

TALKING POINTS

THREE CURRENT ISSUES FACING EGG FARMING IN AUSTRALIA

- Like many food producers, egg farmers across Australia face many challenges. There are three urgent matters currently facing our industry:
- **The first issue** is the ongoing impact of drought in Australia (despite recent rains).
- Drought has fuelled higher grain prices and in turn has skyrocketed the cost of feeding hens.
- As with any business, costs to farmers (such as rising employment costs, insurance and fuel costs) are rapidly rising, yet the price paid to farmers for their eggs is not increasing to compensate such costs.
- Egg Farmers of Australia has called on the major supermarkets to be more flexible to discuss contracts with egg suppliers and provide a fairer return back to the farmer.
- **The second issue** is the need for Federal and State Government Agriculture Ministers to sign off on a new set of ***Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines*** for the poultry industry.
- Farmers have been waiting six years for updated guidelines from both state and federal governments.
- The aim is to bring various state and territory animal welfare codes under one set of uniform animal care standards across the country.

This is needed to provide clarity on how farmers move forward in the care of their hens.

- Egg farmers care about animal welfare and that is why farmers have agreed that the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines* will be mandatory (when they are finally released by the Federal Government).
- EFA is a primary supporter of legally enforceable animal welfare standards for caged, free-range and barn laid farming methods.
- Uniform national guidelines on animal welfare will ensure that consumers can have confidence that our hens are well cared for, and that all farmers are meeting best practice standards.
- **The third challenge** facing egg farmers is biosecurity.
- The vast movement of eggs from one state to another can pose biosecurity risks. But egg farmers are constantly improving practices.
- For example, a previous outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis has allowed the industry to re-examine and strengthen it's on farm procedures to reduce the spread of unwanted disease.
- In the past year, farm break-ins and aggressive behaviour from animal activists resulted in broken eggs, destruction of property and sometimes the death of birds
- This behaviour threatens biosecurity and increases the risk of disease outbreaks on our egg farms in Australia