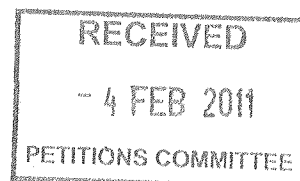




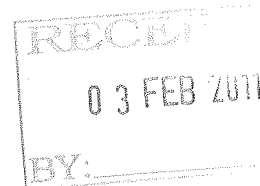
Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland



REF: MNMC2010-12225

The Hon. John Murphy MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2010 forwarding to me a petition on battery hen cages, submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions. I regret the delay in responding.

Each state and territory government is responsible for its own animal production and welfare legislation. The Australian Government has no legislative responsibility for this issue but has played a leadership role by engaging the states and territories to develop model codes of practice for the welfare of animals. These model codes aim to ensure that farm animals are treated humanely and responsibly. The codes are reviewed from time to time to keep them up to date by taking into consideration technological and scientific developments.

The *Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—domestic poultry* (4th edition) provides welfare standards for poultry. Copies of the code can be purchased from CSIRO Publishing (freecall 1800 645 051) or downloaded for free from the CSIRO Publications website at [www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/pid/3451.htm](http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/pid/3451.htm).

The codes are being progressively replaced by a new series of nationally agreed standards and guidelines, which will be legislated by the states and territories. All states and territories are now working to implement the first of these, the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines—Land Transport of Livestock. The government ensures the inclusion of farming industries and animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, in these processes.

I note the petitioners' comment that other countries have banned the use of battery cage production systems. I am advised that some European countries have banned the use of battery cages, but still permit the use of furnished cages. Sweden has banned cage production systems, but imports of cage eggs now account for around 60 per cent of Sweden's total egg consumption.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust you will find this information of assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Joe Ludwig**

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland

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January 2011