

media release

RSPCA WELCOMES WOOLWORTHS EGG SHIFT

The RSPCA said Woolworths' decision to decrease the number of cage egg brands on its shelves sends a strong market signal to producers that demand for higher welfare products is strong and will only grow.

RSPCA Australia Chief Scientist, Dr Bidda Jones, said the decision sent a positive message to consumers about hen welfare and the impact of their choices in the supermarket.

“Customer behaviour is changing as a result of increased awareness about battery cages and for a major retailer to signal a shift away from cage eggs is a big step towards improving layer hen welfare.

“This shift is already occurring overseas with major retailers throughout the UK including Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer refusing to stock cage eggs at all.

“The RSPCA congratulates Woolworths for leading the way in Australia but would eventually like all cage eggs replaced with free-range and barn-laid eggs.”

The RSPCA is working to educate consumers about where their food comes from and increase demand for higher welfare products through its Humane Food programs, *RSPCA Approved Farming* and *Choose Wisely*.

“It must be remembered that consumers are driving this change. People want to know how their food is produced so they can decide for themselves, and increasingly they are finding battery cages unacceptable.”

What's wrong with battery cages?

There is overwhelming scientific evidence to support the RSPCA's view that hens do not belong in cages. Frustrated from an inability to express natural behaviours as simple as scratching in the dirt or laying their eggs in a nest, caged hens suffer chronically throughout their short lives. 11.6 million hens live like this in Australia today, existing in less space each than an A4 piece of paper. A properly managed barn or free-range system gives hens the freedom to behave naturally.