

NEW MODEL FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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Developing new technology to measure stress in hens and identifying values-based elements in animal welfare science are key items in Australian Eggs' new research and development plan released today.

Hen welfare research funded by Australian Eggs has traditionally focused on solving practical issues faced by egg farmers, such as hen behavioural issues and diseases. However, the public debate on animal welfare has evolved to include concepts that go beyond the physical condition of hens.

The new R&D program contains a number of projects to improve understanding of hen well-being but still maintains the investment in on-farm welfare solutions, explained Australian Eggs' Managing Director, Rowan McMonnies.

"We want to ensure the industry can take a leadership position on welfare. There is enormous public interest in hen welfare and we need a holistic approach to avoid leaving a knowledge vacuum.

"Research into on-farm welfare solutions will continue with new projects exploring the causes of smothering and the impact of light intensity on ranging to help farmers manage their flocks.

"What's likely to be more interesting to the broader community is our dual-focus welfare improvement program.

"The first focus is identifying values-based elements arising from hen welfare science for the purpose of further research. It is clear the community is interested in these issues and we want to develop a process for capturing these perspectives to drive more productive debate around animal welfare issues.

"The second is new research to better measure chronic stress in hens. There has been a lot of research on the ability of hens to have positive and negative experiences and learning how to measure this will put egg farmers in a better position to improve hen welfare over time.

The research program also includes an international literature review by animal welfare scientists to provide an overview of key welfare issues.

Australian Eggs

Animal Welfare Research Program



Good hen welfare is critical to the sustainability of the egg industry. Australian Eggs has commenced new welfare projects as part of its R&D program for 2018-19.



BROADER PERSPECTIVE

In response to growing community interest, we have broadened our research program to concepts that go beyond the physical condition of hens.



NEW TECHNOLOGY AND APPROACHES

Our understanding of hen welfare will be improved by developing new technology to measure stress in hens and identifying values based elements in animal welfare science.



ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

The aim is to drive ongoing improvement by contributing to a more productive debate around animal welfare issues and exploring new ways to measure welfare outcomes.



ANIMAL WELFARE RESEARCH PROGRAM

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