

CAGED EGG PRODUCTION

1136. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry.

- (1) What consultation has occurred with Western Australian egg producers on how the standards will be incorporated into the state government's proposed animal welfare legislation and regulations?
- (2) Has an economic impact assessment on the effect of the standards, as proposed, on Western Australian egg producers been undertaken by the state government?
- (3) If yes to (2), will the minister please table a copy of that assessment; and, if no to (2), when will an economic impact assessment be completed?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Food, I provide the following “egg-cellent” answer!

- (1)–(3) National standards are incorporated into state animal welfare legislation as regulations. This was made possible by amendments in 2018 to the Animal Welfare Act 2002, and a number of national standards are now enshrined as regulations. Any regulations would be drafted in consultation with the industry. The development of the proposed poultry standards followed an extensive process of stakeholder consultation over a seven-year period. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has recently completed an assessment of the egg industry in Western Australia to determine the scale of industry impacts arising from the changes to the animal welfare arrangements proposed by the standards.

I am advised that of the 64 businesses producing eggs in Western Australia only five have caged egg laying hens, which makes up 26 per cent of the egg laying flock. Of those five businesses, two have indicated they already have a transition strategy away from cages; one is predominantly enriched cages; and, at most, only two have established new caged egg infrastructure since 2011.

The overwhelming majority of cages currently in operation will be well in excess of the 20-year life span specified under the existing state code of practice when the phase-out begins in 2032.