

MEDIA RELEASE

17 July 2020

Aussie egg farmers to put forward their case to animal welfare panel

- **Eggs farmers to front animal welfare hearing**
- **Farmers have waited 6 years for new animal welfare guidelines**
- **Government panel currently reviewing proposed animal farming standards**

Egg Farmers are set to put forward their views on the care of livestock on Australian farms to a panel currently reviewing the nation's animal welfare code.

The three-member panel was appointed by the federal government to review the introduction of new *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines* for poultry will eventually govern all livestock farming across the country.

Egg Farmers of Australia representatives will meet with the panel this afternoon.

Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto said the poultry industry had been waiting up to six years for the guidelines to be implemented.

“New guidelines and standards on the care of poultry will give egg farmers clarity and certainty on how they can develop their farms into the future,” Mrs Hashimoto said.

“It's unfortunate that this process has so far taken six years, because without any updated guidelines on animal care, investment and growth in the egg industry has been impeded.”

Egg Farmers of Australia is the peak voice of Australian egg farmers who operate caged, free-range and barn-laid egg farms.

The three-member panel will hear submissions from many key animal industries before finalising the animal welfare guidelines for government approval.

Mrs Hashimoto said Egg Farmers of Australia would discuss with the panel:

- Egg Farmers of Australia's position on key farming issues
- The status of the egg industry and egg market place
- Egg market impacts and trends
- Economic and social impacts facing the egg industry
- The latest CSIRO Sustainability Framework for egg production
- Production issues including restructures of the industry, low returns and disease risks
- Costs relating to the long-awaited Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines

- And the resulting lack of investment and debt in the industry, because the animal welfare guidelines have so far taken six years to reach this point, with no outcome.

She said one key issue which will be emphasised to the panel was the need to retain caged egg farming in Australia.

The CEO said consumers would face egg shortages if supermarkets continued a push against caged egg farms in the country.

“In Australia, eggs are produced under cage, barn and free range systems. All three systems are needed in order to meet consumer demand. It is the consumers choice to decide the eggs that they will purchase.”

“According to the CSIRO, 40% of caged eggs are sold in supermarkets. While a further 19% are sold in other outlets. This shows that 59% of eggs consumed in Australia are from caged farms.

Without them, we would see a shortage of eggs nationwide. Retailers might then consider importing eggs from places like China, which could potentially risk the health of both consumers and Australian poultry,” Mrs Hashimoto said.

CONSUMER TRUST IN EGG FARMERS ON THE RISE

Meanwhile, the latest sustainability report commissioned by Australian Eggs (with input from the CSIRO) indicates that "trust and acceptance among the Australian public (of egg farming) has improved in the last 12 months."

The report shows 57% of Australian's expressed higher levels of trust in the egg industry, up from 53% in 2018 ([Australian Eggs, 2020 Sustainability Framework Report, P13](#)).

The Sustainability Framework focuses on the key elements in the egg industry of lives of people, hen welfare, environmental impact and economic viability.

Australian farmers produce 19 million eggs every day to satisfy the growing domestic appetite for Aussie eggs - equating to a \$1.8 billion injection into the economy.

Egg Farmers of Australia Chairman (and egg farmer) Bede Burke said while existing caged farms should remain in place, the organisation did support the case for a cap on the number of conventional cages currently in use in Australia.

“Egg Farmers of Australia has made a commitment that in the longer-term future there will be no new additional conventional cages added to the current egg production cycle within Australia,” Mr Burke said.

ENDS

Media Contact:

Melinda Hashimoto 0434 999 600

CEO Egg Farmers of Australia. info@eggfarmersaustralia.org