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## **FARMERS WELCOME FOOD SAFETY REVIEW AND CALL FOR EGG STAMPING UNITY**

- **Commercial egg farmers welcome FSANZ review into egg sector**
- **Egg farmers hope it will fast track national uniform egg stamping rules**
- **Aussie egg farmers produce 17.9 million eggs a day**

Aussie egg farmers have welcomed a food safety review into their industry and say they hope it will fast-track uniform 'egg stamping' laws across the nation.

Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto congratulated Food Safety Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for undertaking a review into the farming and processing standards of fresh eggs and egg products (known as *Standard 4.2.5*).

"We specifically hope the review will eventually lead to uniform egg stamping laws across the country," Mrs Hashimoto said.

"FSANZ knows that we want every egg offered for sale in Australia (commercial or home-grown) to be stamped with a unique registration code for food safety and traceability purposes. But currently, there are too many differing state rules which hamper such efforts."

Egg stamping is the process where ink stamps are applied to eggs in order to trace them back to the farm of origin in the event of disease outbreak. While most large commercial producers have their own traceability systems in place, small and medium farms may not.

"Every Australian state has its own egg stamping legislation and food regulations. In some states egg stamping is compulsory, while in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania exemptions can apply where eggs are not identified for tracing," Mrs Hashimoto said.

She said COVID-19 and earlier outbreaks of Avian Influenza and Salmonella Enteritidis on poultry farms in southern states proved that compulsory egg stamping was highly desirable.

Australian egg farmers produce 17.9 million eggs daily, from 21.9 million laying hens.

"Eggs cross state borders daily, so the more harmonisation between states on the issue of egg stamping, the easier it is for egg businesses to operate between states," the CEO said.

"Egg Farmers of Australia call for NSW, Tasmania and Victoria to align with the rest of the country and make egg stamping compulsory," she said.

The FSANZ review is likely to focus on the relationship between biosecurity and food safety measures on egg farms. This includes bird health as well as on-farm control and monitoring systems for harmful bacteria like *Salmonella*.

Mrs Hashimoto said: "Egg stamping would allow for faster trace back to the farm of origin for eggs that were subject to incidents of *Salmonella*."

**Photo:** EFA CEO Melinda Hashimoto

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