

Submission  
No 369

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 30 September 2019

---

Partially  
Confidential

The 'right to farm' should not be some special legal right to secrecy; to withhold information about farming practices from consumers and the general public, any more than the right to conduct any business should entitle secrecy about how that business' products are produced. Yet that is effectively what is being proposed with this Bill.

Anyone who consumes meat or animal foods of any kind is entitled to know how they were produced. Was animal abuse; cruelty; indifference to suffering; breach of regulations involved? This Bill proposes to effectively deny that entitlement.

Time and again, video footage obtained by animal rights activists has shown that abuse and cruelty is commonplace, even at farms and facilities claimed, falsely, to have high standards. Time and again it has been only the release of such footage that has finally embarrassed supposed industry regulators into taking some action. This Bill seeks to save regulators such embarrassment and to reinforce what is little more than a façade of industry regulation.

There is of course, an even more cynical motive behind this proposed Bill. It aims to treat as criminals those who have the moral integrity and determination to ensure that the public are kept informed of what the 'right to farm' so often involves. It seeks to reframe the moral as well as legal context of animal abuse and cruelty by publicly branding as criminal not those who commit the abuse and cruelty but those who would dare lift the veil of secrecy. Further, it seeks to apply penalties totally disproportionate to the supposed 'offence' as not only a deterrent but as a means of creating in the minds of the public the impression that those penalties reflect the degree of 'criminality' involved.

Yet where is the evidence of activist wrongdoing, beyond mere trespass; wrongdoing sufficient to in any way justify such draconian measures? No evidence has been produced, only broad assertion and hyperbole.

The purpose of this Bill is patent: to hide the truth from the public and consumers and to misuse the criminal justice system as a means of doing so.

The Bill should be rejected out of hand.