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Submission on Criminal Code Amendment Animal Protection Bill

As free range egg farmers, we believe that there needs to be some clarity surrounding the gathering of evidence of illegal activities by private individuals or members of animal rights groups.

Unauthorised entry to egg farms by the public can create biosecurity problems and has the potential to generate health problems for chickens if those people entering the property have been in recent contact with other poultry.

However there may be some circumstances when unauthorised entry can be justified.

For example, if individuals have reason to believe that illegal practices or breaches of accepted standards are occurring.

We believe that individuals, or groups should not face prosecution for trespass if they can demonstrate that their sole purpose is gathering evidence of serious breaches of regulations.

It is not acceptable for them to damage property, such as breaking locks, or smashing windows to gain entry or to disrupt business activity (by blockading the property to interfere with the free movement of vehicles or staff). It should also be regarded as illegal if the reason for entry is simply for demonstration or publicity purposes – such as a roof-top sit-in.

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Freeranger Eggs