

5 December 2017

Animal Welfare Standards Public Consultation
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Dear Working Group

Draft Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry

I write to support calls for animal welfare reform to improve poultry welfare and prevent cruel farming techniques.

The draft standards do not address ongoing serious community concern about caged egg production and the inherent cruelty of battery hen farming. Two-thirds of Australia's layer hens suffer in cruel farming conditions.

Cage egg production does not allow hens to behave naturally, with health and behavioural impacts including weak bones and pecking behaviours, and they should have space, a nest, somewhere to scratch their claws, a perch, and litter for dust bathing and scratching.

I am also concerned that the guidelines address other cruel procedures including forced moulting, withholding of food and water, killing of surplus male chicks and debeaking. The guidelines should set standards for stocking densities and require provision of shade, shelter, litter for dust bathing and vegetation for outdoor ranges.

A number of jurisdictions have banned or are phasing out cruel cage farming, including the Australian Capital Territory, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. There is overwhelming community support and consumer demand for cruelty-free eggs, with major retailers refusing to stock cage eggs. Animal welfare and consumer advocates have repeatedly uncovered false labelling and industry players presenting cage eggs as cage free, tricking consumers and concealing cruel farming practices.

The industry must be required to prevent cruelty and improve animal welfare.

I call on you to strengthen these draft standards and ban cage egg farming.

Yours sincerely



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