

SUBMISSION – ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS PUBLIC CONSULTATION

My name is Trish Verran and I have been involved in the poultry/egg industry for all of my life. My great grandparents were involved with poultry in the early 1900's in South Belmont. In 1942 my grandparents started a poultry/hatching business. Their children also went into the business and my father has been involved with poultry for all of his childhood and working life. He is still heavily involved to this day, as was my grandfather to the age of 96.

While I am not a farmer I am involved with chicken farmers through my work. The majority of the farmers I know are good people who are concerned for the welfare of their hens. After all why would you mistreat something that is your livelihood?

Animal welfare – is important. A stressed hen will not lay many eggs it is as simple as that. Yes it is important for a farmer to be profitable and productive after all they do put in long hours and large amounts of money into their farms (costs of feed, labour etc are not cheap). Animal welfare is important to farmers as if their hens are not well cared for, they won't lay eggs and therefore their livelihood is gone. Egg farmers in particular always get a bad rap . In my experience they are dedicated to their work looking after their hens.

I believe caged egg production is good for animal welfare. While the birds are in cages they are protected from disease, predators (foxes, dogs etc), they have food and water on hand all of the time and the sheds are airconditioned for summer and winter.

In my work I see a lot of the general public who come in and purchase day old chicks to replace ones killed by foxes or dogs.

I do not believe that cage farming should be stopped. Not only is it more economical for the farmer to run his farm this way it is also more beneficial to the poultry. The hens actually lay more eggs when they are in cages and a lot less of them die and get sick – see all the reasons above.

The images that the activists are using in the media are so outdated and usually not even from Australia. The majority (99.5%) of laying poultry in Australia are brown hens, yet alot of the footage I have seen on the activists websites show white chickens?? The sheds are now temperature controlled, lights are electronically controlled, the manure is taken away and the cages are clean and much larger than the ones seen in the activists footage. The images **DO NOT** reflect what I have seen in poultry farms of today.

I don't believe Cage farming is cruel as portrayed by activists. Cages provide a safe and clean environment for the hens to produce quality eggs for consumers.

The population of Australia is growing, we will need more food. If eggs farmers are forced to have free range and not cage the cost of eggs will sky rocket.

How many of the people in the government have actually been to a modern day egg farm? Have they talked to the farmers? Or have they only talked to the small minded activists who want us all to become vegans, grow vegies in our backyard – something that is not practical in this modern world. What are consumers to do for eggs? Do they have to run their own chickens? If free range is the way of the future that we are being pushed towards...the cost of eggs for many households will go up in price.

All of these people making submissions...have they actually ever been on a poultry farm? Have they experienced what it is like to be a farmer? Work hard 24/7 only to then sell eggs to the supermarkets – with so many underlying conditions that have to be met – for such a small amount.

Farmers in this country need to be treated with more respect and have their opinions heard, not just the activists.

Thank you
Trish Verran

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