

Australian Egg Industry **Sustainability Framework**



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Australian Eggs

Australian Eggs is the Industry Services Body to the Australian egg industry with responsibility for providing research and development, marketing and industry information services.

Through these activities, Australian Eggs works towards ensuring the sustainability of the Australian egg industry.

To improve the focus of these activities and communicate outcomes to stakeholders, Australian Eggs has worked with egg industry representative bodies to develop this Sustainability Framework.



The Australian egg industry

Australians consume 231 eggs per person per year, which is 15 million eggs a day, making the Australian egg industry a provider of an important affordable staple food to all Australians.

To make this possible, hundreds of egg farmers across Australia are constantly working to manage their flocks to respond to consumer demand for more and new egg products.

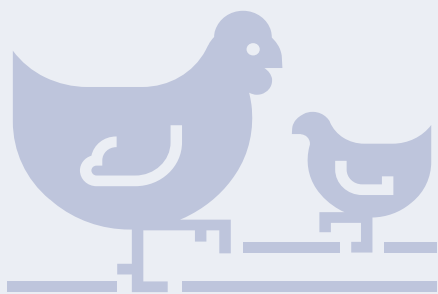
In making a contribution to the Australian community, egg farmers rely upon the support of the Australian public.



Industry objectives

The Sustainability Framework reflects the Australian egg industry's objective of farming eggs for Australians in a manner which is socially, environmentally and economically responsible.

This is done by ongoing improvement and engagement to ensure high standards of food safety, hen welfare and biosecurity are maintained and community expectations of the industry are met as they evolve.



Sustainability Framework

The Sustainability Framework is a process for defining what is socially, environmentally and economically responsible in the context of egg farming and providing a basis for continuous improvement. It does this by driving informed consideration of issues that:

- are important to the public;
- reflect the impacts and contributions of the Australian egg industry;
- can be progressed by egg farmers; and
- are of interest to a range of industry stakeholders.

The Sustainability Framework involves:

- tracking of public views on the impacts and contributions of the egg industry to identify issues of interest to the public;
- genuine engagement with the public on issues of interest to correct misconceptions and acknowledge residual concerns;
- demonstrating how the egg industry is addressing issues of interest and applying international best practice on hen welfare, food safety and sustainability; and
- transparent reporting of industry progress in key areas.



Direct engagement with our stakeholders

The primary function of the Sustainability Framework is to demonstrate accountability to those on whom the industry has an impact and those who have an impact on it.

To achieve this, it provides for direct engagement between the public (as egg consumers) and the egg industry. It allows interested members of the public and other stakeholders to see that issues of concern to them are being acknowledged and progressed by the industry.

While the main audience for the Sustainability Framework is the public, Australian Eggs will include all industry stakeholders in its development and operation. Key stakeholders include consumers, retailers, egg farmers, suppliers and other egg industry participants, regulators, governments, tax payers, non-government organisations and the hens upon which the industry relies.



Ongoing process of improvement

The value of the Sustainability Framework lies in an ongoing process that has the ability to build understanding between the public and the egg industry and contribute toward the common goal of ongoing improvement. Importantly, by providing an accurate factual footing on material issues, the Sustainability Framework will facilitate more productive engagement with all stakeholders.

The Sustainability Framework will be used by the Australian egg industry and Australian Eggs to guide investment in research, development and extension to ensure continuous improvement.

The Sustainability Framework does not have magical properties. It will be inclusive of stakeholders and responsive to concerns but will not instantaneously resolve any and all public or broader stakeholder concerns regarding egg farming or provide egg farmers with the certainty they need to make investments in the industry with confidence. Being accountable does not mean that the industry has to do everything that a stakeholder or stakeholder group requests, nor that the industry loses the responsibility to make decisions.



Scope

The Sustainability Framework considers issues identified across the whole supply chain from inputs, to egg farming practices, distribution, retail, food services and export markets.

The Sustainability Framework is likely to have an immediate focus on egg farming as this is where the egg industry has its greatest known impacts and level of control.

