

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2013

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 34**

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division/Australian Egg Corporation Limited

**Topic:** Members of the Hen Welfare Forum

**Proof Hansard page:** 103

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

**Senator RHIANNON:** So that is the Hen Welfare Forum, is it?

**Mr Kellaway:** That is correct.

**Senator RHIANNON:** Is it on your website or can you provide who is on that and their positions?

**Mr Kellaway:** We can provide who is on that, yes, thank you.

**Answer:**

The following people, including their positions, attended the Hen Welfare Forum meeting in April 2012

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Company / Organisation</b>
Peter Bell	CEO	AAA Egg Company
Michael Clarke	Principal	AgEconPlus Consulting
Mike Bond	CEO	Animal Health Australia
Jean-Loup Rault	Research Fellow	Animal Welfare Science Centre, University of Melbourne
Gary Sansom	Chicken Meat R&D committee	Australian Chicken Meat Federation
Geof Runge	AECL Training Coordinator	Australian Egg Corporation Ltd
Angus Crossan	R&D Program Manager	Australian Egg Corporation Ltd
James Kellaway	Managing Director	Australian Egg Corporation Ltd
Jojo Jackson	R&D Project Coordinator	Australian Egg Corporation Ltd
Clive Jackson	Principal	Biological Technology Transfer
Clive Phillips	Chair of Animal Welfare	Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics, University of Queensland
Raf Freire	Lecturer in Animal Behaviour and Welfare	Charles Sturt University
Allan Sheridan	Manager Technical and Legal Animal Welfare Unit	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Tina Widowski	Professor Animal and Poultry Science	Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Guelph, Canada
Carol Petherick	Senior Research Fellow	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation

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#### **Question: 34 (continued)**

John Darlington	Principal Policy Officer	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
Melanie Latter	Senior Policy Officer - Animal Welfare	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
Amanda Paul	Veterinary Office / Welfare Response	Department of Primary Industries NSW
Greg Mills	Livestock Officer - Industry Development	Department of Primary Industries NSW
Ian Kruger	Environmental Engineer	Department of Primary Industries NSW
Philip Westwood	President	Free Range Egg and Poultry Association of Australia
Lee McCosker	CEO	Humane Choice
Verna Simpson	Director	Humane Society
Philip Szepe	CEO	Kinross Farms
Greg Parkinson	Avian Scientist	Livorno Consulting
K-lynn Smith	Associate Lecturer	Macquarie University
Michael Williams	Principal	Michael Williams and Associates Pty Ltd
John Hellstrom	Chairman	National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, NZ
Mingan Choct	CEO	Poultry Co-operative Research Centre Ltd
Jeff Downing	Lecturer - Animal Science	Poultry Research Foundation, University of Sydney
Geoff Stewart	Director	Queensland Agricultural Consultants
Bidda Jones	Chief Scientist	RSPCA
Melina Tensen	Scientific Officer - Farm Animals	RSPCA
Mark Jefferey	Education Manager	RSPCA NSW
Alan Tilbrook	Chief, Livestock & Farming Systems	SA Research and Development Institute
Phil Glatz	Senior Research Scientist	SA Research and Development Institute
Dana Campbell	CEO	Voiceless

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**Question: 35**

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity Division/Australian Egg Corporation Limited

**Topic:** Members of the Hen Welfare Forum

**Proof Hansard page:** 103

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

**Senator RHIANNON:** Considering that you have undertaken this survey and your job is to work with the different levels of the industry, why was it an anonymous survey? Why don't you survey everybody?

**Mr Kellaway:** We did survey everyone, but not everyone responded.

**Senator RHIANNON:** Why did you choose for it to be anonymous?

**Mr Kellaway:** Because we thought that would be the best way to get the biggest survey return from that questionnaire that we sent out?

**Senator RHIANNON:** How big was the return?

**Mr Kellaway:** I would have to take that question on notice.

**Answer:**

Australian Egg Corporation Limited received 128 responses representing a 67 per cent return on the total sample.

