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### **EGG FARMERS CONCERNED BY ABC USING OUTDATED TERM**

- **Eggs farmers are concerned that people think they mistreat animals**
- **This is because the ABC continues to use the outdated term 'battery' hen**
- **'Battery hens' were outlawed 13 years ago and do not exist in Australia**

Aussie egg farmers are concerned that people may think they mistreat their animals because the ABC continues to use the outdated term 'battery' hens.

The term first incorrectly appeared as a headline on-line, and was further used by ABC Afternoons (Brisbane) to incorrectly describe modern cage egg production.

"Battery hens don't exist in Australia after being outlawed in 2008 – some 13 years ago. Sometimes the media get it wrong, and we politely ask that the ABC correct this picture," Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto said.

"Farms now abide by strict government legislation that governs the care, health and happiness of hens. It's wrong to demonise egg farmers by using a term that's no longer exists to describe ethical methods of conventional, pre-enriched or furnished cage egg farming," she said.

Australian consumers rely heavily on having the choice of cage eggs, which account for up to 40% of egg sales in supermarkets. Without them, Australian families would face egg shortages and higher prices - for what is currently one of the nation's most affordable sources of protein.

"Importantly, cage egg production also has the lowest carbon footprint compared to free range or barn laid eggs," Mrs Hashimoto said.

Australian poultry vet and researcher, Dr Rod Jenner, said Australia's cage egg production was far more ethical today and hens were healthy and thriving.

"As vets we're extremely sensitive to the welfare and care of farm animals. We look for signs of good health and interactive behaviours as key welfare indicators. Being flock birds, hens are content to live close together as it mimics part of their natural behaviour," Dr Jenner said.

"What many people who eat eggs may not realise, is that Australian caged hens have an incredibly low incidence of infectious disease and mortality rates. As a result they do not require any antibiotics, which is an important consideration for consumers.

"Conventional cages are really social housing for hens, holding small groups with 20% more space per bird in comparison to previously outdated methods," Dr Jenner said.

Egg Farmers want the industry to adopt an even more comfortable system of 'furnished cages' by July next year, and back a phase-out of current conventional cages by 2046.

**Media Contact:**

Melinda Hashimoto 0434 999 600

CEO Egg Farmers of Australia. [info@eggfarmersaustralia.org](mailto:info@eggfarmersaustralia.org)