

Activist appears in court for 'stealing' battery hens

New Zealand Open Rescue

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New Zealand Open Rescue activist Mark Eden is appearing in the Levin District Court at 10am today over burglary charges relating to the rescue of 20 battery hens from Turk's Poultry, an intensive egg farm in Foxton owned by Ron Turk.

Mr. Eden is pleading not guilty to the theft of the hens from the intensive egg farm. The hens were rescued from horrendous conditions on Turk's farm in November last year and placed in loving homes for rehabilitation.

Open Rescue activists rescue animals from factory farms and document the conditions which they find. They openly identify themselves and are willing to take full responsibility for their actions.

'Every time we visit factory farms we find evidence of illegal animal cruelty. If the government was serious about animal welfare they would be inspecting farms and enforcing the laws themselves, instead of leaving it to volunteer groups like us' says Mr. Eden.

Another Open Rescue activist, Deirdre Sims, agrees, 'It is appalling that Mark Eden has been charged with burglary for rescuing animals in need. Animals are seen as property in the eyes of the law, so they are used and abused as property - they have no legal rights. I applaud the initiative of Mr. Eden for going to the rescue of those hens'.

Mr. Eden says, 'I don't believe I should be in court for rescuing animals in need, but I'm looking forward to asking Ron Turk why he thinks himself and other factory farmers should be exempt from the Animal Welfare Act'.