The Sustainability Framework is focused on the pursuit of sustainable improvement. The Australian egg industry's goal is to pursue improvements which are either consistent with efficient egg farming and are recognised by consumers as having value.



Key areas



The lives of people

The provision of safe, nutritious, affordable and secure staple food to consumers is key to egg industry sustainability. The egg industry also has an important role to play in issues of concern to the public such as anti-microbial stewardship and food waste.



Animal welfare outcomes

Australian egg farmers respect the livestock they care for and animal welfare is an area of increasing public interest. No one egg farming system is perfect and it is critical that the industry is able to productively engage on hen welfare to ensure that the relevant industry context is understood by the community and that egg farmers have a strong sense of community expectations.





Environmental impact

The community is becoming increasingly aware of the long term impacts of our society on our environment. The industry is committed to maximising the efficient use of the energy and water resources used in egg farming, minimising waste generated and managing farming land responsibly.



Economic viability

The sustainability of the egg industry and its ability to deliver outcomes of value to the community is dependent upon the economic viability of the industry. Consistent egg farming and product quality comes at a cost. It is important that the industry has effective mechanisms to engage with the community to test the value of potential improvements and ensure they can be sustainable in the long term.



Principles



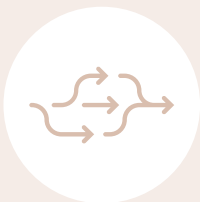
Transparency

Aligned with global standards for sustainability, accountability and stakeholder engagement to ensure that the principles, processes and reporting remain balanced.



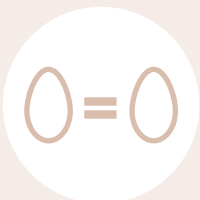
Relevance

The Sustainability Framework covers issues that are identified as being material to the Australian egg industry in that they reflect the issues of greatest interest to the public and other stakeholders upon which the egg industry has an impact.



Flexibility

Recognising that issues will change or emerge over time as the egg industry makes improvements and community interests evolve.



Competitive neutrality

Avoid driving competitive advantage for particular egg farmers or imposing prescriptive management practices at an individual business level.



Inclusivity

Engage stakeholders in developing and achieving an accountable and strategic response to the objective of ongoing improvement.



Feasibility

Accepting the practicalities of egg farming to ensure meaningful engagement on issues identified that are within the control of the egg industry.

Engagement process



Sustainability ICC

Engage the Australian Eggs Sustainability Industry Consultative Committee to guide the process of exploring material issues.



Identify and prioritise issues

Surveys of consumer views conducted to examine the sustainability context of the Australian egg industry including comparable industries, national policies and broader stakeholder expectations.



Explore drivers of material issues

Exploring why issues are relevant to consumers to understand the key drivers of Australian egg industry sustainability.



Engage on opportunities and barriers

Determine how material issues intersect with opportunities for improvement and communicate Australian Eggs' research process and outcomes including potential barriers to improvement.



Reporting on progress

Monitor progress at an industry level and provide transparent reporting.

Sustainability Report

The Sustainability Framework will provide transparency as to the progress of the Australian Egg industry through a Sustainability Report.

It is anticipated that the Sustainability Report will be published annually but it may be appropriate to apply a broader timeframe and/or publish an interim report.

The Sustainability Report will include input from the CSIRO to provide for stakeholder confidence on the principles, processes and information relied upon. It will involve a review of progress at an industry level and will not report on individual businesses.

The Sustainability Report will provide concise and engaging information on egg industry progress making it clear the areas in which the industry has either made significant progress, is working on potential improvements or where future action is necessary.

In doing so, the Sustainability Report will be an important means of engagement with consumers and other stakeholders, providing a central, accurate and trusted source of information on the egg industry.



Next steps

The release of the Sustainability Framework is the starting point of the process. Australian Eggs will now start working with the CSIRO and the Sustainability ICC to identify the material issues that will provide a foothold for engagement. This is likely to be a long and iterative process with opportunity for refinements along the way to ensure the Australian egg industry meets its objective of farming in a socially, environmentally and economically responsible way.





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