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26/02/2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Poultry Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines Public Consultation

Queensland Egg Producers (QUEP) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the consultation on Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (S&G). Queensland egg farmers care for their animals and are committed to continuous and incremental improvement in animal welfare. We know we must improve and that we must do that sustainably and responsibly.

QUEP advocates for incremental and continuous improvement and in this context, QUEP supports the submission put forward by our national industry representative, Egg Farmers of Australia (EFA) and their call for the implementation of Option C in the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). In addition, we also support a cap on current conventional cage farming until the industry can expand its engagement program and grow community understanding and support for the way egg farmers farm. More detail on this position is included in the EFA submission.

We understand that there is community interest and concern about cage egg production, and accept that it must be acknowledged. However, we believe that a ban on cage egg production will deliver a negative net community benefit. A phase out of caged egg production will make a carton of eggs up to 30% more expensive and will force Australians to pay \$200 million more for eggs. The industry will consolidate and retract, and some family farms will be forced to shut down.

QUEP acknowledges that Animal Health Australia have received over 100,000 submissions during the public consultation period and thus, we understand that animal welfare is a peak concern of the community. As such QUEP, in conjunction with EFA, have committed to actively engage with the public by inviting people onto farms and providing education about how and why we farm.

The engagement that has occurred in Western Australia and Victoria has been highly successful in demonstrating that, when exposed to the realities of cage egg farming, ordinary Australians understand why cage egg farming is a necessary part of egg production. The vast majority of Australians have a common-sense approach to this issue: they think of the challenge and ultimately err on the side of trusting farmers to get it right.

It has been suggested that 85% of Australians support a ban on cages. Our experience of direct engagement suggests this claim is not supported. Supermarket sales show that 70% of Australians buy caged eggs from time to time throughout the year and 25% buy cage eggs every time they purchase. As such, QUEP actively does not support Option D of the RIS, an option that will make eggs more expensive and remove the ability of consumers to make their own choices about which egg is right for them.

QUEP supports Option C because it is the only option costed in the RIS that is responsive to the regulatory problem and has a positive net community benefit.

QUEP appreciates the opportunity to participate in the consultation process and encourages decision makers to create legislation that addresses the current problem of state legislative inconsistencies whilst keeping in mind the practical implications of all options enclosed in the RIS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Coward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

John Coward
Chief Executive Officer