

Free range hen welfare: Characterisation of 'outdoor' and 'indoor' hens and physical features in the range



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Egg production, health and egg quality implications addressed through characterisation of the effects of the use of the outdoor range on behaviour and physiology of free-range hens.



Because research regarding the implications of outdoor access on hen welfare is limited, this project aimed to examine the impact of accessing the outdoor range as well as the effects of environmental design on the use of the outdoor range. The project investigated outdoor range usage by laying hens in Australian commercial egg free range flocks. Firstly, it examined the impact of accessing the outdoor range on the behaviour and stress physiology of free range laying hens. Secondly, it investigated whether the performance of so-called 'natural' behaviours, such as accessing an outdoor range, has animal welfare implications. And thirdly, it sought to determine the effects of environmental design on the use of the outdoor range.

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Preference for artificial range enrichment design features in free-range commercial laying hens

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Final Project Report

A report for the Australian Egg Corporation Limited
by J.L. Rault, P. Hamesworth, G. Cline

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