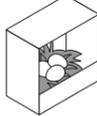
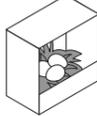
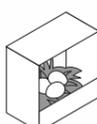
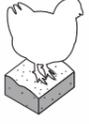
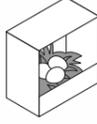


# AUSTRALIAN LAYER HEN HOUSING SYSTEMS

	INDOOR STOCKING DENSITY max. number of birds per m <sup>2</sup>	OUTDOOR STOCKING DENSITY max. number of birds per hectare	INDEPENDENT AUDITING TO ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS	PERCHES	LITTER (INDOORS)	NEST BOXES	BEAK TRIMMING	CULLING OF MALE CHICKS	INDUCED MOULTING
<p><b>CAGE</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Wire barren cages. No minimum requirements for air quality or lighting.</p> <p><b>OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOUR EXPRESSION:</b> Severely confined and unable to express natural behaviours.</p>		-	-	-	-	-	 Infrared trimming at the hatchery and/or hot blade trimming of older birds.	 Current industry practice.	 Allowable on healthy birds. Feed intake can be severely restricted for several weeks.
<p><b>CAGE FREE / BARN LAID</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Large shed where birds are free to move around, and lay their eggs in a nest. No minimum requirements for air quality or lighting.</p> <p><b>OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOUR EXPRESSION:</b> Room to stretch and flap their wings. Able to lay eggs in a nest. May be able to dustbathe and perch.</p>		-	-	Maybe	Maybe		 Infrared trimming at the hatchery and/or hot blade trimming of older birds.	 Current industry practice.	 Allowable on healthy birds. Feed intake can be severely restricted for several weeks.
<p><b>FREE RANGE</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Large shed (or small movable shed) where birds are free to move around and lay their eggs in a nest. No minimum requirements for air quality or lighting.</p> <p><b>OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> No minimum standards for what is required on the range. Birds must be given meaningful and regular access to an outdoor range during daylight hours. No minimum requirement to provide shade/shelter.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOUR EXPRESSION:</b> Room to stretch and flap their wings. Able to lay eggs in a nest. May be able to dustbathe and perch. May explore and forage outdoors.</p>		10,000	-	Maybe	Maybe		 Infrared trimming at the hatchery and/or hot blade trimming of older birds.	 Current industry practice.	 Allowable on healthy birds. Feed intake can be severely restricted for several weeks.
<p><b>RSPCA APPROVED: INDOOR SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Large shed where birds are free to move around, perch, dustbathe and lay their eggs in a nest. Environmental enrichment (pecking objects) provided. Minimum requirements for the provision of lighting and managing air quality.</p> <p><b>OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOUR EXPRESSION:</b> Living in an enriched environment that encourages flapping, dustbathing, ground foraging and perching with appropriate nest boxes for egg laying.</p>		-	 Assessed a minimum of twice a year.	 Between 7.5 to 15cm per bird.	 Minimum depth of 50mm during first two months, 100mm after first two months of use.		 Infrared trimming at the hatchery only.	 Current industry practice.	No
<p><b>RSPCA APPROVED: OUTDOOR SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Large shed (or small movable shed) where birds are free to move around, perch and lay their eggs in a nest. Environmental enrichment (pecking objects) provided. Minimum requirements for the provision of lighting and managing air quality.</p> <p><b>OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:</b> Outdoor area that encourages foraging, exploration and socialisation. Minimum of 8m<sup>2</sup> of natural and/or artificial overhead shade/shelter per 1000 birds. Appropriate size and number of popholes to encourage hens to access the outdoors.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOUR EXPRESSION:</b> Living in an enriched environment that encourages flapping, dustbathing, ground foraging and perching with appropriate nest boxes for egg laying. Encouraged to explore and forage outdoors.</p>		1,500 fixed range systems  2,500 rotational range systems	 Assessed a minimum of twice a year.	 Between 7.5 to 15cm per bird.	 Minimum depth of 50mm during first two months, 100mm after first two months of use, where applicable.		 Infrared trimming at the hatchery only.	 Current industry practice.	No

# AUSTRALIAN LAYER HEN HOUSING SYSTEMS

---

## Disclaimer:

The information provided in this table is intended to give a general overview, based on the 'Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Domestic Poultry 4th edition' and 'RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards for Layer Hens'.

Specific housing and management practices will vary between farms and what may be required under various certification schemes.



## Beak trimming:

Beak trimming is the partial removal (mainly using infrared technology) of the tip of the beak, and results in a beak that is blunt or rounded at the end. It is one of the most common methods utilised by the poultry industry (mainly the egg and turkey industries) to control the impacts of severe feather pecking. Severe feather pecking is where birds vigorously peck at and pull out the feathers of other birds and can be a serious welfare issue for layer hens.

For more information:

What is beak trimming and why is it carried out?

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-is-beak-trimming-and-why-is-it-carried-out/>

Why does the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme allow for beak trimming?

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/why-does-the-rspca-approved-farming-scheme-allow-for-beak-trimming-of-hens/>



## Litter:

Bedding, or litter, has a number of important functions, such as absorbing moisture from the birds' droppings and from the environment, providing a comfortable surface for the birds to rest, and assisting with comfort and insulation. When kept in a good condition and of sufficient depth, litter can enrich the birds' environment by enabling them to perform important natural behaviours such as foraging, scratching, and dust bathing.

## Depopulation:

All layer hens, regardless of the type of housing system, will be killed at their end of lay period. This is known as depopulation, and birds will either be euthanased on farm or sent to slaughter.

For more information:

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-are-the-animal-welfare-issues-associated-with-depopulation-and-slaughter-of-spent-hens/>



## Culling of male chicks:

Male chicks are considered an unwanted by-product of egg production and are killed and disposed of shortly after birth. This is because males don't lay eggs and layer hens – and therefore their chicks – are a different breed of poultry to chickens that are bred and raised for meat production. Layer hens are bred to produce eggs whereas meat chickens are bred to grow large breast muscle and legs.

For more information:

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-happens-with-male-chicks-in-the-egg-industry/>



## Induced moulting:

Induced moulting involves artificially forcing hens to moult through manipulating their environment and diet to replicate the natural process of moulting that occurs seasonally in wild birds. This process involves total feed deprivation and/or severe feed restriction for several days to weeks.

For more information:

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-is-induced-moulting-of-layer-hens/>