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**Question: 36**

**Division/Agency:** Agricultural Productivity/Australian Egg Corporation Limited

**Topic:** CTM 'free range' Application

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

1. In its CTM "free range" application to the ACCC last year, the AECL proposed that a stocking density of 20,000 birds per hectare of outdoor area constitutes "free range" production.
  - a. What government funding was spent on the any activities that informed or supported this failed CTM application, including research and development?
2. The AECL's website states it represents approximately 400 commercial egg producers. How many of those producers run free-range production systems that would meet consumer expectations of 1,500 birds per hectare of outdoor area – along with other accepted free-range conditions such as no beak mutilation?
  - a. What level of support does AECL provide for such producers? Please give details.
  - b. What processes and procedures does the AECL have to ensure smaller free-range producers' concerns and input is represented in the AECL?
  - c. Do such producers have any say in the research and development carried out by the RIRDC for example, or the AECL, in regards to free-range egg production systems? What sort of such input has been given and incorporated into any R&D that has received any public funding?
3. Have there been any concerns expressed to the AECL about its lack of support for smaller "true" free-range egg producers? What are the details please?
4. The ACCC is currently investigating a complaint about Coles and Woolworth's labelling of intensively stocked eggs as 'free range':
  - a. Please provide any details the AECL knows about this complaint?
  - b. How many of AECL member/producers provide Coles and Woolworths home brand free range eggs?
5. At what hen densities are those egg production systems run?

**Answer:**

1.
  - a) \$529 976.37 (comprising laying chicken levy (\$264 988.19) and Commonwealth matching Research and Development (R&D) funds (\$264 988.18).
2. Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL) is not aware of the total number of egg producers who run free-range production systems that would meet 1500 birds per hectare of outdoor area along with other specific free-range conditions.

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**Question: 36 (continued)**

- a) AECL does not classify its investments according to the type of production system used. All known egg producers, whether AECL members or not, have access to and benefit from AECL research and development (R&D) and promotional activities. All known egg producers also have the opportunity to provide input to AECL investments. Free-range egg producers with a stocking density of 1500 per hectare or less would benefit from a range of AECL investments to a greater or lesser degree depending on their particular circumstances.
  - b) All egg producer concerns that AECL is made aware of are considered during the strategic planning process. AECL also receives and considers correspondence received from all manner of egg producers. AECL regularly convenes industry forums, ad-hoc workshops or meetings, board forums, and general meetings where all egg producers, small or large, have the opportunity to raise issues with AECL. One-on-one visits are also made to small and large egg producers by AECL management to discuss R&D or promotional investment issues.
  - c) All egg producers known to AECL, small and large, are invited to take part in the strategic planning process to assist in determining the R&D objectives and priorities for AECL across all egg production systems. AECL regularly consults and seeks input from the On-Farm Innovation & Efficiency Industry Consultative Committee (ICC) and other forums such as the Hen Welfare Forum which includes egg producers from all different types of farming systems. Participation in the ICC is reviewed every two years and is open to all known egg producers who express an interest to participate. The ICC ranks all R&D projects submitted to AECL for funding, including preliminary research proposals and then full research proposals for subsequent investment. AECL understands that RIRDC does not undertake research regarding egg production.
3. Yes, mainly through telephone and e-mail correspondence. These concerns are associated with the highly competitive nature of the egg market, proposed maximum stocking densities and representation by AECL Board. AECL is implementing the recommendation in its May 2011 performance review, undertaken by AgEconPlus Consulting, that ‘given changes to the Constitution, and some concern that AECL may favour the ‘big end of town’, an independent review of the AECL Board, consistent with the regular independent reviews undertaken by other similar-sized research and development corporations and the Australian Securities Exchange best practice...’ be considered.
- 4.
- a) AECL understands that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has requested Coles Supermarket to provide the following information:
    - all farms used for Coles brand eggs
    - a copy of the Coles standard
    - a copy of the RSPCA standard
    - a copy of the AECL standard.

AECL has no information on ACCC investigations into Woolworth’s labelling of intensively stocked eggs except through general media.

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- b) AECL does not have this information.
- 5. See response to question 4b above.