



MEDIA RELEASE

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Shock tactics are fowl

Jamie Oliver's dramatic and unnecessary demonstration of suffocating live chicks and battery cage systems in the British television show *Fowl Dinners*, undermines and by no way reflects the stringent and professional animal welfare standards practiced in Australia by egg farmers.

The Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL) represents Australian egg farmers and is appalled and saddened at the use of any animals in this way.

Australian egg farmers and some animal rights groups alike, have condemned the distressing footage as being gruesome and unnecessary, using emotive stimulus to provoke a sensational reaction from viewers.

Australian egg farmers care for their birds. Best practice animal welfare outcomes have more to do with on-farm animal husbandry and stockmanship than solely the egg production system used. All recognized egg production systems have valid advantages and disadvantages relating to the welfare outcomes of chickens.

The naivety shown by the executive producer of this show is staggering with no recognition of the serious threats to the welfare and higher mortality that is prevalent in free range flocks due to predators, disease and infighting or cannibalism. Not to mention the fundamental need for strict biosecurity on-farm to limit the risk of diseases such as Avian Influenza infiltrating the industry and threatening the health and welfare of animals.

James Kellaway, Managing Director of AECL, said that "today's Australian egg industry is in full support of transparency and educating consumers as to the approved practices used to cater to the growing demand of all egg types. However, for education to be effective, it must be an accurate and relevant portrayal and not one designed to shock and disgust the consumer at the expense of the birds' welfare" Mr. Kellaway added.

RSPCA Australia has come out in support of the show, claiming that it depicts the truth about the origins of food, "suffocation of chicks is not a practice that is used by egg farmers in Australia. RSPCA chooses to ignore the additional distress that has been put onto these birds as a result of this media stunt" said James Kellaway.

RSPCA Australia's views also seem to contradict their UK counterparts who recognized the "potential distress" that the animals would have endured on television under the lights with unfamiliar noise and equipment.



Increased welfare standards for laying hens have been recently introduced in Australia and continued research and education into environmental practices and improved animal husbandry techniques is ongoing throughout the country.

Australian codes of practice for animal welfare have been created through close consultation between Australian governments, animal welfare organizations and the poultry industries, with all eggs produced now having to comply with these codes.

AECL continues to support all recognized egg production systems and advocates the right of consumers to choose for themselves which eggs they buy.

Further information: <http://www.eggs.org.au/hen/>

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