

Submission to the Free Range Egg Labelling Information Standard

9 December 2016

Dear Treasury

I am a consumer of free range eggs and I am concerned about the misuse of the term to sell eggs produced with poor animal welfare outcomes. I choose to pay more to buy free range eggs to support the reasonable treatment of the hens.

Good strong definitions that support my ability to make the purchase that I (and others) want to make are very important. It would be cynical and disingenuous to allow eggs produced with poor standards to be given a free ride and cash in on the market differentiation produced through good labelling standards.

I urge you to ensure the standards are very clear and specific. They should:

- Require no notice inspections at least twice a year.
- Provide very few reasons for the producer to remove access to the outdoors for the hens with not routine denial of access.
- Good outdoor range conditions including providing pasture for the birds to forage in through a system of paddock rotation and rest. Shelter from rain and sun through structures and trees etc. Densities of 10,000 bird per hectare are far too high and should be reduced to 1,500.
- If hens are not accessing the outdoors of their own free will, the conditions being provided should be reassessed and addressed to make them appropriate for the hens. This includes providing the hens with a sense of security in moving outdoors and of providing large openings for the birds to move through freely.
- Indoor conditions should stipulate good useful perching structures of a number which allow all birds to perch. Strict controls on the density of birds in the barns to avoid crowding and overheating.

Regards

Liz Oliver