

Submission
No 232

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FARM
BILL 2019**

Name: Mrs Susan Moran
Date Received: 29 September 2019

Partially
Confidential

Farmers have had the right to farm for centuries. They have now lost their social license to farm; due to the inherent and explicit cruelty they impose on animals. Many of us were unaware of that cruelty, until it was exposed by committed whistleblowers, who entered farms and took footage of the horrors undertaken. The public has a right to know what goes on in farms.

The Bill changes the definition of aggravated trespass to include “wilfully or negligently” releasing livestock.” Recently, an egg farmer near Camden NSW who had neglected his chickens was reported to the RSPCA, and not for the first time. The RSPCA didn’t take action quickly enough, partly due to legislative restrictions. After many failed attempts by the public to get authorities to help the chickens, a rescue group eventually trespassed onto the farm and rescued as many chickens as they could. The chickens were in such a poor state that the farmer, _____ has now been found guilty of serious animal cruelty. He has also been prohibited from purchasing, acquiring, taking possession or custody of any animal for a period of five years, so horrendous were the conditions the chickens were kept in¹.

I personally live near a farm owned by _____ (I’m not sure if he still owns it). If I ever hear of him re-starting his egg business, I will keep an eye on the conditions the chickens are kept in, and I will take footage if I think it’s necessary to improve conditions at the farm. I am just an ordinary, 9-5 worker, who cares about animals. Considering the outcome of the case against _____ above, it would be outrageous to fine me \$13,200 and imprison me for 12 months, for doing what the government should be doing in the first place.

It should not be up to the public to monitor farming activities. The law should provide animals with protection from cruelty, but unfortunately it does not.

If your new laws come into effect, it will not deter activists, it will just lead to more community concern regarding animal welfare. The Bill will stop consumers from having access to information they want and need about what goes on behind closed doors in the animal agribusiness industry. It affects every member of the community.

Some of the farming practices of which the public are largely unaware are:

- The disbudding of new born calves. This involves a red-hot iron being placed on to the calf’s skull and pushed in to burn off the horn buds. In older calves and cows, the procedure is called de-horning. Dehorning involves using special equipment to cut through the bone and horn tissue. Studies have shown that calves not provided with pain relief compared to those who have, have reduced appetite for up to two weeks after the procedure, indicating ongoing pain is also experienced .These procedures take place without any form of anaesthetic, and they would hurt the animals as much as it would hurt you or I. Yet pain relief is provided to calves on only 23% of farms².
- Pigs tails are cut off with pliers, without painkillers. This would hurt the pig as much as it would hurt you or I.
- Mulesing – where some of a sheep’s skin is sliced off without painkillers. This would hurt the sheep as much as it would hurt you or I.
- Chickens are debeaked during their second week of life, with a hot knife or laser while they are fully conscious. This causes intense pain, shock and bleeding. This would hurt the young chicken as much as it would hurt you or I.

1

- Chickens are grown so intensely now thanks to growth-producing chemicals and selected breeding, that they can barely walk and can't fly at all. The frenzied growth makes them prone to "flipover disease" in which the metabolic strain causes sudden death.
- Male chicks are unwanted by-products of the egg industry because they won't turn in to laying hens. The male chicks, even from organic and/or free-range farms, are macerated. This means they are ground up alive. They go along on a conveyor belt and fall down into the macerating machine, where they are shredded alive³.
- Pigs given the growth drug ractopamine are so muscle-bound they are practically non-ambulatory. If the pig goes down, it will not be able to get back up. Although it is banned or restricted in about 160 countries, ractopamine is used by many Australian pork producers.
- Dairy cows are kept unnaturally lactating, in order to produce milk.
- Male calves are taken from their mothers at birth because they are not useful for milk production. These calves are turned into veal.
- Calves destined to become veal spend most of their eight-to-sixteen-week lives confined to small wooden or metal cages known as veal crates. This prison is barely larger than the calf's body and too small for the animal to turn around. Calves are also sometimes tethered so that they don't move around too much, which keeps the flesh tender.
- The gestation period for dairy cows is around 9 months, just like humans. Then we kill their baby and steal their milk.

If veterinarians practiced the same procedures on pets without painkillers, they would lose their licenses and face criminal charges.

Most Australians are unaware of the existence of all of these practices. We know the community's awareness of animal cruelty is rising and as a result, people are choosing to stop eating meat and dairy. Of course, that is what this bill is all about. The farmers want to continue to treat the animals under their care in a way that makes profit for the farmer, rather than in a way that does not include cruelty. So long as people enter their properties and take footage of their practices, they know that they are at risk of losing their livelihood.

This bill does not fit with community and consumer expectations regarding the protection of animals in the agribusiness industry,

To me, farmers have already lost their social license to operate. They do not have a right to farm.

Please watch the following videos, which were taken by brave, compassionate whistleblowers:

³

29/09/2019.

The public wants these practices exposed. Please don't deny us the right to know where and how our food comes to our plates.

Regards,

Susan Moran