

Facts on layer cage, animal welfare legislation and the egg market

NSW Farmers Association Egg Producers Policy AGM March 06 (Tamworth)

“That NSW Farmers' Association lobby the NSW Government to deliver the regulations for layer cages within POCTA as soon as possible”

“That Egg Producers scrutinise the draft regulations when available with a means to phase out non compliant production to 2008 in an orderly way”

Historical context for NSW FA policy

These policies fall in line with the peak body Australian Egg Corporation Ltd which has intended to honour the August 2000 ARMCANZ agreement (now Primary Industries Ministerial Committee).

That agreement between animal rights groups, RSPCA, industry and State governments confirmed that cage height, slope, feeder and drinker space and door width specified since 1992 in the Model Code of Practice would become regulated by 2008 and also confirmed the new stocking density figure (historically stocking densities have been regulated by NSW).

QLD, ACT and Tas have already honoured that agreement.
WA is undergoing deregulation and intends to honour it.
NSW had intended to honour it but has delayed making regulations.
Vic has not honoured the agreement.

Victorian Regulations and impact

Victorian Regulations ignore:

- ignore feeder and drinker space
- ignores cage height
- ignores new stocking density until 2015

however, this is traded off against a longer commercial cage life

- does not give new cages which meet the ARMCANZ standards a 20 year cage life at the old stocking density

Australia wide the exiting growers shortfall (between 27% to 7%) is balanced by expanding existing growers (22%) giving a total predicted picture after 2008 of between a 5% undersupply to 15% oversupply.

The Victorians have positioned themselves with expansion to capitalise on the shortfall if change occurs in 2008. There will be an oversupply of eggs if Victorian legislation is adopted nationally. The under and oversupply is significant for growers selling to the national market as gluts drop price and but not for the producer selling to local shops and farm gate.

Government action

The Federal Government is currently investigating state constitutions to determine if nationally consistent legislation is possible and how that could be achieved. They are still working towards a January 2008 deadline for changes to cage systems.