

AECL WELCOMES NSW's NATIONAL VIEW ON EGG INDUSTRY ISSUES

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The Australian Egg Corporation Ltd (AECL) welcomes the national approach to egg industry issues displayed by members of the NSW Legislative Council today.

Many members of the Legislative Council today endorsed the national, Model Code of Practice (MCoP), Domestic Poultry, 4th Edition, as the benchmark for egg industry issues in NSW. The NSW Government has also committed itself to a national approach on egg issues.

AECL Managing Director, James Kellaway, said he was pleased that the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has placed egg labelling on the agenda for the COAG Food Regulation Ministerial Council meeting in December.

“NSW should never go it alone on issues like this. The Egg Industry crosses state boundaries and any moves by State governments to set up their own, new forms of regulation concerning labelling or other issues will cause unnecessary difficulties, additional costs and confusion for the industry,” Mr Kellaway said.

Mr Kellaway said the MCoP (which was endorsed by government, industry and the RSPCA in 2002) needed to have a maximum placed on free range stocking densities.

“In the current MCoP, endorsed by the Greens in the Legislative Council today, farmers can stock at unlimited densities if hens are rotated across different ranges. But AECL has always believed that this is unacceptable.”

“AECL believes that there should be a maximum of 2 hens per square metre to ensure the long term sustainability of the entire free range industry – not just some sections of the industry. I urge everyone to view footage on our website (www.aecl.org) of a typical free range farm stocked at a maximum of 2 birds per square metre and make up their own minds,” he said.

Mr Kellaway said AECL had always supported truth in labelling and the right of consumers to know. “That is why we initiated the debate in 2007 to create minimum standards and more robust production system definitions,” he said.

Mr Kellaway added that AECL was also conducting industry consultation regarding the draft Egg Standard that, once completed and implemented will further strengthen transparency and consumer confidence in the egg industry,” he said.

The Legislative Council debated an amendment, put by ALP MLC Steve Whan, to a Green Party Bill, however, the issue is yet to be considered by the Legislative Assembly.

Media contact: AECL Communication Manager, Kai Ianssen, phone: 02 9409 6909 or 0423 685 530.