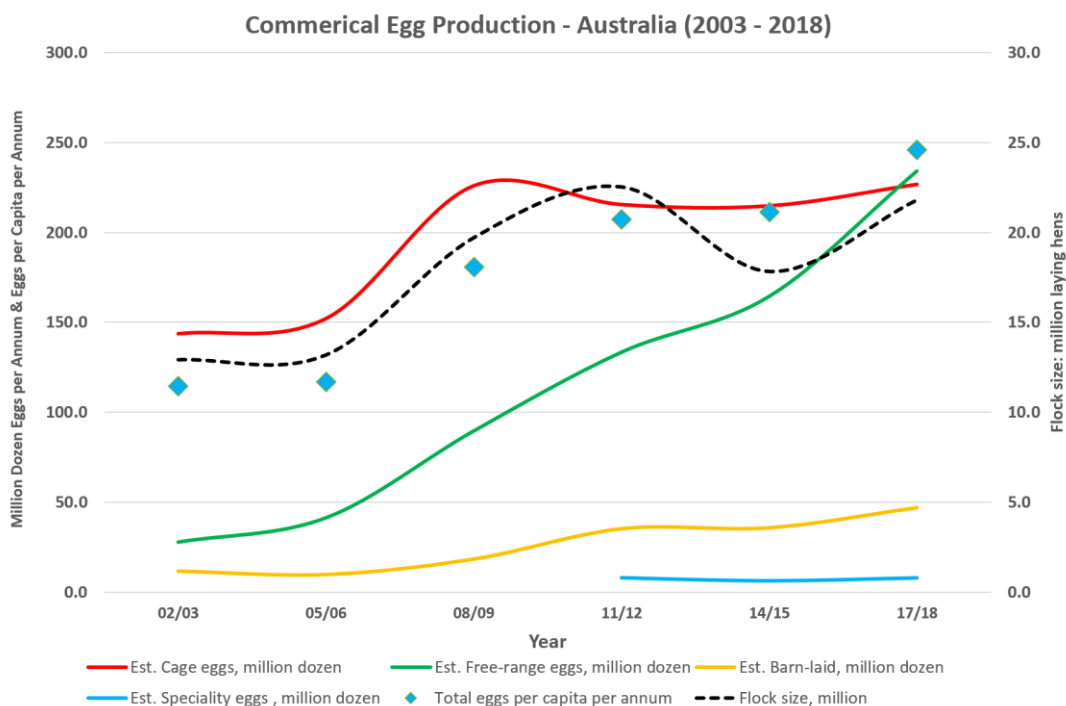
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The World Trade Organization (WTO) has never required countries to conform to animal welfare standards as part of international trade, despite the increasing demand for food products that are produced by livestock that have high standard of animal welfare. The WTO's view to date is that global food retailers and national and international animal welfare organizations are providing product differentiation for consumers in many countries that are "willing to pay" for higher animal welfare standards than what is required by regulatory requirements of each country.

In 1999, the European Union (EU) introduced legislation to ban the use of conventional cage systems in 2002. This ban was required to be implemented by 2002. According to Guarascio, Francesco and Dunmore (2018) of Reuters, 13 European union countries face legal action over the hen cage ban. Countries include France, Spain and Poland. In April 2011, a third of laying hens in Europe were still on non-complaint cages. Other countries involved in law suits include Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands.

Over the last 15 years, Australian free-range egg production has increased at least 7-fold to because companies and animal welfare organisations provided labels to differentiate food products according to the animal welfare standards of the animals producing the product. Consequently, many food products that have labels that certify the welfare of food-producing animals in most industrialised countries over the last 15 years.

Table 1: Growth of Free-Range Production in Australia



Poultry veterinarians in Australia recognise that the benefit of additional space that free-range birds have over caged hens. However, the health of free-range hens often requires significantly more medication and antibiotics than caged birds and this suggest a better system than free-range farming is required. One obvious flaw is that wild birds that may have avian influenza can attack laying hens in open fields.

It is recommended that the good work of global and local food retailers and animal welfare organisations be supported by government mechanisms. However it also recommended that consumers can freely choose egg products based on the level of animal welfare they are willing to pay in Australia.

Your Sincerely,

References

Guarascio, Francesco and Dunmore Charlie (2018). EU Countries face legal action over cage hen ban. Reuters.

Australian Eggs (2003 – 2018). Annual reports.