



RSPCA Australia Inc.

30 June, 2008

For all creatures great and small.

FAIR GO FOR FARM ANIMALS

MEDIA RELEASE

FREE RANGE EGGS - NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY'RE CRACKED UP TO BE

A new survey by consumer group Choice has reinforced the need for stricter labelling and regulation for free range eggs in Australia.

The survey revealed that consumers who think they are making a welfare-friendly choice at the supermarket could be getting duped.

“Just because a carton says free range and has pictures of happy looking chickens adorning the cover doesn’t mean the eggs have been produced to high welfare standards,” said RSPCA Australia’s Scientific Officer, Melina Tensen.

“What’s needed in the first instance is a nationally consistent legal definition of the term “free range” and other such terms that imply improved animal welfare standards, as well as much tighter regulation.

“Until an agreed definition exists, consumers should look for eggs from producers that meet good animal welfare standards.

“The RSPCA accredits barn laid and free range systems that ensure hens have access to nests, space to move freely, flap their wings and socialise, have constant access to food and water and are protected from predators and the elements.”

RSPCA accredited facilities undergo a stringent and regular inspection process to ensure our strict welfare standards are being met.

“Battery hens suffer intensely and continuously throughout their confinement in cages. The RSPCA’s ultimate goal is to get the 10.5 million caged layer hens in Australia out of cages and into a well managed barn or free range system.”

Consumers can help the RSPCA meet this end by refusing to buy eggs that have been produced in battery cages. This could mean buying certified organic, free range or RSPCA accredited eggs.

“Consumer demand for welfare-friendly eggs and in fact other food products is growing rapidly in Australia. It’s important that these labelling issues are addressed so consumers can trust that their purchase is making a difference.”