

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write for you to consider the welfare of layer hens and the end of battery cages. The following recommendations have been sourced from RSPCA and I support them.

I urgently recommend that a standard be included in chapter B1 – Laying Chickens to ensure that battery cages for layer hens are phased out, and a standard included in Part A – 4 Facilities and Equipment, to prohibit housing any birds in conventional cages.

The inclusion of a standard in Chapter 8 – Litter management that ensures all poultry housed indoors must have access to a littered area to allow birds to forage and dustbathe.

The inclusion of a standard in chapter 4 – Facilities and equipment to ensure adequate perch space must be provided to all poultry with a motivation to perch.

The amending of standard SA6.3 in chapter 6 – Lighting to ensure that the minimum light intensities for all poultry be increased to at least 10 lux, and amending standard SA6.5 to require 8 hours of continuous darkness in each 24 hour period for all poultry.

I urgently recommend that guideline GB1.6 become a standard in Chapter 4 – facilities and equipment to ensure that hens of all species must be provided with a nest.

That the maximum stocking densities be decreased for all species, so that each individual bird has more room to move and express its normal behaviours.

That a standard be introduced to ensure that poultry are not forced to moult.

That there are stricter standards introduced around beak and bill-trimming to ensure that it is not performed unless necessary for animal welfare reasons, and it is performed appropriately, with minimal impacts on the birds.

That there are more requirements needed in chapter 11 – poultry at slaughtering establishments to ensure welfare at abattoirs, and to prevent failures. This includes specifications for electrical waterbath and controlled atmosphere stunning systems, a requirement for CCTV cameras in all abattoirs, and designated animal welfare officers in all abattoirs. That there are more requirements needed in chapter 10 – humane killing to include unacceptable methods.

Please consider these recommendations.

Yours sincerely,  
Graham Rickuss