

28 Sunlight Cres

Brighton East

VIC 3187

23 October 2015

Submission: Free Range Egg Labelling

I am a just a regular consumer, although as a vegetarian I probably have a heightened awareness of animal welfare issues.

For some years (5 maybe) I have eaten only free range eggs.

I was surprised and very disappointed when I found out through mainstream news stories that free range could mean many different things, including what I would not intuitively call free range. Since I found this out, I have done 2 things:

(a) I sometimes go to an organic shop that only sells eggs from suppliers they know and are comfortable with. This "solution" is OK to a degree, but this particular shop is not that close to home or work, I actually know don't exactly what makes them comfortable, it is not a scalable solution, and it does not help the majority of people who would care about the issue but to whom it is not important enough to cause them to go out of their way to find this solution.

(b) usually I shop at the supermarket, and I have been completely confused by the labelling. Lately, however, I have noticed that some producers are putting on their labels how many hens they have per hectare, and in some cases, further info about when the hens get to go outside, etc. This is REALLY helpful. To ensure a level playing field, rather than one where consumers are misled by fancy words and photographs/drawing, I believe labelling standards for free range eggs should be mandatory and that those standards should require the prominent display of the number of hens per hectare (or some such measure of density), when the hens get to go outside, and other factors (if any) that credible animal welfare groups think appropriate. With respect to density, I think the standard should stipulate a maximum beyond which the term "free range" cannot be used. It should also impose minimum conditions re when the hens get to go outside, etc that, if not met, would preclude use of the term free range.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Nugent