

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a submission to the Free Range Egg Labelling Consultation Paper.

I strongly believe that it is vital to introduce a clear, legislated definition of free-range eggs. Under the present system, consumers are being exploited and genuine free-range farmers are being unfairly disadvantaged.

In order to meet consumer expectations regarding animal welfare, it is essential that the definition of 'free-range' specifies conditions such as stocking density and husbandry practices. I therefore believe that the following definition of 'free-range' should be legislated:

"Free-range production systems must have a maximum stocking of 1,500, as outlined in the Model Code of Practice. It must be ensured that hens are able to move about freely on an open range during the day. De-beaking is not permitted under any circumstances."

'Free-range' should be the only premium label permitted. Additional labels such as 'premium free-range' and 'access to range' will cause further confusion and will result in continued exploitation of consumers and legalised cruelty to hens.

Production systems that stock hens at more than 1,500 birds per hectare must not be permitted to use the 'free-range' label. In addition, accreditation of farms should be carried out by an independent third party, to ensure that the farm owners adhere to the regulated standards. It is only by introducing and enforcing these regulations that consumer confidence in the egg industry and the government can be restored.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Lynn Greig