

New Zealand Open Rescue Calls for Factory Farming Reform

New Zealand Open Rescue

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New Zealand Open Rescue has produced a five-minute documentary reviewing intensive farming in New Zealand. The documentary is targeted at MPs and calls for party policy on Animal Welfare.

The organisation is also calling for separate Ministries of Animal Welfare and Agriculture, as Welfare currently falls under Agriculture.

"The fact that the Minister of Agriculture, Jim Anderton, is also responsible for Animal Welfare results in a severe conflict of interest on his part," says Deirdre Sims of New Zealand Open Rescue.

"Agriculture is one of our primary industries, earning New Zealand billions each year. So it comes as no surprise that a Minister in charge of both Animal Welfare and Agriculture would put economics before the interests of farmed animals."

Deirdre says that in 2006, Parliament's Regulations Review Committee found battery cages were illegal as they don't allow hens to engage in natural behaviors. Jim Anderton over-ruled this decision on economic grounds.

The Codes of Welfare for pigs, layer hens and broiler (meat) chickens will be reviewed in 2009. Currently in New Zealand, these Codes permit restriction of natural behaviors. This is in breach of the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

New Zealand Open Rescue is calling for concrete change for battery hens, pigs and broiler chickens in the 2009 Code reviews.

"While Jim Anderton claims that New Zealand has 'much to be proud of in our standards of animal care' and that our Animal Welfare legislation is 'state of the art,' as a nation we are far behind more progressive countries," says Deirdre.

Sow stalls (also called gestation crates) are illegal in Sweden and the UK and will be soon phased out in Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Sweden and Switzerland have banned the farrowing crate. Meanwhile, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany and Finland have banned the battery cage. The entire European Union is phasing out conventional cages by 2012.